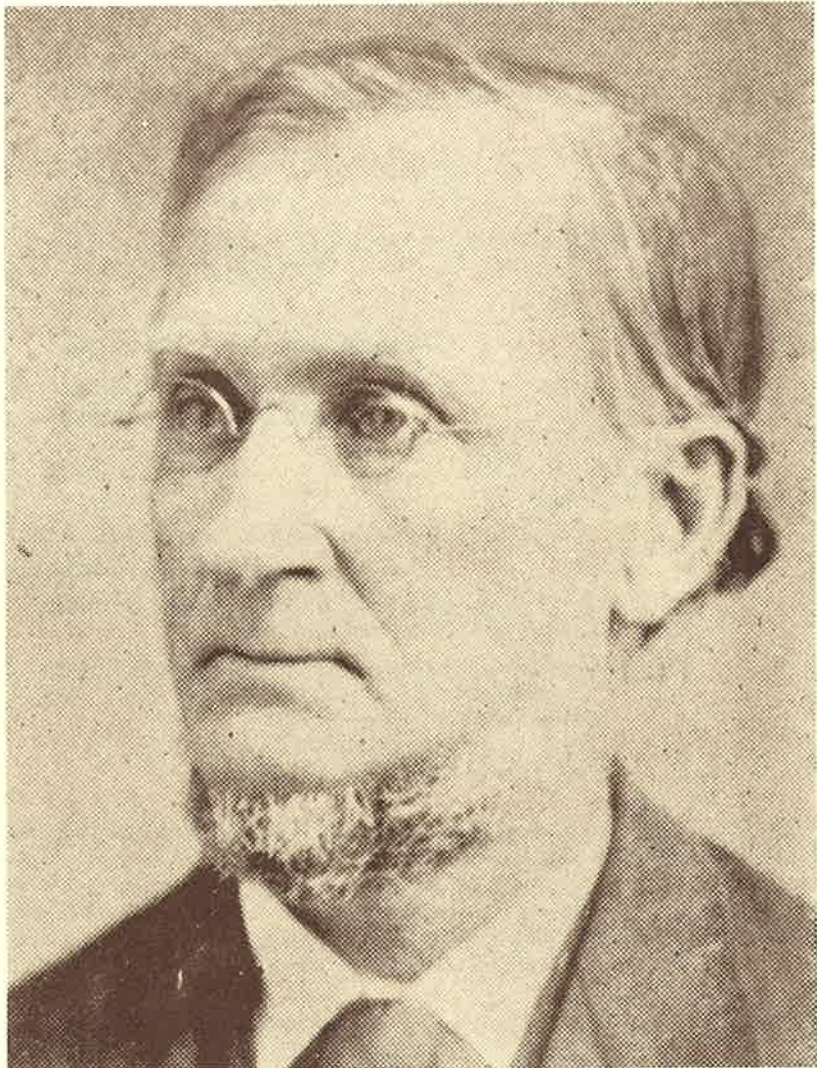


WELS Historical Institute
Journal

FALL 1989



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Editor James P. Schaefer

Assistant Editor Dorothy J. Sonntag

Editorial Board Roland C. Ehlke, Edward C. Fredrich II,
Arnold Lehmann, Thomas Schultz

Editorial Office All editorial inquiries should be addressed:
Rev. James P. Schaefer, Editor
WELS Historical Institute Journal
2929 N. Mayfair Road
Milwaukee, Wisconsin 53222-4398

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Cover photograph: Pastor Gottlieb Reim, third president of the Wisconsin Synod, 1863 to 1865. See article beginning on page 17.

The President's Report

THE FALL 1989 MEETING of the WELS Historical Institute was held at Fairview Ev. Lutheran Church in Milwaukee, Wisconsin. Mr. Alfons Woldt, administrator of the synod's special ministries, presented "A History of WELS Special Ministries." Attendance at the meeting was 26.

The Spring 1990 meeting will be at Salem Lutheran Landmark Church, Milwaukee, on Sunday, April 29 at 2 p.m. Pastor Robert Hartman, administrator for evangelism, will speak on the growth of the WELS through the years. It was at Salem in May of 1850 that the synod's constituting meeting was held. As we look at the Lord's blessings in the 140 years since that time, we can only thank our gracious God! Try to attend this meeting as a way of celebrating 140 years of grace. A brief business meeting and refreshments will follow the presentation.

The Fall 1990 meeting will be held at Northwestern College in Watertown, Wisconsin on September 13 (Thursday) to help commemorate that school's 125th anniversary. Watch for further notices concerning details.

With the archives now in place Prof. Martin Westerhaus, WELS archivist, says they could use more shelving as well as microfilming records for long-term preservation. Special gifts for these projects are welcome, as is the ongoing submission of archival materials.

Work also continues at Salem Lutheran Landmark Church. A storeroom is being renovated into an early classroom, display cases have been built, electrical work has been done, painting has been done, the exterior has been tuck-pointed, furnishings have been received from St. Marcus congregation of Milwaukee and also from people in Arizona. An application is being sent to request that we be listed on the national register of historical places. We owe a special thanks to Mr. Marvin Schwan of Marshall, Minnesota, for a gift of \$10,000 toward the restoration work at Salem. Much work remains to be done.

The 1980s were important years for the WELS Historical Institute. Here are some highlights from the institute's first decade:

- 1981 — Summer: Synod convention authorizes historical institute.
- 1981 — October 28: Institute's first meeting, held at Wisconsin Lutheran College.
- 1982 — May 5: Second meeting, constitution adopted at Salem Lutheran Landmark Church.
- 1983 — Spring: First issue of *WELS Historical Institute Journal*.
- 1985 — April 21: Dedication of Salem Lutheran Landmark Church as official WELS museum.
- 1989 — May 7: Dedication of new synod archives at Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary.

Under God's direction, the institute has accomplished much in this initial decade. May the Lord continue his blessings!

In Christ, the Lord of history,
Roland Cap Ehlke

The Church and Its Ministry of History

Aug. R. Suelflow*

WHAT A PROFOUND PRIVILEGE it is for me to address you, on this campus, on matters that have been of deepest interest and concern to me for more than four decades. Let me extend my heartiest congratulations on the completion of your plans for full-fledged archives-history work! Will you pardon a few personal comments at the beginning? Together with my parents and members of the family, I was one of the 15,000 people who were present at the dedication of this seminary on August 18, 1929. Of course, I wasn't at all sure what exactly was happening and why such an immense crowd had gathered. As we were leaving the beautiful campus, at the archway entrance on Freistadt Road, there sat an aged grandmother, dressed in black, apparently waiting for a member of her family to pick her up. I still vividly remember my father's expressed concern and hope that she had not been forgotten by someone. This haunted me for some time.

To be forgotten! To forget! To forget our gracious Creator and Lord! Indeed, it does make a great difference — in fact, it may make the difference between heaven and hell.

As we reflect just briefly on the history of the Old Testament Hebrews, one could almost say it is the story of a people who forgot their heritage and then were called back to remember. The account goes from forgetting to remembering and from remembering to forgetting.

The ancient Hebrews were involved in extensive record-keeping. As Joshua led the people of Israel across the Jordan, he was instructed by the Lord to place 12 stones into the middle of the Jordan. But let Joshua tell it. He called 12 men, one from each tribe, and told them:

Pass over before the ark of the Lord, your God, into the midst of Jordan, and take you up, every man of you a stone upon his shoulder, according to the number of the tribes of the children of Israel; that this may be a sign among you, that when your children ask their fathers in time to come, saying, "What mean ye by these stones?" then ye shall answer them that the waters of

*An address delivered at the dedication of the WELS archives at Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary, Mequon, Wisconsin, May 7, 1989. Dr. Suelflow is director of the Concordia Historical Institute, St. Louis, Missouri.

the Jordan were cut off before the Ark of the Covenant of the Lord; when it passed over Jordan, the waters of Jordan were cut off. And these stones shall be for a memorial unto the children of Israel forever (Joshua 3).

Towards the end of his life, we see Joshua erecting another memorial stone as a witness to the renewal of the covenant which Israel had made at Shechem. Joshua recorded the event:

And Joshua said unto all the people, "Behold, this stone shall be a witness unto us; for it has heard all the words of the Lord which he spoke unto us; it shall be therefore a witness unto you, lest you deny your God" (Joshua 24).

But then, Israel thought there were more important things to do. Everyone went to his rich, new inheritance, there was a life to be lived, children to be reared and work to be done. Thus, the remembrance of the "memorial stones" became weak, and the attractions of life all too strong. The writer of the book of Judges, already in the second chapter, gives us this gripping chronicle:

And there arose another generation after them which knew not the Lord, nor yet the works which he had done for Israel, and the children of Israel did evil in the sight of the Lord and served Baalim; and they forsook the Lord God of their fathers, which brought them out of the land of Egypt and followed other gods, the gods of the people that were round about them, and bowed themselves unto them, and provoked the Lord to anger. And they forsook the Lord and served Baal and Ashtaroth. And the anger of the Lord was hot against Israel, and he delivered them into the hands of spoilers that spoiled them, and he sold them into the hands of their enemies round about, so that they could not any longer stand before their enemies (Judges 2:10-14).

Today we also erect memorial stones in our churches in a variety of ways. We need them, because our human memory is too short without various kinds of mnemonic devices. Perhaps it doesn't make all that much difference when a husband fails to mail the important letter his wife had given him, or fails to pick up the odds and ends from the grocery store. Embarrassed, he comes home to apologize, "I forgot, honey."

In the church, however, the story of Old Testament Israel takes on much greater repercussions. Failing to remember God's mighty acts in our midst is, indeed, crucial. Failing to remember or to note that our heavenly Father sent his only-begotten Son to redeem us from our sin and the evil consequences makes a difference in all eternity. In that respect, the remembering becomes an act of worship.

Who could ever forget that moment on the cross, when the malefactor turns to the central figure, appealing to be remembered in grace and forgiveness:

"Lord, *remember me* when Thou enterest into Thy kingdom"
(Luke 23:42). (The Lord did not forget!)

Additionally, how blessed it was for Peter when, in spite of the Lord's warnings of his betrayal, he cockily boasted that although all others would deny him, he would never. With what depths Matthew recorded (Matthew 26:75): "*And Peter remembered* the word of Jesus which he said unto him 'before the cock crow, thou shalt deny me thrice.' And he went out and wept bitterly." Remembering brought him back to his Lord. Hebrews 13:7-8 encourages us:

Remember them which have the rule over you, who have spoken unto you the word of God; whose faith follow, considering the end of their conversation, Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, and today, and forever.

Some Gruesome Losses Because of Neglect

1. Perhaps one of the most striking stories of recovering historical treasure is that of the youthful King Josiah (2 Kings 22 and 2 Chronicles 34). He was in the process of repairing, cleaning, and restoring the temple. In the midst of all this activity, Hilkiah, the high priest, found the Book of the Law in the temple, which was buried in the trash heap after utter neglect. When the young King Josiah had the book read to him, we read:

When the king heard the book being read, he tore his clothes in dismay and gave the following order to Hilkiah the priest (and others), "Go and consult the Lord for me and for all the people of Judah about the teachings of this book. The Lord is angry with us because our ancestors have not done what this book says must be done" (2 Kings 22:1-13).

Shortly thereafter, the king returned to the temple and in 2 Kings 23 we read that King Josiah summoned all the leaders of Judah at Jerusalem, and they went to the temple, accompanied by the priests, the prophets, and all the rest of the people, rich and poor alike.

Before them all, the king read the book aloud. The Book of the Covenant, which had been found in the temple. He stood by the royal column and made a covenant with the Lord to obey him, to keep his laws and commandments with all his heart and soul, and to put into practice all demands attached to the covenant, as written in the book, and all the people promised to keep the covenant (2 Kings 23:2-3).

This was followed by a cleansing of the temple, and destroying all the traces of idolatry wherever it was found. The writer of 2 Kings tells us that the historical record was kept: "Everything else King Josiah did is recorded in *The History of the Kings of Judah*."

It is really too gruesome a thought to imagine what might have happened if the *Book of the Covenant* has not been found. It was almost destroyed or lost permanently through sheer neglect. We do need archives.

2. On a much less important scale, though nevertheless of great historical value to Lutherans in America, is the account of the preservation of the oldest charter of religious freedom issued to any group in America. The charter was issued by Governor Francis Lovelace of New York in 1664, after

the English had wrested New Amsterdam from the Dutch. The small Lutheran congregation in New York, which had earlier been severely persecuted by Peter Styvesant of New Amsterdam, immediately appealed to Governor Lovelace for religious freedom. This was granted in the now famous charter, still in existence and safely deposited in the New York Public Library.

But what a miracle that it was preserved! A well-intentioned janitor of the church in the early 1900s was cleaning out all the closets of this church, and among the accumulation and clutter of the years, there was the ancient and honored charter. He did not recognize it, so he carried the trash to the rubbish heap in the church courtyard and was about to burn this junk. But Dr. Karl Kretzmann, avid historian that he was, well-trained by his mentor, August L. Graebner, poked through the rubbish, and to his amazement discovered this extremely valuable charter. In a matter of minutes, that venerable old document could have been destroyed. Indeed, we need archives.

3. Sometimes it happens that when the early records of an event or of a church are missing, unscrupulous historians resort to fabricating documents. Such was the case when no one was able to find the ordination certificate of the first Lutheran clergyman to be ordained in America, in November of 1703. The ordinand was Justus Falckner, and the place was Gloria Dei Church (today known as Old Swede's Church) in Philadelphia.

The ordination was performed by the Swedish Lutherans of New Sweden, and Falckner, a German, was ordained to serve the Dutch Lutherans of New York. When an ordination certificate or document could not be located anywhere, the imaginative Julius Sachse fabricated one, published a history, and produced a facsimile copy in his illustration in the volume. Not only the credibility, but the historical fact itself is destroyed when a church is not concerned about the preservation of its records. It is then that individuals are tempted to create "pseudo-Isadorian decretals." Archives would have saved embarrassment.

4. And one more incident: Recently at our St. Louis Historical Institute, a woman came in to see the baptismal records of the church to which her father had belonged as an infant. Her father died when she herself was a mere infant, and consequently she had never been able to determine whether he had been baptized. She was eager to know. She found the records and combed them and here, to her great joy, was the entry she had been looking for. Her father had indeed been baptized in a Lutheran congregation in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Tears of joy flowed from her eyes to know that her father, whom she had never known because of his early death, was a baptized child of God. Someday she would meet him in heaven.

HISTORICAL PRESERVATION FOR LUTHERANS An Urgent Necessity

It is quite a coincidence that today — May 7 — marks the 102nd anniversary of the death of Dr. C. F. W. Walther at the age of 75. He is the theological mentor of us all, the one who called Lutherans in America to a renewed confessional consciousness, who was so often scathingly attacked as a "restitution" theologian, or perhaps even worse, as a "citation" theologian.

Walther believed, taught and confessed as do we, that the faith once delivered to the saints is unchanged and unchanging, revealed in the word of God, and formulated in the Lutheran confessions. Thus, he sought continuity of belief throughout history. Walther's greatest joy was to point to the harmony and continuity which existed between the Scriptures, the Lutheran Confessions, and the Lutheran church fathers.

Speaking of the *Apology*, he stated:

Here our church confesses that every word, every sentence structure, every repetition of every word, every abbreviation, the entire matter and method of speaking has its origin in the Holy Spirit, who has inspired everything, not only the truths, not only the meanings, not only the "what" but also the "how," who has selected the words necessary so that the mind of God would be correctly revealed to us. That this is the teaching of Holy Scripture itself is clear to every Christian (*Convention Essays*, CPH 1981, p. 27).

Later he says:

The Apostle Paul testifies that all Scripture is inspired by God. He does not say "the word of God" but "all Scripture." Exactly as the holy men have written it, so the Holy Spirit inspired it. That our Lutheran Church believed this and confessed it already in the 16th century is proved by the reference, among others, quoted from the *Apology* (Article IV, par. 107f, Tappert, p. 122). Anyone who pledges himself to the symbolical books and permits himself to be installed into the ministry and does not believe this teaching is a miserable scoundrel. (Do they suppose that these words fell from the Holy Spirit unawares?)

This is what gives validity, as well as significance, to our task of preserving our history in this end-time of the 20th century. We need to continue to see how our theology compares with our heritage.

We need to remember that we, as ancient Israel, the church during the Dark Ages, and the great dawning of a new day during the Reformation have innumerable obstacles to cause us to forget, unless we consciously make efforts to remember. Some of these obstacles are, to name a few:

1. *Crossing the language barrier*: Marvelous theological literature and countless historical records are embedded in a language which very few can read and understand today. At our seminaries we spend more time teaching Hebrew and Greek, the languages of the Old and New Testament and rightly so, but very little time is used in teaching German. What is worse is that so much of the unpublished literature of our antecedents is in the German script, almost undecipherable by people today. How can the record, the covenants of those days, be intelligently read and understood today, unless we preserve and translate them?

2. *Homogenization of American churches*: With our great mobility, elimination of linguistic barriers, the seeking of the least common denominator in theology, America has developed a kind of "religion in general" with the affirmation that all religions ultimately lead to the same place, even though they may still take different routes to get there. In a day such as this, our

historic roots, our efforts to remain faithful to the apostolic doctrine and to our apostolic doctrinal continuum is much more difficult than it was in the past. For that reason, we must pay attention to our history and to our records, and transmit them to our children and children's children.

3. *Cult of the individual:* Our people, too, are not immune from the constant bombardment in our society that we need to be masters of our life, that each individual can establish his own code of ethics, has a perfect right to totally disregard any other human being, including spouse, parents and children and "do his own thing." This leads not only to diversity, but to antagonism, and destroys fellowship. But it makes our task of preserving our precious heritage of the past increasingly more difficult.

4. *Financial restrictions:* All too often we establish priorities in our work in the church on the basis of the number of dollars available. Obviously, we are all totally committed to the proclamation of the precious gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior. Our mission outreach and educational programs naturally must receive a higher priority than we allocate to our archives and history. But too frequently a mere financial chaff is left for this kind of work, and as a result our historical foundations are not properly maintained. But the danger in this is not often seen — our apostolic and doctrinal foundations may erode and the message modified, as we fail to heed our theological and doctrinal heritage. Under such circumstances, it becomes far more difficult, as the seal of your Historical Institute admonishes us *Gedenke der vorigen Zeit* — "Remember the former time."

The history of American Christianity has taught us that so much of Protestant mission work and outreach lost the integrity of the message because of acculturation or assimilation, with the result that the gospel is easily lost.

5. *History as idolatry:* There is a final obstacle to which I should refer. All too often the critics of the historical and archival tasks equate such work with a form of idolatry, or the worship of institutions and people. Naturally, we need most emphatically to guard against this and prove such criticisms to be totally false. In a very little-known book entitled "Little Visits With Martin Luther," a most interesting volume, the author, a member of the Ohio Synod of the 1880s takes some interesting potshots at Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, because, shortly after the death of Walther, it established a "Walther Zimmer" or a museum in which the artifacts of Walther's life were being preserved. Strangely enough, pious souvenir hunters picked up just about every one of the long-stemmed smoking pipes to which Walther was addicted. But idolatry it was not.

No Loss of Memory

A person with a poor memory, or one who has lost it, has impaired usefulness in the family or in society. Permit me, therefore, to state emphatically that historical work, the work of remembering, must also be considered an integral part of the church's activity. The functions involved in an historical/archival program are as essential to the church's well-being and to every phase of its work as any of its other operations. What would we do without the Gospels, the Book of Acts and Paul's epistles? What if they had been destroyed?

The most important human documents in our church are, of course, the Lutheran confessions, our liturgy, our hymnals, our worship resources, our

convention proceedings, our official correspondence, but particularly our parish records such as baptism, confirmation, marriage, and funeral.

Only then, by frequent testing, by self-evaluation and self-study, even in the process of preparing a new hymnal can we be certain of the preservation of our doctrinal heritage. What would have happened if the Saxon Agenda of 1812 and the Prussian Union Agenda of Frederick Wilhelm II of 1817, two documents which totally disrupted the life of the Lutheran church in Germany, had been lost? These two documents, to some degree, were responsible for the immigration of over 6,000 "Confessional Lutherans" who came to America, and whose 150th anniversary we are celebrating this year. Documents do, indeed, make a very great difference! This is especially true as we consider how precious agenda, liturgies, hymnals and other doctrinal and worship resources are in our life.

Our Lutheran church, as every church, is always in the world. This means that in the interaction of the church with the world, the danger of an attrition of faith, of liturgical practices, of our hymnody, of our apostolic and Lutheran faith may be threatened and be diluted into the great mass of American religions and with the consequent removal of our doctrinal distinctives. Through an archives-history institution such as you have established, we are given the instruments by which each generation can measure anew and determine whether it has remained on the apostolic, the Lutheran confessional path, or whether deviations have taken place. This is a task that consists of much more than mere warehousing.

And how do we go about preserving our blessed heritage? One of the very traditional ways is through the establishment of a seminary to train pastors and institutions to train teachers. Accept our hearty congratulations this year on the 125th anniversary of the establishment of your seminary, resulting in 125 years of the preservation of the apostolic gospel and confessional Lutheranism, so ably transmitted from professor to student, from pastor to people, and from parents to children. This is a highly significant form of preservation.

Secondly, another form of preservation takes place through our publications, the magazines, the newsletters, the journals, such as the *Northwestern Lutheran*, the *Wisconsin Lutheran Quarterly*, the *WELS Historical Institute Journal*, the publications of Northwestern Publishing House, convention essays, proceedings, and the correspondence of the officials. All these not only testify to the preservation of our confession, but must themselves be preserved.

We have long followed the old adage: "To know nothing of the past is to understand little of the present, and to have no conception of the future."

In our age, the past is often highly disparaged, because we live in a society that wants an instant presence and cannot wait to implement the future. This is what makes history and archives of increasing importance as we move toward the third millennium since the birth of our Lord Jesus Christ.

I wish to highly commend the foresight and vision which you have evidenced in initiating the WELS Historical Institute. How assuring it is for us in the present, and reassuring for those who will follow after, that significant materials have been collected over the past decades and are now gathered in one place, that these new facilities have been prepared especially for the permanent preservation of such resources, that the necessary staff with

technical skills is available, that those who wish to do reference and research work can now do so, and that this is a project of the entire church!

Finally, may I state that our archives work, within our two synods is, in a sense, an act of worship. This is best represented through the history of our churches, that history in which we live and proclaim the gospel, that history which is being taught in our schools and seminaries, which deals with the most sacred doctrines of Holy Writ, the teaching of the original biblical languages, the record of missionary outreach, the story of the lives of our men and women. When this is done according to the great rubrics of scriptural history, it gives us the greatest evidence as epitomized in the marvelous hymn *Te Deum Laudamus*. Permit me to quote just a few verses which are especially apropos:

Holy, Holy Holy Lord God of Sabaoth, heaven and earth are full of the majesty of Thy glory.

The glorious company of the apostles praise Thee. The goodly fellowship of the prophets praise Thee.

The noble army of martyrs praise Thee. The holy church throughout all the world doth acknowledge Thee.

The Father of an infinite majesty; Thine adorable, true, and only Son; also the Holy Ghost, the Comforter.

Thou art the King of Glory, O Christ. Thou art the everlasting Son of the Father.

We are part of that mighty train, following the glorious company of the apostles, the fellowship of the prophets, the noble army of martyrs, and the holy church throughout all the world. May our archives and history be a continuous *Te Deum* in our individual lives and in the lives of our churches.

A WELS Historical Profile

Chronological Sketches of Our Synod's Past: 1930-1940

Arnold J. Koelpin

THE ERA BETWEEN THE WARS brought about change in the history of the Joint Synod of Wisconsin. In reaction to the national economic depression and stepped-up pressures for Lutheran unity, the Joint Synod found itself bonded into a stronger union. Hard times and the aftereffects of internal synodical controversy caused the synod to move ahead with caution. It resisted defeatist attitudes caused by indebtedness, stagnant school enrollments, slow mission growth, and an inability to assign many ministerial candidates. It reacted against unionistic overtures aimed at Lutheran inter-synodical collaboration. But it welcomed its part in the new Synodical Conference mission to Africa and successfully whittled down the synodical debt.

1930-1940

1930 Enrollments at the synodical schools show a drop or little change during the depression years. In 1930 Northwestern College enrolls 227 students in its eight-year program, down from 240 students during the previous school year. A vacancy in the Northwestern College faculty caused by the death of Dr. Abbetmeyer is filled by Professor M. Franzmann.

1930 Plans for a new science and library building at Northwestern College in Watertown are dropped because of the economic depression in the United States. The project awaits completion until 1949.

1930 The enrollment at Dr. Martin Luther College slips from 235 in 1929 to 200 in the following year. This enrollment figure includes the addition of a third year to the college Normal School program. The figures in the college department show:

III Normal 9 (8 male; 1 female)

II Normal 31 (18 male; 13 female)

I Normal 29 (11 male; 18 female)

The figures for the various school departments indicate:

Normal students: 37 male; 32 female

High school students: 30 male; 47 female

Pre-ministerial students: 36 male

General education students: 10 male; 7 female

1930 During the decade of the 1930s, work in the Dakota-Montana District is severely hampered. The dust bowl conditions, combined with the national depression, cause many to leave home and property. The members of entire congregations are thrown on public relief. Self-sustaining congregations are driven to seek aid from the synod.

1930 Because of economic conditions, Indians working in the mining town of Globe move back to the San Carlos reservation. The move makes this area the most populous of the synod's Indian missions. The number enrolled in the mission school rises to about 450 pupils.

1930 Professor J. P. Koehler is relieved of all seminary responsibilities for the 1929-1930 school year because of his dealings in the Protestant controversy, and on May 21, 1930, is removed from office and ordered to vacate his residence.

1931 In his report to the convention, President Bergemann calls attention to the fact that mission work in the synod is practically at a standstill because of the synod's financial straits and heavy indebtedness. He also notes that one-half of the seminary candidates are not assigned.

1931 The constitution of the Joint Synod of Wisconsin comes out in an English translation prepared by Rev. A. C. Haase.

1931 The convention receives a report that local conditions necessitated discontinuing the academy maintained and supported by Friedens at Kenosha, Wisconsin.

1931 Michigan Lutheran Seminary at Saginaw requests a fifth professor who would also serve as dean. Because of the depression the synod does not honor the request and asks Director Otto Hoenecke to assume the duties with the help of an additional tutor. Attendance in the 1930-31 school year is 77 (42 boys and 35 girls).

1931 The fifth professorship established at the Wisconsin Synod seminary is filled by Professor A. F. Zich.

1931 The Madison Student Mission at the University of Wisconsin is placed under the supervision of the Joint Committee on Missions. The mission is a cooperative endeavor between the Missouri and the Wisconsin synods.

1931 Landscaping the new seminary property in Thiensville is planned and carried out by Pastor Henry Hartwig with the help of seminary students.

1931 Professor M. J. Wagner, who served as inspector (dean) at Dr. Martin Luther College for fifteen years, dies and is replaced by Professor Edwin Sauer.

1931 In June Dr. Franz Pieper, professor of theology at Concordia Seminary in St. Louis since 1878, its president from 1887 until his death, and author of "Christian Dogmatics," dies. He was a member of the first graduating class of Northwestern College and a former pastor in the Wisconsin Synod.

1931 The Professors' Conference comes out in favor of discontinuing Greek as a preministerial requirement in the high school departments of the synodical schools.

1932 The Board of Trustees of the Wisconsin Synod reports that the synod's indebtedness has been reduced from a high of about \$752,000.00 in 1931 to about \$598,000.00 in 1932. During the time professors' salaries were cut 20 percent and missionaries' salaries 10 percent. Later there was another 20 percent cut in all departments of the synod. To help the situation, the trustees authorized an every-member canvass collection.

1932 The Missouri Synod draws up an authoritative doctrinal statement entitled "A Brief Statement." The Brief Statement treats all primary matters of Christian faith and is to serve as a basis for discussions of church fellowship.

1932 In the "Thiensville Theses," the seminary faculties of the Wisconsin and Missouri Synods reach an understanding in the doctrine of church and ministry as practiced in each synod.

1933 Pastor John Brenner is elected president of the Joint Synod of Wisconsin to succeed Pastor G. E. Bergemann, who was president from 1917 to 1933.

1933 At the synodical convention, Professor A. Zich presents an essay to the synod on "Defeatism in the Church." Because of the timely message and encouragement from God's word, the synod resolves to place the essay in the home of every member of the synod.

1933 The committee on the amalgamation of all synods affiliated with the Synodical Conference indicates that the committee does not understand its assignment and is not ready with a report.

1933 Acting on a memorial from the Nebraska District, the synod reinstates the office of inspector (dean) at Northwestern College in Watertown. A tutor is to assist the inspector.

1933 The synod reinstates the office of school visitor, but changes its title to executive secretary of the Board of Education. Two years later, teacher F. W. Meyer accepts the position. A new plan for visitation of Christian elementary schools is likewise adopted. The new plan provides an interlocking system of district and synodical boards of education.

1933 Members of the Michigan District propose a plan to effect a uniform method of collecting and controlling synodical monies. The synod authorizes the Board of Trustees to implement the plan, if it is feasible.

1933 Professor J. P. Koehler is suspended from fellowship with the Wisconsin Synod because of his continuing affiliation with the Protestant Conference.

1934 During an August meeting in Milwaukee, the Synodical Conference "Board for Missions to the Colored (Black)" memorializes the conference to commission three members to explore mission fields in Nigeria, Africa. By a vote of 53-33 the Synodical Conference authorizes the move into Africa.

1934 Dr. J. H. Ott observes his fiftieth year as teacher at Northwestern College in Watertown, Wisconsin.

- 1935 In his report to the synod, President Brenner indicates that 32 theological candidates could not be assigned, but that the financial conditions in the synod had improved.
- 1935 When ill health forces Professor Bliefernicht to discontinue his work as president of Dr. Martin Luther College, Professor Carl Schweppe succeeds him as acting president. The following year Schweppe is appointed president of the college.
- 1935 On January 5, Pastor Immanuel Albrecht, president of the Minnesota District of the Joint Synod, Dr. Henry Nau, president of Immanuel Lutheran College in Greensboro, North Carolina, and Pastor O. Boecler from Illinois leave New York harbor for Africa to explore possibilities of mission work in Nigeria and the Cameroon. The next year Dr. Nau begins work in the name of the Synodical Conference.
- 1935 Michigan Lutheran Seminary in Saginaw also experiences tumbling enrollments because of the depression. In 1935 the school counts only 58 students. Ten years later the enrollment almost doubles to 105 students.
- 1935 The United Lutheran Church of America, meeting in Savannah, Georgia, issues a national call for a union of all Lutheran church bodies who subscribe to the Scriptures and the Lutheran confessions.
The Wisconsin Synod officials decline the invitation because unity in doctrine and practice does not exist between it and the ULCA. The reply is adopted by the Joint Synod in convention.
- 1936 The Joint Synod of Wisconsin joins the Synodical Conference move to establish a foreign mission in Africa.
- 1937 Professor John P. Meyer is appointed acting president of the theological seminary in Thiensville. Later he became president (1941-1953).
- 1937 The Peace (Arbitration) Committee appointed to mediate the controversy between the Western Wisconsin District and the Protestant Conference reports to the synod convention that it has failed to reach a resolution of the controversy and asks to be relieved of its duties.
The West Wisconsin District calls a special session to reconsider the entire case against the Protestants and unanimously resolves to stand behind its decision of 1927.
- 1937 On March 14, Pastor William Schweppe becomes the first Wisconsin Synod missionary in Africa. The Nigerian mission already counts 32 mission stations. Pastor Schweppe serves 16 stations in the northern part of the Nigerian mission and resides at Obot Idim.
- 1937 The mission board of the Joint Synod is authorized to expedite its work. The work of home missions begins to accelerate after a general missionary is called to serve promising areas in Arizona and Colorado. Called are Pastor Immanuel Frey to work in Colorado and Pastor Fred Stern in Arizona. Both areas soon appeal for status as mission districts of the synod.
- 1938 The American Lutheran Church adopts the Sandusky Declaration, in which it adopted the Missouri Synod's Brief Statement as understood according to its own Declaration. But it also states its unwillingness to terminate its membership in the American Lutheran Conference, an amalgamation of five Norwegian Lutheran synods with the German Lutherans of the Ohio, Iowa, and Buffalo synods.
- 1939 In the year prior to the outbreak of World War II, the Wisconsin Synod's mission church in Poland has 8 pastors, 12 congregations and a membership of 2,818 people.
- 1939 The American Lutheran Church and the United Lutheran Church of America adopt the Pittsburg Agreement, which deviates from former clear confessions on the nature of Scripture.
- 1939 In April, representatives of the Wisconsin, Missouri, and "little" Norwegian Synods (ELS) meet at Thiensville to discuss recent union movements in the United States.
- 1939 The Joint Synod of Wisconsin in convention rejects the agreement in doctrine reached by committees of the Missouri Synod and the American Lutheran Church. The synod based its rejection on the fact that the document does not state the truth clearly nor exclude the errors in controversial doctrines.
- 1939 The Wisconsin Synod in convention calls on the Missouri Synod for a clear statement of confession in one document that deals, thetically and antithetically, with contested doctrines between the Missouri Synod and the American Lutheran Church. The Wisconsin Synod also asks the Missouri Synod to clear up the confusion its dealings are causing in the Synodical Conference.
- 1939 The synod's convention adopts the recommendation of a study committee on army and navy chaplaincies. The report recommends that the synod pastors not be commissioned to serve as armed forces chaplains because, in practice, the chaplaincy violates the principle of the separation of church and state.
- 1939 Two Roman Catholics (an Apache Indian and a white woman) bring formal charges protesting the ceding of American government school buildings to the Apache mission. As a result, the Government Indian Service reopens its school and the mission has to build its own structures.
- 1939 Professor Reinhold Fenske is called as director of Northwestern Lutheran Academy at Mobridge, South Dakota, succeeding Professor Hilton Oswald, who was acting director. During Director Fenske's term, the school experiences a period of rapid expansion.
- 1939 After Germany invades Poland in 1939 and incorporated the country into the German Reich, the Wisconsin Synod's mission in Poland lives in wartime emergency. Two missionaries are drafted into the German army and government policy stifles church activity. The Wisconsin Synod superintendent, Pastor Bodamer, is unable to return to Poland and keeps in touch by mail.

1940 After the death of Professor Zich in June, Dr. Paul Peters from the Zehlendorf Seminary of the Saxon Free Church in Germany is called to take his place at the seminary.

1940 On May 26 the Wisconsin Synod celebrates its 90th anniversary.

The decade to come, during and after World War II, tested the mettle of the Wisconsin Synod's confession and practice. As relationships within the Synodical Conference grew more complex, tensions between its synods mounted. Discussions on unionism and fellowship began to consume the time and energy of synodical leadership and clergy. But wartime contacts and post-war opportunities also opened new doors for mission work.

Professor Arnold Koelpin teaches religion and history at Dr. Martin Luther College, New Ulm, Minnesota.

Helenville Forty-Eighters and Their Neighbors

Edward C. Fredrich II

BY TIME-HONORED CUSTOM the opening paragraphs of essays of this sort present personal remarks of the essayist offering special explanations, private confessions, necessary apologies, humble disclaimers, and the like. This writing is no exception.

The first necessary introductory explanation has to do with the wording of the title, especially the term *Forty-eighters*. It isn't that the date 1848 is in any way in question. St. Peter Lutheran Church at Helenville was founded through the signing of a constitution by twenty-six members in October 1848, just 140 years ago. The WELS Historical Institute is eminently correct when it assembles in this place at this time to note the 140th anniversary of the founding of this oldest congregation of the Central Conference and the Western Wisconsin District, and one of the very oldest in the whole synod.¹ Synodical congregations older than St. Peter at Helenville can be counted on the fingers of one hand.

The problem with *Forty-eighters* is the special connotation the term usually has in immigration literature. By that definition not every immigrant of 1848 is to be so named. A state history puts it this way:

Carl Schurz was typical of one group of immigrants, the *Acht und Vierziger* or "Forty Eighters," refugees from the reaction which followed the unsuccessful liberal movement of 1848 in Germany.

These immigrants, mainly intellectuals of unorthodox political and religious ideals, were less numerous than their more conservative countrymen but because of usually superior education wielded influence out of proportion to their numbers.²

The title employs the term *Forty-eighters* in order to emphasize the anniversary date but does not want it to be misunderstood. For a time thought was given to the possibility of adding some explanatory adjective to avoid the pitfall, but the adjectives that came to mind always seemed to have negative connotations. It just didn't seem appropriate to speak of "Helenville's Lowbrow Forty-eighters."

In any event, think of the St. Peter pioneers as founding their congregation in 1848 but not as intellectuals and radicals. These pioneers were devout believers and tillers of the soil God has provided in this area. They do not have to be thought of as inferior to any other immigrant group.

Those in the audience who have merit badges for steady attendance at these semi-annual meetings may well recall one gathering at Mequon

several years ago when this essayist made a solemn promise never again to present a paper to the WELS Historical Institute. Since then he has broken the promise on a previous occasion and is now in the process of breaking it again. It isn't necessarily that you are hearing a person who plays fast and loose with solemn promises but rather because of special circumstances prompting the breaches of promise.

On the earlier occasion a topic went begging. Nobody was interested in presenting paper on a group called "Protes'tants," until one obliging person was found and pressed into service. In this particular case the topic was so attractive that it proved irresistible to the essayist despite any previous pledges to the contrary. And that leads into a final disclaimer.

This essayist is a native son. He was born here at Helenville 71 years ago. He was baptized and confirmed in this church. He received his first formal education in the school below the hill on the west side. That parsonage was his home through boyhood and to adulthood. Anyone born and bred to these fair horizons would not want to shun the opportunity to participate in these anniversary festivities.

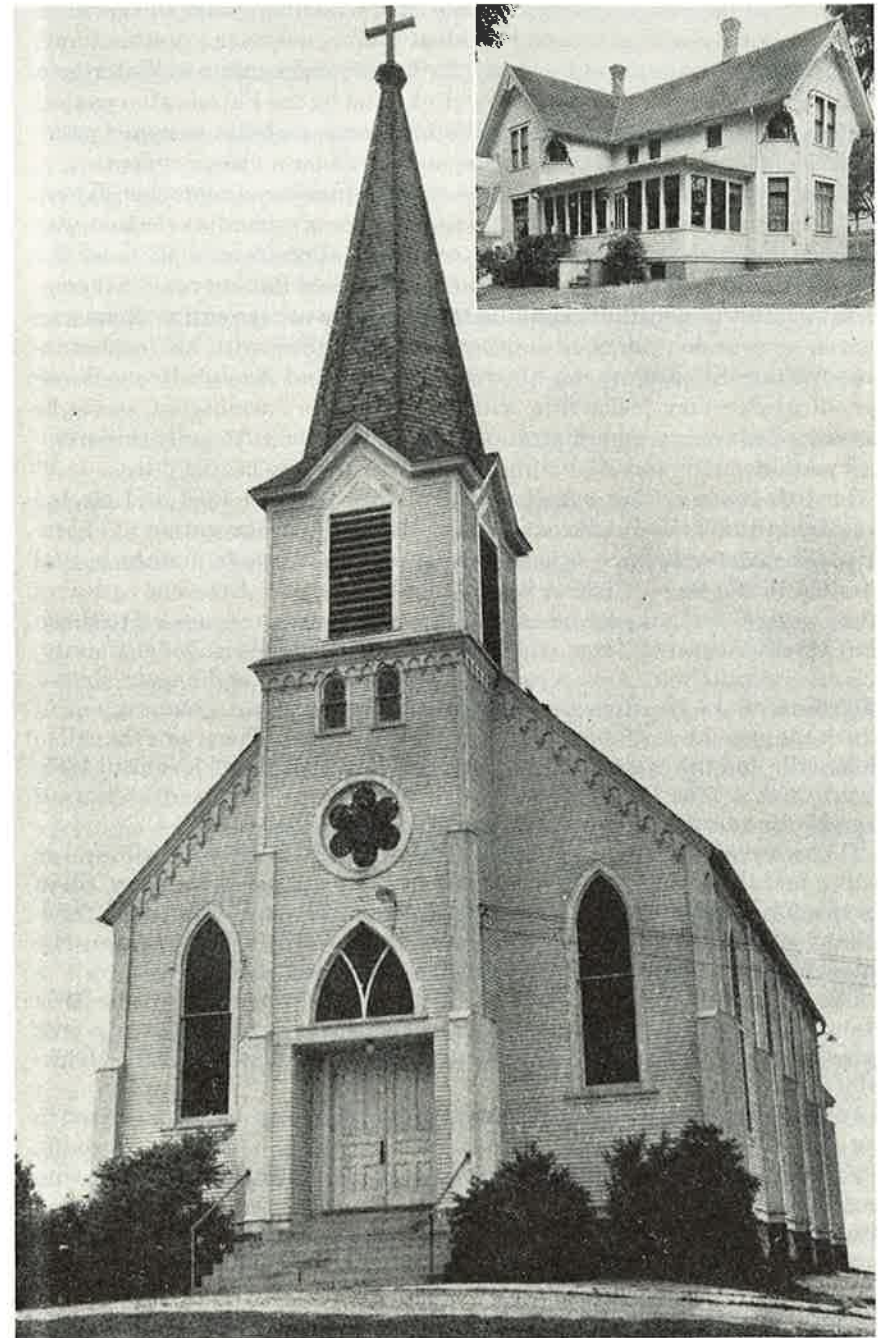
All these personal remarks of the essayist add up to a serious warning to the hearer. There is danger that some biased history may be presented that does not meet the discipline's standards of historical objectivity. You are hearing from a Helenville and St. Peter Church and School partisan. Take what you hear with the proverbial grain or two of salt. The essayist knows enough about history work that he understands the need for historical objectivity. He can promise he will try to be objective in the presentation to follow, but he probably will not succeed. At least we can be totally objective in the first part of the discussion of "Helenville's Forty-Eighters and Their Neighbors." This first section has the heading:

I. Helenville, Hub of the Synod a Century and a Quarter Ago

It may strain the imagination to realize that the lane leading from the street up the hill to its top was the counterpart of the Wisconsin Synod's 3512 W. North Avenue, Milwaukee, of a few years ago and a reasonable facsimile of today's 2929 N. Mayfair Road. But that is the way it was 125 years ago. From 1863 to 1865 Wisconsin Synod history, much important synod history, played itself out in the parsonage that stood at the foot of this hill in those days. In the parsonage was the office of the third synodical president, Gottlieb Reim.

The stage was set for this development at the synodical convention of 1863 held May 29 to June 3 at Grace Church, Milwaukee, founded one year after St. Peter by Pastor Muehlhaeuser, synodical founder and first president. The 1863 synodical convention passed the significant resolution to begin a worker-training school at Watertown that very fall in temporary quarters. A man was chosen to begin the teaching. This was Edward Moldehnke, a Halle University graduate recently come to this country as an emissary of the mission societies at Berlin and Langenberg. That much was relatively easy. What was harder was to plan for the erection of the permanent plant that would soon be needed.³

In those days the synodical budget was small. The 1863 report shows \$417.67 for mission purposes, \$24.80 for student support and \$394.27 for other synodical purposes, a grand total of \$836.74. This was a pittance



St. Peter, third church dedicated in 1902
(Inset) Third parsonage built in 1896

compared to the \$10,000 needed for the first school building. In this difficulty the synod resolved to send President Bading overseas to gather funds among Lutherans in the old country. Bading's congregation in Watertown would be cared for by Professor Moldehnke and by the Farmington pastor, Adolph Hoenecke. But what about Bading's responsibility as synod president? The body had up to that time seen no need for a vice-president.

In this situation, although it was not an even-numbered year when synodical elections normally were held, a special vice-presidential election was resolved. Gottlieb Reim was chosen to act in the presidential office for the year that remained in Bading's second term. When Bading could not complete the collection by the time of the 1864 Manitowoc convention, Reim was chosen as president for the two-year term, 1864-1866, with his brother-in-law, William Streissguth, as his vice-president and Adolph Hoenecke as synodical secretary. Helenville, with an assist from Farmington, was to be the seat of synodical administration from 1863 to 1866. Actually this situation prevailed only to 1865 but that is another story to be told later.

Gottlieb Reim, acting synod president from 1863 to 1864 and elected president in 1864, had come to serve the Helenville congregation in February 1858. Pastor Reim, a Wuerttemberg cobbler by trade, had at age 22 enrolled in the Basel Mission School and completed a five-year course of study in 1855. In that year he came to America, presented himself to President Muehlhaeuser and was assigned to the Ashford field in Dodge County. His special gifts were soon recognized by the brethren and he was elected chairman of the Northwestern Conference, the original grouping out of which the present-day Central Conference was carved. Then came the call to Helenville and the beginning of a pastorate here that would last until 1865. From 1860 to 1862 he served as synodical secretary and readied himself thereby for a larger office that he would soon be called to fill.

The two years of work as the synodical officer from 1863 to 1865, one as acting and the second as elected president, were not just a stand-by, fill-in service for a president who was temporarily on leave for a European fund-raising junket. The Reim years in the synodical presidency loom large in the whole history despite the relative brevity of the term of office.

The vice-presidential report that Gottlieb Reim presented to the 1864 Manitowoc synod that elected him to a full two-year presidential term points to large and important synod business, much of it carried out in the Helenville parsonage.

For the first item, Reim could report that six men were being presented to the synod as new pastoral workers: E. Giese, A. Opitz, G. Vorberg, G. Thiele, who became a seminary professor in 1878, J. Zwolanek, who could not be admitted to the synod because a release from his former church body was not at hand, and E. Mayerhoff. J. Brockmann, who had arrived in Wisconsin the previous year, could also be admitted to the synod's pastoral ranks in 1864.

These considerable gains for a church body that had less than 40 pastors were to a certain extent offset by losses. Gottlieb Reim had to report the death of a "dear brother and coworker," C. Koester, a synodical veteran ranking in seniority behind only J. Muehlhaeuser and C. Goldammer of Jefferson. As painful for Reim to report were disciplinary actions that had

to be taken against three of the pastors on the synodical roll. The report of the committee on the president's report recommending endorsement of these disciplinary actions was accepted with some reluctance in the case of Pastor Leupp.¹

The "Implementing Last Year's Synodical Resolutions" section of the presidential report points to several major undertakings that Reim had to oversee. At this point in time, one of them, the organization's legal incorporation, may seem nothing more than a routine business item. That it was more than that is indicated by the very special thanks Reim expresses in this connection to Mr. Struve of Farmington and Mr. Bingham, the former for initiating the matter and the latter for seeing to its enactment in the legislative body. In addition, the convention expressed concern that the charter covered the whole synodical body and not just the school's board of governors.

What had made the charter necessary was the worker-training school. That school, Reim could happily report to the Manitowoc convention, had operated during 1863-1864, even if the enrollment total was one.

Reim's 1865 presidential report could contain this news about the Watertown school: "In a few weeks it will be possible to occupy the building begun last year. As soon as that happens, the college could and should be opened." It must have been a great joy for Reim to see the synod's first worker-training school building take shape in time for the 1865-1866 school year.

Much less enjoyable was the task of serving as chief officer for a church body that was not of one mind and one spirit regarding its basic theological position. The lax Lutheranism that had characterized the founding was giving way to a stronger confessionalism. Ties with the union mission societies still existed, however, and President Bading was in fact at that very time collecting funds for the Watertown school within the congregations of the Prussian Union. The issue was coming to a head during Reim's years as synod president.

Many expected the 1864 convention to be a battleground on which to fight out the basic difference. The new synod secretary, Adolph Hoenecke of Farmington, introduced his convention account with the words: "As much as substantial differences had been feared here and there, one thing that was confirmed in the meeting by convincing and strong evidence was that the whole synod is obviously committed to the path leading to a determined position."

Despite the secretary's optimism, the differences could flare during and between conventions. Nobody wanted to compromise doctrine or espouse out-and-out unionism, but there were variations in the form in which this viewpoint expressed itself. Pastor Philipp Koehler headed a group that took a hard line; others wanted to tread more softly so as not to jeopardize relations with the union societies and the collection in progress. Reim, as president, was caught in the middle. Actually he was in the middle. The combination of strong doctrinal views and a mild personal disposition made him a good leader in this critical time in the young church body's development.

His leadership at the 1864 Manitowoc convention may well have been the main human factor in preventing what many had feared would happen

there. This was the only convention at which Reim filled the chair. His term was to run until 1866 but by the time of the 1865 convention Reim had resigned both the presidency and his synod membership and had moved from Helenville to Beaver Dam.

This surprising, actually shocking, development was not a synodical but a local congregational problem. Thorough investigation on the congregational and the synodical level completely exonerated Pastor Reim of any improper action and recognized that he was a victim of slander that a woman in the congregation had spread.⁵

Minutes of a March 2, 1865, church council meeting report:

On this day the church council of the Evangelical Lutheran Congregation, meeting because of the _____ writing, in and after a long and difficult investigation . . . ascertain that [the congregational member] had spread lies and has deceived the children of our school. Her father _____ himself was eventually present as the meeting drew to a close and personally heard that she had broadcast lies and slandered Reverend Reim, our pastor, grievously.

We the council members of this congregation herewith declare that Pastor Reim is innocent in this matter and declare further that Mrs. _____ must present a public apology.

To this the council members attest.

George Pfeifer.

The apology was tendered in the presence of the church council before the worship service on March 5. (Dated, March 6.)

Despite the complete vindication, Pastor Reim must have been disturbed by the unfortunate happening to the point of questioning his ability to serve effectively at Helenville. When soon after a call came from Beaver Dam, he accepted.

The congregation record states of the April 9, 1865, call meeting:

At this meeting Pastor Reim, because of various circumstances, asked to be released of his duties as pastor of this congregation. A ballot vote was taken: 56 voted to have him stay and four to release him. The congregation then expressed its thanks to Pastor Reim for his love and loyalty in all the tasks of his work as pastor here, as well as his exemplary conduct. . . . Pastor Reim then asked the congregation to release him, since he felt compelled to accept his new call. If circumstances allow in the future, however, he would be glad to return and again serve here. He also promised to do all he could to help in getting a good man here in his place.

When Pastor Reim left Helenville on May 28 a large number of members saw him off by traveling the first leg of the trip to Beaver Dam as far as Jefferson and there bade him a sad farewell. In June Reim carried the resigning two steps further. On June 4 he wrote his brother-in-law, Vice-President William Streissguth, that he was resigning the synodical presidency and on June 9 he followed that with a letter requesting a "temporary release" from the synod.⁶

When the convention reacted to this request for a resignation, it once more thoroughly investigated the sorry affair and discussed it at both a

ministerial meeting and a full convention session. The result once again was a declaration of Reim's innocency and upright behavior, even if it employs the wording of a scotch verdict, namely that "it could not convince itself of the guilt of Pastor Reim" and trusted that in his omniscience God would "in his time shed light on this clouded matter."

One could go on and on speculating about "the clouded matter" but to what avail? The conclusion reached in a research paper on the subject provides a good summary and conclusion. Lynn Wiedmann writes:

Concern for tender consciences, a sincere desire that the ministry be not blamed, and a hope that time would heal and that distance would soothe may have led Pastor Reim to ask for this temporary dismissal from the presidency and from synodical membership. . . . Pastor Reim was more concerned with the souls and consciences of people than with the right and fame of his name. He sacrificed a promising career in the Wisconsin Synod and left a congregation that he loved so that the ministry and his Savior would not be blamed.

A few facts can round out this section.⁷ A five-year pastorate in Beaver Dam put Reim in the middle of a big lodge battle. He then accepted a call to New Ulm and served there faithfully from 1870 to 1882 when he died from a fall from a wagon while hurrying to a parishioner's sickbed.

After Reim left Helenville the close relation between synodical and congregational history that existed from 1863 to 1865 was to a great extent diminished. It did, however, have a resurgence of sorts four years later. The minutes of the 1868 convention close with this notation: "After the minutes were read and approved the synod adjourned until the Thursday after the Trinity Festival 1869 at 9:00 a.m. when, God willing, it will assemble in the midst of the congregation at Helenville." God willed it and the 1869 synodical convention is the Helenville convention.

What Churchill once said comes to mind: "Never have so many owed so much to so few!" The little village played host to a major synodical convention, in some respects the most important of all its conventions, a convention that would chart the church body's pathway for over 90 years.

On May 28, 1869, 46 of the synod's 49 pastors descended on the village and the old church that was built during Reim's pastorate. There were 23 congregational delegates and 11 registered guests, among them official delegates from the Missouri, Minnesota, and Iowa Synods. President Bading, who was elected in 1868 and served until 1889, presided at the sessions. Senior among the pastors was C. F. Goldammer, who attained that rank when John Muehlhaeuser died in 1867. The local pastor, Reim's replacement, was T. Gensicke.

Local legend has it that one morning session was delayed for a considerable time. It seems that the pastor slated to hold forth that morning was quite tardy because he had gotten interested in helping his host with his morning chores and the host neglected to call the attention of his guest and helping hand to the lateness of the hour.

The major essay on the church was presented by Pastor T. Jaekel, Muehlhaeuser's successor at Milwaukee's Grace Church and long-time synod treasurer. The convention held six score years ago discussed an item that

again appeared on the agenda of the 1989 convention. It passed resolutions that made possible the publication of the revised and improved and enlarged hymnal in 1870.

The most noteworthy agenda items, however, were in the interchurch relations area. The last fellowship ties with former partners were ended. Relations with the General Council were severed because of the body's weak confessional stand. Last claims on Prussian Union monies collected by Bading were yielded. The synod was grateful for all the help it had received from that direction from its founding on but had grown confessionally and distanced itself from the Union way of life.

Because these old associations were completely ended, a new fellowship could be declared at the 1869 convention by the ratification of an agreement reached the previous fall by representatives of the Wisconsin and Missouri Synods. The ratified agreement stated, among other points: "Both synods joyfully recognize one another as orthodox Lutheran church bodies and there will be pulpit and altar fellowship between the synods."

Because Missouri in 1869 did at Ft. Wayne what Wisconsin did the same year at Helenville, a long and strong association blossomed. It was a harbinger of the formation of the Synodical Conference three years later and would endure as a blessing to Missouri, Wisconsin, and many others until 1961.

Not so important and not so long-lasting was a worker-training agreement between the synods that the 1869 Helenville convention also ratified. For a decade Missouri had students and one professor at the Watertown school while Wisconsin transferred its seminary operation to St. Louis. It was not possible for Wisconsin to send a professor to St. Louis and the arrangement soon ceased. The fellowship ties with Missouri, however, flourished and led to mutual gains in doctrine and in missions. That is why the 1869 Helenville synod convention has such an honored place in the church body's annals.

Up to this point attention has been given to Helenville's place in the Wisconsin Synod. Sufficient evidence has been presented to validate the thesis that Helenville was once the hub of the synodical wheel, a place of importance ranking then just behind Watertown and Milwaukee. Much as this seems and sounds like civic pride and blind partisanship, it has the backing of the historical record. The next section puts Helenville in its local, its conference setting, as it describes

II. The Joint Mission Festival at Helenville in 1872

What follows is a translation of a *Gemeinde-Blatt* article that appeared in the August 1, 1872, issue under the title, "Mission Festival." It is an eye-witness description by a participant, Pastor B. Ungrodt of Jefferson. The report running over two pages follows:

On the seventh Sunday after Trinity the four Lutheran congregations at Farmington, Jefferson, Fort Atkinson and Helenville celebrated their joint mission festival in a grove located near the last-named church. Pastor Schneider of the Missouri Synod at Concord with most of his congregation has also joined the festival in response to a friendly invitation. Already by

8:00 a.m. there appeared, coming from all directions, an almost unbroken procession of buggies, carriages, and wagons, enveloped in thick dust clouds and crowded with festival participants dripping sweat in the almost tropical heat, yearning for the inviting shade of the festival grove and then seating themselves on the prepared benches.

At 9:30 the festival service began with the singing of "All Glory be to God on High." After the liturgical service, led by the pastor of the host congregation, Pastor Schneider mounted the pulpit and read the glorious mission prophecy that the Lord proclaims in the first part of the prophet Isaiah's Chapter 60 and showed, following the passage point for point, how all men are by nature blind and dead in trespasses and sins; how God, however, has let the glory of his grace in Christ Jesus come over them, first the Jews and then the Gentiles, through the gospel; and how he intends further to glorify himself by gathering the Gentiles into his kingdom of grace until the end of the world and the last of the days.

The undersigned was to present the historical address. On the basis of Genesis 40:14 he — by referring to slavery, the humiliation and dishonor of the female sex, the social and religious customs of the African tribes insofar as they are known — sought to depict their deep misery, from which the cry for help reaches out to the hearts of Christians: "When all goes well with you, remember me and show me kindness." Then he pointed out how, just as the chief cupbearer had forgotten the imprisoned Joseph for a time but then aware of his sin, sought to make good the neglect, so most Christians for a long time forgot the miserable, enslaved heathen and it is now time to acknowledge the sin, regret it in sincere repentance, and by heartfelt intercession and faithful labor try to make up in some way for the neglect so that the imprisonment of the heathen can be ended.

Since time for the noon meal had come, a two-hour break occurred during which the present guests were refreshed bountifully with food and drink by the Helenville congregation and pastor. For this I herewith express a friendly thanks in the name of all the guests.

Shortly after 2:00 p.m. the afternoon service began. After the singing of a mission hymn, Pastor Opitz preached on the Lord's command, "Go into all the world," recorded in Mark 16:15,16. . . . Finally Pastor Brockmann showed in a down-to-earth and moving way on the basis of the Judges 7 story of Gideon's conflicts and conquests how mission work, both within one's own church and without among heathen nations, is just such a story of conflicts and conquests in which the Lord through paltry and unpretentious means and weapons accomplishes what is great and glorious. . . . This was also applied to our synodical schools at Watertown and they were recommended to the caring love of the festival gathering.

Between the festival sermons several edifying chorales were sung by the Jefferson choir that added their bit in enhancing the festival joy.

This edifying mission festival closed with prayer, a brief final word by Pastor Gensicke, in which he in his own impressive way made the festival collection a special concern of the celebrants, and the Lord's blessing. . . .

The collection at the festival service was about \$90.00. This sum was raised to \$115.00 by late offerings from members of the Helenville congregation who were not able to attend the festival. The Lord be praised for everything!

B. Ungrodt

It would be unneighborly not to include at least a brief sketch of the early histories of these good neighbors of Helenville: Farmington, Jefferson, and Fort Atkinson. All three have put out anniversary histories that supply the following material.

The golden anniversary picture history of the Western Wisconsin District supplies this caption for Immanuel: "To the east of Johnson Creek in Farmington is Immanuel congregation. This rural church has about 500 communicants. It was founded by Dr. Adolph Hoenecke." To have such a founder would be an honor for any WELS congregation. The only problem for Immanuel in Farmington, just a stone's throw north of here, is that the booklet is in error. Immanuel was already four years old when Adolph Hoenecke came to Wisconsin and the congregation became his first charge in 1863.

Immanuel's first pastor was K. Kienow, a teacher at Watertown. In the sporadic early records of the congregation the first entry of a pastoral act is the burial notice of Christian Fritz dated on November 17, 1859. In 1860 the first property was acquired and a log church was built. When Kienow accepted the call to be the first resident pastor at St. Paul in Fort Atkinson, the vacancy was filled, as stated, by Adolph Hoenecke.

Hoenecke served Farmington only three years but during that brief time began to be recognized as one of the synod's most talented pastors. He was elected synod secretary in 1864, the same year that G. Reim was elected president. When touchy correspondence had to be carried on with the mission societies it was Hoenecke who aided Reim by drafting the letters. When in 1866 a second seminary teacher, who would also serve as dean, was needed at the infant seminary at Watertown, the synod almost automatically and unanimously wanted Hoenecke to fill that post. Almost overnight, because of Edward Moldehnke's resignation and return to Germany, Adolph Hoenecke became the sole theological teacher of the synod.

Farmington was served by three pastors from 1866-1874. In 1868 a larger church had to be erected to accommodate the growing congregation. In 1874 A. Denninger began a longer twelve-year pastorate. During his tenure the big election-conversion controversy broke out. Unfortunately, Immanuel opted for election *intuitu fidei* (in view of faith) and as a consequence terminated its membership in the Wisconsin Synod which it had held since 1864. How strange that among the very few congregations that left our synod in this controversy, one should be included that had been nurtured by

Hoenecke, who led the synod in achieving a correct grasp of the Bible's teaching that we are elected in view of God's mercy and Christ's merits and not in view of our faith.

The essayist vividly recalls a Sunday in the spring of 1939 when he preached his first sermon. It was at Farmington. Along with the usual jitters that predominate at such a first venture, the rookie preacher was having trouble grasping the intricacies of some uncommon liturgical practices. The local pastor tried to explain by saying, "We have those differences in our order of service at Immanuel because we were served for a long time by Iowa Synod pastors."

The local pastor was August Paap, who came to Farmington in 1917 and served the congregation longer than anyone else on the pastoral roster. In the first half of this century he was among that group of Central Conference pastors who through long service at their posts became almost inseparably associated with their congregations.

Farmington was a sister congregation of St. Peter at Helenville, younger by 11 years. St. John at Jefferson stood between the two, older than Immanuel by eight years and younger than St. Peter by three. The Jefferson founding was in the spring of 1851. The original church site was the *Christ-berg* on the road between Jefferson and Helenville.⁸ The first church in Jefferson proper was dedicated in 1861.

Although there were 64 families involved in the 1851 Jefferson founding, it took until 1858 before the group had a resident pastor. During those seven years pastors at Helenville helped out as much as they could. A teacher, E. Ruppnow, came in 1858 and served until 1863. He was followed by the synod's veteran home missionary, C. Goldammer. In 1870 came the former African missionary and Milwaukee pastor, B. Ungrodt, whose mission festival account was just read.

The longest pastorate in the congregation's history, that of H. Vogel, began in 1881 and lasted into the next century to 1910, a period of exactly 29 years from installation to burial. In 1895 the still very serviceable present church was dedicated.

The first resident pastors devoted a good share of their time to teaching in the congregation's school. During Ungrodt's years the first full-time teacher was called and a school was erected that would serve its purpose for over 70 years. Then finally in 1951 the larger present school building was dedicated. Only 13 years later additional rooms had to be supplied when the pupil count had reached 272 and the teaching staff nine. On this staff was O. W. Jungkuntz, who had begun his work at Jefferson in 1922 and was still serving St. John in various functions until his retirement just a few years ago.

Of the four congregations that joined in the 1872 mission festival at Helenville, Fort Atkinson was the youngest. It was organized on November 23, 1861. The first pastoral service was supplied by the synod's traveling missionary, E. Moldehnke, who had set up his headquarters near Fort Atkinson at Germany. The first resident pastor was K. Kienow who came in 1862, as we have already heard, after serving the Farmington Lutherans. There were several short pastorates and longer vacancies from the time of Kienow's leaving in 1865 and Pastor J. Brockmann's coming in 1868.

Pastor Brockmann, a Hermannsburg missionary before coming to this country, was instructed in his call to teach at least four days a week. This was the beginning of St. Paul School. A building was erected in 1869 between the church, dedicated in 1863, and the parsonage, built during the Hoerlein pastorate, 1865-1867. In just six years the young congregation provided a full plant, even though these were Civil War and immediate post-war years.

During Pastor Dowidat's time (1875-1881) the first full-time teacher was called. When Pastor John Sprengling's one-year service was cut short by death, Julius Haase was called. During his years congregational growth forced an enlargement of the church building.

In 1894 A. F. Nicolaus began one of those long pastorates that were becoming the rule instead of the exception in the Central Conference. Pastor Nicolaus retired in 1926 after 32 years of service at St. Paul. On December 8, 1901, the present church had been dedicated.

By the time of Nicolaus' retirement the Fort Atkinson congregation had become involved in a distressing conflict between the pastor and two women teachers. The suspension of the teachers became a *cause celebre* in what would later become known as the Protestant Controversy. Their premature reappearance in the ranks of synod teachers so upset St. Paul that for a brief time it relinquished the synodical membership it had held since 1872.

All this, however, takes us well beyond the turn of the century that was quite arbitrarily chosen as a time parameter for this writing. What remains after these glimpses at Helenville in the synodical and then its area setting is a return to the original subject, the congregation being especially celebrated on the 140th anniversary of its founding. Our focus is on additional

III. Highlights from Helenville's History in the 1800s

In the year that the Wisconsin area went from the territorial stage to statehood Lutherans in the Helenville area, mostly from Bavaria and Wuerttemberg, took steps to found St. Peter congregation. In the spring of 1848 the pioneers, encouraged by an influx of new settlers in the area, reached the decision to form a congregation, draft a constitution, and build a log church. This resolution was signed by 26 members. In October the first constitution was formally adopted and work on the building was begun on land donated by Bernard Keller.

In the true sense, there had been a church in Helenville before 1848. For some years Lutherans, who began to come into the area around the middle years of the 1840s, had gathered in one another's homes on Sunday mornings to join in singing hymns, saying prayers and hearing God's word. This was church, even though many of the ecclesiastical formalities were not yet in place. The 1948 congregational history, in listing the pioneers who gathered for such worship, mentions such family names as Bullwinkel, Glaesel, Haag, Heine, Horn, Keller, Koepfel, Martin, Maurer, and Weber. The first name, Bullwinkel, used to be the place name for the village on old maps. We can be glad today for the change from family name to that of the pioneer's wife.

Early problems and conflicts about the confessional Lutheran character of the young congregation are hinted at in a letter written by a member, John Conrad Haug [Haag?] to Synod President Muehlhaeuser in 1857. The letter in part reads:

We are still without a pastor. . . . The most unruly group in our Helenville congregation wants a preacher who has no synodical ties. The better part, however, is of a different opinion, since a year ago we adopted a Lutheran constitution, which we would be reluctant to have rejected now. After all, Pastor Sinke had a lot of trouble getting it adopted. Please do not disregard the earnest request I am making.⁹

In response to the request, Pastor G. Reim eventually came in February 1858 to begin the significant service that lasted until 1865 and that has already been described in some detail.

The previous pastor had been Pastor Sinke, mentioned in that letter as one concerned about Lutheran confessionalism. He died in December 1857 and is buried in the Helenville cemetery. Pastor Sinke had been preceded by the first resident shepherd, Pastor Kleineges, who came in 1849 and is no doubt the P. Kleinegees mentioned in the 1851 synodical proceedings as closing the ministerial session with prayer. In 1854 he left Helenville, apparently after some discord.

The "apparently" is necessary because of confusion and gaps in the early records. Some of the records were burned by a pastor for some reason or another. Even Pastor Reim did not know all the answers. In St. Peter *Kirchenbuch I* on the inside corner he wrote: "A listing of the pastoral acts of previous pastors (Kleineges, Biel and Sinke) is simply not available."¹⁰

From G. Reim to the end of the century these are the Helenville pastors: Traugott Gensicke (1865-1874), Candidate H. Eckelman (1874-1875), George Reinsch (1875-1880), John Koerner (1880-1891), Theodore Hartwig (1891-1895) and John Himmler (1895-1903). In that year a pastorate (E. C. Fredrich) began that would extend to 1946 and that is more properly described by others.

Some notable congregational events in the last half of the previous century that should not be passed by without mention are:

- Membership in the Wisconsin Synod — 1859
- Building of the second church — 1861
- Building of the second parsonage — 1862
- Building of the first school — 1868
- Introduction of the new hymnal — 1872
- Collections for the new Rome congregation — 1887
- Building of the new parsonage — 1896
- Dedication of the new church — 1902

The fourth item in the previous list of events is "Building of the first school — 1868." It introduces an anniversary subject that the essayist, who is a graduate of the St. Peter Lutheran School, is most ready and eager to treat. The year 1868 should not be taken to mean that in that year the history of the congregation's school began. On the contrary, already in



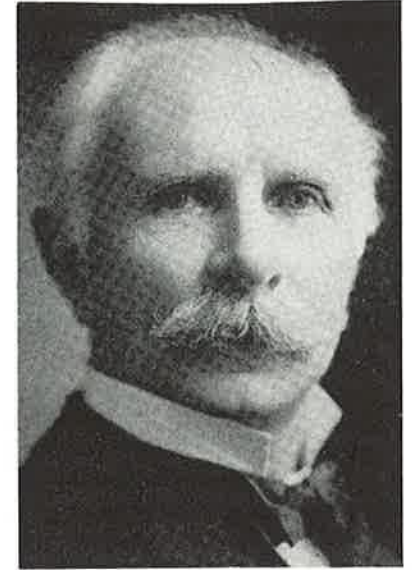
Rev. G. Reim
1858-1865



Rev. T. Gensicke
1865-1874



Rev. H. Eckelman
1874-1875



Rev. G. Reinsch
1875-1880



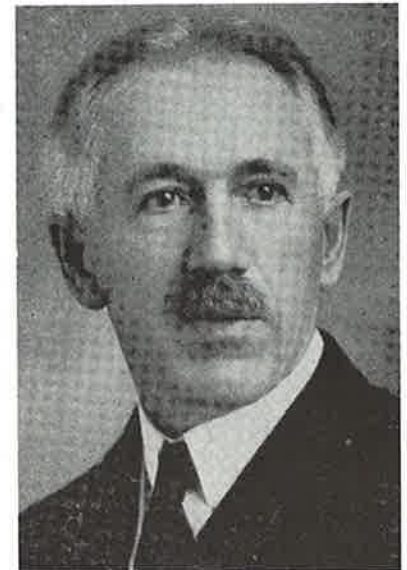
Rev. J. Koerner
1880-1891



Rev. T. Hartwig
1891-1895

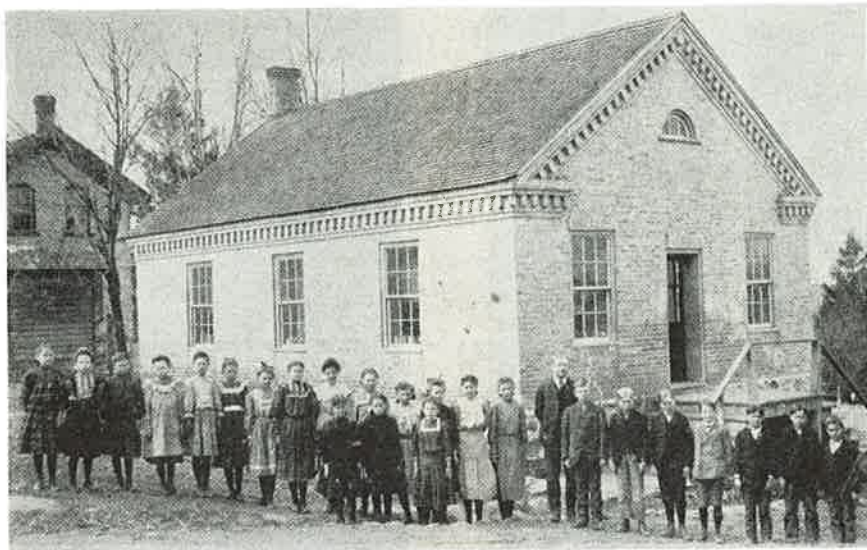


Rev. J. Himmler
1895-1903

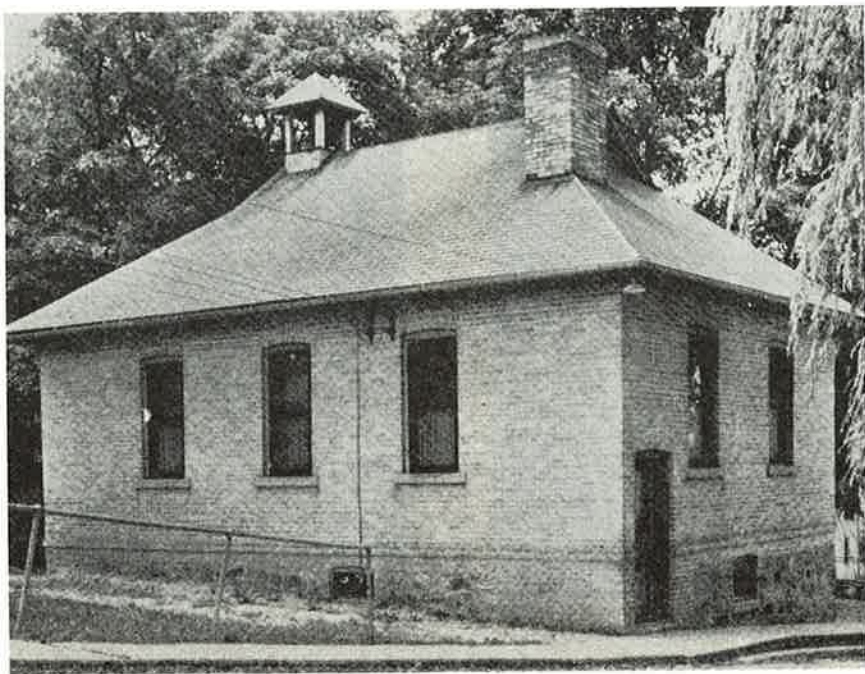


Rev. E. Fredrich
1903-1946

St. Peter's pastors from 1858 to 1946



St. Peter's first school built in 1868



"New" school built in 1914



Philip Becker
1882-1889



Carl Bolle
1895-1896



Henry Wicke
1899-1911



Ewald Kuester
1912-1928



Adolph Fehlauer
1930-1938



Ervin Humann
1938-1946

Six teachers of St. Peter School

1851 the annual meeting went on record as calling for Christian education for the children of the congregation by the pastor. The erection of the building simply meant that the school, which previously had been conducted in the church, now had its own building.

By 1882 St. Peter could call a full-time teacher to serve in the school. This was Philip Becker, who remained until 1889. The line that Becker began 106 years ago has continued unbroken to this time. In that line occur such names as Carl Bolle (1895-1896), who later headed Northwestern College's music department for many years, Henry Wicke (1899-1911), Ewald Kuester (1912-1928), from whom I learned my A-B-Cs and a lot of other things, Adolph Fehlauer (1930-1938), later long-time executive officer of the synod's educational board, and Ervin Humann (1938-1946), the last of the teachers I knew as a Helenville neighbor.

In 1914 a "new" school was built. It still stands across the road from the parsonage. No doubt, the present school building is its superior in every way and no doubt more than a one-room school became a necessity, but you will not chide some of us for having a softer spot in our hearts for that one-room school and the excellent education imparted there.

The final outline item reads "The Empty Parsonage Office."

The reference is to the previous parsonage replaced in 1896. The time is the fall of 1892. The Helenville pastor is on temporary leave in Arizona Territory hunting for Indians as prospective targets for a mission effort the Wisconsin Synod wanted to launch. Pastor Hartwig and Pastor Koch of Columbus had been commissioned to find a virgin Indian mission field. They found it in Apacheland and soon work was underway that still continues. Once again the Helenville congregation did its bit for the synodical cause and for the ongoing work of missions.

This is a good place to break off. We are back where we began — with Helenville in its synodical setting. So much remains to be said. It will have to remain unsaid. If there is one blot on the 140-year record still worth mentioning, it is that so few have gone from Helenville into the pastoral ranks, while so many pastors have come to serve. There is reason and time to remedy that situation.

If there is one more word of thanks and praise to be said, let it be said to the Lord of the Church, the Lord Jesus, the one hero in this long story of seven score years. To him and to his sustaining word be all the praise and all the glory.

If there is a final anniversary prayer to be said as the future years are faced, let it be: "Abide, O dearest Jesus, among us with thy grace and with thy word."

ENDNOTES

¹Among them are Pastor Schmid's plantings in Michigan from 1833 on and several in the Milwaukee area.

²H. Russell Austin, *The Wisconsin Story* (Milwaukee: Journal Company, 1948) pp. 115, 116.

³See the 1863 *Wisconsin Proceedings* for these and subsequent details.

⁴The 1864 *Wisconsin Proceedings* has Reim's report on pp. 4-8.

⁵The subject was thoroughly investigated by Lynn Wiedmann as a student at Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary. His writing "The Helenville Problem" is in the essay file of the school's library and supplies documentation from the congregation's records. Its conclusion is quoted in a subsequent paragraph.

⁶See Streissguth's synodical report on p. 7 of the 1865 *Wisconsin Proceedings*. The synodical action is recorded on p. 16.

⁷More material on the subject is supplied in "Two Forgotten Wisconsin Presidents: Reim and Streissguth" in *Wisconsin Lutheran Quarterly* LXXV (July 1978), pp. 188-198.

⁸*Wisconsin Proceedings*, 1851.

⁹From the files of early synod correspondence and records that J. P. Koehler set in order and that are preserved at the Northwestern College Library. The translation team of Lehmann-Schroeder-Sullivan is in the process of putting them into English. Dr. Lehmann supplied the essayist with this translated letter.

¹⁰A similar problem exists with minutes of congregational meetings from August 1866 to May 1872.

Professor Edward C. Fredrich II is head of the department of church history at Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary, Mequon, Wisconsin. He delivered this paper at the meeting of the WELS Historical Institute at Helenville, Wisconsin on October 23, 1988.

World Mission Vignettes

“Lutheran is a happy religion!” Bagus Pudjah, Bali Spring, 1970

Edgar H. Hoenecke

FROM MY WINDOW SEAT on the Garuda Airlines flight from Djakarta I had a grand preview of the fabulous tropical island of Bali as we were about to land at Denpasar terminal. Pastor Martinus Adam had arranged for a service at Singaradja which I was to attend.

Through the oldest son of the ex-king of North Bali, Anak Agung *Dipa Pandji Tisna*, whom he was tutoring in Lutheran theology, he had begun preaching services on Bali and another son of the ex-king and several children were to be baptized in this service.

Looking for a cab driver to take me on the three-hour trip from Denpasar to Singaradja, I was approached by a very handsome black cabbie with the friendly words, “I am Bagus Pudjah, Driver Number Four, Bali Beach Hotel; can I be of service to you?” The man’s whole person exuded confidence and competence, so I hired him on the spot.

When I mentioned Singaradja he was eager to settle on a modest fare for the trip because, he said, he had long wanted to meet the ex-king whose books on the culture and history of Bali he had read with great interest. The service was to be held at the summer home of the ex-king so his hope would surely be realized.

The king’s name was also Anak Agung Pandji Tisna. The Anak Agung is the equivalent of our title “the honorable.”

Bagus Pudjah seemed almost too large for his little Japanese car as we began our drive north through the lush tropical countryside. He kept up a steady description and commentary on the scenes unfolding before us in perfect English. He must have sensed my curiosity about this, because he explained that he had been a school teacher who simply could not raise a growing family on a teacher’s wages.

The scene changed constantly. People in colorful robes, deep green foliage with fragrant tropical flowers, and unusual exotic fruits reminded me of the brilliant images we used to create in our kaleidoscopes.

The pace at which the people walked and worked was unhurried as they took time to wave a greeting as we passed. We stopped at a well-kept park at



Lutheran congregation of Pastor Martinus Adam at Singaradja.

whose far end stood a tall terraced temple. In stately procession brightly clad women walked with erect postures, bearing woven baskets of fruits and flowers on their heads as offerings to their gods.

At another crossroad Mr. Pudjah turned into a secluded grove from which we heard loud shouts even before the whole scene came into view. An illegal cock-fight was in progress and the voices were those of people lounging on raised platforms shouting out their bets. In the central ring the roosters were being fitted with sharp metallic spurs to make them more lethal in the bloody contest. We left. Mr. Pudjah explained that these brutal spectacles were subject to police raids and he did not want us to become involved.

On our right we now saw the dark green cone of Mount Agung, an active volcano. The driver explained that “The Honorable One” has a very sad history. Some twenty years earlier the priest at the hillside temple had urged the terrified people to take refuge in the temple compound which the gods had revealed to him would be spared. Thousands came and all were smothered by the lethal gases and buried under the relentless river of hot lava.

Now our road veered to the west with the vast expanse of the Pacific Ocean on our right and our destination, Singaradja, just ahead. A little past noon we stopped at a wooden gate, bearing the inscription “A.A.P.DJLANTIK.” The present occupant was Anak Agung Pandji Djlantik, youngest son of the deposed king. His older brother, Oka, and several children now came through the gate with black-garbed Pastor Martinus Adam to welcome us.

Coming out of the glare of the noonday sun, the courtyard which we entered seemed almost gloomy, overshadowed by towering trees and ringed by grey wooden buildings. On our left were the home and sheds of the Djlantik family. Across the yard stood an open thatched structure which Pastor Adam pointed out as "the house of the dead." Here, he said, the dead were laid out on the open verandah until the priest had his fee and an omen from the gods for an auspicious day of burial.

The little family congregation, about twenty persons, now gathered on the porch of the house. The ex-king had not come but had sent word that he would receive us later at his beach house for a formal audience.

Just as the service was about to begin Pastor Adam sidled up to me and said that I was to preach the sermon. Mr. Godfrey Simon would interpret for me. I was about to decline when I looked at the huddled group on the porch and at the depressing "house of the dead" across from us. Then I knew that I had to bring the "tidings of great joy" to these descendants of the deposed king of Bali.

That led to my text, "Fear not, for behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy. — For unto you is born this day in the City of David a Savior, which is Christ the Lord!" And I began to expound this wonderful Christmas message on Bali on Saturday afternoon, May 2, 1970.

Within minutes my driver, Bagus Pudjah, interrupted very politely, "Forgive me, sir, for disturbing. But these people do not understand. You see, Mr. Simon is translating into his native Javanese, but these good people know only Balinese. By your leave, I will interpret for you."

I was taken aback by the interruption, but also by the suggestion that a man whom I thought to be a Moslem would transmit a sermon for me. But I saw the logic of his kind offer and asked him to carry on.

Now the people understood. It could be seen on their happy faces and in their shining eyes. Everything went on without a hitch. Adam performed several baptisms and the service was over.

Bagus Pudjah took my hand, again apologized and spoke these unforgettable words, "Sir, I find the Lutheran to be a very happy religion. I should like to learn more about it."

His "more about it" gave me the opening I needed. This was the bulk of our conversation on the drive back to Denpasar. I told him that our Lutheran missionaries would come back to Bali, also to make further contact with him. By the Holy Spirit's working this friendly ex-teacher, Driver Number Four, Bali Beach Hotel, will have found much more on his run to Singaradja than personal acquaintance with the ex-king of North Bali to make him rejoice.

Edgar H. Hoenecke is a retired pastor living in San Diego, California. For 25 years he headed the WELS world mission program.



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." (Salem now serves as the museum 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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