

WELS Historical Institute

Journal

Volume 29, Number 2

Fall 2011



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Cover picture
Pastor Gervasius Fischer

From the Editor

John M. Brenner

The year 2011 marks the 50th anniversary of the declaration of a break in fellowship between the Wisconsin and Missouri synods. The tensions dividing the Synodical Conference not only pitted the Wisconsin Synod and the ELS against the Missouri and Slovak synods, it also divided local congregations and families. The controversy unfortunately at times brought out the worst in human nature and the worst in churchmanship.

One particularly bitter episode occurred in the late 1940s and early 1950s in Mankato, Minnesota. As bitter as the controversy was, it served to strengthen relations between the ELS and the Wisconsin Synod.

We present an account of this struggle by Pastor Paul Meitner so that a new generation can gain insight into the challenges faced by a previous generation and to learn lessons for the future.

The Mankato War (1949-1953)¹

by Paul S. Meitner

The story behind the creation of Our Savior Lutheran Church (LCMS), Mankato, Minnesota, and the activities of her first pastor, Alvin Fehner, is a one full of regret and pain. It is a story of Synodical Conference civil war, church politics at their worst, and a deep sense of betrayal by a former friend. But it is also one of the clearest examples of how united the Wisconsin Synod and the Evangelical Lutheran Synod had become by the late 40s and early 50s.

In 1949 four members of Immanuel Lutheran Church (WELS), Mankato, had become frustrated at the position Pastor Gervasius Fischer maintained against scouting. The four men (Marvin Hoyer, Karl Malwitz, Arnold Meyer and Hilbert Hantelman) asked for their release from Immanuel under the pretext of starting a Missouri Synod mission church in Mankato. The request was tentatively granted only after the men had met with officials from the Wisconsin and Missouri synods.

At a November 9, 1949, meeting at Immanuel, the four petitioners gave an oral promise to Minnesota District President Oscar Naumann that this new congregation was to be a sister congregation and not an opposition congregation. Their stated reasons for wanting to form a new congregation affiliated with the Missouri Synod was: 1) they were originally members of the Missouri Synod; 2) they felt at home and liked the Missouri Synod; 3) Immanuel was too large and there was room for another Lutheran church in Mankato.²

There was, of course, a serious question raised by the last point. True, Immanuel was a large congregation, but at that time there was also St. Paul's Lutheran Church in North Mankato. The west end mission (later St. Mark's Lutheran Church—WELS) had also just begun and was in need of support. In addition, there was the ELS congregation, Mt. Olive, located just up the hill from Immanuel. Pastor Palmer, the chairman of the Minnesota District Mission Board of the Wisconsin Synod, had offered to build these men a chapel and support their work.³

The Missouri Synod officials present at the meeting were also initially reluctant to open a mission in Mankato, since it would appear that they were taking advantage of Immanuel during a difficult time. But the four men persisted. They insisted that their desire for a Missouri Synod mission had been in their minds long before the present difficulties. Mr. Malwitz in particular had already done some ground work for such a mission and gathered a number of names of people who had come to the area who were looking for a Missouri Synod congregation.⁴

But the Wisconsin Synod men were not convinced this was a good idea. First, it violated the longstanding practice in the Synodical Conference to re-

spect a given territory of a particular synod. Then one of the petitioners, Mr. Meyer, bluntly asked two questions. First, is there any reason not to allow a Missouri Synod mission? Second, are there differences in practice between the Wisconsin and Missouri Synod on certain points, namely scouting and chaplaincy? Pastor Palmer answered "no" to the first and "yes" to the second.

In response, Mr. Meyer made it clear that he did not agree with Wisconsin's position and he wanted his children in Boy Scouts. He further stated that he had several brothers who served in the last war and one of them was lost to the church because there was not a Lutheran chaplain to look after him. He would not belong to a church that is opposed to Lutheran chaplains.⁵ Thus, the proverbial cat was out of the bag. The real reason for starting the Missouri Synod mission was so they could have scouting and be aligned with a synod that supported chaplaincy.

President Naumann, along with other Wisconsin Synod and Missouri Synod officials, made it clear that if this was the real issue, then the Missouri Synod could not come into Mankato, since it would be an opposition congregation and not a sister congregation. From this point it became clear that the Wisconsin Synod officials were reluctant to grant such a request. It also became clear that these four men were going to go ahead with their plan regardless.

This, of course, came as no surprise to Pastor Fischer of Immanuel. Although Pastor Fischer had never raised the issue of Boy Scouts from the pulpit, he had addressed scouting in his catechism class in connection with the first three commandments.⁶ After Fischer had done this, Malwitz and Hoyer had resigned as Sunday school teachers (though they would later falsely claim they had been "fired"). Hantelmann had withdrawn his children from the school without giving reason for the action. Meyer, who had petitioned to teach Sunday school, was not approved because of his obvious stand with the others in the proposed Missouri Synod venture. In short, Fischer knew the real motivation for the petition, and since it would violate Scripture to release such men with the congregation's blessing, he made it clear to President Naumann that he would not consent to a release unless they retracted their statement and promised not to have a Boy Scout troop.⁷

Another meeting was scheduled for December 6, 1949, at Bethany Lutheran College. This time, not only members of the Wisconsin and Missouri Synod were in attendance, but also representatives of the ELS and members of the Bethany College and Seminary faculty. After the preliminaries, the discussion again came to scouting. Only after Pastor Otto Brauer (LCMS Mission Board President for Minnesota District), and President Hugo Gamber (LCMS District President) assured the Wisconsin Synod that there would not be any scouting at the mission itself, did the Wisconsin Synod men relent and agree to a release of the four men to this endeavor.⁸

In a letter to President Harstad of the ELS, Naumann explains his contin-

ued reluctance about the Missouri venture in Mankato along with his reasoning for allowing it,

It became evident that Missouri would get in, and I would rather see them come in without a long protest and quarrel than to go through what we experienced in New Ulm...

My prayer is that we can settle the difficulties with Missouri soon so we can become more uniform in practice, then people transferring from one synod to another should feel more "at home."⁹

Naumann's hopes were not to be realized. The situation was about to go from bad to much, much worse.

At the time Alvin Fehner received the call to the newly formed LCMS mission in Mankato, he was the highly popular pastor at Trinity First Lutheran Church, Minneapolis, MN. But one Bethany professor in particular, Jacob Preus, viewed the selection of Fehner as the new pastor of Our Savior's with foreboding. Preus and his wife were familiar with Fehner and even enjoyed his preaching.¹⁰ But Preus was equally frightened by reports of Fehner's liberal fellowship practices. In particular, Fehner had invited Dr. Malmin of the Evangelical Lutheran Church as a speaker on a number of different occasions. Preus cites this breach as particularly painful for a number of reasons.

In addition to the fact that his synod and yours are for Scriptural reasons not in church fellowship, in addition to the fact that he himself is guilty of serious doctrinal errors; I am especially sorry to hear of this because of his attitude toward our Norwegian Synod. There is no single man in the ELC who has been more bitter and unfair in his attacks upon our synod than Malmin. He has attacked us not only on personal grounds but also for our stand against the lodge and women's suffrage. His language in his paper has been sarcastic and un-Christian....If Malmin had been in statu confessionis, or even one who wanted to be a true Missourian, I would not feel so strongly on this issue; but there is no one in the ELC who is so completely alien in spirit to the stand of the Synodical Conference as Malmin.¹¹

Preus goes on to ask three simple questions: First, is this report true? Second, does Fehner realize that such invitations are contrary to Scripture? Third, will Fehner give his word such acts will not be repeated in Mankato? Fehner's letter to Preus, a scant paragraph, answers all of Preus' questions perfectly.

In answer I would say that I do not feel disposed to elaborate and de-

fend in writing, and at this time, the principles and the policies I have pursued in my ministry at Trinity First. Nor do I make any confession of guilt herewith, neither give you any course of assurance as to the course I intend to follow in my new Mankato parish, other than it shall be in accordance with God's Word, as it was also here at Trinity First.¹²

The boldness of the evasion struck a resounding cord with Preus (who did not participate at the installation). And, sadly, it did not take long for his sense of foreboding to become a reality.

Between his installation and December of 1950, Fehner had opened a two front war with Immanuel and the Minnesota District of the WELS on one flank and Bethany Lutheran College and the Evangelical Lutheran Synod on the other. The first skirmishes of the "Mankato War" broke out at Immanuel. Even though the original members of Our Savior's had promised that they would be reaching out to non-Synodical Conference members, their ranks swelled with 180 transfers in the first few months alone. This was to a certain extent expected. All such transfers had been done in good order and with sisterly love, at least on the surface. But all it took for hostilities to commence was one slip at a morning service by Pastor Fischer.



Adolph Ackermann

Pastor Adolph Ackermann, the senior pastor at Immanuel, had died early Sunday morning and by service time, many of the members had already known.¹³ However, as is common in the parish ministry, Pastor Fischer had not been made aware before the services and did not make mention of it during the prayers or announcements. The embers that had been smoldering against Fischer for his strong stand against scouting were stoked into blazing fire by this *faux pas*. Soon a petition of removal was being circulated against Pastor Fischer. The council of Immanuel, seeking to end this, proceeded to take action against the petitioners according to Matthew 18. They sought a meeting between the petitioners and Fischer, to call them to account for their un-Christian behavior and heal the rift that had been caused. Even when the district officials were brought in to help mediate, the trouble makers attacked Fischer verbally, hissing and booing, and threatening Fischer and others with the fist.¹⁴

The trouble makers then proceeded to attend Our Savior's and were accepted into membership without a transfer, even though many of those who went over were still in the middle of discipline proceedings at Immanuel. And



Hugo Gamber

what was Alvin Fehner's response to all of this? Fehner told Fischer that he would accept members with or without transfer. Naumann tried to get a meeting with the Missouri officials to help settle this matter, but Gamber, the LCMS district president, dragged his feet.

The second front of the "Mankato" war was opened at Bethany Lutheran College when Fehner imperiously demanded that all Missouri Synod students be directed to Our Savior's for his ministrations. Such a demand was, to say the least, out of place. It was common practice that a Synodical Conference college looked after the spiritual welfare of the students attending, regardless which synod the student came from. No student was demanded to attend Mount Olive, the ELS church, but was strongly encouraged to attend any of the sister congregations in Mankato. It was not as though the Bethany faculty and administration had any particular trouble with Fehner's request, but more so the manner in which it was done. Fehner had told the administration that if Bethany did not comply with his demands, he would use his influence in the Missouri Synod to cause the Missouri students to withdraw from the college.¹⁵

Fehner had tipped his hand to the ELS professors with this brash demand and accompanying threat. During the course of discussion that BLC officials had with Fehner, the topic of the Statement of the Forty-Four came up, which Fehner had defended, insisting that there was no false doctrine in it.¹⁶ Fehner's position on Romans 16:17 was also brought into question. Troubled by these demands, threats, and comments supporting "the Statement," the president of the Board of Regents of Bethany, Milton Tweit, and the president of the Synod, C.M. Gullerud, called for a meeting with Fehner to discuss these matters more fully.

At the meeting Fehner refused to change his demands, talk any more about Romans 16:17, or meet with the full board to discuss these matters. This troubled both Tweit and Gullerud. Upon further probing, they found that Fehner's strange behavior was the least of their problems. Not only did he fully support the Statement of the Forty-Four, but he contended that this movement was needed in the Missouri Synod and he denied Romans 16:17 as it was understood by the old Missouri position.¹⁷

Things only got worse from there. Not only did Fehner refuse to discuss the matters which were before him, but on his leaving he stated that "no-one this side of heaven would ever reach a point where he would be 100% orthodox."¹⁸ "In fundamentals," he said, "orthodoxy was possible, but not in non-fundamentals."¹⁹ At the conclusion of the meeting, the Bethany faculty and administration believed they had no other choice but to file a protest with the



Dean Norman A. Madson and the 1956 class in the first seminary quarters. The students are Robert Thorson, David Gullerud, and Gerhard Weseloh.

Minnesota District of the Missouri Synod against Pastor Fehner's behavior and doctrinal statements.

However, Fehner would continue to needle the faculty and interfere with their students well into the fall. By December "Fehner-talk" filled the halls of Bethany, some pro and some con. To make matters worse, a meeting had not been granted by Missouri Synod District President Hugo Gamber, because, according to Gamber, the BLC men needed to officially charge Pastor Fehner with false doctrine. The faculty had already done so, but apparently not with enough force for Gamber. Finally, on December 19, 1950, the faculty at Bethany not only drew up specific charges, but also issued a statement to the students at Bethany regarding the Statement of the Forty-Four.

Gamber responded to the charges by scheduling a meeting with the ELS officials as well as Fehner at the Lutheran Student Center in Minneapolis on February 12, 1951. After a review of the events that had led to this meeting, discussion centered on Fehner's statements of support for the Statement of the Forty-Four. However, little was accomplished or decided. It was agreed that a further meeting was needed. Another meeting was held on March 12, 1951.

At the March 12th meeting some positive headway seemed to be made. During the discussions Fehner stated that he opposed unionistic services and stated that he now agreed with the interpretation that Romans 16:16, 17 applied to all errorists, both Lutheran and non-Lutheran.²⁰ However, there was still some issue at the implications of joint prayer and the cooperation in externals. Yet, the mood of the meeting was optimistic.

But the optimism was short-lived. By July of 1951, Fehner was back to his old tricks accepting people into membership at Our Savior's who had not been given a release. Fehner even went so far as conducting funerals of people who had not been given a release from membership at Immanuel.²¹ During this time District President Naumann officially filed a protest against Our

Savior's. However, the protest was rejected by the Minnesota District of the Missouri Synod, and Our Savior's was accepted into official LCMS membership. At the same time, Pastor Fehner's relationship with ELS officials was degrading further. During a December 4th discussion with Dean Norman Madson of Bethany Seminary, it became clear that Fehner did not accept the March 12th minutes and that his position on Romans 16:16, 17 was again in question. Again, ELS officials pleaded with LCMS district officials to help mediate the matter. But Gamber, as he had done with Naumann and the Immanuel protest, dragged his feet and postponed meeting after meeting.

In August of 1952, the Wisconsin Synod officials again filed a protest against the acceptance of Our Savior's into membership. This time, not only did the Minnesota District of the Missouri Synod reject the protest, but also now accused the Wisconsin Synod of violating fraternal relations and offending against divine order!²² This was the last straw for the Minnesota District of the Wisconsin Synod. On September 27th, President Naumann asked Carl Lawrenz, professor at WLS and the church news editor of the *Northwestern Lutheran*, to insert the following,

Notice:

Members of our Synod are regretfully advised that Our Savior's Lutheran Church of Mankato, Minnesota, heretofore regarded as a sister congregation, has severed the bonds of fraternal relations with us through the violation of Scriptural and Lutheran practices – persisted in despite all admonition and protest – specifically as it pertains to the acceptance of members from a sister congregation, and that our privilege of fellowship with that congregation must be regarded as suspended.²³



B. W. Teigen

This announcement set off a firestorm of protest by the LCMS officials not only against the Wisconsin Synod, but also against the ELS officials. Gamber let his disgust with the ELS and WELS be known to B.W. Teigen at the Synodical Conference convention at St. Paul during that same year.²⁴ Many LCMS officials refused to accept the notice that had been printed. However, it was what Fehner did next that joined the WELS and ELS fronts into a single line.

No sooner had the ink dried on the notice of severance of fellowship with Our Savior's in the *Northwestern Lutheran* than did the *Mankato Free Press* announce on two successive Saturday nights that a Boy Scout Troop would be meeting at Our Savior's. All the initial fears of Immanuel

and her pastors, Wisconsin and ELS officials, were now realized. The specific promise made when organizing Our Savior's was not only broken, but broken with brazen panache. To be fair, Fehner was not solely to blame for this gross offense. A hefty portion of the guilt falls upon the shoulders of the founding members of Our Savior's, who went against their word and, at the very least, misled Fehner in what had and had not been promised in regard to the creation of a scout troop at Our Savior's. Still greater guilt must fall upon Otto Brauer, the head of the LCMS District Mission Board, who, having been contacted by Fehner in regards to the Boy Scout issue was misleading in regards to the promises that had been made. Brauer even went so far as to deny that such a promise had been given, even though every other WELS, ELS, and LCMS official at the 1949 meeting confirmed that such a promise was indeed made.²⁵

To add insult to injury, President Gamber, in a letter to Gullerud, defended the actions of Our Savior's in starting a Boy Scout troop, citing that this matter has not yet been settled in the Missouri Synod. Gamber completely ignored that it was specifically promised by the members of Our Savior's not to have a Boy Scout troop. Throughout the rest of the year, correspondence shows a backpedaling by Gamber in an attempt to justify Fehner's actions. ELS President Gullerud criticizes Gamber again and again at his total lack of understanding of the Mankato situation. At the same time, the correspondence between Gullerud and Naumann shows just how close the two synods had become as a result of this battle.

The protests (by both ELS and WELS officials) against Our Savior's would continue into 1953. One attempt to mediate the situation took place on July 22, 1953, at Concordia College, St. Paul. In attendance were the Presidia of both Wisconsin and Missouri Minnesota Districts, the pastors and representatives of Immanuel as well as Pastor Fehner and members of Our Savior's. It is of note that during the meeting Pastor Fehner admitted that all the charges that were leveled against him and Our Savior's were true. They further admitted that their action was contrary to numerous Bible passages. Yet, instead of repenting, they justified their actions "according to a higher law, namely the law of love; therefore they would not admit that they had sinned in such disorderly manner of receiving members from a sister congregation, nor would they promise to cease such offensive practice."²⁶ What was even more disturbing was the fact that this line of argumentation received the support of Missouri's Minnesota District Presidium!

But Fehner had one more salvo to make in his Mankato war. In the fall of 1953, he contacted all the LCMS students then attending Bethany by way of letter. In the letter, he not only invited all the students to make Our Savior's their church home, but also invited the students to share with him personally any statements made against the Missouri Synod by any Bethany professor or student.

I regret that there are students at Bethany, and also some faculty members, who make it a point to criticize and fault our Missouri Synod in the presence of our students. They inject doubt into young minds, try to confuse them, and seek to alienate our Missouri Synod students from the Synod to which they belong. When such unwarranted activity comes to your attention, please report it to me; and do not permit yourselves to be influenced by such unholy fault-finding...²⁷

This was too much for the faculty both of the college and the seminary to take. As soon as the Fehner letter came to the attention of the faculty of the college and the seminary, it was immediately addressed both in a statement, drafted by B.W. Teigen, read before the faculty and student body, as well by a letter to Pastor Fehner drafted by Dean Norman Madson of Bethany Seminary.

The statement drafted by B.W. Teigen, president of Bethany, showed the ELS not only standing up for herself, but also coming to the defense of her larger sister, the WELS. First Teigen rejects the notion that the Bethany College or Seminary faculty has tried to alienate the students from the Missouri Synod. However, the Immanuel-Bethany-Our Savior's battle had been anything but private, but rather public. When the time came to stand up for the truth of Scripture, the faculty was unhesitating in their duty.

Also, since they shared the same position as the Wisconsin Synod in doctrine and practice, and since the Wisconsin Synod had judged Our Savior's as a heterodox church from both the practice and the doctrine promulgated there, and since the faculty of Bethany had in their own dealings come to the same conclusion, they had no other choice but to also sound a warning against the false teaching of Fehner and the practices that had torn apart the Synodical Conference community in Mankato.

Furthermore, Teigen continued, the fact that there was a publicly organized Boy Scout troop at Our Savior's not only violated the specific promises made to the other churches of Mankato, but was further evidence of the different spirit that was operating at Our Savior's. In summary, Teigen denied the charges leveled against Bethany by evangelically laying before the students all the evidence.

Bethany Seminary Dean Norman Madson's reply to Fehner was much more devastating. Not only did Madson show just how false the charges against Bethany were, but also the un-Christian manner in which Fehner was operating,

Now let us consider, point by point, the seriousness of these charges made, not to us, but at our backs, to students committed to our charge:

- 1.) Are we finding fault with the Missouri Synod when we use in our

classes as treasured text books: Walther's "Law and Gospel;" Walther's "Pastoraltheologie;" Pieper's "Dogmatics;" (even defending it over against attacks made upon it by ALC theologians); Koehler's "Summary of Christian Doctrine:" "...The fact that we have to take issue with such who claim to be true Missourians, but who do not abide by the Scripture-true teachings of these revered teachers of the Missouri Synod, can most certainly not be made a just cause for complaint.

- 2.) "Injecting doubt"? Doubt about whom or what?
- 3.) "Trying to confuse"? Can the accuser discern even the intent of the heart?
- 4.) Are we seeking to alienate our students from the teachers whose very text books we not only diligently use, but treasure most highly?
- 5.) "Unwarranted activity"? Zu behaupten ist nicht zu beweisen. The fact that you may deem a thing unwarranted does not make it such. Sweeping statements do not carry much conviction to any person who is concerned about arriving at the actual facts in the case.
- 6.) And then, in violation of the Scripture principle laid down in Lev. 19,17; Matt. 18, 15; Luke 17,3 that a person guilty of trespass like "unholy fault finding" should be rebuked for his sin, our students are urged to become informers, talking to others about the wrong before acquainting the guilty person with his error. Would Christian parents want that sort of counsel given their youth?

And then, in violation of the pledged word given us by your district officials regarding the organization of a congregational Boy Scout troop, you have flaunted before our eyes that very thing...

Where is the evidence to justify your sending (unbeknown to us) letters to our students with such serious charges? Out of deep concern for the truth,

On behalf of the Bethany Theological Faculty,
Norman A. Madson²⁸

Fehner's reply to Madson was as usual, short and polemical, charging Madson and Bethany with the same charges with which they charged him. Fehner replies,

If you don't like my procedure, let me ask you: what words would you use to characterize your action, when behind the backs of the parents, and behind the backs of their pastors, you urged your student-body (and I am particularly concerned here about students from the Missouri Synod), not to attend services in the only Missouri Synod church in Mankato? Write to those parents and pastors, and learn what they have to say about it!²⁹

Not only was the charge against Madson untrue (the Bethany Handbook only published the name of Mount Olive as a congregation to which students might attend, omitting all other Synodical Conference churches), but Fehner had been involved in his own letter-writing campaign against Bethany. However, correspondence shows that Fehner was not as clever a propagandist as he considered himself. One of the minds he tried to spin was then Missouri Synod pastor Arnold Kuster, whose son Ted was then attending Bethany (Arnold Kuster would later leave the LCMS for the ELS).

A letter that Fehner mailed to Kuster was full of half truths and even lies. Fehner attacked Preus for his letter of concern and denied that he, Fehner, ever did anything un-scriptural (He did. It was on record in the ELC publication). He claimed the entire Bethany faculty refused to participate in his installation (only Preus refrained). He portrayed himself as the meek Missouri Synod pastor humbly requesting the names of the Missouri Synod students. He left out the fact he demanded the names with force of threat. Yet, the Fehner letter does have one positive. It shows clearly that both Wisconsin and the ELS are theologically united. Fehner admits to Kuster,

The negotiations of our Synod with the Wisconsin Synod, the Norwegian Synod, are wholly on the side of Wisconsin...According to the Minneapolis Star of Oct. 10, in an article on the Wisconsin Synod's recent Milwaukee convention, "the Rev. C.M. Gullerud of Mankato, Minn., President of the Norwegian Synod, supported the Wisconsin Synod in its controversy with the Missouri Synod. 'It's not a matter of academic debate, but our salvation that's at stake,' he said in an address to the convention. The danger that confronts us is the danger of losing Christ. It's that dangerous."³⁰

The last battle in the Fehner matter would be at Our Savior's Lutheran Church on November 6, 1953. In attendance were Pastors Tweit and Anderson, members of the Bethany Board of Regents, and Pastor Fehner and Mr. Hoyer of Our Savior's. This meeting specifically would address Fehner's recent letter to BLC students and the faculty response. The meeting, again, would underscore just how different the theology of Fehner was and just how difficult he was to deal with. Time and time again during the meeting, Fehner

would make outlandish charges against Bethany. When his charges were shown to be false by documentation, Fehner would either backpedal or change the topic. If Tweit or Anderson asked for the name of the accuser who had given Fehner his information, Fehner would refuse to give the name out of supposed concern not to draw this "friend" into these matters. Tweit commented in his report to the Board of Regents,

The end result of this part of the interview was that, while a long list of incidents of alleged "fault-finding" were referred to, no documentary evidence was submitted to the Board of Regents committee in the form of names, dates, etc., which they had come to secure and had asked for. In other words, Pastor Fehner was unwilling to substantiate these charges with facts...³¹



Milton Tweit

When Fehner was pressed specifically about whether or not his actions in sending a letter rather than addressing the people with whom he had issue was in keeping with Matthew 18 he refused to answer. He was asked again. He refused to answer again. He was asked a third time, to which he exploded with the reply, "Oh, I've read Matthew 18 more times than you have!"³²

The final portion of the meeting was perhaps the most telling of how both the ELS and the Wisconsin Synod were becoming viewed by the authorities in the LCMS. Tweit and Anderson asked how was it that Pastor Fehner considered himself the chaplain to the Missouri Synod students at Bethany. Fehner produced a certification from R.W. Hahn, Executive Secretary of the Student Service Commission of the LCMS, that so entitled Fehner.

The implication was not lost on either Tweit or Anderson. This implied that the LCMS no longer considered the spiritual welfare and instruction of these institutions to be trustworthy or reliable. It also indicated that the Missouri Synod no longer considered Bethany a sister school. Tweit is recorded to have said, "In that case, the Missouri Synod has spoken!"³³ When asked if similar arrangements had been made for Dr. Martin Luther College or Northwestern College or the preparatory schools of the Wisconsin Synod, Fehner replied, as far as he knew, a similar chaplaincy existed.

With the end of that meeting came also the end of contact with Fehner. It is of note that during these years the number of LCMS students at Bethany did rapidly decline. How much of this can be attributed to the Fehner matter is debatable, but one thing is for certain, the presence of Alvin Fehner became a catalyst for the dissolution of fraternal relations with the LCMS, and a closer bonding with the leaders of the WELS and the ELS.

The Fehner Case brought to both ELS and WELS officials a sense of urgency in their dealings with Missouri. Perhaps for the first time, the men who would eventually lead their church bodies out of the Synodical Conference came to realize that their long labor of love toward the Missouri Synod needed, as Werner Franzmann would so eloquently put it, “a stronger kind of admonition and love.” Wisconsin would declare itself *in statu confessionis* in '52 and the ELS would suspend their relations with Missouri in '55. While numerous factors led to these decisions, the Fehner matter was perhaps the straw that broke the camel's back. The minutes of the Intersynodical Relations Committee in the fall of 1952 show that the Fehner matter was not only discussed in full, but it was connected with the decision by the Wisconsin Synod to declare themselves *in statu confessionis* with the Missouri Synod.

Also, the Fehner matter brought together major figures of the WELS and ELS in the struggle with Missouri. Naumann, who would later become the president of the Wisconsin Synod, would develop deep ties with the ELS during the Fehner Case. Later correspondence between Naumann and ELS officials is imbued with brotherly love, trust and joy in the oneness of faith the ELS and the Wisconsin Synod shared. It is also of some importance to see how many of the people caught up in the Fehner matter eventually also were on the Intersynodical Relations Committee. The roster of the Intersynodical Relations Committee shows Madson, Tweit, Anderson, Gullerud, and Lillegard from the ELS and as well as Oscar Naumann of the WELS. The Fehner dealings were, to a certain extent, a warm-up for larger battles to be fought on the Synodical Conference scene. When one reads the Intersynodical Relations Committee minutes with the backdrop of the Fehner case in view, it is easy to see why there was so much solidarity on the part of the ELS and WELS in the discussions.

ENDNOTES

1. This article was excerpted by Pastor Paul Meitner from his WLS STM Thesis, “Strangers to Sisters: The Growth of Fraternal Relations between the Evangelical Lutheran Synod and the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod 1917-1955).”
2. Pastor G.W. Fischer, Mankato Case Notes and Documentation, ELS Presidential Files: 1950s – the Fehner Case. Evangelical Lutheran Synod Archives, Mankato. Fischer had long been acquainted with the ELS. Fischer

was the first pastor of Eastside in Madison, and was involved with the Eastside Case. He also became further acquainted with ELS men Norman Madson, S.C. Ylvisaker, and Christian Anderson while serving as a Wisconsin Synod representative on the Synodical Conference production of *The Lutheran Hymnal*. Fischer had been serving St. Jacobi Lutheran Church in the Milwaukee area when, in 1949, he received the call the call to serve as the associate pastor of Immanuel in Mankato. He was known as a very vocal opponent of military chaplaincy, scouting, and prayer fellowship and had published numerous articles in the *Northwestern Lutheran* explaining and emphasizing the correct scriptural stance in regards to these issues. When Norman Madson, Dean of the ELS' Bethany Seminary, heard Fischer had received the call to Immanuel, he personally urged Fischer to accept. (David Lau, “The Church of the Lutheran Confession – Fifty Years,” *Journal of Theology* 49:3 (September 2009). 9.

Fischer's arrival and the timing of the petitioners' request should not be overlooked. Fischer was much more soundly orthodox in doctrine and practice than the more lax Ackermann. Eventually Fischer would lead Immanuel to suspend fellowship with the WELS in 1956, leading to the formation of the Church of the Lutheran Confession. Fischer's strong stand cost him his health and ultimately his life. He needed to take medical sabbaticals and on June 10, 1958, Fisher suffered a massive heart-attack and died. Norman Madson, preaching at Fischer's funeral, remarked, “In the sacristy of that Lübben church you will find a life-sized painting of the faithful confessor [Paul Gerhardt], bearing this inscription in Latin: ‘THEOLOGUS IN CRIBRO SATANAE VERSATUS.’ ‘A theologian who has been sifted in the sieve of Satan.’ We like to think of our departed brother as one who had also been sifted. But he remained faithful to the end, faithful to the religion of the cross, than which there is none other by which you may be saved.” (Lau, 9)

3. Fischer, Mankato Case.
4. Fischer, Mankato Case.
5. Fischer, Mankato Case.
6. Gervasius Fischer to Oscar Naumann, letter, November 10, 1949, ELS Presidential Files: 1950s – the Fehner Case. Evangelical Lutheran Synod Archives, Mankato, MN.
7. Fischer to Naumann, November 10, 1949.
8. B. W. Teigen – Personal summary of meeting at Bethany Lutheran College, ELS Presidential Files: 1950s – the Fehner Case. Evangelical Lutheran Synod Archives, Mankato, MN.
9. Oscar Naumann to Adolph Harstad, January 4th, 1950, ELS Presidential Files: 1950s – the Fehner Case. Evangelical Lutheran Synod Archives, Mankato, MN.
10. J.A.O. Preus to Alvin Fehner, letter, May 4th 1950, ELS Presidential Files:

1950s – the Fehner Case. Evangelical Lutheran Synod Archives, Mankato, MN.

11. Preus to Fehner.
12. Alvin Fehner to J.A.O. Preus, letter, May 8, 1950, ELS Presidential Files: 1950s – the Fehner Case. Evangelical Lutheran Synod Archives, Mankato, MN.
13. Adolph Ackermann (1871-1950) had a history of controversy within the Minnesota Synod and later, Minnesota District. Ackermann was a gifted preacher, teacher and administrator and was a professor (1894-1918) and later president of DMLC (1914-1918). But his pro-Germany, anti-draft public comments led officials of both the church and the state to pressure him into resigning his position. He begrudgingly acquiesced to their request, leaving office with the final words of protest, "*Recht muss Recht bleiben!*" - What is right is right!" (Fredrich, pg 283). Following his resignation, he took a call to a small, dual parish in Essig-Brighton, Minnesota. In 1922, he received a call to serve as pastor of Immanuel Lutheran Church, Mankato, MN.

In 1936 he was elected as district president of the Minnesota District, and served until 1948, when he was replaced by Oscar Naumann. Following Naumann's election to the district presidency, Ackermann rebuked the body for not re-electing him and then left the chair and the convention. Naumann's election was seen by many as a move by the district to take a stronger stand against the LCMS divergence in doctrine and practice, for Ackermann had been considered to have liberal and unionistic tendencies. George Schweikert, in a letter of congratulations to Oscar Naumann on his election, confirms this fact when he writes, "Congratulations on being elected to the presidency of the Minnesota District...I had a few notes on your election that I had planned to insert in the current issue of the Okabena Lutheran, but the space ran out on me too soon. Also, it is rather hard to handle some news. Should I take a crack at Pastor Ackermann? He might use that as further reason for leaving us, i.e., the Conservatives. Anyway, he is out and you are in the office thru which you can do much as a defender of the faith." (George Schweikert to Oscar Naumann, letter, June 30, 1948, Minnesota District Presidential Files – Ackermann Correspondence, Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary Archives, Mequon, WI).

The chief complaint of Schweikert and others against Ackermann was his willingness to give in to liberal practice either by ignoring protests or making excuses that glossed over the real issue. For instance, Ackermann, much to the surprise of Pastor Fischer, had allowed a young man to join the church and attend the Lord's Supper even though he had signed a contract with the local Catholic priest to raise his children Catholic. Even more disturbing was the fact that in the 28 years that Acker-

mann had been pastor, Immanuel had never excommunicated anyone, but simply dropped names from the church roster. Pastor Gervasius Fischer arrived as the associate pastor of Immanuel in 1949. It seems that from his very arrival, he stood in stark contrast to Ackermann's lax attitude toward the divergences in the LCMS. An exasperated Fischer wrote, "Every confessional stand of mine is a widening of the breach. Ackermann stands on the liberal side of the gap and I on the other." (Gervasius Fisher to Oscar Naumann, letter, December 11, 1949, The Mankato Case Files, Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary Archives, Mequon, WI). Of wider concern to the other WELS and ELS churches of the Mankato area was Ackermann's involvement with the Mankato Ministerial Association's radio broadcast. The involvement with these heterodox churches in broadcasting religious messages was of great concern to both WELS and ELS officials. WELS Pastor Ross Henzi attributes this allowance for liberal practice by Ackermann to stem from Ackermann's fraternal ties to the Missouri Synod (Ackermann had attended Concordia, St. Louis, for his seminary training).

But Ackermann had a small but vocal and powerful group behind him. Mr. Hantelmann, one of the original petitioners, maintained quite firmly that "there had been no serious trouble at Immanuel in the 28 years that Pastor Ackermann was pastor at Immanuel, but now there was trouble after trouble" (Mankato Case, ELS archives). In a letter to Oscar Naumann, Ackermann's daughter, Mrs. Eleanor Meagher nee Ackermann, writes, "In every shop, in every gathering on every corner, people are talking about the man that is succeeding my father and how he has made miserable a congregation and its pastor. In a town of this size, that is more serious than a metropolitan area, and the pastor must be accepted by the community or the church will die...if your plan is to break my father completely only you and the church will suffer, for his friends are legion." (Mrs. Eleanor Ackermann Meagher to Oscar Naumann, letter, January 24, 1950, Minnesota District Presidential Files – Ackermann Correspondence, Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary Archives, Mequon, WI). Shortly before his death, Ackermann had told Naumann that he was planning on resigning later that year for the sake of peace in the congregation and the district.

The grudge that the Ackermann family and supporters felt toward Naumann, Fischer, and the Minnesota District was reflected in the funeral preparations. In the original funeral plans, Naumann and Fischer were purposely left out (although Naumann later did participate). President W.A. Poehler of Concordia College, St. Paul, delivered Ackermann's funeral address with Rev. E.J. Marxhausen, pastor of LCMS' Immanuel Lutheran Church, Courtland, MN presiding at the liturgy. Timothy Blauert, "Oscar Naumann: A Steadfast Leader in Turbulent Times." Wisconsin Lutheran

Seminary On-line Essay File. <http://www.wlssays.net/files/BlauertLeader.PDF>. (Accessed May 13, 2009); Ross Henzi, "Oscar Naumann 1909-1979 – The Making of a President." WELS Historical Journal volume 15:2, 1997. <http://www.welshistory.org/files/Vol15No2pp03-19.pdf>; Morton Schroeder, "Adolph Ackermann, Chauvinism, and Free Speech." WELS Historical Institute Journal volume 2:2, 1984. <http://www.welshistory.org/files/Vol2No2pp10-18.pdf> (last accessed May 13, 2010).

14. Intersynodical Relations Committee meeting minutes November 13, 14 1952, ELS Presidential Files: 1950s – the Fehner Case. Evangelical Lutheran Synod Archives, Mankato, MN.
15. Report of M.E. Tweit and C.M. Gullerud's meeting with Pastor Alvin Fehner on September 1st, 1950, ELS Presidential Files: 1950s – the Fehner Case. Evangelical Lutheran Synod Archives, Mankato, MN.
16. Twelve propositions with comments signed 1945 by 44 LCMS clerics (sometimes called "The Forty-four"). Of most trouble to the ELS and WELS men, *A Statement* declared that Romans 16:16,17 did not apply to the present situation in the Lutheran Church in America and favored selective fellowship.
17. Tweit/Gullerud Report.
18. Tweit/Gullerud Report.
19. Tweit/Gullerud Report.
20. Minutes of March 12, 1951 meeting at the Lutheran Student Center. ELS Presidential Files: 1950s – the Fehner Case. Evangelical Lutheran Synod Archives, Mankato, MN.
21. Gervasius Fischer to Alvin Fehner, letter, July 1, 1951, ELS Presidential Files: 1950s – the Fehner Case. Evangelical Lutheran Synod Archives, Mankato, MN.
22. Minutes of the 1952 Minnesota District Convention of the LCMS, ELS Presidential Files: 1950s – the Fehner Case. Evangelical Lutheran Synod Archives, Mankato, MN.
23. Oscar Naumann to Carl Lawrenz, letter, September 27th, 1952, ELS Presidential Files: 1950s – the Fehner Case. Evangelical Lutheran Synod Archives, Mankato, MN.
24. Stuart Dorr to Hugo Gamber, letter, October 1, 1952, ELS Presidential Files: 1950s – the Fehner Case. Evangelical Lutheran Synod Archives, Mankato, MN.
25. B.W. Teigen to Otto Brauer, letter, January 6, 1954, ELS Presidential Files: 1950s. Evangelical Lutheran Synod Archives, Mankato, MN.
26. George Barthels to the Church Council of Immanuel Ev. Lutheran Church, letter, September 1953, ELS Presidential Files: 1950s – the Fehner Case. Evangelical Lutheran Synod Archives, Mankato, MN.
27. Alvin Fehner to LCMS students attending Bethany Lutheran College,

letter, October 1, 1953, ELS Presidential Files: 1950s – the Fehner Case. Evangelical Lutheran Synod Archives, Mankato, MN.

28. Norman Madson to Alvin Fehner, letter, October 1953, Norman Madson Papers Box 3 XXIV.2, Evangelical Lutheran Synod Archives, Mankato, MN. The level of Norman Madson's disgust with Fehner can be seen in a letter written to J.A.O. Preus July 30, 1954, when he comments, "If we have 'done dirt by the lily-pure Missourian,' I for one am willing to make due amends. But if we have not, I don't want that charge to stand against us. I have seen enough of his [Fehner] pastoral ethics to form my own estimate of the man...I am all for being fair even to the animal with a stripe down his back." Norman Madson Papers Box 3 XXIV.6. Evangelical Lutheran Synod Archives, Mankato, MN.
29. Alvin Fehner to Norman Madson, letter, October 1953. Norman Madson Papers Box 3 XXIV.5, Evangelical Lutheran Synod Archives, Mankato, MN.
30. Alvin Fehner to Arnold Kuster, letter, October 15, 1953. Norman Madson Papers. Box 3. XXIV.3. Evangelical Lutheran Synod Archives, Mankato, MN.
31. Report to the Board of Regents. December 17, 1953. ELS Presidential Files: 1950s – the Fehner Case. Evangelical Lutheran Synod Archives, Mankato, MN.
32. Ibid.
33. Ibid.
34. Intersynodical Relations Committee meeting minutes of November 12-13, 1952. ELS Presidential Files: 1950s – the Fehner Case. Evangelical Lutheran Synod Archives, Mankato, MN.

**STORE PER, Norwegian-American "Paul Bunyan"
of the Prairie, by Peter Tjernagel Harstad**

Lakeville, Minnesota: Jackpine Press, 2011. 242 pp, pb, \$14.95 + s&h.

Peter Tjernagel Harstad's documentary seeks to show how his Norwegian Lutheran family played a noteworthy part in the making of church and national history. The author obtained an AA from Bethany Lutheran College at Mankato and his BS, MS, and PhD from the University of Wisconsin-Madison with concentrations in history. After teaching at several universities and Bethany Lutheran College, Harstad served as director of the Iowa and Indiana Historical Societies. Since retiring in 2001, he continues to publish the results of his historical research. *STORE PER*, meaning "Big Pete" in Norwegian, is his latest publication. The following summary is from the book's prologue and provides a taste of the author's style.

Every American schoolchild knows tales of Paul Bunyan and Babe, his blue ox – myths that emerged from the lumber camps of the Upper Midwest. In contrast, few people know about Store Per, a flesh and blood strongman who grew up in Norway, and then left for America with little more than his bride, his Bible, and his violin. After an encounter with the pinewood forests of Wisconsin, the young couple found their bearings in the New World while living among fellow Norwegians in Wisconsin and Illinois, then crossed the Mississippi to wrest a farm from the virgin prairie of central Iowa. Per toiled with his oxen, made music with his violin, and experienced joy as well as excruciating sorrow. At times, his temper flared. He knew that he fell short of God's standards but he did not despair. Wherever he went his optimism, feats of strength, competence, and good humor raised people's spirits.

Like the Paul Bunyan tales, the Store Per stories passed through the lens of Scandinavian exaggeration. Nevertheless, at the core of the stories is a real person with aspirations and faults, hopes and dreams, who lived, loved, toiled, believed, and died. Was he just another frontiersman, or, in the language of his native land, *enestaende*, unique and in a class by himself? The pages that follow challenge the reader to decide.

The author covers scholarly material in lay person terms, and has a nice way of explaining Norwegian customs and words. Many pen-and-ink style illustrations by Karyn Lukasek, a budding artist, help to move the story along. One might wish, however, for a chart or two making it easier to follow the

Tjernagel genealogy which is carefully detailed in the abundant source notes.

This reviewer particularly enjoyed the way the story of Peder Larson Tjernagel (Store Per's birth name) is set in the wider context of Norway's history and the Lutheran Reformation, along with the rise of rationalism and pietism. The author provides interesting insights into the European immigrations, life on the American frontier, the Civil War period, and the establishment of early Norwegian Lutheran congregations in the Upper Midwest. WELS and ELS people will easily relate to this book, especially if their own ancestors came to America seeking a better life and religious freedom. The joys and sorrows experienced by Big Pete's family, along with the sacrifices they made for family and faith, can be an inspiration to those who read this book.

This volume is published in cooperation with the Evangelical Lutheran Synod Historical Society and the Ottesen Museum, both headquartered in Mankato, Minnesota. It is available from Jackpine Press, 16787 Jackpine Trail, Lakeville, MN 55044, ptharstad@yahoo.com. It can also be purchased from Bethany Lutheran College Bookstore, www.bookstore.blc.edu and Northwestern Publishing House, www.nph.net

David J. Plocher

Looking Back
At
The Religious World in which
Lutheranism Was Born and Lives

500 Years Ago – 1511

- First Catholic bishops appointed to the new world – two in Hispaniola, one in Puerto Rico

475 years ago – 1536

- Lutheranism was established as the national religion of Denmark.
- Menno Simons (1496–1561) left the Roman Catholic Church and joined the Anabaptist movement. He would soon become the acknowledged leader. The Mennonite churches are named after him.
- Parliament declared that the Pope had no authority in England and closed the Catholic monasteries in England.
- William Tyndale was martyred by strangulation and burning (b. ca. 1494). Tyndale translated the New Testament and parts of the Old Testament into English.

450 years ago – 1561

- Nikolaus Hermann, hymnist and composer, died in Joachimsthal, Bohemia (b. 1500). Herrmann wrote some 200 hymns, mostly for children. He wrote the text and the tune for “Let All Together Praise the Lord” (*Christian Worship* 41) and the melody, *O Heilige Dreifaltigkeit*, used in hymns 480, 584, 586, and 591 in *Christian Worship*.
- Mary Queen of Scots returned to Scotland and accepted the establishment of the Presbyterian Church.
- Kaspar Schwenkkfeld (b. 1490), died. He was a Silesian Anabaptist theologian and writer. His followers originally called themselves “Confessors of the Glory of Christ,” but became popularly known as Schwenkfelders. Persecuted in Europe, many came to America. The Society of Schwenkfelders was formed in 1782. The group incorporated as the the Schwenkfelder Church in 1909. Today there are five Schwenkfelder congregations in Southeastern Pennsylvania with a total membership of about 2,500. Article XII of the Formula of Concord rejects Schwenkfeld’s theological errors.

425 years ago – 1586

- Martin Chemnitz died (born 1522). The greatest of the 2nd generation Lutheran theologians, Chemnitz played a major role in the writing of the Formula of Concord. His main works include *The Lord’s Supper*, *The Examination of the Council of Trent*, and *The Two Natures of Christ*. History pays him this supreme compliment: “If the second Martin had not come, the first would not have prevailed.”

400 years ago – 1611

- The King James Version of the Bible, also known as the Authorized Version, was published. After initial rejection by many in England, the KJV became the best selling translation of the Bible in the English language.
- The first Presbyterian congregation was established in Virginia.

375 years ago – 1636

- Harvard College was established by Puritans in Massachusetts as the first institution of higher education in America.

350 years ago – 1661

- John Eliot (1604–1690) finished his New Testament translation into the Mahican language (Old Testament 1663), the first translation of the Bible into a Native American language.
- The Massachusetts Bay Company suspended the Corporal Punishment Acts of 1656, which imposed harsh penalties on Quakers and other religious Nonconformists. The British Parliament had pressured the company to do so.

325 years ago – 1686

- Hans Egede, the famous Norwegian-Danish Lutheran missionary to Greenland, was born (died 1758).

300 years ago – 1711

- The Black Death killed 300,000 in Austria, 215,000 in Brandenburg.

275 year ago – 1736

- John & Charles Wesley arrived in Georgia. Not cut out for work in colonial America, they soon returned to England. The Methodist Church which the Wesleys eventually founded in England had phenomenal growth in America from 1790-1840.

250 years ago – 1761

- American Quakers excluded slave traders from the Society of Friends despite the fact that many Quakers owned slaves.

225 years ago – 1786

- The Virginian General Assembly passed the Virginian Charter of Religious Freedom guaranteeing freedom of religion.
- Cyrus Kingsbury, Presbyterian missionary who established the 1st mission to the Choctaw Indians in 1818, was born in Alstead, New Hampshire (d. 27 June 1870). Kingsbury also did mission work among the Osages, Creeks, and Cherokees.

200 years ago – 1811

- The “National Society for Promoting the Education of the Poor in the Principles of the Established Church in England and Wales” was founded in Great Britain in an attempt to make national religion the foundation of national education. The National Society wanted to make religion “the first and chief thing taught to the poor, according to the excellent Liturgy and Catechism provided by our Church.”

175 years ago – 1836

- Charles Darwin completed his voyage on the HMS Beagle and returned to England with the biological data that he eventually used to develop and publish his theory of evolution. Darwin’s *Origin of Species* (1859) and *The Descent of Man* (1871) led many to reject the Bible’s teaching of a six-day creation.
- Presbyterian missionaries Marcus Whitman (1802–1847) and Henry H. Spaulding (1803-1874) and their wives reached what is now Walla Walla, Washington, at the junction of the Columbia and Snake Rivers. The first white settlers in the Pacific Northwest, Whitman, his wife and twelve others were killed at their mission by Native Americans in 1847.

150 years ago – 1861

- The American Civil War began with the bombardment of Fort Sumter, South Carolina. The Civil War had a profound impact on Christianity in America and resulted in a number of denominational splits along North-South lines.
- The Metropolitan Tabernacle was opened in London with Charles Haddon Spurgeon, an English Baptist, as pastor and preacher. Spurgeon, the most famous preacher of his day, was a conservative Calvinist who opposed the liberal religious trends of the 19th century.

- The Confederate Congress approved a bill installing chaplains in Confederate armies. Chaplains had not previously been common in the American military, but they became a permanent fixture during and after the Civil War. Between 100,000 and 200,000 Union soldiers and approximately 150,000 Confederate troops were “converted” during wartime revivals.

125 Years ago – 1886

- Karl Barth, famous Reformed neo-orthodox theologian, was born in Basel, Switzerland (died 10 December 1968). Barth’s neo-orthodox approach to Scripture led some Lutherans to believe that they could use negative critical methods of interpreting Scripture without theological harm.
- Roman Catholic priest Father Edward Flanagan was born in Roscommon, Ireland (d. 15 May 1948). Flanagan is best known as the organizer of Boys’ Town in Nebraska for homeless boys,
- The Church of God (Cleveland Tennessee), a Holiness/Pentecostal church body, was organized in Monroe County, Tennessee, by Richard G. Spurling (ca. 1812–1886), a Baptist minister .

100 Years Ago – 1911

- Carrie Nation (born November 25, 1846), American temperance leader, died on June 9. The temperance movement pressed for the passage of the 18th amendment to the US Constitution prohibiting the manufacture, sale and transportation of intoxicating beverages (ratified in 1919). This amendment was repealed by the 21st amendment (ratified in 1933).

75 years ago – 1936

- The Orthodox Presbyterian Church was founded by J. Gresham Machen and other conservatives in the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America because of the growing liberalism in that denomination.

50 Years Ago – 1961

- The American Unitarian Association joined with the Universalist Church of America to form the Unitarian-Universalist Association. The Association defines itself as non-creedal and draws on humanism, Hinduism, Buddhism, Judaism, New Age thinking, as well as Christianity.
- The New English Bible New Testament was published simultaneously by the Oxford and Cambridge University Presses. The Old Testament was completed in 1970.

25 Years Ago – 1986

- The New Life Version (NLV) of the Bible was published. The NLV was produced for those who do not speak English fluently. The vocabulary used is limited to 850 words, not including proper names.

Correction: It was mistakenly reported in the *Looking Back* section of our last *WELS Historical Institute Journal* (Spring 2011) that Philip von Rohr arrived in Winona, Minnesota in 1886. He arrived in Winona in 1866.

Please visit the WELS Historical Institute web site – www.welshistory.org

The WELS Historical Institute was given formal approval by the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod (WELS) in convention in 1981 to organize for the purpose of collecting and preserving historical data and artifacts that are related to the various periods of Lutheranism in America, especially of the WELS. In recent years the synod took over the responsibility of maintaining the archives. The Institute maintains a museum and publishes a *JOURNAL* and *NEWSLETTER*. Membership is open. Fees are as follows, which include the subscription fees: Individual: \$20.00; Husband/Wife: \$25.00 (2 votes but only one publication issue); Congregation, School, Library, Corporation: \$40.00; and Student: \$15.00. Fees may be sent to the WELS Historical Institute, 2929 N. Mayfair Road, Milwaukee, WI 53222.

The board members are: Prof. Robert Bock, president; Naomi Plocher, secretary; Duane Kuehl, treasurer; Prof. Joel Pless, Steven Miller, Daniel Nommensen, Prof. James Korthals, Rev. Joel Leyrer, and Rev. Raymond Schumacher. Advisory members are: Prof. John Hartwig, Prof. John M. Brenner, and Charlotte Sampe, display designer and museum curator.

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