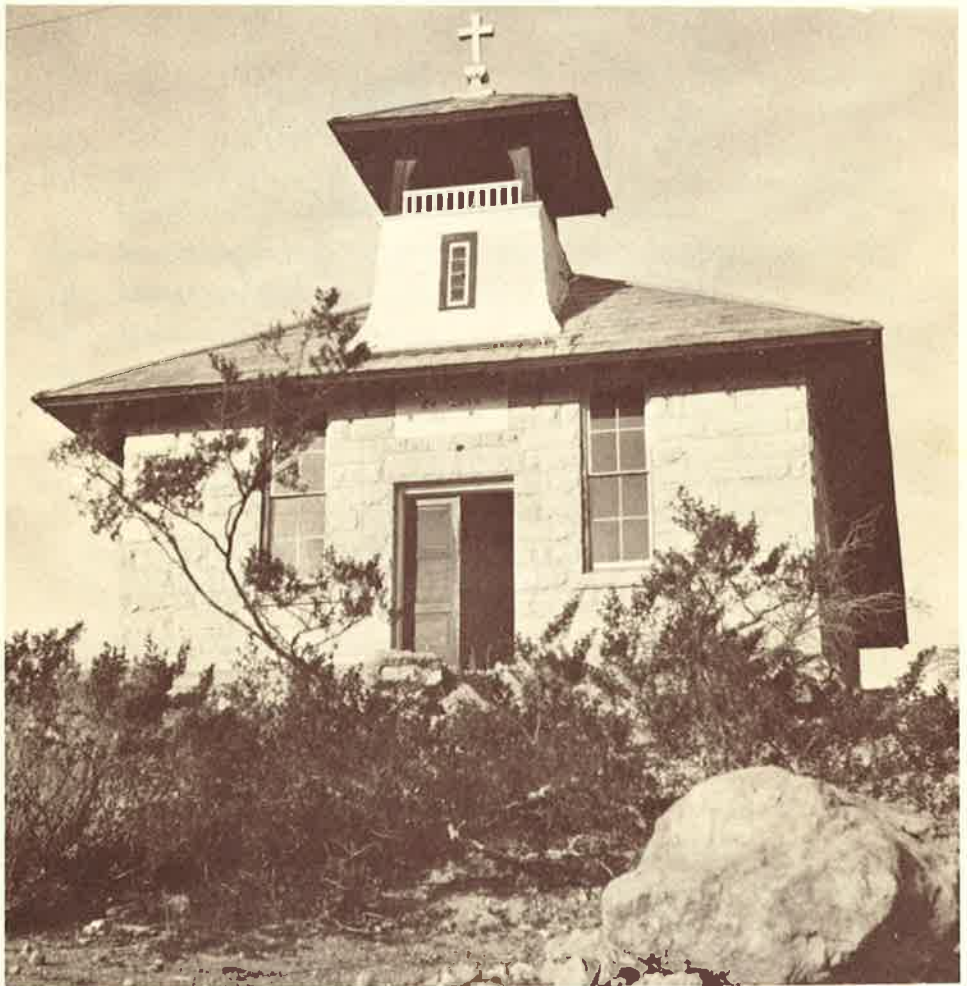


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WELS Historical Institute  
**Journal**

FALL 1984



The Chapel  
at Peridot, Arizona



The seal of the WELS Historical Institute depicts Salem Lutheran Landmark Church, built in 1863 on the site of the "birthplace of the Wisconsin Synod." In 1850 the Wisconsin Synod was born; in 1981 the WELS Historical Institute officially came into being. The German inscription is a reminder of the Synod's German roots. The words mean "Remember the former time." The cross reminds us of Jesus Christ, the Lord of all history.

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WELS Historical Institute  
**Journal**

VOLUME 2, NUMBER 2 • FALL 1984

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## The President's Report

OUR GRACIOUS LORD continues to bless the WELS Historical Institute. As with my past reports, this one will be little more than an inventory of those blessings.

This issue of the Journal contains two new listings: monetary and archival gifts. We are thankful for the growing number of individuals and organizations who are supporting the Institute with these extra gifts of love. A number of the archival items will be suitable for display in the new museum.

As for the museum, this fall saw the completion of most of the restoration work on Salem Lutheran Landmark Church. Finished work includes: new heating system (\$9,175); work on the roof including shingles, insulation and gutters (\$17,033); installation of double-pane lexon windows (\$9,235); plumbing and sewer hookup (\$9,850); burglar and fire alarm system (\$2,790); blacktopping of the church's driveway and parking lot (about \$13,000). We also hope that work on display cases can begin soon (initial cost about \$5,000). A grant of \$68,500 from the Aid Association for Lutherans is covering these expenses. Membership dues and personal gifts will have to cover further restoration work and ongoing expenses.

Salem will be the location of our 1985 spring meeting. The meeting will begin with a special service dedicating the building as the Wisconsin Synod's museum. Rev. Mark Jeske will then speak on Salem's history. Watch for further notices.

The 1984 fall meeting was held at Dr. Martin Luther College, New Ulm, Minnesota on October 21. Prof. Morton Schroeder gave a presentation on "Adolf Ackermann, Chauvinism, and Free Speech." The essay is printed in this Journal. At the business meeting following the presentation, Mr. Paul Nass of Jefferson, Wisconsin was elected to the board of directors. Attendance was 43.

If you have not yet renewed your membership, please do so now. If you already have, share the membership form with someone else or use it for a gift membership. Our membership now totals 930 (1173 members, including the husband/wife memberships).

With your continued support the Institute will prosper. So I ask for your ongoing membership, and for your prayers, gifts, suggestions and enthusiasm. May God keep us grateful for the blessings of our heritage — those undeserved blessings of his grace!

Roland Cap Ehlke

## A WELS Historical Profile

### Chronological Sketches of Our Synod's Past:

1860-1865

Arnold J. Koelpin

THE CIVIL WAR CRISIS in the United States paralleled years of equal crisis for the fledgling Wisconsin Synod. Work in the free atmosphere of the American frontier brought pastors and congregations face to face with the question of their confessional identity. The Lutheran/Reformed antipathy was only aggravated in the New World. The Wisconsin Synod attempted to steer a moderate course between the Missouri Synod's exclusiveness and the German mission societies' unionism. While the Civil War restored the political union of the country, the Wisconsin Synod moved toward separation from its founders in Germany. In the end, answers for them lay in unifying the Synod under its own institutions and a clear confessional stance.

1860-1865

- 1860 10th annual Wisconsin Synod convention meets at Fond du Lac on May 31-June 7.
- Pastor Bading (age 36) is elected second president of the Wisconsin Synod. His election opens a new era in the young Synod's history. He moves to Watertown soon after his election.
- Muehlhaeuser (age 57), the past president, is given the honorary office of *Senior*; he composes a short history of the Wisconsin Synod.
- Synod statistics: 22 pastors in 3 conferences (Northern, Southern, and Central) and 7 circuits:
- MILWAUKEE: Kilbourn Road, Caledonia, Root Creek (Greenfield), New Berlin (Prospect Hill), Granville.
  - RACINE: Paris, Burlington.
  - THERESA: Addison (Nenno), Ashford, West Bend, Town Herman (Huilsburg), Richfield.
  - MANITOWOC: Newtonburg, Mosel, Maple Grove, Hika, Two Rivers, Mishicot, Two Creeks, Green Bay, Algoma (Ah-napee).
  - FOND DU LAC: Oshkosh, Menasha, Winchester, Princeton, Montello.
  - LA CROSSE: Burr Oak, Fountain City, Platteville, St. Paul of Minnesota.
  - WATERTOWN: Helenville, Farmington, Ixonia, Lebanon, Hustisford, Columbus.



- A decision is made on confessional grounds to terminate negotiations with the three Illinois synods for a joint university at Springfield, Illinois.
- 1860 The German missionary societies seek candidates to fill the vacated position of missionary-at-large in the Wisconsin Synod, as well as offerings for a synodical library.
- Candidates nominated for the position include Wilhelm Dammann from the Barmen Mission House, Dr. Theodore Meumann from the Inner Mission in Berlin, and Rector E. Moldehnke, graduate from Halle University.
- The library question and the termination of discussion on the founding of a university in Illinois prompt the idea of the Synod founding its own seminary.
- 1860 Manitowoc becomes the rallying point for a "strictly Lutheran" confession. Pastor Philipp Koehler, who faces opposition of the Albrechtsbrueder (German Methodists) and the Hermannssoehne (Sons of Hermann, a German nationalistic lodge) in his congregational work at Manitowoc, leads the way.
- 1860 The change in Synod's presidency occasions a warning from the Berlin Society that the Wisconsin Synod "guard against the dangers of a too strongly emphasized confessionalism, let alone exclusive Lutheranism."
- Correspondence from the German Langenberg Society warns that "Lutheranism is being fostere<sup>d</sup> too strongly" in the Wisconsin Synod.
- 1860 The Synod's conferences make drafts of their own Lutheran agenda to be used in the church services. Because of finances and the use of the Missouri Synod's worship agenda, action on a Wisconsin Synod agenda is postponed until the late 1880s.
- 1861 Moldehnke designated by the German mission societies to fill the position of missionary-at-large. He is salaried by them and stationed in Watertown.
- 1861 The American Civil War begins on April 12.
- 1861 11th annual Wisconsin Synod convention meets at Watertown on May 25-31.
- Two essays are presented:
- Pastor Reim, on the Synod's confessional stance;
- Pastor Fachtmann, on the practice of private confession.
- The Synod adopts a number of theses concerning its confessional stance. One of them states: "The Synod declares that, with firm adherence to the Lutheran confession, it pursues a moderate practice determinedly, not for the sake of weakly accommodation."
- The agenda of the meeting features a discussion on the founding of a seminary. President Bading voices a plan.
- 1861 The Missouri Synod publication, *Der Lutheraner* ("The Lutheran"), charges the Wisconsin Synod with unionism in receiving subsidies from the mission societies in Germany and from the

Lutheran church in Pennsylvania.

- The Wisconsin Synod feels that the Missouri Synod is guilty of "exclusive Lutheranism."
- 1862 12th annual Wisconsin Synod convention meets at Columbus on June 14-18.
- The Synod recognizes a need for pastors; there are 13 parishes vacant.
- The founding of a Wisconsin Synod seminary is proposed. The Synod incorporates as "The German Evangelical Lutheran Synod of Wisconsin and Adjoining States" in order that it might become a property holder.
- Discussed are three intersynodical cases between the Wisconsin and Missouri synods. The cases involve congregations at Town Herman and Racine. Other cases involve synodical affiliation where Reformed teaching is tolerated.
- 1862 Ex-president Muehlhaeuser goes to Germany for the 25th anniversary of the Langenberg Mission Society and the 25th anniversary of his ordination. He is honored as its first missionary and as founder, president, and senior of the Wisconsin Synod.
- Muehlhaeuser reports on the Iowa Synod's successful collection of funds among Lutherans in Germany and Russia.
- He announces his intention to attend the meeting of the Gustavus Adolphus Society in Germany on behalf of the Synod's seminary project.
- Muehlhaeuser secures candidates from Langenberg, Basel, Berlin, and Chrischona societies for service in the Wisconsin Synod. These included C. G. Reim and Phil. Brenner.
- 1862 Pastor Fachtmann becomes the successor to "Father" Heyer at Trinity in St. Paul, Minnesota.
- 1863 Adolph Hoenecke and H. Bartelt, university graduates from Germany, come to serve in the Wisconsin Synod. In May, Hoenecke takes charge of the congregation at Farmington, near Watertown.
- 1863 13th annual Wisconsin Synod convention meets at Milwaukee (Grace Church) on May 29-June 3.
- There are 14 new pastors in the Synod, among them 6 university-trained Lutheran theologians from Brandenburg, Pommerania, and West Prussia.
- The seminary project is the main order of business. After an extensive debate, it is voted to locate the seminary in Watertown, instead of Milwaukee. Cost was a factor, as well as "the harmful influences to which the students are exposed in large commercial centers like Milwaukee."
- The Synod authorizes the opening of the seminary that autumn. Missionary-at-large Moldehnke is to be the first teacher. The Synod decides to send President Bading to Germany to solicit help for the seminary project. Pastor G. Reim is to serve as acting president of the Wisconsin Synod in Bading's absence.

- Pastor C. F. Heyer of Red Wing, Minnesota, addresses the Synod in the hope that the Minnesota and Wisconsin Synods might establish closer ties. The Wisconsin Synod contacts the Ohio, Michigan, and Minnesota Synods in an effort to establish closer associations.
- 1863 President Bading leaves for Europe with his family. He contacts the Berlin Mission Society and stops at Potsdam, Wupperthal (Langenberg Society) and Luebeck (Gustavus Adolphus Society). He meets with the chairman of the Prussian Supreme Church Council and is assured of a general collection in the Prussian church for the Watertown seminary.
- Bading helps to gain new pastors from Germany for the Wisconsin Synod, especially from the Hermannsburg Mission. Included among these are G. Thiele and H. Mayerhoff.
- 1863 At Bading's direction, Pastor Hoenecke framed a petition to the Queen Mother of Prussia and to Crown Prince Friedrich for funds to be used for the seminary project. The effort was unsuccessful. The Lutheran King of Hanover, however, grants permission for a public offering in his dominion and himself contributes from his private treasury.
- 1863 President Bading takes an excursion to Russia to secure permission from the tsar to collect among the German-Russian Lutherans.
- 1863 Pastor Koehler is personally disturbed about the Wisconsin Synod's reputation for its unionism. He writes to Acting-President Reim, "What would these societies say if we told them: Your confessional stand, your doctrine and your confession is wrong?"
- 1863 The Boehner case in Beaver Dam, in which Boehner published a pamphlet against Methodism, arouses the anger of the Berlin Mission Society.
- Anglo-Americans are also furious over the manner in which Pastor Boehner attacked the practice of women having abortions. Pastor Boehner retracts his extreme position. Hoenecke writes, "We want to collect among the Methodists, so Boehner shouldn't agitate so clumsily."
- 1863 President Bading's contact with the Prussian church authorities and leaders of the German mission societies reveal their continuing concern for the direction of the Wisconsin Synod. If the Wisconsin Synod excommunicates a pastor of a union congregation, why should the union state churches in Germany grant an offering to such a synod? The Berlin authorities indicate pointedly, "Ours, as well as the Langenberg Society, would finally be compelled sorrowfully to part company with your Synod."
- 1863 A statement on the Synod's confessional position, authored by Moldehnke, is sent to the Prussian Supreme Church Council: "We have continually supplied union congregations with word and sacrament, as soon as they signified their willingness to suffer Lutheran doctrine and practice, and we shall in the future, for the sake of Christ and the brethren's need, observe this policy."
- Pastor Koehler, secretary of the Synod, refuses to sign the document and affix the Synod's seal. The Northern Conference supports Koehler.
- Muehlhaeuser urges Bading to extend his stay abroad to moderate the dispute.
- 1863 Synodical reports of this year and 1867 indicate the gradual introduction of choir music into the church services, especially for festival and special services.
- 1864 Bading postpones his return to America and canvasses Westphalia and Bremen with good success. He also goes to Hamburg, Mecklenburg, and his *alma mater*, the Hermannsburg Mission.
- 1864 Dr. Muenkel of the Prussian State Church in Germany writes a series of articles critical of the Wisconsin Synod in the German periodical "Current Affairs of the Lutheran Church."
- 1864 In June, Bading writes a lengthy explanation of the Wisconsin Synod's confessional stand for the same German periodical. It appears under the heading: "A Voice from the Wisconsin Synod." He explains that the "Wisconsin Synod adheres not only to the Augsburg Confession, but to all the confessional writings of the Lutheran church; that it pledges all its candidates for ordination without distinction upon them."
- 1864 The Watertown congregation is embroiled in controversy over the lodge.
- 1864 The Missouri Synod's periodical, *Der Lutheraner*, continues its attacks on the Wisconsin Synod's activities and relationship with the un-Lutheran German mission societies.
- 1864 14th annual Wisconsin Synod convention meets at Manitowoc on May 27-31.
- Acting-President Reim reports favorably on relationships with the German societies and with the Pennsylvania Synod. Reim is elected president and Hoenecke, secretary.
- The Synod encourages Bading to finish his project in Germany. There are extensive deliberations on the seminary. It had begun modestly with Moldehnke teaching one student. The school's charter had been granted by the state legislature.
- The Synod meeting demonstrates unity in confession despite tensions within the Synod itself on how to deal with union congregations and the German societies. Bading, in a letter, urges moderation and avoiding extremes.
- Fachtmann is released from the Wisconsin Synod to the Minnesota Synod.
- The Minnesota Synod requests that its students be sent to the Wisconsin seminary.

- 1864 In July, the Board of Directors of the Langenberg Mission Society expresses grave concern over the confessional direction of the Wisconsin Synod.
- 1864 President Reim asks Hoenecke to draft an answer to the Langenberg Society. In a carefully worded reply, he explains the situation in America and the practice of the Wisconsin Synod in the light of the Lutheran confessional writings.
- 1864 On July 22, there are groundbreaking ceremonies for the school building at Watertown. The five acres were purchased at a cost of \$600.00. The site came from John Richards, who lived in the Octagon House.  
A building on the Watertown property, the "old coffee mill," was designed according to the popular style for school buildings in imitation of the houses of old Yankee sea captains in New England (the cupola on the roof was needed by them to scan the sea). Cost of the building: over \$10,000.00. Bading stopped payments from the German collections, indicating that the proceeds were to be used for teachers' salaries.
- 1864 The Watertown seminary carries on the school year with 11 students.
- 1864 Prof. Moldehnke appeals to the King of Hanover, to Dr. Kliefoth of Mecklenburg and to Dr. Hengstenberg in Berlin to establish a school for pre-seminary training. This school would serve as a recruiting agency for the Watertown seminary. The idea does not materialize.
- 1864 The Minnesota Synod meets at Trinity, St. Paul.  
The main order of business is the question of joining the General Synod.  
Fachtmann serves on a committee to draft a constitution modeled after the Wisconsin Synod and the Pennsylvania Ministerium.
- 1864 In October, Bading completes his trip abroad.
- 1865 On April 25, H. Hoffmann becomes the first graduate of the seminary.
- 1865 Pastors Koehler and Dammann write personal letters to the Langenberg Society explaining their strong stand on Lutheran confessions and practice.
- 1865 Hoenecke, at the direction of President Reim, writes a second more moderate and diplomatic letter to the German mission societies in explanation of the confessional position of the Wisconsin Synod.
- 1865 15th annual Wisconsin Synod convention meets at Watertown on June 22-28.  
President Reim resigns his position on account of problems in his Helenville congregation. Vice-President Streissguth is elected as the fourth president of the Wisconsin Synod.  
The meeting reveals progress in synodical unity.  
The Synod decides to open a college at Watertown in addition to the seminary.

A resolution passes that "teachers should organize teachers' conferences, and that Synod wishes them to take part in synodical meetings."

The president calls for action on a new hymnal.

- 1865 The Wisconsin Synod dedicates its Watertown school building on September 14.  
Special gifts to the Watertown school include produce from country congregations and handiwork from city congregations. There are a substantial contribution from Mecklenburg, Germany, a gift of 220 francs from Pastor Kreiss in Strassburg and a shipment of valuable books from Oscar Steinmeyer in Berlin.  
The college department has an enrollment of young men and women, drawn chiefly from the Watertown area. One-half are from English and Irish descent.  
Prof. Adam Martin, head and organizer of the college, is fluent in German and English. He comes from Hartwick College in New York.
- 1865 The publication of a congregational periodical for the Wisconsin Synod begins. The church paper is called *Gemeinde-Blatt*. The first issue on September 1 coincides with the opening of the college in Watertown.
- 1865 Prof. Martin submits plans to transfer the college department to Milwaukee under the name "Wisconsin University." He labors to separate the college from the seminary and to widen the college's scope.  
The college incorporates as "Northwestern University at Watertown." It has the right to confer degrees that are granted by any university or college in Europe or the United States. The charter is approved by the state legislature on March 21, 1867.
- 1865 The Minnesota Synod meets at Trinity, St. Paul. Most of its pastors come from South Germany.  
Fachtmann is elected as Minnesota delegate to the General Synod convention in Pennsylvania.
- 1865 The Civil War in the United States ended earlier in the year, on April 9.

After five years of ongoing tension, a break with the German mission societies which founded the Wisconsin Synod was imminent.

*Professor Koelpin teaches religion and history at Dr. Martin Luther College, New Ulm, Minnesota and has completed his course work for a doctorate at Erlangen.*



# Adolph Ackermann, Chauvinism, and Free Speech

Morton A. Schroeder

THE STORY OF THE RESIGNATION of Adolph Ackermann as professor in and director of Dr. Martin Luther College in New Ulm, Minnesota is a strange blend of the exercise of raw, dictatorial political power, the fears of church officials, and the misuse or non-use of ordinary common sense. The whole episode occurred in a time warp, also. Had it taken place a half century later — or even in the 1980s when political protest aimed at nuclear power and nuclear weapons became almost a way of life — it would have passed. The men who in the 1914-1918 era were unceremoniously hoisted on the petard of irrational war hysteria would have been in the 1960s, or would be in the 1980s, regarded as patriots of the first rank, as high-minded freedom fighters who were striving to uphold fundamental, constitutional values.

The entire incident was made less tolerable by people's memories. Minnesotans knew that New Ulm had been settled by Germans less than sixty years before this. They remembered that New Ulmites had publicly celebrated German victories in the Franco-Prussian War. On August 8, 1870 news of the German victory at Forbach was celebrated with cannon fire. Six days later a public meeting was held to solicit financial support for the German cause. On September 10 a combination concert, dance, and supper was held at Turner Hall, again to raise funds for the German cause. And on January 31, 1871 gunfire saluted the report of the surrender of Paris (Ubl 28-29). That the first overt act in the war was made by France and that the French loss resulted in the overthrow of the Napoleonic dynasty was of no consequence in the 1917 atmosphere.

Minnesotans were also able to count. According to the 1910 census the population of the state was approximately 2,000,000. Of this number, 70% were either foreign born or of foreign parentage on one or both sides. Nearly 500,000 of the 2,000,000 were born either in Germany or Austria or were of German or Austrian parentage (Folwell 558). Like the Nisei during World War II, their foreign connections made them immediately suspect.

## Adolph Ackermann

Adolph Ackermann was one of these 500,000. Born in Nussdorf, Wuerttemberg, Germany on January 11, 1871, he attended school at Reutlingen and the Latin School at Schorndorf. He came to America when he was fourteen years old and enrolled in Dr. Martin Luther College. Earliest *enroll-*

*ment* records list him as a member of the *quinta* class in the preparatory department in 1885-1886, the *quarta* class in the *progymnasium* in 1886-1887, and the *secunda* class in the collegiate department in 1888-1889 (C 1885-86, 1886-87, 1888-89).

The oldest *academic* records of Dr. Martin Luther College presently known to the office of the registrar of that school date back only to the three terms of the 1889-1890 school year. In that year Ackermann was one of 22 men enrolled in the "Collegiate & Preparatory Depts." (*Rec 1*). Four men were enrolled in the "Normal Dept." and 52 were enrolled in the "Academic Dept." Four of the 78 were from Europe (*Rec 1-5*).

Ackermann was a superior student and campus citizen. During the 1889-1890 school year in which he was in the *prima* class of the collegiate department, he studied in ten subject areas. The areas (English, Greek, Latin, theology, *et al*) were divided into 39 separate courses during the three terms of the academic year. On a grading scale in which "8" was equivalent to the modern "A," Ackermann received no grade lower than a "7.5." He never missed a single class period, and, based on the grades given him, I assume he was never tardy. During these same three terms he received twelve grades in department. Nine were 8s and three were 7.5s. He was graduated in 1890 "with 10 marks" (*Rec 1*).

According to the 100th anniversary history of Immanuel Lutheran Church, rural Courtland, Minnesota, Ackermann taught in the parish school from 1889 through 1892 (*Immanuel*). Two possibilities exist for the 1889 date: 1) it is incorrect or 2) Ackermann was a part-time teacher, assisting, for example, on Wednesday afternoons. The preponderance of evidence seems to indicate that the anniversary booklet errs.

Ackermann attended Concordia Seminary in St. Louis, Missouri for two years. During the 1892-1893 school year he was enrolled in "*Klasse III*"; during the 1893-1894 school year he was a member of "*Klasse II*." His teachers were Pieper, Bente, Guenther, Stoeckhardt, Graebner and Fuerbringer (*Cat* unpagged). He also assisted the Dr. Martin Luther College faculty during the 1893-1894 school year (*Bliefernicht 40, 42*).

The old records of Concordia Seminary, now under the care and management of Concordia Historical Institute, St. Louis, show that Ackermann was not graduated from the seminary. Instead of completing Class I, and thereby the entire ministerial course, he accepted the call as professor to Dr. Martin Luther College. In 1897 he passed a colloquy and was ordained as a clergyman (*MFP 5-9-50*). Eleven years later, when then Director John Schaller accepted the call to the seminary in Wauwatosa, Wisconsin, Ackermann accepted the call as director of Dr. Martin Luther College. He was 37 years old.

## Commission of Public Safety

On April 16, 1917, ten days after the United States declared war on Germany, a bill to create the Minnesota Commission of Public Safety was passed unanimously in the state senate and with only one nay vote in the assembly. Fears of an uncertain loyalty from many in Minnesota's large German element caused the legislature to overreact. The commission was to control seditious activity, ensure compliance with the military draft, and

## Misreading the Signs

take steps to conserve food, fuel, and anything else it deemed essential to the war effort (*Statutes* 16-18). The commission became a virtual government within the state government, employing its own agents and constabulary. Arbitrarily assuming powers and responding vigorously to the worst fears of chauvinists, the commission attempted to squelch political dissent which, it said, detracted from the war effort. William Watts Folwell, a New England Yankee not noted for pro-German sympathies, says this of the bill in *A History of Minnesota*, his definitive history of the state: "If a large hostile army had already been landed at Duluth and was about to march on the capital of the state a more liberal dictatorship could hardly have been conceded to the commission" (Folwell 556). The commission was composed of Governor Joseph A. A. Burnquist, Attorney-General Lyndon A. Smith, and five laymen appointed by the governor to serve at his pleasure: Charles H. March, Litchfield, John Lind, Minneapolis, Charles W. Ames, St. Paul, John F. McGee, Minneapolis, and Anton C. Weiss, Duluth. Lind, the original owner of the mansion on the corner of Center and State streets, had lived in New Ulm almost continuously from 1877 until 1901, when he moved to Minneapolis. He had served in Congress from 1887 to 1893 and was elected governor in 1899. Dissent within the commission "led to [his] withdrawal" after the state election of 1918 (Blegen 473).

Armed with unprecedented powers, granted an ample appropriation of \$1,000,000.00 (*Statutes* 18), and backed by a nearly unanimous legislature, "the commission," Folwell reports, "proceeded to exercise functions the like of which the history of American law never disclosed" (Folwell 557). The history of the commission seems to indicate that it became intoxicated with its own ruthlessness and fed on its ability to cow Minnesotans into submission. The commission decided that, among others, the following arcane actions would be beneficial to the successful completion of the war: All licensed saloons were to close at 10:00 pm and remain closed until 8:00 am. Women and girls were to be excluded from saloons at all times. Dancing and cabaret performances were to be discontinued in places where intoxicating beverages were sold. Every alien was to register and declare under oath the kind and amount of his property holdings. Strikes and lockouts were forbidden. Sheriffs were required to compile lists of able-bodied men not continuously employed. No person not a citizen would be permitted to teach. Persons who did not buy Liberty Bonds were encouraged to subscribe to them or be examined to determine why they were not doing so. Battalions of home guards were to be organized. They were to "protect life and property" and "provide for the defense of the United States." The commission took a farm crop and stock census, ordered barberry bushes eradicated, and interfered promptly and vigorously in many incidents of limited and local concern. It became involved in municipal and university affairs, and it did not think the Constitution suffered in any way. In *Cook v. Burnquist* "it was held that the statute could not be attacked as delegating legislative power to the Commission" (*Statutes* Note 17).

The commission had been at its work for only a brief time when it learned that several meetings had been held and others had been advertised in various parts of the state in violation of the act of 1917. The so-called "sedition law" made it unlawful to advocate resistance to the draft in a public place or at any meeting where more than five men were assembled.

One such meeting was held at New Ulm before America declared war on Germany (*NUR* 4-4-17). About a thousand people from New Ulm and vicinity packed the armory and listened to speeches by Major Louis A. Fritsche, Mayor Albert Pfaender, who was the city attorney, Father Robert Schlinkert, Captain Albert Steinhäuser, Prof. A. F. Reim, Mr. F. H. Retzlaff, a prominent local businessman, Dr. O. C. Strickler, and "Prof. A. Ackermann who made the most extended address of the evening." Ackermann spoke against the expected declaration of war on constitutional and semantic grounds. He read from the Constitution, defined treason, and, in general, set himself up as a perfect target for anti-German feelings (*NUR* 4-4-17).

Ackermann had misread the signs of the times and, to some extent, also the corporate, bottom-line sentiment of the church body to which he belonged. When he looked around, he saw ample evidence that German was *the* language and, by his extension, also *the* heritage and *the* culture. He interpreted that to mean something other than it did. Consider some parts of the whole:

The community in which he lived — New Ulm — was a German-speaking community, and most of its business was conducted in that language. This situation obtained up to the time of World War II, even though influential, national newspapers had begun their anti-German language rumbles as early as 1915.

The Wisconsin Synod published two papers for its adult readers: the *Gemeindeblatt* and *The Northwestern Lutheran*. In 1917, 135 members of St. Paul's in New Ulm were "*Gemeindeblatt*leser." None of the members subscribed to *The Northwestern Lutheran*. In 1919, 138 persons subscribed to the *Gemeindeblatt*; two subscribed to *The Northwestern Lutheran* (*PBMD* 1917 and 1919).

People who did read *The Northwestern Lutheran* — and I would like to think that Adolph Ackermann, scholar that he was, was one of them — were fed a steady diet of editorials with a strong, pro-German bias. Random samples include the following:

"As a consequence there are over 6,000 Protestant ministers carrying arms for the Fatherland. The peril of their country and their deep-seated conviction that their country's war is a war of defense has urged them to share the dangers of their fellow citizens" (*TNL* 1-21-15 12-13).

"The future of our church in the generations to come is thereby indicated; fresh German blood will not be available to keep our German congregations as German as they were, and more and more they will have to consider the needs of their English-speaking members. It is fruitless to speculate, but there is also the possibility that the renewed interest all men and women of German ancestry show for the Fatherland may give the German language a fresh impetus from within. There can be no doubt that a decisive German victory would instantly make the German language a universal language of the highest order and would stimulate the study of German in all quarters. Whatever the future may bring — our Lutheran church must not be permitted to suffer; it is still essentially a German church, as far as we are concerned, and its strength will to a large extent be measured by the influence of German bodies" (*TNL* 2-21-15 25-26).



An editorial entitled "The War and Missions" even got involved in the murky waters of international law. Said its author, "... bombardments and landing parties from British and French men-of-war . . . have forced the German colonial forces far into the interior. This practice is in direct violation of all agreements made by the powers in regard to war in colonial possessions" (TNL 3-21-15 41)

Another, this one entitled "The Fifty-fifth Psalm," scolded pro-Allied users of that psalm: "... it might be advisable for the ardent patriot that wishes to use it for pro-Allied purposes to do a little editing before it reaches the hands of his sympathizers" (TNL 4-7-15 50).

The author of "War and the German Universities" unabashedly referred to Germany as "the fatherland" (TNL 6-21-15 95). Two months later the same writer said that one Dr. Kuehnemann, a German propagandist given the liberty of our countryside, "commands our respect and admiration" (TNL 8-21-16). And three and one-half months after that he spoke in glowing terms of a "religious awakening in Germany due to the war." He also found a reason for the revival: "More than 6 million Bibles have been distributed to German soldiers" (TNL 12-7-16 180).

Two other matters, surely crucial to Ackermann's misunderstanding of the position the Wisconsin Synod would take, if required to do so, were not settled until after he had resigned. The question of making English the medium of instruction in synodical schools was addressed by various districts. It got to the referred-to-committee stage, but it was not answered by 1918.

Synod's commitment to encourage congregations to use English in public worship was virtually nonexistent. Pastors of congregations in Wisconsin which did conduct services in English met in Waukesha, Wisconsin on May 21-22, 1918 and organized an English Lutheran conference. Their concern over the importance of English as the medium for public worship and instruction, especially in mission churches, also was not an issue until after Ackermann's resignation.

A second public meeting was held in New Ulm on Wednesday, July 25, 1917. About 8,000 to 10,000 people gathered in Turner Park ostensibly to hear explanations of the draft. New Ulm's population was about 3,000 at the time. The purpose of the rally gradually shifted — and to this day nobody knows how. What was to be an education meeting became a "draft protest meeting." Involved in the proceedings in one way or another were Louis Vogel, the county auditor, Fritsche, Pfaender, Steinhauser, Retzlaff, and two men from Dr. Martin Luther College, Wagner and Ackermann. Wagner spoke for the constitutional right of free speech and against the draft law, which he regarded as undemocratic. Ackermann said he had had a busy day and had not had time to prepare a formal speech. He spoke, he said, because he wanted to testify to the loyalty of the people of New Ulm. He favored sending petitions to the President and the Congress, and he lambasted Wall Street, England, France, and the member of the House of Representatives who represented the local congressional district (NUR 8-1-17).

The New Ulmites who had played a prominent role in the July 25 meeting also spoke in at least six other towns in the New Ulm area. Ackermann, in company with Pfaender and Retzlaff, spoke to about 2,000 people in Gibbon,

thereby defeating his "New Ulm loyalty" reason for participating in the rallies (NUR 8-1-17).

Counterrallies were held, and New Ulm became a "war torn city." The temper of the times can be judged best by this little footnote: German Street was renamed Liberty Street. (It assumed its original name when the war ended, and it was not tampered with during World War II.)

The times were troublous, and Dr. Martin Luther College was naive. Apparently — or so it seems from this vantage point in time — it had done nothing to disavow the pro-German sentiments expressed in *The Northwestern Lutheran* and announce a fundamental loyalty and patriotism of its own. Contrariwise, it appeared to go out of its way to hoist its Germanic origins flag. Articles written in German appeared regularly in *The D.M.L.C. Messenger*. Catecheses were delivered in German in St. Paul's Ev. Lutheran School by members of the faculty and the "A" Class. Programs presented in the Aula, the building on the DMLC campus today called the Music Hall, were rendered in German. The first literary society formed was a German literary society. "*Der Deutsche Verein* [was] brought into existence on September 27, 1913" (M 12-13 35). This is difficult to believe today, but on October 18, 1913 the "100th anniversary of the battle at Leipsic, where Napoleon was defeated by the combined armies of the Austrians, Russians, and Germans, was observed here in the Aula" (M 12-13 35). Almost exactly one year later, on October 19, 1914, the college choirs participated in a concert given in Turner Hall for the benefit of the Red Cross in Germany and Austria (M 12-14 45).

The frame of mind and naiveté which prevailed on the college campus is best illustrated by the essay which Aadele Falde, the editor of "College Notes," wrote in the March 1915 issue of the *Messenger*. Said Falde: "The terrible war now raging in Europe has called for help for their wounded and sick. Uncle Sam is a ready 'minute man' in all troubles, so he was called upon to answer a call from the Red Cross on this occasion also. Societies all over the United States are formed and are collecting for the good cause. An Englishman will collect for the Red Cross in England. A Frenchman for the Red Cross in France. We, being Germans, would materially help the Germans. So it was too. We were visited by two young ladies from Mankato, selling rings made of iron to aid the Red Cross in Austria-Hungary and Germany. The rings are made on the same style as those that were sold in Germany in 1812. They were sold at the price of one dollar apiece, a very small amount considering the good that dollar will do. Why not all buy a ring?"

And last but not least, let me say that if I suspected I were suspect, I would have during times like those which then prevailed eschewed all things military. Dr. Martin Luther College did the opposite. It began a military company which drilled every Tuesday and Friday (M 9-13 16). By the next year almost 100 students had joined the company. Pro-Allied sympathizers had to find these words disturbing in their ambiguity: "Judging from the material that has been given us this year, we may expect to reach a standard which will put us on the level with any other organization of the kind" (M 10-14 15). The man who organized the military company also organized a military band (M 3-14 69).

On recommendation of the Commission of Public Safety, Fritsche and

Pfaender were permanently removed from office by the governor. Gross indignities which split the community and the county medical association were heaped on the men. Vogel, able to prove he was shining a light on the courthouse flag during the July rally, escaped similar treatment. Steinhäuser, who held no public office, was the "least repentant." He nonetheless suffered maltreatment by chauvinists who regarded loyalty and dissent to be mutually exclusive (8-25-17) — BCJ.

#### Removed from Office

Finally, Adolph Ackermann, who had served the college as professor since 1894 and as president since 1908, was removed from office. The college board of control met at St. Paul on Tuesday, January 29, 1918. The then president of the Wisconsin Synod, the Rev. G. E. Bergemann, an *ex officio* member of the board, asked for Ackermann's resignation, reportedly after the Minnesota Commission of Public Safety threatened to close the college (NUR 2-6-18). The commission itself was not immune to pressure. The *New Ulm Review*, in that same issue reported, "It is currently reported that citizens from here kept the matter alive and that even if the Public Safety Commission had wanted to forget their plans to have Prof. Ackermann ousted they were prevented from doing so by activities from here."

Synod and school officials moved quickly to contain the incident and repair any damage. Ackermann was treated almost as a non-person. No reason for his resignation was given to the members of the Wisconsin Synod, and his name was mentioned obliquely only in notices which referred to his successors. Prof. E. R. Bliefernicht, who had been a member of the faculty since 1908, was elected temporary director, and Walter Bodamer, a student at the seminary in Wauwatosa, Wisconsin, was engaged to help fill the teaching vacancy (M 3-17 [sic] 16-17). A patriotic program was held on Lincoln's birthday, and the seventh item on a twelve-item program was an address by Inspector Wagner. The same address, "Lincoln and Patriotic Address," was reprinted in its entirety in the March 1918 issue of the *Messenger*. At the suggestion of Acting Director Bliefernicht, a Junior Red Cross chapter was formed, and the chairman of the Brown County Red Cross was invited to speak to an assembly. Fifty-three students joined the new organization (M 3-17 [sic] 17). Shortly thereafter, English became the medium for teaching Greek and Latin.

In the meantime two other persons connected with Dr. Martin Luther College went about their business, and the Minnesota Public Safety Commission never heard of them. In private they set out to compose "a national anthem" which sang the praises of America. Fritz Reuter and Lydia Goeglein Wagner were the people, and "America" was the song. Composed to raise funds for the Red Cross, it was scored for mixed choir, piano, and organ. The printed bill for the presentation boasted that "the entire program was rendered in English." The music was set in march tempo; the words were written in fulsome fashion: "America, most blessed land/Where free-men ever shall gather/Where high and low and rich and poor/Unite as man with man." After recognizing America's bounties and beauties, the song closes with this paean, "My country, my glorious, glorious land." The original score of the Reuter-Wagner "national anthem" is in the Dr. Martin Luther College archives (Schroeder 60).

In its meeting held on April 4, 1918, the board of directors [sic] unanimously elected the Rev. John W. Brenner as president of Dr. Martin Luther College (TNL 4-21-18 63). When Brenner returned the call, the college board turned to a man who had been on the faculty from 1903 to 1915: the Rev. John P. Meyer of Oconomowoc, Wisconsin. His acceptance of the call, which should have been an occasion for considerable rejoicing, was announced in a two-line, twenty-word, small-type memo in *The Northwestern Lutheran* of July 14, 1918. The same issue gave 136 lines to the farewell address to four graduates of Bethany, Mankato, Minnesota. It seemed as though the Wisconsin Synod wanted to disavow its adopted child.

That all of this caused personal pain and anguish is best illustrated in a poignant note in the *D.M.L.C. Messenger*: "Gertrude Ackermann, a former student of D.M.L.C., is now attending the New Ulm High School" (M 9-18 n.p.). The nearest thing to a public expression of regret I could find appeared in the *Messenger* for March 1919. One "D.R.," a member of the Class of '19 wrote a brief but intense essay on "Rumors." He regretted, deeply and bitterly, the harm which can "befall a person who is the victim of unfounded rumors," especially if the persons were "honorable and 100 percent loyal..." (M 3-19 25-26).

The resigned Adolph Ackermann was a loose cannon, and Minnesota District and Wisconsin Synod officials did not know what to make of him and his ambiguous situation. Unsubstantiated tradition has him employed for a while in a jewelry store in New Ulm before he was assigned a parish. In his report to the Minnesota District, President J. R. Baumann listed "Dir. A. Ackermann" as one of six pastors, professors, and teachers who had left their office "*aus guten Gründen*" (PBMD 1918 12). However, in the *Proceedings* of the first convention of the Minnesota District, his title is strangely and obviously missing. In the list of advisory delegates — "*Beratende Pastoren und Professoren*" — R. M. Albrecht is listed as "Prof." and J. E. Sperling is listed as "Prof. em." Ackermann is simply listed as "Ackermann, A., New Ulm" (S-B 1918 5). His title was restored in the 1919 *Proceedings* of the Wisconsin Synod: "*Am 29. Januar 1918 reichte Direktor A. Ackermann seine Resignation ein*" (S-B 1919 82). Although no record is given of his installation, he appears in the district statistical report for 1919 as pastor of the dual parish of Essig-Brighton, Minnesota (PBMD 1919 n.p.). In the report for 1920, he is again listed as pastor of the Essig-Brighton parish, but the following note indicates his status: "*Nicht zur Synode gehörig*" (PBMD 1922 n.p.). His rehabilitation was finally made official when President Immanuel F. Albrecht in his report to the Minnesota District in 1924 included this item: "*8. A. Ackermann (Essig and Brighton), eingeführt in der Immanuels-Gemeinde, Mankato, am 2. Sonntag nach Trinitatis, 25. Juni 1922, von Pastor A. F. Winter*" (PBMD 1922 62).

The story of the presidency which began triumphantly and ended tragically has two footnotes: The Minnesota District of the Wisconsin Synod elected Ackermann its president in 1936 and for five additional, two-year terms. When he turned the gavel over to the Rev. Oscar J. Naumann, who also had served on the faculty of DMLC, he was 76 years old. Ackermann soon fell ill and died three years later. The funeral address was delivered by the Rev. W. A. Poehler, president of Concordia College, St. Paul. The Rev. E.



J. A. Marxhausen, pastor of Immanuel Lutheran Church, rural Courtland, Minnesota, officiated at the interment. Pastors Emil F. Peterson of St. James, R. A. Haase of North Mankato, and Naumann of St. Paul also participated (Schroeder 61). If we are to give credence to the detailed and lengthy news accounts which appeared in the local press, Naumann was not included in the original funeral plans (*MFP* 5-9 and 5-13 1950).

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##### Newspapers, Periodicals, and Their Textual Abbreviations:

- BCJ*, *Brown County Journal*.
- M*, *The D.M.L.C. Messenger*.
- MFP*, *Mankato Free Press*.
- NUR*, *New Ulm Review*
- TNL*, *The Northwestern Lutheran*.

##### Miscellaneous Publications and Their Textual Abbreviations:

- C*, *Dr. Martin Luther College Catalog*.
- Cat*, *Catalog(s) for Professors and Students of the German Ev. Lutheran Seminary*, St. Louis, Missouri. Student Year(s) 1892-1893 and 1893-1894.
- Immanuel*, *Immanuel Lutheran Church Courtland, Minnesota 100*. N.p., n.d.; unpagged booklet.
- PBMD*, *Parochialbericht des Minnesota-Distrikts*, 1918, 1920, 1922, 1924.
- Rec*, "Records of the office of the registrar," Dr. Martin Luther College, New Ulm, Minnesota.
- S-B*, *Synodal-Bericht*, 1917, 1919, 1921, 1923.
- Statutes*, *1917 Supplement to the General Statutes of Minnesota creating the Minnesota Commission of Public Safety*, 117-10 through 117-19, 1917.

(The documentation style used in this paper is my modification of the new parenthetical style recently adopted by the Modern Language Association. *M.A.S.*)

*This essay was presented at the fall meeting of the WELS Historical Institute on October 21, 1984. Professor Schroeder teaches English at Dr. Martin Luther College, New Ulm, Minnesota and has authored the school's centennial story (1884-1984), A Time to Remember.*

## The Protes'tant Controversy

Edward C. Fredrich

WHEN THE PROTES'TANT CONTROVERSY surfaces in our circles, as it has a way of doing every ten or fifteen years, certain events occur as predictably and inevitably as tax payments in April and Minnesota blizzards in December. Any such occasion will produce up-to-date versions of a long line of articles in *Faith-Life* under the heading, "Why I Became a Protes'tant."<sup>1</sup> The accounts will tell and retell allegedly the story of bungling district officials, misguided congregations and blind-following-the-blind ouster resolutions.

There will be traumatic experiences for the congregations directly involved and for their called ministers. There can be dissent and opposition altars, especially when a gifted and energetic pastor is mounting the protest.

There will also always be a renewed interest in the continuing "Protes'tant Controversy" when such a surfacing occurs. The renewed concern can assert itself near Fremont or Green Bay and also as far afield as Rochester, Minnesota. It can involve conferences and districts, students at synodical schools and members of special societies. In the last few years the essayist has discussed the topic at a conference in the Fremont-Green Bay area, a student forum at Northwestern College, a meeting of the Synod's Historical Institute and today at the Minnesota District Pastoral Conference.<sup>2</sup>

In connection with such periodic renewal of attention to the Protes'tant Controversy the thought may suggest itself to some that we may have been neglectful between times. Should we perhaps not be much more concerned about the subject, not only in season, but also out of season?

Certainly, that is what the Protes'tants themselves have told us and still tell us. Long ago they were incensed when there was unwillingness to enter into every aspect of every grievance over every past incident in the origins of the conflict. They refuted over and over again and still refute the declaration, "*Die Vorgeschichjte geht uns nichts an*" (The previous history does not concern us).<sup>3</sup> When the Minnesota District made an attempt over a half century ago to investigate both sides of the conflict, its efforts were rebuffed by the one side with the charge that there had not been enough reading and studying of *Faith-Life*.<sup>4</sup> Today anyone involved with the Protes'tant Controversy who admits that he does not know the whole history must be ready for the suggestion that it is about time for him to get at his homework.

It is certainly understandable that Protes'tants are deeply concerned about every aspect of the Protes'tant Controversy. This is where they live. This is their *raison d'etre*.

It is true that the controversy represents in the history of the Wisconsin Synod one of the major internal events and intramural conflicts that have



occurred. No one would want to write off as inconsequential the strife between those who had been brothers, the turmoil at two synodical schools, the clash between two theological giants, the losses in congregations and called workers. All that merits attention and concern.

At the same time it should be realized that there are other concerns that claim attention. We cannot concentrate our whole energy on one single episode threescore years old, traumatic and dramatic as it may be. We cannot be totally busy attempting to settle a conflict that has defied the best-intentioned settlements of the past. We need not apologize if we do not know the whole long, sad story as well as the Protes'tants know it.

This may sound like the usual excusing that fills the introductions to the conference and district papers we write. In a way that is just what it is. The essayist does not feel at all competent to fulfill the assignment, as described in your secretary's letter, to present "a paper laying out the full history, cause, points and personalities of the Protes'tant Controversy."<sup>5</sup>

Some knowledge of the subject the essayist may have, but not that much. He confesses to a long interest in the subject that stretches from student days at the seminary to a teaching post there that involves synodical history. Almost a half century ago, he began to read *Faith-Life* in the upstairs seminary library. Copies of the periodical were stacked haphazardly in the periodical room and specific issues were not always easy to find. What made the reading even more difficult was the temperature in the unheated room. Not even the heated attacks in the early *Faith-Life* issues could supply warmth for the reader. Now the essayist can read *Faith-Life* articles in much more pleasant surroundings but that does not say by any means that he has become so expert that he knows all the answers for this complicated section of our synodical story.

Brief attention should also be given in this introductory section to bibliographical matters. The bulk of such material is to be found in the volumes of *Faith-Life*, published since Easter 1928. Originally it appeared twice every month but is now down to once every two months. In this three-foot shelf item with most pages filled with crowded double columns the quantity is there. What about quality?

Given the quantity, the quality is bound to be uneven. Essays presenting Bible studies, especially those by J. P. Koehler, are valuable and edifying. Certain sections of his *Kirchengeschichte* (Church History) appear in translation. *Faith-Life* also presented the original printing of Koehler's *History of the Wisconsin Synod*. Because the *Faith-Life* pages were simply reproduced when the material was published in book form, this definitive work, indispensable for any serious student of early Wisconsin Synod history, appears in such unattractive format that it is more likely to repel than to attract the reader. Incidentally, the book might be appearing under Northwestern Publishing House imprint without the Jordahl introduction and in more fitting format. The book was offered to our Commission on Christian Literature at the time the Protes'tant Conference determined on publication. But the Commission declined on the grounds that the book would not sell.<sup>7</sup> The book is now well into its second edition.

Those interested in finding out the whole story of single episodes in the long Protes'tant Controversy will find the material on *Faith-Life* pages.

Most of the Protes'tant pastors have written up in detail the story of their conflict with the Wisconsin Synod. On the more objective side *Faith-Life* has rendered a service by reprinting the early important documents of the Controversy: The Beitz paper, the Seminary Faculty *Gutachten* (Evaluation), the Koehler *Beleuchtung* (Clarification), the Pieper-Meyer *Antwort* (Answer) and others. As a fiftieth anniversary contribution the last two 1978 issues of *Faith-Life* reprinted the Beitz essay, a translation of the *Gutachten* and the Paul Hensel analysis of both with the title, *The Wauwatosa Gospel: Which Is It?*

A Protes'tant summary of the conflict is provided in the introduction to Koehler's *History of the Wisconsin Synod*. It was written by Leigh Jordahl who studied at Northwestern, has served at two Lutheran seminaries and has been a member of several Lutheran synods. His preface to the Koehler history, covering some thirty crowded pages, has the title, "John Philipp Koehler, the Wauwatosa Theology and the Wisconsin Synod." It presents the Protes'tant side of the story, as does much of the *Faith-Life* writing previously mentioned.

What of the other side of the story? There has not been much such writing. This dearth should not be mistaken as evidence that the Synod has so many skeletons to hide in so many closets that it dare not write its story. From the very beginning there was general agreement not to reply to personal attacks in *Faith-Life* and to write little more than official notices and resolutions. The reason was to avoid as much conflict as possible and to put no unnecessary "paper fences" in the way of a desired settlement. The Protes'tants were being taken at their word when they called themselves *Protes'tant Conference*. It was assumed that agreement could be reached with a "conference," albeit a protesting one.

Some few writings have appeared recently. Elmer Kiessling in his anniversary history of the Western Wisconsin District devotes a chapter to "Stormy Weather."<sup>8</sup> Among several research papers on various aspects of the subject, a general overview of the subject, widely reproduced for study purposes, by Mark Jeske is worthy of mention.<sup>9</sup> The second issue of the Wisconsin Lutheran Synod's Historical Institute *Journal* carried a discussion of the Koehler-Seminary troubles. Other titles could be mentioned but for the most part the reader or researcher will have to "hunt and peck" for the Synod's side of the story until an update of Koehler's synodical history is available.<sup>10</sup>

### I. Setting the Stage for Strife

The beginning of the controversy is usually traced way back to 1924 when the Northwestern College board — faculty dispute over disciplining thieving students created two factions at war with one another and a so-called "third party" also. Perhaps the roots of conflict reach back even farther to 1917 when the merger of the four federated synods of the church body took place.

As far as the outward appearances are concerned, the merger was accomplished with a minimum of friction. This is especially true of the "other states" of the merger, Minnesota, Michigan and Nebraska. Here the built-in synodical leadership and bureaucracy simply transferred itself into a dis-

strict counterpart. Not too much more than change of names and titles was required. In Wisconsin, however, it was a different story. Here the old synodical leadership moved up to serve the merged body. Three new districts were formed and there was a lack of experienced personnel to fill the many leadership posts. Brethren, used to seeing one another frequently at synodical conventions, now seldom went to or met one another at such conventions and encountered only one-third of the old group at district meetings. And at that era's counterpart of last year's North Avenue and this year's Mayfair Road, new synodical machinery had to be broken in, a lot of it.

It is understandable that there were some false starts, some clashing of gears, some outright breakdowns at the synodical level and especially at the district level in Wisconsin. It was easy to make a vague but hated *Beamtentum* ("official" officialdom) the goat of all difficulties. The situation lent itself to an anti-establishment mood. Anyone perusing the old records of the Protes'tant Controversy is struck by this distaste for officialdom, this commitment to the belief that the worst of all worsts is *Beamtentum*. As has been said, the officialdom was weak in the days when the Controversy erupted within Wisconsin districts. But the point is not how to catalog failings and faults but rather to emphasize the anti-establishment character of the Protes'tant movement. This may well be the key to understanding the whole complex development.

Actually, anti-establishmentarianism was a key feature of the twenties. A scofflaw attitude prevailed in that decade over against the old mores and morality, the old order and authority, the old and the new laws. One would be hard put to provide hard evidence that the times alone spawned Protes'tantism in our church body. But our church body existed in and was influenced by the twenties. The decade provided a mood and a mindset. It was an era of rivalry on the national and world scene between the revolutionary and the reactionary. It proved to be that also on the synodical scene. Boards and officials at district and synodical level were challenged by Protes'tants.

As the turbulent twenties began, there were special problems that threatened the peace and harmony of our church. In a time when shortfalls in the synodical treasury were a way of life, a major building operation was planned for the seminary and also for New Ulm (Dr. Martin Luther College). Despite "pay-as-you-build" safeguards, many were disturbed at the combination of budgetary deficits and building collections. In 1984 it is easy to understand the concerns.

Paul Hensel in his 1928 *Wauwatosa Gospel* describes the unrest in this way:

Five years ago we were engaged in gathering funds for the new seminary building [at Mequon]. We threw ourselves into the harness for the undertaking and met our quota. We were afire for this task. Our congregations were also willing. Yet it involved work. While we were in the midst of it, Pieper returned from Germany and traveled about agitating against the project. Pastor Brenner, member of the building committee, and others, are able to attest to this. It hurt. It was the first blow.<sup>11</sup>

The triumvirate that fostered the Wauwatosa theology was no more. In past theological issues, as Koehler testifies, "the Wisconsin faculty stood over against others."<sup>12</sup> He is referring especially to the issues of analogy of faith and of church and ministry. By 1924, however, John Schaller's steady hand had been stilled by death. Koehler and Pieper, old schoolmates at Watertown and St. Louis (Concordia Seminary) and also colleagues at Wauwatosa and in its great church-ministry endeavors, were no longer seeing eye-to-eye. Troubles were brewing.

## II. Rock River Rumbles

They first came to a boil, not at Wauwatosa, but along the banks of the Rock River, about which Black Hawk had once said, "Rock River is a beautiful country. . . . I fought for it. . . . Keep it as we did." Along the banks of that river, by then badly polluted, the first skirmishes of the Protes'tant Controversy were fought. It all began at Watertown and at its Lutheran college, Northwestern.

In early spring 1924 wholesale thieving, involving some two dozen students, was uncovered by the tutors.<sup>13</sup> The faculty took swift action, establishing three quite equally divided groups and applying to each group appropriate punishments. The worst offenders were expelled. A second group was suspended for the rest of the year. The third group was allowed to remain at school but with campus restrictions. That could have ended the matter. But it did not.

Relying on a deadletter statute that vested expulsion power with the board, not the faculty, the school's governing board set aside the faculty's disciplinary actions. There was naturally a bitter wrangle between board and faculty. Two teachers resigned in protest. They volunteered to teach for the faculty but not the board. The faculty was willing; the board naturally vetoed the arrangement. On commencement day the Watertown campus was graced by a specially summoned informational meeting at which the pro-faculty side of the dispute was heard.<sup>14</sup> The Synod established committees to sort out the facts and to establish principles. The Wisconsin-Chippewa Valley Conference became deeply involved and at a Wisconsin Rapids meeting heard the Synod's president accused of misrepresenting the facts in the case.

At the time much debate centered on such questions as how the Watertown problem was handled by faculty and by board and how it should have been handled by them. The real issue, however, was board power asserting itself. It was a matter of establishment authority. There were not a few who were minded to challenge that authority but could not easily do so at Watertown, where the board had things under control.

Some twenty miles south on the Rock River at Fort Atkinson a better opportunity for protest developed. Two women teachers became embroiled with congregation officials and the pastor. The teachers took a dim view of what individuals and groups in the congregation were doing and wanted practices they deemed objectionable stopped. The pastor was reluctant to oppose what he considered adiaphora. A clash resulted with the pastor calling the teachers *freche Gruenschnabel* (smart alecks) and the teachers calling the pastor a false prophet. Under fire and without a release the



teachers were recommended to and called by the Marshfield congregation. The Fort Atkinson congregation was upset, so upset it even withdrew for a time from the Synod.

As the Fort Atkinson case dragged on it became more and more complicated. Protests and counterprotests were filed by the teachers and by the Fort Atkinson congregation, by groups supporting the teachers and by groups opposing them. Committee after committee tried to settle the matter. Meeting after meeting came up with a variety of decisions. Few shared the views of the teachers that had originally caused the conflict or of the tactics they had then employed. But a good many had begun to have doubts about the way the case had been handled since then, especially when a notice of the suspension of the two teachers was published in May 1926.

A month later the Western Wisconsin District met at Beaver Dam. Among other items on the agenda was a proposal to ratify the suspension of the teachers that was voted on favorably by a majority. A group of seventeen, however, protested that action in writing.<sup>15</sup> From that time on the term *Protes'tants* has been in use. Professor Pieper, very active at Beaver Dam, is supposed to have used it, somewhat disparagingly, in the first instance and those so dubbed regarded the epithet as an accolade.<sup>16</sup>

Two other significant happenings at Beaver Dam merit mention. Both enlarge the problem and pave the way to a definite Protes'tant Controversy. For one thing, those protesting added to their complaints about suspension procedure an item that referred to a "bigger problem" that was at the root of the issue and which they wanted discussed. The problem, as they saw it, was officialdom.<sup>17</sup> It would soon have a larger airing.

The other significant matter was the Beaver Dam resolution that the president should deal conclusively with dissidents.<sup>18</sup> Soon there would be a rash of suspensions and the formation of a Protes'tant Conference. First, however, there would have to be the airing of the "bigger problem."

### III. Divisive Documents Debated

The occasion was a meeting of the Wisconsin-Chippewa Valley Conference at Schofield, near Wausau, in September 1926. There William Beitz read a paper actually assigned to him by the area mixed (Missouri — Wisconsin) conference with the title, "God's Message to Us in Galatians: The Just Shall Live by Faith." Three weeks later it was read to the conference that had originally assigned it. The paper would have many other readings, a few public but mostly private. It is still being read today by those assigned papers on Protes'tantism.

Beitz used the great Reformation passage in Habakkuk and Galatians as a launching pad for an aggressive attack on the spiritual life in the Wisconsin Synod. The passage was to set the tone that would test harps "to see whether they be in tune with God's."<sup>19</sup> The test, according to Beitz, showed a miserable failure in congregational life, in preaching, in Seminary training, in catechetical endeavors, in just about every aspect of "living by faith."

At every reading of the Beitz paper questions were raised, chiefly about the sweeping documentations expressed therein. With the open and as yet undercover Protes'tants rallying around the paper and with those of another mind finding fault, something had to be done. An official estimation of

the paper was sought by beleaguered Western Wisconsin District officials from the Wauwatosa theological faculty. This gave rise to the second divisive document, the Wauwatosa Seminary's evaluation of the Beitz paper usually referred to simply as the *Gutachten*.

The *Gutachten* took the Beitz paper to task on these three counts: 1) it mixed justification and sanctification by using the justification passage in Galatians as a pretext for a sanctification discussion; 2) it harbored erroneous statements about the role of the Law in repentance; 3) it judged hearts and slandered. The *Gutachten* had been carefully written. This was the procedure as one of the participants described it:

In order to be as correct and careful as possible, it was determined in this important matter affecting the peace and unity of the Synod that each of the four of us should make a written appraisal without prior consultation with the others, that then the four appraisals should be jointly evaluated and then brought together by one of us. The amalgamation should then be again reviewed and after that put into final form.<sup>20</sup>

The *Gutachten* would obviously be debated and contested by Protes'tants. It was a divisive document in this respect. And also in another. It made the synodical strife the seminary's strife. Already by 1927 the seminary had lost a faculty member, Gerhard Ruediger. He had been energetic in the 1924 Watertown commencement meeting. He had espoused the cause of the Fort Atkinson teachers. He was an avowed advocate of the view that the Wisconsin Synod was ripe and ready for God's judgment. He advocated his views in his classroom. His colleagues, Koehler excepted, felt that even a belated and enforced confession could not avail to rectify the situation. Ruediger lost his teaching post.<sup>21</sup>

When Ruediger was in his troubles, Koehler stood aside. He had been on leave, far off in Germany to research the roots of the Synod whose history he was to write. By the time he returned the conflict was already going strong. His own son was in that exclusive group to be known as "the third party," third between the board at Watertown and the disgruntled faculty. Karl Koehler was one of the two who resigned at Watertown in 1924. Professor J. P. Koehler was obviously not overjoyed when his protegee, Ruediger, and his son Karl had to vacate their teaching posts. But he was 4000 miles away when the troubles started in both cases and therefore took himself out of the role of judge.

The *Gutachten* was another matter. Koehler failed to write his evaluation of the Beitz paper. He said he was busy with blueprints of the proposed seminary relocation project north of Milwaukee. He, however, signed the *Gutachten* but with the stipulation that he could discuss the matter with Beitz before the document's release. When the *Gutachten* was released before that discussion, Koehler withdrew his signature.

The divisive issue eventually became a question of interpretation principles. Koehler insisted that the Beitz paper should be given the benefit of the doubt and of the best construction. His colleagues insisted that a conference paper, especially one that had helped engender its share of controversy, should be judged in the interest of clarity on its own merits, on its own wording. The key issue became *Wortlaut* (literal sense).



As the controversy worsened, this division at Wauwatosa loomed larger and larger. Divisive documents were being interpreted in different ways at Wauwatosa. The situation was intolerable. Something had to give. Something did. The event will be described subsequently.

A valiant effort was made to justify the Beitz paper over against the *Gutachten*. This is Paul Hensel's *The Wauwatosa Gospel: Which Is It?*<sup>22</sup> It sought to quote Pieper against Pieper by citing previous Pieper writings that resembled statements of Beitz in his paper which the *Gutachten* opposed. The resemblance could easily be substantiated. What was left out of consideration, however, was the Koehler contention that "circumstances alter cases," that more than the *Wortlaut* should be considered.

August Pieper would subsequently insist that his writings that were cited had been written abstractly while the Beitz writing was aimed at a concrete situation. There is merit in the contention. It is vain to argue that the call, "Fire!" deserves equal evaluation if uttered when a building is ablaze or when shouted in a crowded building that is not afire.

Whatever the evaluation, certain documents were helping to create the division. Soon an opposition fellowship was in the process of formation.

#### IV. Faith-Life Fellowship Formed

The first get-together of those who would soon form a protesting conference took place in mid-November 1926 at Wilton. The purpose seems to have been to form ranks behind the Beitz paper that was under attack, even before any *Gutachten* was issued. Plans to print the paper in quantity were considered but no action was taken at that time.

Early in February the group met again, this time at Marshfield where O. Hensel was under fire. A *Faith-Life* summary of events says, "This was the first meeting of the protes'tants 'mit Gottesdienst und Abendmahl'" (with a church service and the Lord's Supper).<sup>23</sup>

The first suspensions of protesters occurred in June 1927. O. Hensel and W. Motzkus, Beaver Dam protesters, were the first to be so dealt with. Motzkus had been called to Globe and O. Hensel installed him in spite of protests. H. W. Kock at Friesland clashed with congregation and district officials, lost the congregation and was suspended. In July Beitz was suspended when meetings and correspondence failed to bring about any agreement. The notice of suspension reached Beitz when Professor Koehler was visiting him to discuss the paper a second time.<sup>24</sup> A fifth suspension, that of W. K. Bodamer, also was announced in July. In September protesters met formally at Elroy and this time resolved to print the Beitz paper.

At a special Western Wisconsin District meeting at Watertown, Nov. 15-18 the district took its stand with the *Gutachten* and against the Beitz paper and passed the resolution which declared that all who upheld the Beitz paper were to be regarded as such who had severed their relations with the Synod. Naturally there were negative votes and abstentions. These were to be dealt with.<sup>25</sup> This development crystalized the protest movement.

In mid-December the Protes'tants met at Marshfield. They defeated a proposal to break off all relations with the Synod, but they did establish a treasury, a board, a LaCrosse mission and an editorial committee. The Protes'tants were definitely in business. Most important of all, they adopted the "Elroy Declaration," so called because it was mailed from there by the

secretary. The "Declaration" was a refusal to deal with investigating committees and categorically stated: "We shall be ready to deal only if the resolutions of Beaver Dam and Watertown are rescinded, all cases are reopened as new cases, and Synod thereby shows a new attitude which might give hope of profitable dealings."<sup>26</sup> That statement has for over fifty years stood in the way of all efforts to bridge the division. Even a setting aside of resolutions proved futile.

Another meeting of the Protes'tants should be mentioned to round off this section on "Faith-Life Fellowship Formed." It is the Jan. 17, 1928, gathering at Wilton that resolved to begin publishing *Faith-Life* at Easter. This is another resolution with an impact of over fifty years.

#### V. Crises and Conflicts Continue

Soon more and more names were being added to the roll of Protes'tants. A pattern, a chain reaction, a domino effect began to assert itself. A friend and brother of a Protes'tant would be unwilling to break fellowship with him. This would put his synodical fellowship in question. Such "domino defections" began to occur as soon as a Protes'tant Conference was created and they are still occurring. Back in 1928 Professor E. E. Sauer of Northwestern preached for Pastor W. Hass of Oconomowoc and was soon deposed and suspended. Fifty some years later Pastor Christman of Green Bay sides with Pastor Brand, a Protes'tant or Protes'tant sympathizer, and soon is suspended. In between the two instances are many others who may have their own unique factors but all follow the basic pattern.

By now the question is in place: What did the Synod itself do to settle the controversy? Actually up to this point in the story, 1928, it had not done all that much. As previously mentioned, the Synod set up committees to look into the Watertown problem. The committee reports were accepted. It was the same in the Fort Atkinson case. The 1927 Synod convention consequently contributed little to the record.

By 1927 the controversy had worsened and the Synod convention of that year had been presented with numerous appeals and protests from the protesting side. It chose, however, to view the whole matter as a Western Wisconsin District problem that lay beyond its jurisdiction. The one step it took was to order that a committee agreeable to both the Western Wisconsin District and the protesters should be set up to attempt mediation.

The 1929 Synod convention was much more involved with the Protes'tant Controversy than its immediate predecessors. The Koehler problem came to a head but discussion of this matter will be deferred to a subsequent section of the essay. The meeting resolved on the appointment of a "Peace Committee" that would function for four years. It worked hard but its reports to the 1931 and 1933 Synod conventions were so controversial that in both instances the whole problem was once again referred back to the Western Wisconsin District. The Peace Committee was discharged in 1933. From that time on there is little to report on synodical dealings with the Protes'tant Controversy until a whole new generation was on the scene.

Of all the "Continuing Crises and Conflicts" none was more regrettable, more tragic than the Professor J. P. Koehler ouster at the seminary. The subject is involved enough to make the basis for its own paper, as lengthy as this is. Only essential details can be supplied here.<sup>27</sup>

The Controversy began, while Koehler was off in Europe tracing synodical roots to Barmen, Basisl and Berlin. By the time he returned the Watertown affair had erupted and his son Karl was one of the two third-party members. Koehler himself was requested to intervene in the Fort Atkinson case. He tried but could get nowhere with the two teachers.

Then came the Beitz paper. Koehler agreed that the seminary faculty should provide an evaluation for the embattled Western Wisconsin District. He did not, however, provide his evaluation. He put his "John Hancock" at the top of the list of four signers. Subsequently he withdrew the signature when his proviso that there should be no *Gutachten* released until he had met face-to-face with Beitz was not honored. By the time he met with Beitz the *Gutachten* was printed and disseminated. The meeting was obviously unfruitful. A second meeting with Beitz, who was by then under suspension, would produce a line of thought that Koehler developed first in a writing, *Ertrag* (outcome), and then later in the *Beleuchtung*, both of which were Koehler's own *Gutachten* of the Beitz paper that differed from the faculty *Gutachten*.

The faculty *Gutachten* took Beitz at his word, at his *Wortlaut*, and thus arrived at its denunciation of unclarity, false doctrine and judging. Koehler sought to find extenuating circumstances that would make a more charitable reading possible. The disagreement boiled down to a matter of interpretation principles.

This was serious. The persons involved were professionals in interpretation. They found it difficult to yield even an inch. Since the interpretation involved a paper that was acquiring the role of a shibboleth in a divided and dividing church body, the difference loomed all the larger.

The issue came to a head in 1929. Just before the Synod met, Koehler released his *Beleuchtung* that spelled out his disagreement with the *Gutachten*. His two seminary colleagues, Pieper and Meyer, replied promptly with their *Antwort*. The seminary board cast its lot with the *Antwort* and dismissed Koehler.

The synodical meeting, however, set up a new committee to help the old and new seminary boards seek an agreement. Koehler was granted a temporary leave from classroom duties. No agreement could be reached. In September 1930 Koehler moved from his housing in what is now Section Nine of the Seminary dormitory to Niellsville where his son Karl lived. The 1933 synodical convention received the report that Koehler's fellowship with Protes'tants had broken his fellowship with the Wisconsin Synod. One wishes one could close the subject on a better note.

## VI. Minnesota Makes Its Move

What of the district you are most interested in? Already in 1924 Minnesota showed its concern by resolving regarding the Watertown affair: "We regret the trouble at the institution and hope that the committee appointed will be able to settle matters to such an extent that such things may not occur again."<sup>29</sup> While it was certainly concerned about the mounting troubles in the Synod in 1926, the Minnesota District had no reason to act officially in the matter.

The 1928 meeting is another story. Reacting to the resolutions of the committee on the President's Report, the district deplored "the events caus-

ing the Western Wisconsin District the loss of several pastors, teachers and congregations" and then suggested, in what was certainly a rebuke of its sister district across the Mississippi, "Christ has given instruction for church discipline not for the purpose of condemnation but the salvation of souls."<sup>30</sup>

Minnesota's concerns regarding the Protes'tant Controversy beyond its borders reached a high point in the 1930 district convention. A ten-man seminary committee provided a long report, adopted by the district, that dealt in the main with the contested documents. Peace can only be restored, says the report, if the misunderstandings involved in the Beitz paper and the *Gutachten* are clarified.<sup>30</sup>

It was pointed out that there were conflicting interpretations of the Beitz paper. The author's unwillingness to offer clarification was deplored.

The opposition to Beitz was also faulted. The report questioned the wisdom of issuing a *Gutachten* in the first place and also of issuing it without face-to-face consultation with the writer being condemned. The district was seeking to bring the two camps closer together. That is the tone that sounds out loud and clear in the *1930 District Proceedings*.

It is another story in 1932. When an approach to Beitz was made in the spirit of the 1930 resolutions a rebuff was encountered. A Beitz letter brushed off requests for clarification and suggested that Minnesota should be more diligent in its homework on the issue.<sup>31</sup> The result is a brusque and businesslike report on the Protes'tant Controversy. Communications from the Western Wisconsin District and from Beitz are simply filed as matters "not within the judgment or control" of the district.<sup>32</sup>

In 1936 the Minnesota District had to regard three of its pastors, H. Albrecht, E. Baumann and G. Schuetze "as people who have severed their affiliations with our Synod." The reasons are predictable. "There had been a practice of fellowship with Protes'tants and an unwillingness to continue dealings with district officials."<sup>33</sup>

In review, the Minnesota District may have been somewhat below par as far as losses of pastors and congregations are concerned but it certainly was above par in reasoned and seasoned efforts at healing the break. One looks back at the months following the 1930 Minnesota District convention with a strong sense of the "It might have been." It wasn't and little happened for a long time.

## VII. Belated Olive Branch

Finally in the late 1950s and early 1960s a major conciliatory effort was mounted. At the prompting of the Synod the Western Wisconsin District rescinded the suspension resolutions that had led to the formation of the Protes'tant Conference.<sup>34</sup> Lack of clarity and unanimity were given prominence as reasons for the rescision.

The rescision did not, however, bring about any peace between Protes'tants and Synod. It seemed to meet, at least in part, the demands of the Elroy Declaration. Why the failure? The Hintz suspension about the same time certainly put a damper on the whole effort. But the impression gained from numerous published reactions of Protes'tants to the rescision is that they regarded the step as "too little, too late." Some called for instant fellowship



as a reply to what had been conceived as a first step in that direction. Others wanted all anti-Protes'tant resolutions repudiated pronto.

In 1963 the Synod convention had to face the fact of "disappointing results." It still encouraged "the Western Wisconsin District and the other districts that are involved in the Protes'tant matter . . . to seek steps to close this long-standing break."<sup>35</sup>

Twenty years and more have passed since then but the break remains. In recent years it has been enlarged by the Fremont-Green Bay developments. This turns the subject to:

### VIII. Present Problems and Prospects

Regrettable and poignant and tragic as those developments at Fremont and Green Bay may be, the veteran observer's first reaction will be that history is repeating itself. Earlier in this essay a line was drawn from Pastor Christman to Professor Sauer. The line is simply intensified by what is being said at this point.

Certain pastors become involved in the Protes'tant Controversy. They may be in trouble with their congregations or they may be most appreciated in their ministry. They, however, cast their lot with the Protes'tants. Old issues are revived. Old fellowship problems arise. Old accusations are raised. Old established congregations are disturbed and divided. This is not said as disparagement. This is said as a statement of fact.

Eventually one must face the question of doctrinal differences. Are there such that divide the Protes'tants and the Wisconsin Synod? The question is not easy to answer.

Way back in the late twenties skilled interpreters were at loggerheads over the problem of doctrinal differences in the Beitz paper. One doubts whether the belated wisdom of the eighties will really supply a definitive answer.

Held to strict *Wortlaut*, Beitz can be questioned on such matters as the role of the Law in repentance. Granted the benefit of the doubt, in the mode of Koehler and others, he could pass an orthodoxy test. In the final analysis, however, one should assert that in the matter of conference papers, and that is in the area of public doctrine, the key point is clarity and all unclarity should be clarified. When doctrine is at stake, the sponsoring of doubt or disbelief are equally to be avoided.

There is another reason why it is difficult to discuss doctrinal divergence in the Protes'tant Controversy. This is the prior demand of Protes'tants to clean the whole slate before substantial discussions can get started. Since the twenties there may have been private discussions of doctrinal issues involved in the dispute between the Protes'tant Conference and the Synod. None such, however, appeared on the record. Discussions of this sort never really got beyond the introductory stage.

In the absence of direct doctrinal confrontation there is and should be a reluctance to throw the charge of false doctrine hither and yon. The historical record, however, plainly indicates that the Protes'tants and we do not see eye-to-eye in the matter of fellowship. If the opportunity presented itself, this essayist would very much like to discuss with Protes'tants the Bible teaching of obduracy. As late as a decade ago, a Protes'tant withdrew from the conference over this issue.<sup>36</sup>

In conclusion a "Protes'tant Profile" will be presented. The latest statistical report indicates that the Protes'tant Conference has eight pastors with ten congregations comprising 1600 members. There are 165 enrolled in the 10 Sunday schools. Among the nine Lutheran church bodies supplying financial statistics in 1982 the Protes'tant Conference ranked dead last in the "total contributions" column. Its figure was \$147, half of the \$289 of the Wisconsin Synod. In the work-at-large column the Faith-Life adherents again ranked dead last. Their average contribution was a little over \$11. The WELS figure was almost \$60. Remember, figures can lie!

If the essayist is forced into predicting the future, he will have to assume a Cassandra role of prophet of doom and gloom, at least insofar as the historical record is concerned. That is human judgment. What the Holy Spirit can do and will do is another matter.

Given the letdown of the early sixties it is not easy to hope for a swift and surprising end to the Protes'tant Controversy. According to human judgment, one would have to predict a resurgence of Protes'tant difficulties in a dozen years or so. They could come sooner. They could come later.

This is, however, too pessimistic a note on which to round off a paper that has had to accentuate the negative. What would really be wrong with each and every one of us resolving today to do anything and everything possible to heal a break that has existed in Wisconsin Synod history for over a half century? What would be wrong with each and every one of us praying tonight and subsequent nights that the Holy Spirit might do what we have been unable to do.

This essayist's generation with its graying hair stands somewhere in the middle. It has inherited a Protes'tant Controversy from its fathers. It bequeaths that controversy to another generation.

It appears that the Protes'tant Conference will continue to exist in the years ahead. It is well for all of us to have at least some acquaintance with the group and its history.

It is the purpose of this paper to make a small contribution in that direction.

### ENDNOTES

<sup>1</sup>Examples are the personal accounts of Floyd Brand, Robert Christman and Michael Hanke in recent issues of *Faith-Life*, the Protes'tant publication produced continuously since Easter 1928. Hereafter references to the periodical will be given as *F-L* with an *a* or *b* added to the usual issue and page designation. *Faith-Life* has usually used a two-column per page format. Hence the special alphabetical addition to the citations. A "*F-L* sup." designation will indicate a reference to a documentary insertion appearing with special pagination in certain *Faith-Life* issues.

<sup>2</sup>The only published record of these proceedings is "The Parting of Professor J. P. Koehler and the Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary" in *WELS Historical Institute Journal*, I, Fall 1983, pp 36-47.

<sup>3</sup>President John W. Brenner is supposed to have coined the phrase. An early example of Protes'tant objections is found in *F-L*, November 26, 1928, p 66.

<sup>4</sup>The 1930 Beitz letter to the Minnesota District charges, "From the nature of your resolutions it becomes evident that you have been remiss now for a period of more than two years in not reading *Faith-Life* and for that reason are not up to the times." The letter appears in *F-L*, August 1930, p 66.



<sup>5</sup>Letter from Pastor Alfred Jannusch to E. C. Fredrich dated June 20, 1983.

<sup>6</sup>John Philip Koehler, *History of the Wisconsin Synod* (St. Cloud, Minnesota: Sentinel Publishing Company for the Protestant Conference, 1970). A second edition, necessitated when the senior church history class at the Seminary bought out the first edition, appeared in 1981. Hereafter cited as Koehler, *History*, with references to the first edition.

<sup>7</sup>*F-L*, March-April 1969, p 20a. reports the matter and *F-L*, May-June, p 7a reprints the Commission's letter that declined the offer.

<sup>8</sup>Elmer C. Kiessling, *The History of the Western Wisconsin District* (special district printing, 1970), pp 11-28. Hereafter cited as Kiessling.

<sup>9</sup>The paper is on file at the Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary library.

<sup>10</sup>In his concern for objectivity Koehler, who was so personally involved, avoided more than a mere mention of the subject.

<sup>11</sup>Paul Hensel, *The Wauwatosa Gospel: Which Is It?* (Marshfield, Wisconsin, 1928), paragraphs 117-118, as quoted in *F-L*, November-December 1978, 22b.

<sup>12</sup>Koehler, *History*, p 255.

<sup>13</sup>Details of the whole affair can be found in "Faculty and Board Reports" that appear in *F-L* sup. from October 1940 to January 1941.

<sup>14</sup>*F-L* sup. from July to September 1940 provides the "Watertown Transcript."

<sup>15</sup>*Western Wisconsin District Proceedings*, 1926, pp 31-34.

<sup>16</sup>*Kiessling*, p 19.

<sup>17</sup>*Western Wisconsin District Proceedings*, 1926, pp 33.

<sup>18</sup>*Ibid.*, p 34.

<sup>19</sup>Since the *Faith-Life* 1978 September-October issue's reprint of the Beitz paper is the most readily accessible, references to the paper will be made via that issue. This reference is to *F-L* September-October 1978, p 2a. It is striking that in the next sentence following the "harp" quotation Beitz writes, "This letter is written not for the purpose that we may see what is happening to the Galatian Christians, but that we may see what is happening to us." It is not likely that Beitz would have read the opening paragraph of Karl Barth's *Roemerbrief* by 1926 and therefore the similarity is all the more remarkable.

<sup>20</sup>The quotation is from the Pieper-Meyer *Antwort* to Koehler's *Beleuchtung* and is found on p 8.

<sup>21</sup>Eventually Gerhard Ruediger found his way back into the Wisconsin Synod after a bitter strife with Protestants.

<sup>22</sup>See Note 11.

<sup>23</sup>Claus Gieschen, "Ten Lively Years," *Faith-Life*, January 1938, p 5b.

<sup>24</sup>*F-L*, January 1938, pp 7b-8a.

<sup>25</sup>*F-L*, January 1938, p 8b.

<sup>26</sup>*Kiessling*, p 24.

<sup>27</sup>Reluctantly the essayist refers to the writing cited in note 2.

<sup>28</sup>*Minnesota District Proceedings*, 1924, p 27.

<sup>29</sup>*Minnesota District Proceedings*, 1928, pp 48-49.

<sup>30</sup>*Minnesota District Proceedings*, 1930, pp 32-35. This reference also covers the material in the next two paragraphs.

<sup>31</sup>The Beitz letter is found in *F-L*, August 1930, pp 6a-7b.

<sup>32</sup>*Minnesota District Proceedings*, 1932, pp 72-73.

<sup>33</sup>*Minnesota District Proceedings*, 1936, pp 13-14, 15, 73-74.

<sup>34</sup>*Wisconsin Synod Proceedings*, 1961, pp 199-200.

<sup>35</sup>*Wisconsin Synod Proceedings*, 1963, pp 222.

<sup>36</sup>*F-L*, May-June 1973, pp 12-15.

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## The End of an Epoch in the Apache Indian Mission

Alfred M. Uplegger and Henry E. Rosin  
1892 — 1984                      1892 — 1982

Edgar H. Hoenecke

AN IMPORTANT EPOCH OF NINETY YEARS came to an end in our Apache Indian Mission with the death of two veteran missionaries and lifelong friends, Pastors Alfred M. Uplegger and Henry E. Rosin within a two-year span. They were both born in the year before J. Plocher, G. Adascheck and P. Mayerhoff set up their tents in Arizona in 1893.

Uplegger spent over fifty of his active years on the San Carlos reservation and Rosin rounded out his fifty years of service at Peridot, at the very spot where Plocher and Adascheck began the work in 1893. This was on the sunny southern slope of the Peridot Mesa in full view of the grand panorama to the east, dominated by the formidable Triplet Peaks.

After their arduous years of faithful service it is entirely appropriate that their tired mortal remains now lie with those of their devoted helpmates and fellow workers in the tiny cemetery higher up on the mesa's southern slope waiting for the last trumpet to sound and their bodies to rise incorruptible. From the vantage point of the growing number of headstones one can see the vast grandeur of the southern desert toward San Carlos Lake and the mighty Coolidge Dam and, at one's feet, the tufa-stone church, the school and the dwellings of our workers of the ninety-year-old Peridot mission station.

The almost parallel careers of Alfred Uplegger and Henry Rosin began in two small villages in Wisconsin in 1892. Alfred Uplegger was born at Hermansfort on July 12 and Henry Rosin at Wrightstown, near Green Bay, on September 19. Both grew up in devout Lutheran homes and decided to study for the ministry. They became good friends at Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary which they attended from 1914 to 1917.

During December of his senior year Alfred Uplegger volunteered to respond to the urgent request of Superintendent Gustav Harders for a student to help him at the Indian mission station Globe. Harders' health had broken down under the stress of his many duties. He was pastor and teacher at the church and school at Globe and he frequently made exploratory visits to other cities and towns in Arizona in the interest of opening new missions. In addition, as superintendent he had the visitation of all the Apache Mission stations and all the deskwork involved in the mission. Alfred Uplegger arrived at Globe in January of 1917 and worked with Pastor Harders until the latter's death in April of the same year, when the responsibility of the

church and school was laid upon his inexperienced shoulders. Assigned to the same station after his own graduation from the seminary, Rosin came to Globe in August to help his friend. Missionary E. Edgar Guenther of East Fork was called to succeed Harders as superintendent.

The brief apprenticeship under the great Harders had a profound effect on young Uplegger and, through him, also on Henry Rosin. The example of loving devotion and warm concern for the Indians left a lifelong impression on both men which especially Alfred Uplegger often recalled with fond appreciation. The same influence was felt throughout the Synod through the Indian novels which Pastor Harders had written about his mission experiences among the Apaches. His *Dohaschtida* and *La Paloma* are still available from Northwestern Publishing House.

### Harders' Twelve Years of Service

It will be of interest and value to present a brief sketch of Harders' twelve years of service in the Indian Mission.

In 1905 a serious throat disorder induced Pastor Gustav Harders of Milwaukee to follow his doctor's orders to go to a drier climate to find relief from his illness. His limited funds and the opportunity for useful employment of his time and ministerial talents persuaded him to accept the offer of the mission board to spend his one-year leave of absence at Peridot and to live in the abandoned old Peridot schoolhouse. This proved to have been a happy solution of a mutual problem.

Because of the overload of work at Peridot, Carl Guenther had been unable to provide follow-up spiritual care for his Apache farmers whom floods had driven from their fields to find work in the mines at Globe, just west of the reservation. He welcomed Harders' help in serving these people several times a week. It also gave Harders a limited activity, stimulating him to better health and enabling him to return to Milwaukee after his year's leave.

But when he resumed his pastoral duties his throat disorder recurred and he was advised to move permanently to Arizona with his family. The mission board gladly called him to Globe. In fact, they also called him to take over the superintendency of the entire Apache Mission. With the Indians as a nucleus at Globe Harders extended his soul-saving work to include people of many other national backgrounds. The population of the city now numbered about ten thousand. Harders was a man for all peoples; his gospel call knew no race or color bar. Somehow he communicated even with a group of Chinese laborers, invited them to his church and began to instruct them for confirmation. Only the fact that their employers removed them to another job out of his reach prevented him from carrying our synod's first Chinese mission effort to fruition.

The complete story of Harders' fruitful activity of twelve years in Arizona may be read elsewhere. Our immediate concern is with his brief contact with our two missionaries and the lasting effect he had on the career of Alfred Uplegger and Henry Rosin.

Both Uplegger and Rosin left Globe within a year to begin their work among the Indians on the reservation in 1918. Alfred Uplegger moved to the Indian agency at "Old" San Carlos, about nine miles south of Peridot. He established a mission, built a residence and a small school out of the soft

### Three Apache Mission Superintendents



Gustav Harders  
1906-1918

E. Edgar Guenther  
1918-1936

Francis Uplegger  
1936-1963

tufa stone found there. He worked faithfully here until his buildings and the Indian agency had to be relocated in 1929 when the waters of San Carlos Lake began to cover the land behind the Coolidge Dam.

Henry Rosin was also assigned from Globe to Peridot to replace Carl Guenther who had followed John Plocher, the first missionary, in 1900. Rosin always spoke of his assignment to Peridot as a great honor and responsibility, thinking himself unworthy to step into the shoes of these great predecessors.

### Peridot

Peridot is a beautiful place, if one can appreciate the stark grandeur of the Arizona desert with its sparse growth of mesquite and chaparral set against the rocky backdrop of the massive Peridot Mesa. The plain appearance of the tufa mission church and school has been relieved over the years by the planting of desert-hardy plants like acacia, arbor vitae, palo verde and tamarisk. But when the first missionaries arrived in 1893 and began their work on the ten acres allotted to the mission, Peridot may have been as Eric Hartzell reports it to have been described by Daklugie, the son of the Apache Chief Juh, "That was a terrible place, the worst in all of our vast territory!" This might have been the appearance of Peridot from the road, looking west.

If one took the trouble of climbing Peridot Mesa to the top, as this writer did with Henry Rosin, and then looked back to the south and east, the impression of Peridot would change radically. Then one might look at the grand panorama stretching from the southwest to the northeast across San Carlos Lake, the seemingly endless desert, and on to the rugged mountains, dominated by the Triplet Peaks, as Pastor Francis Uplegger described it:

Now let your eye take one vast sweep  
and view a land most grand,  
with mountains rocky, rugged, steep,  
with mesas wide and canyons deep,  
and slopes and wildland far, unscanned,  
sun-kissed Apacheland!



Henry Rosin was proud of his Peridot and happy to send his guests on their way with beautiful mementos of their visit in the form of a piece of the rock which the Lord had put there. Someone named the mesa after the beautiful, yellow-orange crystals of chrysolite, a gem called *peridot* which is found in profusion in the rough in outcroppings near the crest. Rosin and his Apache children collected many of these which he generously presented to his friends and visitors.

He also used a number of them in the rough and as polished gems in a convention display under the text from 1 Peter 2:5: "Ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God, by Jesus Christ." The rough, uncut, dull crystals represented natural man. Out of these unlovely stones, by the power of God's Word and Spirit, God, by Jesus Christ, can make reborn souls that shine like, and indeed are, precious gems in the sight of the Lord, useful unto good works. Sometimes he told his beloved Apaches that they, too, were such precious people in God's eyes, as the Lord had said, "which in times past were not a people, but are now the people of God."

Superintendent Ed Guenther once wrote this about Peridot, alluding also to the *peridot* gem which was found there:

The real gem of this station is the mission school that has grown and flourished under the calm, evangelical leadership of Missionary Rosin. It has a staff of four teachers and an enrollment of 124 pupils in grades one to nine. A tenth grade was added in the fall of 1947.

Schools and colleges sometimes draw attention to former scholars who have attained to positions of prominence in later years. The Peridot school also has an alumnus of whom few living beyond the boundaries of Apacheland have ever heard. His name is Rankin Rodgers, an Apache youth. Physically handicapped and walking only with the aid of crutches, the Lord endowed him with a humble spirit and a childlike faith in Christ. He was a natural-born teacher. Although he had only a seventh-grade education, he was able to take over the lower classes of the Peridot school which he had himself attended. He taught these grades faithfully and successfully from 1920 to 1935, when the Lord called him home. (*Continuing In His Word*, p. 239.)

### "Raisins"

To know Henry Rosin was to love him. He was known to his friends by his college nickname "Raisins." *Rosine* is the German equivalent of raisin. By some he was also known as the Peridot "sheriff," a term of endearment given him because of his law-abiding, discipline-enforcing, sincere personality and his physical vigor. He was a bundle of energy in his active years, always ready and willing for some new enterprise.

His practical mind and aptitude with tools was so well known that scarcely a building project on the reservation was undertaken without seeking his advice. It was self-evident, for example, when the mission station at San Carlos had to be abandoned in 1929, that the comparatively new tufa-stone structure would be salvaged. Henry Rosin and his brother-in-law organized



Henry Rosin and Alfred Uplegger

a group of their Apache members to dismantle it, haul it the nine miles to Peridot, and there erect it as a school. Back in 1941 he showed us a solar water-heating system which he had designed and built to put the abundant sunshine of Peridot to good use for the parsonage and teacherage. And it worked!

Rosin was a man among men, also among his Apache cowboy members. They often invited him on their spring cattle roundups, not to look on but to participate. He could ride and bulldog calves for branding with the best of them. But he was loathe to perform before my movie cameras lest it would a wrong impression of him "back east."

He loved children and was a frequent visitor in the school classrooms besides taking over the religious instruction of the upper grades to prepare them for confirmation. On our visits we usually found him before school or during recess on the playground, either playing baseball with the older children or pushing the little Apaches on the swings or carousel which he had built for them. And they loved and trusted him.

Like Ed Guenther, Henry Rosin visited his members in their camps and at their work. When one of them was sick or unable to come to church he either brought the Word of comfort to them or called for them in his automobile. He regularly took the time before church, for example, to pick up a blind man at his outlying camp, even on the Sunday of his anniversary. Art Guenther and Henry Rosin were of one mind about the matter of regular camp visits, also to the men at work on the cattle range. As Arthur Guenther had said, "The time to talk to the Apache men is when their day's work is done and they're sitting or lying around the evening campfire, swapping stories and drinking coffee. Then they're relaxed and will listen to you."

It was always interesting and rewarding to stop by for a visit to Rosins; one knew that the welcome mat was always out. Rosin was a good listener, always eager to hear what had happened and was being planned "back east." He enjoyed discussing matters of church life and doctrine on a one-to-one or conference level. And his contributions to the discussions were valuable. He was always considerate and unassuming. On the occasion of his



fiftieth anniversary at Peridot, with the church filled with his members and friends, he shifted attention from himself and maneuvered his father-in-law, Pastor Francis Uplegger, to center stage, while he retreated to the background.

The coming of Pastor Francis Uplegger and his three daughters, Johanna, Gertrude and Dorothy, to San Carlos in 1920 brought the family together with Alfred who was still a bachelor pastor at Old San Carlos. Shortly after this both Alfred and Henry married and became brothers-in-law. Henry took Johanna Uplegger to wife and Alfred brought his beloved Irma nee Ruge to Arizona from Milwaukee in 1922.

It was truly a mark of God's great goodness that the family remained together on neighboring mission stations for fifty years, sharing the work of the Lord and also days of joy and sorrow. Both the Upleggers and the Rosins were blessed with a son. Both sons, as they grew up, resolved to prepare themselves for work in the church. Rupert Rosin is now a teacher at Oklahoma City. Karl Uplegger was studying for the ministry in Wisconsin when he was drafted into the army during World War II. To the great sorrow of the whole family he laid down his young life for his country, dying in the Battle of the Bulge.

Henry Rosin was always full of concern for his *Schatz*, as he fondly called his wife Johanna, and she for him. In 1968 they retired to Globe where they lived happily until the Lord called him home in 1982.

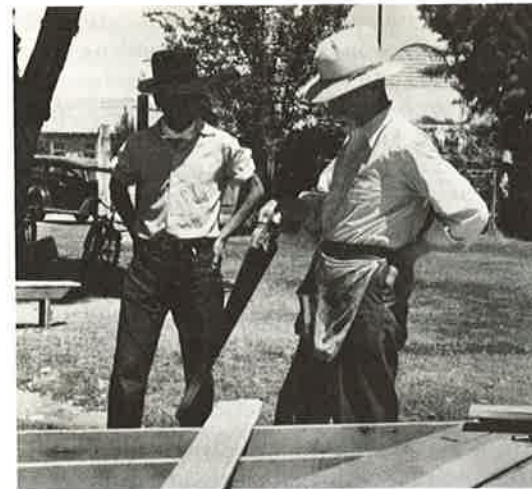
#### Alfred Uplegger

When Old San Carlos mission had to be abandoned in 1929 and its school had been rebuilt at Peridot the mission board assigned Alfred Uplegger back to Globe where he had begun under Harders in 1918. However, during the intervening decade many of the Apache farmers had returned to the reservation and Uplegger discovered that the work was much more frustrating among people of a variety of national backgrounds who had been attracted to the copper mines and had little interest in religion. Also the work was now supervised by the Arizona mission board, while the funding of it was still under the Indian Mission budget and the school was closed in 1922 for a lack of children.

Alfred Uplegger's original call has been to the Indian Mission and he was happy to be called to help out on the reservation as often as there was need, such as during a vacancy at Peridot. In 1920 his father, Pastor Francis Uplegger, had been called to the large San Carlos field and in 1936 as superintendent to succeed Pastor E. Edgar Guenther. Alfred was often called to San Carlos to help his father because of the latter's heavy schedule.

He was happy to do this because his repeated request for a modest chapel to replace the jerry-built original meeting-place at Globe had not been granted. In 1931 the mission board had again presented the request:

Already at our last Joint Synod session the conditions at Globe were presented and the need of a modest new chapel expressed. Our present chapel resembles some of the chapels in our early colored mission in the South. The building is in a dilapidated condition. It is to serve not only the Indians, but now chiefly the white people. Globe is now a city of 10,000.



Francis Uplegger at work building annex to church for living quarters and office

The chapel was not built. Alfred Uplegger continued to live at Globe until 1941, although his work during the last five years had been chiefly in the mission and school at San Carlos. The senior Uplegger was physically not able to cope with all the duties entailed in the field of 1,200 Indians, the teaching at the government school on released time, and the laborious task of teaching Apache to the missionaries. Alfred Uplegger and his two sisters, Gertrude and Dorothy, now took over the teaching.

It became clear that Alfred Uplegger would have to move to San Carlos to help his father, even though it meant the expense of living quarters for both. An annex apartment was attached to the rear wall of the church for Superintendent Francis Uplegger and his daughters and the Alfred Uplegger family moved into the parsonage.

The Apache language courses for missionaries had been a natural result of the decision of Pastor Francis Uplegger to bridge the gap between himself and his large Apache congregations by learning to speak Apache. He saw the inadequacy of entrusting the sacred message to interpreters who themselves did not speak a correct English, were not grounded in the faith and often were at a loss as to how to translate words and statements which were not entirely clear to them.

In 1941 the new executive committee, which supervised the mission, was certain that the slow growth of the field in numbers and in Christian maturity was in large part due to the fact that the preaching and teaching of children as well as adults by means of Bible stories and Sunday school leaflets permitted only the most elementary doctrinal instruction. Even the people who could get along with broken English at the trading post were confronted with what was virtually a foreign language when the instruction went beyond the concrete and narrative in religion.

Pastor Uplegger senior was encouraged to pursue his language study and to share his results with his co-workers. The new missionaries were required to spend six months under his instruction before they began their practical field work. It was an arduous time-consuming task for Pastor Uplegger. There was no Apache written language; no manual or teacher able to teach a



“correct” Apache; and no guide for proper pronunciation of very difficult sounds. Uplegger began by visiting the camps and sitting for hours learning the Apache words for things and then jotting them down in his notebooks in a phonetic manner with the help of a number of diacritical marks. Gradually a glossary of sorts emerged which, after careful correction, became a crude written Apache which could be taught to others. The next hurdle was the compilation of what became an Apache grammar, gleaned from many variables as the commonly used form of expression and sentence structure. With these basics established he began to translate Scripture texts and stories, the catechism, liturgy, Scripture lessons, original and traditional hymns into Apache and to print a series of large-type charts for instruction. Before long he also produced a hymnbook in Apache with the musical score for the service.

### A New Direction

It became important that our missionaries would have to advance in their camp visit and other instruction periods beyond the use of Sunday school leaflets. A native sectarian church charged our church as not teaching the Bible because these leaflets were so generally used, teaching from pictures instead of God's Word. With Uplegger's training, it was hoped that our missionaries would be able to dispense with interpreters and preach directly from accurately translated Scripture texts which were meaningful to the Apaches in their own language.

It had been a tremendous undertaking. It is deplorable that it was not more generally appreciated. It is a sound maxim that missionaries, to be most effective, must learn to communicate with their hearers in the vernacular which they speak as their mother tongue. This obviously applied also to a people who by compulsion once were, and by preference now are, confined to a reservation where they still use their tribal language.

The Apaches now had a language which was also fixed in a written form and did not vary or depend upon the spiritual understanding and maturity of an untrained interpreter. Francis Uplegger, and Alfred Uplegger after him, faithfully taught their congregation the use of the written language, leading them in group reading from the charts posted at the front of the church. These charts are still in use at San Carlos. The writer was surprised to hear the Apache congregation at the funeral of Pastor Alfred Uplegger on March 4 1984, join with full voice and fervor in the singing of one of Francis Uplegger's Apache hymns posted on the chart before them. Alfred Uplegger was perhaps the most devoted language student of his father. He learned to speak Apache, used it in the camps, and in his instruction classes and sermons. The close bond between pastor and people was very evident at his funeral service. Every pew in the church had been occupied long before the service and a large number of Apaches stood outside to listen at the open windows. At the end the people slowly filed past the casket to pay their last respects and, when they had left the church, a few wailed loudly, as is the old Apache custom. But most of the people quietly spoke about what was on their sorrowing hearts — in Apache!

For years Alfred Uplegger had lived and labored in the shadow of his distinguished father. He himself did not aspire to scientific language research nor was he honored with a doctor's degree as was his father for his

life's work. But he was loved and mourned as a faithful, loving, caring pastor by his grieving flock. His quiet Christian temperament and gentle leading on their way to everlasting life had won their hearts. They responded to his warmth and compassion in their sorrows with loving ministrations when he and their dear “Aunt Irma” were bowed down with grief at the news that their only son had become a casualty in World War II, even though for some the expression of compassion was only a handclasp. Alfred Uplegger was friendly but never at the loss of his dignity. His greatest strength and resource in times of need was a childlike faith. This was his way of solving problems which were beyond his ability to handle. Thus he approached his need for a God-fearing wife early in his ministry. He wrote this touching account about himself only a year before his death.

In the first six years in the ministry of this writer [he was then at Old San Carlos], he took a special delight in the story of Abraham sending his trusted “chief steward, Eliezer of Damascus” to Mesopotamia to get a God-fearing wife for his son Isaac. — “and Eliezer bowed before the Lord and prayed.”

Now, the writer of this story has also been called to a strange land, to him at first, to Apacheland. It is a land similar to the Holy Land, the land of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. For him the need and desire for a proper God-fearing helpmeet were great. In those years as a bachelor a cry went up to the Lord daily, “O Lord, my gracious God, Thou hast sent me here to this Apache people; do Thou now also send me a wife or direct me to find one, even as Eliezer found Rebekah and brought her to Isaac. Let the one whom Thou, O Lord, hast chosen for me to serve Thee at my side be one who, like Rebekah, is willing to leave her people and to come to this strange Apacheland and to accompany me to the Arizona desert and its mountains. Give her the health and strength to be able to endure whatever we might need to endure for Thy name's sake. Let Thy Spirit comfort her and cheer her, so that we may serve Thee and Thy chosen children here together for the glory of Thy name and for their eternal salvation!”

The convention of the Wisconsin Synod in 1921 gave this writer an opportunity to meet many people in the big city of Milwaukee. . . . Before leaving, his cousins arranged a party with fellow church members on the shore of “Gitshi Gumi, the shining big sea-water.” It was on September 13. There in the group was one who was very similar in appearance and manner to the one he had seen in a wonderful dream! Yes, actually!

Thereafter postcards, then letters followed, out of which grew friendship and love. Nearly a year later one letter carried the question, “Will you come to Apacheland to be with me? May I come to get you?” And the answer came back, “If it is the Lord's will that we be united, then I will come.” Here was the answer to his oft-repeated prayers! . . .

The wedding day was bleak and dark with many intermittent showers, yet there was a joyful sunshine of confidence in their hearts. The wedding was on Thanksgiving Day, November 30,



Left to right: Pastor and Mrs. Henry Rosin, Gertrude Uplegger, Dr. Francis Uplegger, Dorothea Uplegger Behn, Pastor and Mrs. Alfred Uplegger.

1922. *It was indeed thanksgiving!* This became true and there was hardly a day in our fifty years together that we did not pray a thanksgiving prayer!" (*Apache Lutheran*, April 1983, p. 6f.)

Theirs was a good happy life. Together they served their people at Old San Carlos, Globe and new San Carlos until 1972. The Lord blessed their marriage with an only son, Karl, born in 1923. But we will let Alfred Uplegger tell the story in his own touching words:

Our only son, Karl, was born on October 28 of the following year. God blessed him with perfect health and with the spirit of humble obedience, to our great joy and thanksgiving. He attended Northwestern College at Watertown, Wisconsin and was preparing for the ministry, when he was drafted into the United States Army in 1943. He fought as a sergeant with the 78th or Lightning Division in Germany in World War II and became a casualty on March 1, 1945 (in the Battle of the Bulge). He died of his wounds on Pentecost Sunday, May 20, at Denver, Colorado. He was buried here at Peridot.

That was our greatest sorrow and loss. Yet we knew from him that he had saved the lives of many soldiers on both sides of the battle lines because of his knowledge of German which he could interpret to U.S. officers (*Apache Lutheran*, November, 1972, p. 5.)

Although they accepted this great loss in the spirit of Job and said, "The Lord gave, the Lord hath taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord," yet the sorrow for Karl was always in the back of their minds. They adopted a daughter, Rachel, after Irma's surgery in 1936 which made it impossible for her to have more children, and showered her with much love.

### Irma Uplegger

Irma Uplegger also found solace in taking care of babies, especially the abandoned Apache babies which were brought to their attention. Her visits to the hospital's baby ward were so frequent that she became known everywhere as "Aunt Irma." If one of these little ones had to be taken to the East Fork Nursery way up near Whiteriver, a drive of several hours through the mountains and the Salt River Canyon, "Aunt Irma" was notified. She and Alfred would then take blankets and pillows in the car, day or night, and set

out on the journey, Irma trying to comfort the little one on the long trip. Uplegger writes, "We began to do this at the time of the old Model T Fords with only isin-glass curtains in the twenties, to the present day."

Lest one dismiss these nighttime rides from San Carlos to East Fork in a Model T Ford as too trivial to mention, one must remember that this trip to the higher elevation of the Fort Apache Reservation on gravel roads through the switchbacks of the Salt River Canyon, sometimes in a blizzard, was not a small matter. Happily, there was always a warm welcome at East Fork and loving arms and hearts were ready to nurture all the little waifs which were brought to the nursery.

"Aunt Irma" was sorely missed when the Lord took her home to himself in heaven in 1972. Only this thought could in any way assuage the grief of Alfred Uplegger. Her death came so suddenly at the end of a busy day. The family had observed the eightieth birthday of Henry Rosin at Peridot at noon, then the Upleggers stopped at Globe and on the way home also at the hospital to visit an aged Apache grandmother. As Irma sat down in her easy chair she was overcome by a coronary occlusion. Before the doctor across the way arrived, the Lord had taken her home. The shock and sorrow was the greatest he had ever endured, Alfred later told this writer. Only the certain confidence that she was now with her Lord could reconcile him to his irreparable loss.

The Apache congregation, especially her many friends, the Apache ladies of the congregation, with whom she had sewed so many quilts and children's clothes for East Fork orphans, came in great numbers to her funeral and wept aloud, as the widows did when Dorcas died, thinking of all the kindnesses "Aunt Irma" had done among them.

Pastor R. H. Zimmermann, field secretary, expressed the thoughts of all of us in his address, "The death of Mrs. Alfred Uplegger brings to a close the career as wife, mother and pastor's right hand of a very fine and dedicated lady. For fifty years she devoted her life, first of all to her husband and children, but also to the work of bringing the gospel of salvation to the people of the Apaches on the San Carlos Reservation. She will be sorely missed. Pastors can be trained and called, but a dedicated pastor's wife, like Irma Uplegger, is a special kind of gift of God. We are grateful to him for her many years of loving service. May she rest in peace against the day of the resurrection of all flesh!"

Alfred Uplegger's life went on for another twelve lonely years. But even though he grieved deeply and retired from active duty in 1977 at the age of 85 after 60 years in the ministry, he still carried on. He kept in touch with the work by visiting his old friends and writing articles for *The Apache Lutheran*. His prodigious memory remained sharp to the end of his life. And he kept faithful records, even of the weather.

His study at San Carlos was an index to his compulsive need to save anything written or printed that ever came into his hands. His filing system was unique; it was in his memory. He once told the writer, when he looked in vain for an empty chair to offer him, because desk, file cabinets, window ledge and chairs plus much of the floor were literally buried under sheaves of papers and stacks of books, "I know it's a mess and Irma always threatens to get rid of these things; but I need them and I can always find what I want when I need it." His store of carefully memorized Bible passages in both





The Peridot mission

English and German was amazing and even in impromptu speeches at conferences seemed always at his beck and call.

Alfred Uplegger died on February 25, 1984 at the grand old age of 92. His life had spanned the entire 91 years of the history of the Apache Mission. The cumulative years of service of the Uplegger family, including Henry Rosin, were far more than 160! The funeral service appropriately was held at Grace Church, San Carlos, on a chilly Sunday afternoon to enable all his friends and colleagues from the reservations and beyond to attend. The church was crowded with Apache members long before the service opened and many had to stand outdoors to listen at the open windows.

The present writer had been asked to preach on an appropriate Word of Scripture. Unaware of the fact that it was a favorite text of his friend and brother, Al Uplegger, he chose the words of faithful Eliezer to Laban after his mission had been accomplished. We laid Alfred Uplegger's tired body to rest up on Peridot Mesa in the tiny cemetery where his dear Irma, his father, Dr. Francis, his son Karl, his sister Johanna and her husband Henry Rosin, Al's lifelong friend and co-worker on the San Carlos Reservation, and a number of other colleagues all lie awaiting the sound of the last trumpet and their resurrection to life everlasting. It was a chilly, windy sunset when we gathered there to perform this last sad duty and to be comforted once more with the familiar Word of hope, "sown in corruption, it is raised in incorruption; sown in dishonor, it is raised in glory; sown in weakness, it is raised in power; sown a natural body, it is raised a spiritual body."

As is their custom, the Apaches remained at the graveside and many helped to commit his body to the bosom of the earth by actively taking part by turns in the burial. As we walked down the rocky slope it was as though we heard him speak as Eliezer, Abraham's faithful servant, did of old, his mission in life accomplished, "Do not detain me, now that the Lord has granted success to my journey. Send me on my way so that I may go to my master" (Genesis 24:56).

*Edgar Hoenecke is a retired pastor. For more than two decades he headed the WELS World Missions program. He lives in San Diego, California.*

## Monetary Donations to the WELS Historical Institute

January 1982 – October 1984

Memorials are indicated by names in parentheses.

January	1982	Rev. and Mrs. Loyal Schroeder	\$50.00
December	1982	Rev. A. T. Kretzmann	\$50.00
February	1983	Mrs. Herbert Speckin	\$5.00
May	1983	Rev. A. T. Kretzmann	\$25.00
		Marion Leverentz	\$10.00
August	1983	Mr. and Mrs. Daniel Carow	\$35.00
		Rev. and Mrs. Roy Hoenecke	\$50.00
		WELS Convention	\$1977.29
October	1983	Mrs. B. F. Prange (Rev. B. F. Prange)	\$300.00
November	1983	Mr. and Mrs. Gerald Heckmann	\$5.00
February	1984	Chippewa Valley Councilmen's Conference	\$161.46
		Palos Lutheran Church, Palos Heights IL (Rev. George Boldt)	\$20.00
March	1984	Mr. and Mrs. William Bopf (Rev. William Schink)	\$10.00
		Mr. and Mrs. Robert Clausen (Rev. William Schink)	\$20.00
		Mrs. Herbert Speckin	\$5.00
		Prof. and Mrs. Martin Westerhaus (Rev. William Schink)	\$10.00
May	1984	Rev. and Mrs. Frederic Gilbert (Rev. William Schink)	\$10.00
		Alma Ihlenfeldt	\$5.00
		Rev. and Mrs. Theo. Kretzmann (Henry Merklinger)	\$10.00
		Mr. and Mrs. Monte Schmiege (Rev. William Schink)	\$10.00
		Prof. and Mrs. Armin Schuetze (Rev. William Schink)	\$6.00
June	1984	Fairview Ev. Lutheran School, Milwaukee WI	\$341.00
July	1984	Mary-Martha Guild, Zion Lutheran Church, Torrance CA	\$50.00
		Prof. and Mrs. Darvin Raddatz	\$20.00
October	1984	Marion Leverentz	\$15.00
		Lutheran Ladies League, Star of Bethlehem Lutheran Church, New Berlin WI	\$20.00

If we have neglected to list any donations, please let us know.

Rev. Roland Cap Ehlke, President  
WELS Historical Institute

# Donations to the WELS Archives

July 1982 — October 1984

The individual, congregation or organization listed before each item is the donor. In some cases the name of the donor is unknown.

- July 1982 Rev. Markus O. Koepsell: 35 picture postcards from beginning of century, including several from Missionary J. G. Harders in Arizona.
- February 1983 Concordia Historical Institute: *Amerikanischer Kalendar*, 1870, 1875.
- April 1983 Mr. Herbert Blum: 2 pictures of J. P. Koehler's church home in Neillsville WI.
- September 1983 Principal Karl Blauert: Nebraska Lutheran Academy 1983 Annual Report, Yearbook 1981-82, 1982-83.  
Rev. Lyle J. Lindloff: Framed picture of 1925 Wisconsin Synod Convention delegates.
- October 1983 Prof. Gerald Hoenecke: 42 anniversary and dedication booklets; program for the 25th anniversary celebration for Prof. Adolf Hoenecke as Director of the Seminary; picture of Adolf Hoenecke; picture of August F. Ernst.
- November 1983 Rev. Alfred Walther: 5 bound volumes of music; 6 pieces of sheet music, some of it sung at the cornerstone laying and dedication of the Seminary.  
Parkside Ev. Lutheran Church: An oak parament cabinet; oak missal stand; 2 oak crucifixes; pair of small wooden candlesticks; pair of large (floor) candlesticks; 1 candlelighter.  
Mrs. H. J. Vogel: O. J. Naumann Fellowship Medallion presented to Prof. H. J. Vogel.
- January 1984 Rev. W. Nommensen: 13 volumes *Bunte Blaetter* (Childrens' Magazine published by NPH).  
James Sonnemann: 13 volumes of German children's stories, published by Northwestern Publishing House.  
Mrs. Ruth Stern: 1 folder of assorted newspaper clippings.  
Rev. Roland C. Ehlke: 2 cassette recordings of November 1, 1983 WELS Historical Institute meeting.
- February 1984 Loren Steele: A Northwestern College (NWC) pin with college seal on a key, date of origin unknown.  
David Martin: WLS Financial Reports, 1980-83.  
Rev. Mark Jeske: Photos — Grace Church, Milwaukee; Kaffe Muehle (NWC), WELS Historical Institute Journal Staff, 1983 (Photo); newspaper article on German immigrants to Wisconsin.  
Rev. Wilbert Krueger: 1 reel of movie film picturing arbor day at NWC ca. 1950.

- April 1984 Assorted issues of the Lutheran School Bulletin.  
Service folder and cassette recording of Saginaw area Luther 500 anniversary service.
- May 1984 WELS Luther 500 Anniversary Planning Committee: Minutes, materials, essays.  
Thomas Wilsmann: 5 volumes of minutes of the Southeastern Pastoral Conference, Michigan District, WELS.  
Board for Parish Education: 1 volume of the Minutes of the *Allgemeine Ev. Luth. Lehrerkonferenz* of Milwaukee; 1 Book of Hymns (WELS); 1 German hymnbook; DMLC Self-Study Reports for 1962, 1972, 1977, 1979; 8 copies: Diamond Jubilee Booklet, Wisconsin State Teachers' Conference. 1962 Education Survey for WELS, vols. I, II, III & Final Report.
- June 1984 Lutheran Christian Church of Japan: Materials from 25th anniversary celebration: 1 video cassette; 2 audio cassettes; 1 service folder; 3 anniversary logo pins.  
Dr. Siegbert W. Becker: 7 folders of materials on Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod doctrinal controversies; 1 folder on Intersynodical Theses of 1920s.  
Numerous Issues of "Tri-Parish Caller" (Parish Newsletter from La Crescent MN).  
Rev. R. J. Voss: Photo of Administration Building, Michigan Lutheran Seminary.  
St. Paul's Lutheran Church, Green Bay WI: History of St. Paul's; Constitutions of 1935 and 1975; 100th Anniversary service folder; 1953 church dedication booklet.
- July 1984 From Mr. James Sonnemann: Handle of the door of St. John's Ev. Lutheran Church, Ridgely Township, (rural Gibbon) MN. (Congregation was disbanded some years ago. The church has since been moved away.)
- August 1984 Winnebago Lutheran Academy: Several issues of newsletter.  
Rev. Nathan Pope: 7 large stewardship posters produced by WELS Committee for Information and Stewardship in 1950s.  
Luther High School, Onalaska: 25th anniversary booklet.  
Oscar Frey family via Prof. E. C. Fredrich: 4 photographs of Synod, District and Pastoral Conferences, of Michigan District.  
Pres. Raymond Wiechmann: Presidential Correspondence for South Atlantic District.
- September 1984 Northwestern Publishing House: Bound volumes of Synod Publications, 1983.  
District Proceedings: Michigan, South Atlantic, Southeastern Wisconsin and Western Wisconsin Districts.
- October 1984 Composite photo: Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary class of 1925.  
Elanore Schmidt: 1 medallion from 50th anniversary celebration, 1900, *Deutsche Ev. Luth. Synode von Wisconsin and anderen Staaten*.

In addition, a considerable number of anniversary and dedication booklets of various congregations have also come in. If we have inadvertently neglected to list some donation you are aware of, please let us know.

Prof. Martin O. Westerhaus  
WELS Archivist and Historian



# WELS Historical Institute New Memberships

April 1984 through October 1984

## CONGREGATION

First Ev. Lutheran Church  
Ladies' Aid Society  
Green Bay, Wisconsin  
Grace Ev. Lutheran Church  
Tucson, Arizona  
Mary-Martha Guild  
Zion Ev. Lutheran Church  
Torrance, California  
St. Peter's Ev. Lutheran Church  
Milwaukee, Wisconsin  
Zion Lutheran Church  
Hutchinson, Minnesota

## HUSBAND/WIFE

Bloom, Rev. and Mrs. Andrew S.  
Bourman, Rev. and Mrs. James C.  
Burgdorf, Mr. and Mrs. T. C.  
Davis, Mr. and Mrs. Montford V.  
Frey, Prof. and Mrs. Conrad I.  
Geiger, Rev. and Mrs. Gerald E.  
Gibbons, Rev. and Mrs. Gregory D.  
Gumm, Rev. and Mrs. Tim H.  
Henrich, Rev. and Mrs. Warren J.  
Kannenberg, Rev. and Mrs. Delmer F.  
Krueger, Rev. and Mrs. Wilbert T.  
Laabs, Rev. and Mrs. David W.  
Lauersdorf, Rev. and Mrs. Richard E.  
Lueneburg, Rev. and Mrs. Kurt A.  
Mahnke, Rev. and Mrs. Jon M.  
Pieper, Rev. and Mrs. Gary L.  
Raddatz, Prof. and Mrs. Darwin  
Renz, Rev. and Mrs. James A.  
Ristow, Rev. and Mrs. LeRoy G.  
Schafer, Mr. and Mrs. Frank  
Schroeder, Rev. and Mrs. Arnold H.  
Staab, Rev. and Mrs. William E.

## INDIVIDUAL

Arndt, Susanne K.  
Banbury, R. William  
Baumgart, Rev. John J.  
Behringer, Rev. James M.  
Belter, Rev. Dennis W.  
Buechner, Cheryl  
Degner, Rev. Steven C.  
Dick, Rev. Robert J.

Dietz, Rev. Michael W.  
Endresen, Mrs. Audrey  
Eriksson, Mrs. Margaret S.  
Ewald, Gregory  
Falck, Rev. Daniel R.  
Fetzer, Rev. Paul C.  
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High School  
Periodicals Librarian  
Appleton, Wisconsin  
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Frey, Rev. Immanuel G.  
Frey, Rev. Marc P.  
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Gerlach, Rev. Joel C.  
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Hintz, Rev. Gerald C.  
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Kruck, Rev. Keith C.  
Krueger, Rev. Edward H.  
Krueger, Rev. Robert M.  
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Meister, Rev. Robert W.  
Meyer, Rev. John P.  
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Pagels, Rev. Richard J.  
Rasch, Miss Viola E.  
Rath, Rev. James E.  
Reede, Rev. Paul N.  
Rindfleisch, Fred A.  
Ristow, Rev. August K.  
Rose, Rev. Roy H.

Sachs, Rev. Roger L.  
St. John's Ev. Lutheran  
Church Library  
Hemlock, Michigan  
Sauer, Rev. Theodore A.  
Schaeewe, Rev. Edward A.  
Scharf, Rev. Ralph E.  
Scheibe, Rev. Richard A.  
Scheuerlein, Rev. Don H.  
Schmitz, Jr., Rev. Reuben W.  
Schneider, Prof. James A.  
Schumann, Rev. Robert L.  
Schwerin, Rev. Philip J.  
Schwertfeger, Dale H.  
Schwieger, Mrs. Beverly A.  
Sehald, Donald C.  
Sievrt, Rev. David R.  
Sievrt, Richard H.  
Steiner, Rev. Steven P.  
Sternberg, Rev. David H.  
Strack, Rev. Kenneth W.  
Strangman, Mrs. Alice  
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Sulzle, Rev. Christian E.  
Terrell, Paul T.  
Tessmer, Rev. Charles L.  
Wagner, Rev. Mark C.  
Warnecke, Rev. Richard E.  
Wendorf, John R.  
Wiederich, Rev. Larry L.  
Wietzke, Rev. Wilfred A.  
Wilkens, Rev. Steven E.  
Wisniewski, Ruthella I.  
Yecke, Rev. Richard D.  
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Zell, Prof. William G.  
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