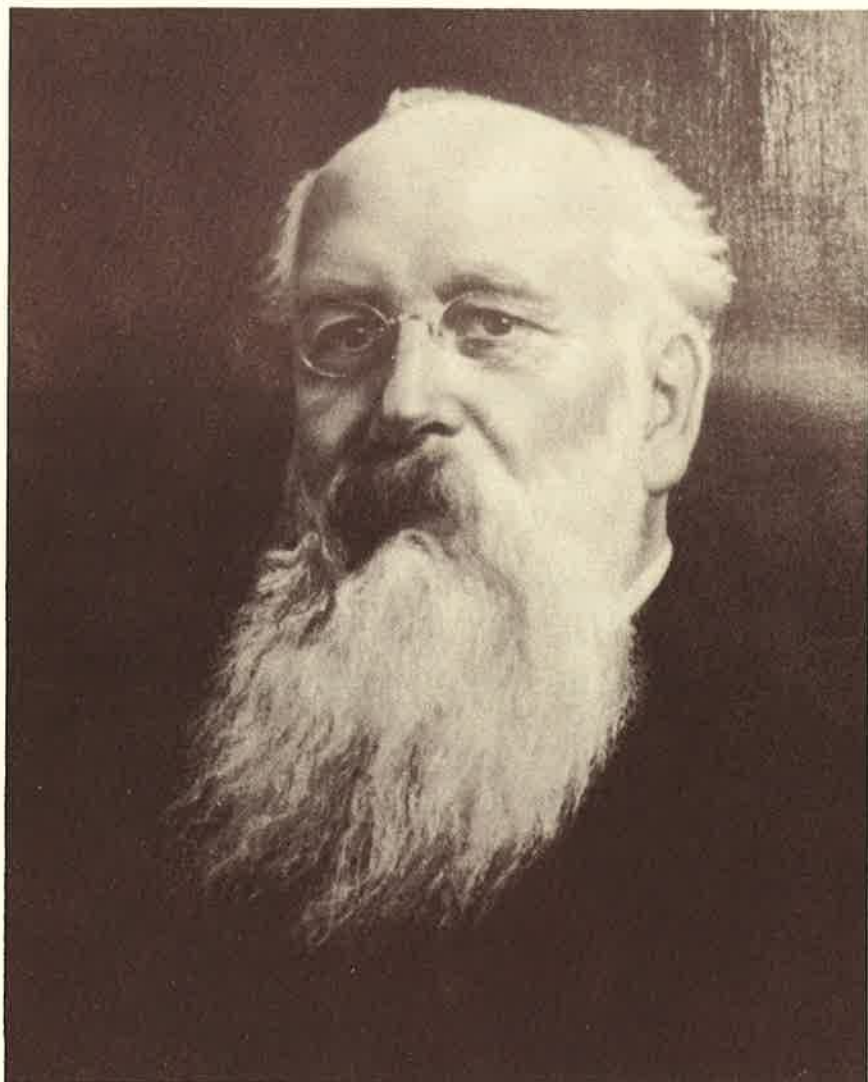


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Cover photograph: The Rev. Philip von Rohr.

The President's Report

PLANS HAVE BEEN DRAWN UP for the synod archives at Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary. The archives are part of a remodeling project which will transform the old gymnasium into three classrooms and archives. Cost will be about \$200,000. Grants amounting to \$96,880 from the Siebert Lutheran Foundation and Lutheran Brotherhood will cover almost the entire cost of the archives portion of the project — that is, approximately \$100,000. We hope that construction might begin this fall.

The institute's fall 1986 meeting was held on October 29 at St. Paul's Lutheran Church, Muskego, Wisconsin. Dr. James Kiecker of Wisconsin Lutheran College presented an essay on "Early History of WELS congregations in the Milwaukee area." Attendance at the meeting was 60.

The spring 1987 meeting was at Northwestern College in Watertown, Wisconsin on April 29. Prof. James Korthals of Northwestern discussed "Turning the Corner: the Establishment of the Ernst Presidency." Attendance was 80.

The fall 1987 meeting will be October 18 at St. Paul Lutheran Church in Algoma, Wisconsin. Dr. Arnold Lehmann will speak on the circuit pastors from the synod's early years. The meeting will be a part of St. Paul's 125 anniversary celebration. It will be the institutes twelfth meeting.

If you are planning a trip to the Milwaukee area for your church or school group, consider stopping at Salem Lutheran Landmark Church. Tours of the historic building include a brief history of the early years of Salem (one of the three founding congregations of WELS) and of the synod. You may arrange a tour of Salem by contacting Mrs. Evelyn Schafer, W145 N7336 Northwood Dr., Menomonee Falls WI 53051, phone (414) 251-4093.

Roland Cap Ehlke

The Rev. Philip von Rohr

Devoted Pioneer Pastor and Leader of the Wisconsin Synod

Philip von Rohr Sauer

THAT GREAT BIOGRAPHER and great Christian, Dr. Samuel Johnson, once wrote, "I have often thought that there has rarely passed a life of which a judicious and faithful narrative would not be useful."

For many, many years I have felt that Philip von Rohr's biography should be written. Whether I am qualified to produce one that is both "judicious and faithful," I cannot say. I only know that no one else has attempted this and that I had many reasons for trying.

First, I had acquired some valuable manuscripts from my mother, Elfrieda, which I had filed away all these years. Secondly, since I retired from active teaching, I had both the desire and the time to write. Thirdly, when I discovered Professor Richard Balge's fine, scholarly article in the *Wisconsin Lutheran Quarterly*, I was inspired to know more about my grandfather, who used to hold me on his knee and whose name I bear. Fourthly, I had translated Philip von Rohr's autobiographical sketch from the German *Gemeindeblatt Kalender*, a rare primary source. But most important, I wanted to preserve for his many descendants an account of a very saintly and lovable pioneer whose example might inspire all of us to carry on his Christian heritage. It is our privilege to be influenced by men of moral excellence and Philip von Rohr was one of them.

The von Rohr Family Background

The von Rohr family has a colorful history. Philip von Rohr's forebears had been active in Brandenburg Prussian political and military affairs for centuries. The *Gotha* (Genealogical Handbook of Noble Families) traces the family back to 1191, and the von Rohrs have been numbered among the nobility ever since. Many had served as military officers or government employees.

Heinrich von Rohr, Philip's father, had a most varied career. In 1805, at the tender age of eight, he was enrolled in the Stolp (Prussian) Military Academy, founded by Frederick II. As a teenager he served as a page at the court of Frederick Wilhelm III of Prussia. At eighteen he was a second lieutenant in the Kaiser Alexander Grenadier Regiment. In this capacity he spent three months in Paris among diplomats who were settling Franco-Prussian disputes after the Napoleonic wars. On March 30, 1834, he became a captain in his regiment.

In his early thirties Heinrich experienced a religious conversion that made him a devout Lutheran and ultimately altered his entire life. He read

widely in the Scriptures, took daily instructions and studied theology. When Frederick Wilhelm III, with Prussian zeal for unity, proclaimed a union between the Lutheran and Reformed Churches, Heinrich refused to join — because the Reformed did not acknowledge Christ's real presence in the Lord's Supper — and Heinrich was considered a stubborn nonconformist. On February 10, 1837, he was dismissed and his commission nullified.

But the erstwhile captain was not alone in his opposition to the "Prussian Union." Lutherans in Pomerania, Saxony and Silesia were also being persecuted for their opposition — they were ready to immigrate, as so many did, in order to find religious freedom. Because of his training in organization and leadership Heinrich von Rohr soon became the prime mover of the first Prussian immigrant group of 1000 that sailed for America in 1839 — on a nine weeks' ocean crossing.

Soon after their arrival in the States, Heinrich and John Grabau established settlements in Buffalo, New York and in Wisconsin. Von Rohr's group founded Freistadt, north of Milwaukee, and built there the first Lutheran Church in Wisconsin. An official marker of the State Historical Society attests to this. Enduring many hardships in their log cabins, these pioneers made a living as farmers and Heinrich, too, tilled the soil.

After the Freistadt colony was well established, Heinrich felt a calling to serve his Lord. This caused him to return to Buffalo, where Grabau, an astute theologian, had established a center for Lutheran studies. Soon von Rohr was ordained and with Grabau became a leader among the early Lutheran immigrants. And so influential was their zeal that on June 25, 1845, Grabau, von Rohr, Leberecht Krause, and Adolph Kindermann founded the Buffalo Synod (now part of the American Lutheran Church) in Milwaukee.¹ In a short time von Rohr became so prominent in the Buffalo Synod that "Pastor von Rohr, a former Prussian captain, and Pastor Grabau were sent to the Lutheran churches in Germany to get help in settling a dispute between the Buffalo and Missouri Synods."²

It was either on this trip or another journey to Europe that Grabau and von Rohr met with Wilhelm Loehe, who was sending many Lutheran pastors to the Middle West at this time.

In 1840 Heinrich von Rohr married Margarete Luetzel, daughter of a Huguenot family, also immigrants. He served in New Bergholz near Buffalo for 28 years. There, perhaps the happiest period in Heinrich's life, he reared a family of four: Marie, who married Grabau's oldest son; Elise; John (pioneer Winona pharmacist); and Philip, the subject of this biography.³

"He preached until his death in 1875 at the age of 77 years. He was a leader in the ranks of the German Lutheran ministry and was for many years president of the Synod of Buffalo."⁴

The Early Years and College Days

Philip von Rohr was born on February 13, 1843, in Buffalo, New York, where his father was teaching school and studying. Soon after Philip's birth his father, Heinrich, took over a congregation in Humberstone, Ontario, where he served for two years. After this the von Rohr family moved to New Bergholz, New York, where the Rev. Heinrich von Rohr also served Wallmow and Johannisberg. Young Philip grew up in New Bergholz, near Buffalo, until he was eleven.

In his autobiography he records the following:

Of my youth in New Bergholz there is little to record. The school there offered only the most meager necessities; the teachers were hard and administered vigorous punishment even for minor offenses. The village in general was ruled by a very pietistic atmosphere: skating and snowballing were considered evil excesses by the people there. Only in our home was there a friendly spirit. What gave me strength and vigor throughout my entire youth and upheld me all my life was my intimate relationship with my sainted father. The profound love and complete trust which I felt toward him was deeply engraven in me, and I thank God that this relationship remained steadfast and unshaken until his death! He *was* and remained my true friend and guide in whom I could confide everything, whose unalterable love nothing could destroy.

The situation in the parishes was a unique one. Only people who belonged to the congregation lived in these cities. New settlers had to take instruction before they were full-fledged members. Church discipline was rigorously enforced. All so-called worldly activity such as dancing was strictly forbidden. Members who had fallen into sinful ways had to do penance publicly. All church holidays were meticulously observed. In short a strong church spirit regulated every one. Thus outwardly a model congregational life was to be observed there.⁵

In 1853, when Philip was eleven, he entered Martin Luther College at Buffalo, where he studied for nine years. This college (a combination of college and seminary) was founded by the Rev. John Grabau, and Grabau's son was its president. The Spartan discipline of Philip's college years is described by him as follows:

In my twelfth year I entered Martin Luther College in Buffalo; the change from a simple and uniform way of life was for me a very decided one. I had great difficulties in adjusting myself to the ways of a city. City boys were very annoying at times and my complete ignorance of the English language aggravated all my troubles. The daily routine there was altogether novel too. We slept in huge rooms in the attic which got so cold in winter that frost formed on our covers. In this cold we had to get up, wash, and get dressed and then, nearly frozen, walk a half mile or mile to get our breakfast. In those poverty-stricken years we students had so-called "free-board." Seven families would alternate boarding a student, each taking him for a week. Our food was good and our reception always cordial. During the latter years of my college career we *did* get our breakfasts at school. This was a great advantage in winter, for braving the snow on an empty stomach is no pleasure!

My instructors were Pastor Grabau, Prof. Winkler, Prof. Doehler and later Pastor Hochstetter. When I compare this instruction with the training that our sons are getting at college and the seminary today, I recall painfully an almost wasted

youth. The instruction was very deficient and what is more, very mechanical. I can truthfully say that not one of our teachers knew how to make his subject interesting. Add to this an iron discipline and the fact that refreshing sports of all kinds were prohibited, and you have a conception of the situation. What made conditions worse was the fact that sordid and unclean elements got into the student body exposing the youths to pernicious influences. Truthfully, I cannot look back to these nine years at college with any degree of pleasure!

Pastor Grabau we all honored. His example influenced me and others favorably and taught us never to complain of overwork in our parishes. Complete devotion to our glorious calling — that was the attitude, God be thanked, that we were imbued with. Through many trials and temptations the powerful grace of God had upheld us; and for what we achieved we have to thank the grace of God!

During my two last years at college I had to teach parochial school — a fact which had its advantages but caused a neglect of college duties.

The First Parish and Early Years of Marriage

Philip von Rohr was ordained as a Lutheran pastor on October 13, 1863. His *Testimonium Ordinationis*, all in official Latin, was signed by John Grabau, Heinrich von Rohr, John Winkler, Christian Hochstetter and others. His first call, arranged by John Grabau, was to a small congregation in Toledo, Ohio. At the age of twenty the young pastor, powerful, tall and energetic, took up his duties. His congregation was a small group that had left the Iowa Synod. In Toledo at this time there were also a German Lutheran Church of the Ohio Synod, a German Reformed Church and a German Methodist parish. The pastor described his first years in the ministry as follows:

A Mr. Hoffmann of our congregation gave me free board and room. My salary was a bare \$200 a year which was raised to \$350 after I had to get my own board and room. In this charge I engaged in my duties with eagerness and pleasure. Besides preaching and my parochial duties I taught school five days a week. During the last years of my sojourn there I contracted ague, which did not entirely leave me until I got to Minnesota. My work in Toledo lasted 2½ years. My nearest neighboring pastor was the minister in Detroit, 60 miles distant; but I did at times associate with ministers of the Ohio Synod, for instance Pastor Cronewett, Pastor Luebker and others.

In 1865 the head of the Buffalo Synod, Pastor John Grabau, took a tour of inspection throughout the West. The little congregation in Winona, Minnesota was then being served a few times a year by Milwaukee ministers.⁶ Pastors Grabau and Mueller visited this small parish and urged its parishioners to call a minister. At the recommendation of Grabau I was selected, and he informed me of this in September 1865. The call proper, however, was not delivered. Pastor Grabau was withhold-

ing it, particularly after I had announced my engagement to my beloved wife, a niece of Pastor Hochstetter. This was in October of 1865. A split in the Buffalo Synod, especially between Grabau and Hochstetter, was impending and later occurred.⁷ Of this more anon. But it was not until this break took place and Grabau had left our faction that I received the call to Winona from the new chairman pro tempore, Pastor G. Wallaeger. On February 1, 1866, I had taken to wife Emma Schaal in Buffalo. Noteworthy under the existing conditions was the marriage text chosen by Grabau in which Paul says, "For the present distress it is better *not to marry than to marry*" and although at the end of the sermon he spoke of God's power to support us, the sermon as a whole was a direct accusation; to wit, that I should burden the poor congregation in Toledo with a *wife!* I was able to remain in Toledo only three months more; my health demanded a change of climate, and with quiet joy I headed for a strange land because in those days Minnesota on the Mississippi was considered the Wild West.

Early Years in Winona

In June 1866 Philip von Rohr and his bride of four months arrived in Winona, Minnesota and on June 27 he was installed. In the '60s thousands of Germans, largely Pomeranians, were settling in the area and this young couple in their early twenties were a welcome addition to the German families of Winona, where they soon became both the spiritual and secular leaders of the colony. The young Mrs. von Rohr, whose family came originally from Wuerttemberg-Baden, had the happy temperament so often found among South Germans. And there can be no doubt that her Swabian joy of life had a most beneficial effect on her serious Prussian husband as well as on her family. Over the years the pastor and his wife became more and more endeared to these German immigrants, who had come to farm the rich soils of southeastern Minnesota or to work in the thriving lumber mills in Winona.

When the von Rohrs arrived, Winona was less than ten years old. It was a friendly little village with dirt streets and few sidewalks. The busiest place in town was the riverfront, where lumber mills like the Laird-Norton Company were providing lumber that would soon replace the sod huts of the prairie or the log cabins in the forests. The sawmills were run by rich New Englanders, who in turn encouraged the Germans to come and work in their mills. Of the four wards in town, one — the third — was composed almost entirely of German Lutherans. Among them was a saintly man, Tobias Leeb, who served as lay reader during the years when the pioneers were seeking a pastor, and he was to become the pastor's best helper. Von Rohr records these memories of his early years in Winona:

When I landed in Winona I found a small gathering of 20 communicants and a church 18 x 30 feet meagerly furnished. But the congregation grew apace, thanks partly to the parochial school, which I founded with six children two weeks after my arrival. By that fall there were 80 children in the parish school. The next four years I taught on the average of 100 students until finally the

congregation was able to call a teacher. There was no lack of work! In Wilson I had a flourishing daughter congregation which I served six years. In Hart I served three years until the congregation was finally induced to call a Missouri minister. Thus I had three congregations to take care of in addition to five days of school teaching a week. The work brought me joy, and God has blessed it so that today there is a prosperous parish in Winona.

In 1868, two years after von Rohr's arrival, his congregation, St. Martin, was large enough to purchase the property on the northwest corner of Broadway and Liberty streets. A small church had been moved to that corner, to be replaced in 1870 by a larger frame church. Next to this was a large wooden house, which served as the parsonage during most of von Rohr's ministry. The large stone church, which is still the center of worship, was built in 1886, replacing the 1870 edifice.

As important as the church was, the parochial school founded by von Rohr occupied an equally vital place in his scheme of things.

He had opened the school himself, providing six children of his own when he did so. For four years he taught one hundred children at a time, until the congregation could afford to call a teacher. The original building was enlarged, and then two new schools were built during the years of his pastorate, one of them a branch to serve the west side of the growing city and parish. He attributed the rapid and continuing growth of the congregation in large measure to this Christian day school. He once exulted that the local Methodists had closed their school because all the youngsters were transferring to St. Martin. He expressed the view that home and school must work in concert to carry out the education of Christian children.⁸

The Middle Years: a Portrait of the Pastor and His Family

Rev. and Mrs. Philip von Rohr were the parents of 13 children. The first two, a boy and a girl, died within five months of their birth. Another boy died at the age of six months. Two other sons had untimely deaths, a sad episode that will be dealt with later. But eight children, three sons and five daughters, all born during the 1870's and 1880's, survived the rigors of their pioneer childhoods, and made up a closely-knit family circle; all reached maturity in the old frame parsonage of which the pastor said, "We used to add a new section whenever a new child appeared."

In this old parsonage, however, there was a busy, congenial family whose love and devotion illuminated the dark surroundings. Dominated by the patriarchal dignity of Philip von Rohr and his most hospitable little wife, this house became the center of a large family, an open house to a growing congregation, and a happy rendezvous for Lutheran ministers from all over the upper Midwest. In the cozy study, lighted by an old gas lamp with a green shade, pioneer German peasants came to discuss their problems with their pastor. Many a graying father, discouraged about supporting his large family from a rocky farm, found comfort in the pastor's benevolent words. Many a widow in mourning left this study feeling that her grief had been soothed.⁹

Despite his busy pastoral activities Philip von Rohr always had time for his family. His children remember him as the kind of father who was eager to lead or join in all their activities. A favorite evening entertainment took place when the father played piano duets with daughter Adele, accompanied by young Uncle John (Philip's brother), the pioneer pharmacist who played a violin. Then the whole family would sing German folk songs or hymns. On Christmas Eve all would march into the Christmas room singing "Ihr Kinderlein Kommet."

On festive occasions the Philip von Rohr family, later joined by John von Rohr's family, would spend the evening singing a Rundgesang, a ceremony in which each one suggested his favorite song, which all joined in singing. When someone had a birthday, the families would sing "Hoch soll er (or sie) leben!" and there was always a sumptuous midnight meal to end the party.

The pastor had many hobbies, chief of which was outdoor recreation. One day he might be showing his daughter Elfrieda where to find marsh marigolds, for both were great nature lovers. On another occasion he might be seen teaching son Edmund how to shoot, for the pastor was an excellent wing shot and Edmund became one too. Or he might drive daughters Emma and Hedwig into the sylvan valleys, showing them how to handle a team of horses. One can also imagine him teaching son Hugo or daughter Ada how to row a boat on Lake Winona. But of all his outdoor hobbies trout fishing was his favorite: he and his youngest son, Adolph, with his fishing buddy, a Mr. Wachs, would drive in a horse-drawn buggy to East Burns Valley and catch native Eastern brook trout by the dozen. These he would pack in ice and deliver to friends. Typical of the pastor is the remark he once made to a Mr. Tarras, an adult who was taking instructions: "It's too nice to study. Let's go and fish trout!"¹⁰

Pastor von Rohr, as his friends called him, was also active in the community and helped to break down the social barriers between the elite New Englanders and the new immigrants. He soon became a member of the first park board and a trustee of the Woodlawn Cemetery Association. He taught German at Winona High School and also gave private lessons. One of his students was Katherine Berry, mother of Mrs. Joseph McConnon, a great civic leader whose husband was later president of McConnon and Company, pharmacy wholesalers. He taught Mrs. Berry enough German so that she could read Goethe in the original. He also taught music to Caroline V. Smith, who later became a music instructor at Winona Normal School. Among his other community friends was Bishop Cotter, after whom Cotter High School was named. The two religious leaders were warm friends and used to take walks together. Other friends with whom he visited and played chess were the pioneer physician, Dr. Hans Lichtenstein, and an attorney named Balcomb.

Though the pioneer pastor knew many happy hours, he was not spared that grief of pioneer homes, sudden death by accident or illness. As previously mentioned three children died in infancy. But far more painful were two later deaths described by the father as follows:

Our youngest son, Philip, a child of nearly four years, fell into a washtub of boiling soap-water. This happened in the morning at nine o'clock and he lived, fully conscious, until five o'clock that evening when he quietly went to sleep.

The deepest blow of my whole life was the unexpected death of our dear Henry who died at the age of 17 years and 4 months. He was a goodly lad, very talented, obedient and faithful and was my constant pride and joy. He was to have been first my assistant and later my successor and with this in mind was sent to our college in Watertown. He reached his Junior year. At the end of the school year, already preparing to go home, he was seized with appendicitis. His condition was not considered serious but, since he could not go home with the other boys, I sent his mother to Watertown to nurse him. I myself had to go to St. Paul for synod. After three days I received a telegram stating that Henry was in serious condition. I immediately boarded the first train available but while passing through Winona was told by my brother, John, that Henry had already died the evening before. I found him in his coffin! Three months before I had seen him for the last time. The extent of my grief I cannot express in words. Although my dear Lord comforted and strengthened me to bear also this cross, I must admit that even today as I write this I *feel deeply* the wound that has remained.

But the father concludes these sad episodes in these words:

Again in this affliction we were richly comforted by the gospel. In fact all our afflictions have but produced the fruits of righteousness for me and my family. We have learned to thank our God for these tribulations and have come to realize that all things work together for good to them that love God.

No portrait of the von Rohr home would be complete without a tribute to the pastor's venerable wife, Emma née Schaal, who reared eight children and maintained a perpetual open house for Wisconsin Synod friends. Mother von Rohr was a small woman with an energetic constitution and well-balanced, calm personality. Her children report that she was serene and composed at all times, that she never raised her voice or yelled at her offspring. Her happy South-German temperament kept the busy household under control and helped to rear a splendid family.¹¹

Since Philip von Rohr was very active in the Wisconsin Synod, his home soon became a gathering place for a galaxy of synodical leaders, the Babenroths, the Hoeneckes, the Ernsts, the Badings, the Notzes, among others. "Our house was a hotel for ministers" his daughter related.¹² All visitors were welcomed and were given the best parsonage hospitality by Mother von Rohr. Since Winona was midway between Milwaukee and St. Paul, centers of Wisconsin Synod Lutheranism, many pastors left the train for an overnight stop at St. Martin's parsonage. And during the formative years of the Synod's history, men of the caliber of A. F. Ernst and Adolph Hoenecke made Wisconsin Synod history while guests of Mother von Rohr or "Frau Pastor'n" as they called her.

That his parish work in Winona from 1866 to 1908 was most gratifying can be seen from this resumé, written within a year of von Rohr's death:

"When I now look back upon the dealings of God, this one thing always stands uppermost; namely, that once I had settled in Winona, I was to remain there permanently. I have served the congregation 41½ years and through God's guidance the work has been richly blessed."



President Philip von Rohr and grandson, Philip von Rohr Sauer

His Career as President of the Wisconsin Synod

The Buffalo Synod, in which von Rohr was reared, had been founded in 1845, two years after his birth and two years before the founding of the Missouri Synod. He was educated in this synod's schools and served as a Buffalo Synod pastor for 12 years, 1863 to 1875. Buffalo's leader, Grabau, had over the years become more and more rigid in disciplining individual churches and had been criticized both by Heinrich von Rohr and C. F. W. Walther of the Missouri Synod "for his pastoral letters, which were extremely high church in tone."¹³ This rigidity led to a split, and there arose a "von Rohr faction" and a "Grabau faction." Von Rohr tells of the results:

When I came to Winona I belonged to that portion of the Buffalo Synod which had separated from Grabau because of his constant dictatorial attitude. Our portion of the synod was led by my sainted father, and when he died in 1875, I became his successor. Clearly recognizing that this small and scattered synod could not continue, I called together its officials in 1875 and peacefully dissolved the synod.

The question arose, what next? I did not want to be a man without a synod. During the years I had become acquainted with the leading men of various Lutheran synods, among others Professor Fritschel of the Iowa Synod. When this Synod met in Madison, Wisconsin in 1875 I went there to learn more of its policies. Unfortunately, they were not such as I could abide by. The entire attitude toward the Lutheran confessions presented there was too vague and indefinite.

Again I was confronted with the question, whither? Many attempts were made to bring me into the Missouri Synod — certainly their doctrines did not hinder me. Through intense study on my own, in particular a study of Luther, I had arrived at a satisfactory view of then disputed doctrines and had reached conclusions which, by the help of God, I still maintain.

Grabau thought a strict organization of the churches would be the only haven of safety for the small American group. The result was that he propagated an almost dictatorial attitude, very un-Lutheran, that practically smothered the rights of the individual congregations. Walther, on the contrary — and a blessing it was — upheld the principles of congregational rights.

These are the closing words of von Rohr's autobiographical sketch, which was written during his last illness and never finished.

Whither? For two years St. Martin's pastor was a man without a synod. He considered joining Missouri, the larger synod which wanted a merger with Wisconsin.

He must have empathized with those in Wisconsin who resented the pressure (real or inferred) that Missouri was applying. He must have been one of those in federation with Minnesota. In short, he could have joined Missouri but he didn't. May we conclude that, while he appreciated the larger fellowship of confessional brethren, he did not agree with those who thought size and

uniformity and centralization are the best safeguards of confessional Lutheranism?¹⁴

In any case von Rohr decided to bring St. Martin into the Wisconsin Synod, which had admitted him on the basis of a colloquy (theological examination) in 1877. At this time Wisconsin had 143 parishes and 80 pastors. Almost overnight St. Martin became a vital part of this synod. In fact, von Rohr was so enthusiastic that he invited the synod to convene in Winona the next year. And it did convene there in 1879, two years after he joined it.¹⁵

In just a few years von Rohr became a leader in this active young synod. He brought a few former Buffalo Synod pastors into the Wisconsin fold and founded congregations in Wilson and Lewiston, Minnesota. In 1879 he was elected as a delegate representing Wisconsin at the Synodical Conference of North America convention. In 1880 he served on a committee that was to prepare a more up-to-date catechism. In the late 1880s he helped defeat "the Bennett law," which would have required that all instruction in parochial schools in Wisconsin be in English. During these years he was known also as a friend of education, especially parochial schools (for which the Wisconsin Synod is famous to this day). And the synod's college at Watertown was his pet project, partly because his own college days had been so bleak.

When Philip von Rohr was elected president of the Wisconsin Synod in 1889, he grasped the reins of leadership, eagerly promoting the synod's educational system as well as its missionary endeavors. Although he never considered himself to be a great theologian, he strongly advocated sound theological studies by expanding the synod's college and promoting its theological seminary. He was also successful in enlarging the synod's missions, which expanded rapidly as immigrants arrived from Germany around the turn of the century.

President von Rohr (or Praeses von Rohr as he was always called in German) soon embarked on his favorite project, the improvement of Northwestern College. This college, located in Watertown, Wisconsin, has been and still is known for its strong classical, liberal arts curriculum. It was founded to provide a first-rate education for pre-ministerial students.

His special love was for Northwestern University (as it was then called) at Watertown. He was not unappreciative of his own education at Buffalo, but felt that Northwestern's classical language training and liberal arts education was better suited to equip men for lifelong theological study. His close association with Bading and Ernst, perhaps an intuitive grasp of the synod's situation and needs, his concern for the future ministry of the synod — these put the institution at Watertown first in his reports and highest in his assignment of priorities. "As always we give first thought to our institutions. They are the focus of our synodical life." He understood that the synod's missions needed missionaries, that the congregations who would support missionaries needed a supply of able pastors who would show them the needs and opportunities.¹⁶

Student welfare and morale were high priorities for Praeses von Rohr. In 1903 dormitory space was very inadequate at Northwestern and a new building was to be erected at a cost of \$25,000. So eager was von Rohr to get this building finished that he personally raised \$7,000, largely from wealthy

Milwaukee Lutherans. When the cost of the dormitory plus other improvements rose to \$51,267, "von Rohr . . . and Mr. Graebner of Milwaukee . . . pledged themselves to raise the excess over the sum fixed by the synod. The dormitory, 'home' to most present-day pastors of the synod during their years in Watertown, was razed in 1974. President von Rohr was one of the featured speakers at its dedication, as he had been for most great events at Northwestern since 1890."¹⁷

Today a large oil painting of Philip von Rohr may be seen in the reception room of Northwestern College. It was he who vowed that student life should be better and more profitable than his had been. And many generations of Wisconsin Synod pastors benefited from his dedication.

The synod's theological seminary also had some of its best years under von Rohr's leadership. When the Minnesota Synod and small Michigan Synod federated with Wisconsin in 1892, it was decided, under von Rohr's leadership, to have one seminary for the new larger synod. And when the new seminary building at Wauwatosa was dedicated, he delivered the festive sermon stating:

From now on it will not serve the Wisconsin Synod alone, but also the sister synods now federated with us. We have tendered it to the Joint Synod and thereby demonstrated, with our joyful and willing sacrifice, how urgent it is for us to help our fellow believers and further the wonderful work of building God's Kingdom among them as well. I now transfer this institution to the Joint Synod of Wisconsin, Minnesota and Michigan.¹⁸

This Wauwatosa seminary, under the leadership of Dr. Adolph Hoenecke, produced some of the great figures of the synod during the years 1892 and 1908, the latter date marking the deaths of Hoenecke and von Rohr.

A third institution which von Rohr supported wholeheartedly was Dr. Martin Luther College at New Ulm, Minnesota. And it was during his term of office that this college officially became *the* teachers college of the Joint Synod of Wisconsin, Minnesota and Michigan.

A fourth institution that owes much to von Rohr's leadership is the Northwestern Publishing House, Milwaukee, which though started in 1876 was incorporated in 1891. This important link in the synod's organization published the synod's official organ, the *Gemeindeblatt*, the hymnals, and later theological books. N.P.H. even today enjoys a reputation for excellence in publishing.

Because these institutions flourished under von Rohr's presidency and provided trained manpower, the missions of the Wisconsin Synod expanded accordingly. With more and better-trained graduates available, synodical leaders looked beyond Wisconsin for mission fields. In 1898 Mission Superintendent Bendler and President von Rohr entrained for California and surveyed the Pasadena area as a possible mission field. Though the project never materialized, the episode does reveal how far-reaching the president's mission hopes extended.

One of Wisconsin's most successful mission efforts, the work among the Apaches in Arizona, did flourish under his leadership. As early as 1893 mission workers started bringing the gospel to these Indian tribes, with John Plocher pioneering in this difficult endeavor. The Apache mission was to become one of the Wisconsin Synod's most successful endeavors.

Most of the mission work, of course, centered around Southern Wisconsin, Northern Illinois and Southeastern Minnesota, where German immigrants were in need of pastors. While von Rohr was president, the synod started eighty-five missions and the mission budget increased tenfold. During his tenure in office the synod grew from 227 parishes to 330. As the *Lutheran Cyclopedia* states, "He is largely responsible for the development of the synod and its missions and institutions during his term of office."¹⁹

It is perhaps no exaggeration to state that his beloved synod reached its full maturity under his guidance. He left it in good hands and it has prospered spiritually as well as materially ever since. And today, almost 80 years after von Rohr died, the Wisconsin Synod has over 1200 congregations in all 50 states. It now has 416,000 members with world missions on five continents.

The Later Years: Fulfillment, Illness and Death

The last two decades of Philip von Rohr's life were a period of rich fulfillment; they provided many satisfactions for him from his late forties to his early sixties. Just as there was dramatic growth in the synod (as recorded in the previous section), the work at St. Martin was richly blessed during the closing years of the nineteenth century and the start of the twentieth.

The completion of the large new church of 1886 was perhaps the richest material blessing in St. Martin's history. It was dedicated December 12, 1886. The *Winona Daily Republican* reported the event as follows:

At 9:30 the congregation assembled at the old church and listened to a short address by the pastor, Rev. Philip von Rohr, whose remarks were in the nature of a farewell to the old church. A procession was then formed. The service was opened by the choir singing 'Crown the Feast with Flowers.' Rev. B. Nommensen of Fountain City read a selection of Scripture, being 'Solomon's prayer at the dedication of the temple.' Pastor von Rohr gave a prayer and the school children sang 'Hosanna to the Son of David,' filling the church with the great song. Prof. A. Ernst of Watertown, Wisconsin preached the sermon to the 1500 attending. In the afternoon Rev. A. Babenroth preached, and in the evening Prof. A. Graebner of Milwaukee preached — in English.²⁰

Four years later a second parochial school was erected at the corner of King and Minnesota streets in the west end of Winona. This not only proved to be a very successful educational venture but also became the nucleus of a daughter congregation, St. Matthew, which was to become independent in 1920.

In the following year, 1891, the original school on Fifth street was doubled in size:

"Thanks to the efforts of our young men a second story was added to the school of 1880, to be used largely by the societies of the parish. A great hall (auditorium), a kitchen, a small hall, and a confirmation room were provided."²¹

This two-story brick school served both as the educational unit and the fellowship hall — a very busy one — for over a half century and is well remembered by St. Martin's senior citizens.

The year 1896 marked both the fortieth anniversary of the congregation and the thirtieth year of Pastor von Rohr's ministry. On this occasion the famed theologian, Professor A. Hoenecke, and others delivered festive addresses and the pastor reported:

"Thus we see that the blessing of our Lord has been with us all these years. The congregation now numbers at least 500 families and nearly 1400 communicants. During the course of my ministry here I have baptized 3213, married 766, buried 735, instructed and confirmed 1228. We may well give thanks to the Lord . . ."22

The Golden Jubilee year of St. Martin was celebrated with great ceremony in 1906. The present baroque altar and pulpit, described by the *Daily Republican* as "the finest to be found in any church in the Northwest," were installed. The second-story galleries were also built at this time, increasing the seating capacity to over 1200. Redecoration of the nave and completion of a new roof completed the jubilee projects. In addition, a golden jubilee brochure of 36 pages was published, in German of course (see endnote 21).

There were three festive services for the occasion at which the following prominent Wisconsin Synod pastors spoke: A. Nicolaus of Fort Atkinson, A. Koch of Columbus, Wisconsin, A. Babenroth of Milwaukee, A. Froehle of Neenah, R. Siegler of Barre Mills and C. Gausewitz. It is significant to note that all services were conducted in German except that in the third one Pastor Gausewitz presented a sermon in English.

The memorable year, 1906, was not, however, one of undiluted joy and presents strange paradoxes. It has been stated that for the fiftieth anniversary the congregation was indeed healthy but its pastor was not. In fact, he had been in such poor health in the summer of 1905 that he had vacationed in the West seeking relief.

While the ailing pastor was out West, a most welcome helper had arrived at St. Martin: Candidate Alfred W. Sauer, who had been graduated from the seminary in June, 1905, and arrived at St. Martin on July 29 of that year. An eager and energetic young cleric of 23, Pastor Sauer had been valedictorian of his college class as well as football and baseball captain. He was somewhat awed at being assistant to the synodical president, but circumstances soon changed that. When he was installed in August by the senior pastor, he suddenly found himself deeply involved not only in parish matters but also in the von Rohr family life, for he was soon to be engaged to Rev. von Rohr's daughter, Elfrieda, much to the elder pastor's joy.

In 1906, the very year of the Golden Jubilee, Pastor von Rohr was advised by his physicians to sail for Germany where eminent specialists could be consulted. Before he left he said to the engaged couple,

"Since I must go abroad for my health, I suggest that you get married at once and take over the congregation and parsonage." The couple was married privately (because of the senior pastor's illness) on July 18, 1906. Immediately thereafter Rev. von Rohr and his devoted wife, Emma, sailed for Germany. But the diagnosis of the German specialists was startling. A cablegram from Europe read:

"Pastor von Rohr has incurable cancer of the bowel and is returning home at once."

A few weeks after his return from Germany the pastor's cancer of the colon had reached a critical stage. To alleviate his suffering Dr. Will Mayo,

then 45, was summoned. He was brought from Rochester to Winona on a specially chartered Northwestern Railroad coach. So serious was the pastor's condition that Dr. Mayo promptly performed a colostomy on the dining room table of the parsonage as neighbors brought in boiling water to sterilize the instruments. Thus a great surgeon living only 40 miles from Winona had brought relief which the pastor had not found abroad. Dr. Mayo had saved his life and added over two years to his life span.

During these last two years Rev. von Rohr remained active and had many gratifying experiences. His youngest son, Adolph, had been graduated from Northwestern College in 1906 and was a student at the Wauwatosa seminary, much to the satisfaction of the old pastor, whose heritage he would carry on. St. Martin was in very good hands as the popular young Pastor Sauer served a valuable apprenticeship under von Rohr (a privilege often alluded to in glowing terms by the junior pastor).

Family affairs were also a source of satisfaction for him in his waning years. All his children were grown. The marriage of Elfrieda and Alfred Sauer had been blessed with two sons. Daughter Adele had married Dr. W. F. C. Heise, local physician (who had summoned Dr. Mayo), and they had at this time one son and three daughters. With his children and grandchildren close by, von Rohr's autumn years were blessed indeed. Another source of joy was the marriage of his daughter Emma to Rev. August Ernst, son of the eminent A. F. Ernst, "father of Northwestern College," and close friend of the von Rohrs. And finally his amiable, admirable wife, Emma, was his constant companion in his declining years as were his two unmarried daughters.

His beloved Wisconsin Synod was also in good hands. Vice President Gustave Bergemann, who was to succeed Praeses von Rohr, had taken over some of the ailing pastor's synodical duties and the two were very close friends. What is more, his synod was expanding rapidly.

But the years were taking their toll and late in 1908 the pastor's health declined rapidly. He had preached in the new pulpit but was so weak that he needed help in climbing the stairs. From his wheelchair he had baptized his grandchild, Alfred von Rohr Sauer (who was to become a leader in American Lutheranism). But his otherwise powerful frame was weakened, even though his spirits remained high. He died peacefully at 1:30 in the morning of December 22, 1908. In the church that, by the grace of God, he had built, his body lay in state — under the Christmas tree. Friends and admirers came from all over the Midwest to attend the funeral. One special train picked up passengers from Tracy, Sleepy Eye, New Ulm and Mankato.

The funeral took place on a cold, clear December day. Vice President Bergemann preached the German sermon to a crowd of 1500 with some 2000 in the street or the adjacent park.

"To know him was to love him, to esteem him, to be drawn to him," Bergemann said. The English sermon was delivered by Pastor Carl Gausewitz:

When I first visited Winona, people who knew him — and they all knew him — pointed him out to me as one of the finest men in town. . . . You could read (his life) like an open book. It would be remarkable indeed if you had not found some misprints. The very

frankness of his manner makes it all the more remarkable that he, a sinful and faulty human being like the rest of us, should have been able to labor successfully in one field for so many years.²³

As the funeral cortege, consisting of many black hackney coaches drawn by horses, wended its way across the Lake Winona bridge to the picturesque Woodlawn Cemetery, the city lay in mourning. He was laid to rest among the Winona hills, which he loved, in a family plot where his pioneer mother lay buried.

Among the tributes were eulogies from various sources.

The Winona Ministerial Association passed a resolution:

"The long and beneficent life and ministry of Doctor von Rohr was, under God, a blessing not only to the church of which he was pastor but to all our churches."

The Winona *Daily Republican* devoted an editorial to the pastor's contribution:

"A mighty prince of Israel has fallen. This can truly be said of the death of the Rev. Philip von Rohr of this city. He was a man zealous in good works and a mighty leader in the cause of righteousness, whose demise will be mourned not only in Winona but throughout the entire Northwest and indeed throughout the nation, for Mr. von Rohr had become a national character in the work of the German Lutheran Church."

When the news of his death reached Lutherans in Germany, the magazine *Daheim* printed a front-page portrait of Pastor von Rohr in its February 1909 issue. An accompanying article paid tribute to the pioneer, pointing out his achievements among German immigrants. The article also stated that "with the death of Pastor Philip von Rohr one of the best-known and most admired clergymen of the evangelical Lutheran church in America as well as being one of the champions of German culture in America has gone from us. . . . With him a prominent portion of German-American culture has departed!"²⁴

Later the official *History of Winona County* referred to the pastor as "one of the most influential citizens among the Lutheran people of this county. . . . Rev. von Rohr was president of the Wisconsin Synod for 19 years and in that position was the head of some of the most important Lutheran educational institutions of the Northwest."²⁵

The *Gemeindeblatt Kalender* (a Lutheran Annual) for 1910 contains a long tribute in German. It states in part:

He was a man of noble character and rich gifts, with a truly loving heart. . . . Few were as well-read as he; he had an especially deep theological insight. If any one possessed the fine art of distinguishing between law and gospel, it was he. . . . His bearing was unpretentious, yet distinguished and noble. His disposition was always cordial, never dour, never distrustful. Himself a true child of God, he loved children, and they loved him. In all his affairs he was humble and modest. A child could lead him."²⁶

During his 43 years at St. Martin Rev. von Rohr had seen the congregation grow from eight families to 580. He had baptized 4890 and confirmed 2032; he had officiated at 991 weddings and 950 funerals. He knew that his synod, too, had not only been expanded by over 85 parishes during his term of office but

had also increased its mission budget tenfold. And both his congregation and his synod were in capable hands when he died.

All these tributes and statistics would no doubt have pleased the pastor, but his native modesty would have replied, "It was only by the grace of God that I received so many blessings."

It seems as if divine guidance provided that this talented pioneer should arrive on the scene just when the Winona parish was in its infancy and the young Wisconsin Synod needed a dynamic leader. For both he filled a tremendous need.

In Winona his flock of German immigrants was drawn to him by his simple, undiluted orthodoxy, his deep faith and especially by his radiant Christian love. They needed his warm, outgoing personality and hearty greeting as they encountered the vicissitudes of pioneer life. And the city of Winona still feels the influence of Pastor von Rohr as his St. Martin parish and the daughter St. Matthew parish continue to flourish.

In the Wisconsin Synod, too, by divine guidance von Rohr was just the right man at the right time. The Synod was young and immature. Its institutions were barely adequate. It had talented pioneer educators, eager to move forward, in A. F. Ernst and Adolph Hoenecke, but it needed an administrator, a dynamic leader to coordinate its activities. And Praeses von Rohr arrived on the scene with these qualifications. To this day the synod's institutions, its 416,000 souls, and its world missions still owe a debt to this gentle Christian man, Philip von Rohr.

Soli Deo Gloria — to God alone he gives the glory.

ENDNOTES

¹David Runge, "Milwaukee's First Lutherans," *Lutheran Standard*, October 9, 1962, p. 16.

²*Kirchenblatt für die evangelisch-lutherischen Gemeinden in Preussen*, October 1, 1853, p. 137 (translated from a German manuscript in possession of the author).

³Unless otherwise stated these data on H. von Rohr were taken from Philip von Rohr Sauer's "Heinrich von Rohr and the Lutheran Immigration to New York and Wisconsin," *Wisconsin Magazine of History*, March 1935, pp. 247-268.

⁴*History of Winona County*, p. 690.

⁵Nearly all the material in this section and the next is either paraphrased or quoted directly from Philip von Rohr's autobiographical sketch "Ueberblick ueber mein Leben und dessen Erfahrungen," *Gemeindeblatt Kalender*, 1910, pp. 14-19. The translation is my own.

⁶St. Martin's founded by Leberecht Krause in 1856 was one of four parishes that are now recognized as the first German Lutheran churches in Minnesota. C. Glasrud, *A Heritage Fulfilled: German Americans*. Concordia College, Moorhead, 1984, p. 159.

⁷What was more, Grabau had an only daughter who could have found no better choice than Philip von Rohr.

⁸Richard D. Balge, "Von Rohr, a Beloved Brother and Faithful Minister," *Wisconsin Lutheran Quarterly*, July 1975, p. 212. (Prof. Balge's fine scholarly article has one error: He states that von Rohr "opened the school himself, providing six children of his own." Von Rohr was married in February, 1866 and founded the school in July, 1866.)

⁹Philip von Rohr Sauer, "Elfrieda von Rohr Sauer," *Concordia Historical Institute Quarterly*, July, 1960, pp. 36-37.

¹⁰The above material on von Rohr's home life was gathered in an interview with his daughter Ada on October 12, 1974 and September 13, 1975, on her 95th birthday, in Winona.

¹¹Of the von Rohr children Hugo, the oldest, was employed by a German publishing house in Milwaukee; Adele married Dr. William Heise of Winona (she was once named "Minnesota's Mother of the Year"); Elfrieda married Rev. Alfred W. Sauer, who served St. Martin for 50 years, succeeding Ph. von Rohr; Ada married Otto Bollman, assistant postmaster at Winona for many years; Edmund worked with Lampert Lumber Co. in Webster, S.D. most of his life; Emma married Rev. August Ernst of the renowned Ernst family; Adolph became a Wisconsin Synod pastor and served for over 50 years; Hedwig married Edgar Blekre, a Minneapolis businessman.

¹²Mrs. Edgar Blekre made this remark in an interview in Duluth on October 18, 1975. Much of the material in this and the previous paragraph was gleaned from this interview.

¹³J. P. Koehler, *Lehrbuch der Kirchengeschichte*, Northwestern Publishing House, Milwaukee, 1917, p. 639.

¹⁴Balge, p. 218.

¹⁵Most of the material in this section is based on Balge's 1975 article, to which this writer acknowledges a debt.

¹⁶Balge, p. 214.

¹⁷Balge, p. 216.

¹⁸Balge, p. 219.

¹⁹E. L. Lueker, *The Lutheran Cyclopedia*, Concordia, St. Louis, 1954.

²⁰*St. Martin's Lutheran Church Centennial* (brochure), Winona, 1956, p. 8.

²¹*50-jahriges Jubiläum der St. Martins Gemeinde zu Winona, Minnesota*, Northwestern Publishing House, 1906, p. 19. The translation is my own.

²²*St. Martin's Centennial*, p. 8.

²³Balge, p. 224.

²⁴*Daheim: Ein deutsches Familienblatt*, Vol. 45, No. 22, February 27, 1909, pp. 1-2.

²⁵*History of Winona County*, p. 691.

²⁶*Gemeindeblatt Kalender*, Northwestern Publishing House, 1910. The translation is my own, p. 20.

Dr. Philip von Rohr Sauer is a 1929 graduate of Northwestern College, Watertown, Wisconsin and a professor emeritus of English at Bemidji State University, Bemidji, Minnesota.

A WELS Historical Profile

Chronological Sketches of Our Synod's Past: 1890-1900

Arnold J. Koelpin

THE '90s PROVED TO BE PLEASANT, not only for life in the United States, but also in the Wisconsin Synod. During the last decade of the 19th century, the three upper-tier Midwest synods federated in a new church body, the "Evangelical Lutheran Joint Synod of Wisconsin, Minnesota, Michigan and Other States." Despite the stress and strain of organization, the federation eventually became a strong and genuine organic union. Its basis was unity in doctrine; its blessings: expansion of home missions in and beyond the Midwest, a heathen mission field among the Apache Indian tribe of Arizona, and the synod's own printery for spreading the written word. At the turn of the century, the original Wisconsin Synod could celebrate the joyous jubilee of God's work in its corner of the world. It arranged to recollect, in its history, the trials and triumphs of the church.

1890-1900

- 1890 Former President Bading continues to head the Board of Trustees of Northwestern University at Watertown until his death in 1913 (the same board supervises the Wisconsin Synod seminary in Milwaukee).
- 1891 The Bennett Law, passed by the Wisconsin State Legislature for the regulation of private, particularly church schools, is repealed. Prof. Ernst of Watertown is credited with success in the campaign to repeal. Dr. Notz, at the same time, gains favor in the Democratic party and is appointed by Governor Peck as regent of the University of Wisconsin.
- A new school law in the state of Wisconsin gives "a most favorable consideration to the wishes and needs of the church."
- 1891 The Wisconsin Synod in convention resolves to establish a printing firm in addition to its bookstore.
- 1891 President Albrecht of the Minnesota Synod and President Lederer of the Michigan Synod, classmates from the Basel Mission House at Chrischona, consider the prospect of the Michigan Synod joining the Wisconsin and Minnesota Synods to form a general body. The overture also includes the Michigan Synod's switch from the General Council of Lutherans to the Synodical Conference.
- 1891 Representatives of the Michigan Synod meet at Watertown with representatives of the Wisconsin and Minnesota Synods to discuss the possibility of forming a new synod.

1891 Northwestern Publishing House is established on August 28 as a printery and publishing firm for the Wisconsin Synod. It is located at 310 North Third Street in downtown Milwaukee and takes over printing the "Gemeinde-Blatt" ("Church News") and the "Schulzeitung" ("School News").

1892 In spring, representatives of the Wisconsin, Minnesota and Michigan Synods meet in Milwaukee to draw up articles of incorporation for the proposed new synod, the "Allgemeine Ev. Luth. Synode von Wisconsin, Minnesota, Michigan, u.a.St."

The synod established in 1892 received its official English name, the "Evangelical Lutheran Joint Synod of Wisconsin, Minnesota, Michigan and Other States" in 1915-17. At the time of its reorganization and redistricting its unity was strengthened by constitutional changes. In 1919, the name was officially shortened to "Evangelical Lutheran Joint Synod of Wisconsin and Other States," popularly referred to as the "Wisconsin Synod."

The Articles of Union include specific provisions for the new synod: three districts at the beginning; a common publishing house, common congregational newspaper and common theological journal. Home mission work is to be under the supervision of the general body. The existing institutions in the three synods are to be assigned specific tasks.

1892 In October, representatives of the Wisconsin, Minnesota and Michigan synods assemble at St. John Church in Milwaukee to organize the Joint Synod of Wisconsin. Represented at the meeting are: Wisconsin — 112 pastors, 22 teachers, 43 laymen; Minnesota — 18 pastors, 1 teacher, 4 lay delegates; Michigan — 22 pastors, 1 teacher, 6 laymen.

The statistics for the new synod:

257 pastors
502 congregations
18,800 voting members
14,300 day school pupils
257 schools
137 teachers

(of these, 146 pastors, 150 day schools and 110 teachers come from the Wisconsin Synod).

Elected as officers: Prof. Ernst of Northwestern in Watertown, president; Pastor C. Gausewitz Jr. of St. Paul, vice-president; Director Huber of Michigan Lutheran Seminary, secretary; and Mr. Ferdinand Kiekhefer of Milwaukee, treasurer.

Representation in the Joint Synod is to be 120 delegates (60 from Wisconsin, 40 from Minnesota, and 20 from Michigan).

By agreement, the theological seminary is to remain at Milwaukee, the school at New Ulm, Minnesota is to be converted into a teacher's seminary, the teacher-training course at Northwestern in Watertown is to be dropped, the seminary program at Saginaw, Michigan is to be discontinued and reorganized into a preparatory school.

1892 At the meeting for the consolidation of the three synods, Pastor Ed. Hoyer presents an essay on the "doctrine of the divine call." At issue is the nature of the call into the ministry for a Christian day school teacher.

1892 The Michigan Synod severs its connection with the General Council of Lutheran Synods and applies for membership in the Synodical Conference. The usual colloquy and examination of the applying synod's constitution is waived because of the testimony of the Wisconsin and Minnesota representatives in the Synodical Conference.

1892 Congregations in Minnesota at Town Eagan, Inver Grove, and St. Steven Church of St. Paul leave the Minnesota Synod because of the merger.

1893 The Joint Synod convenes at St. Matthew in Milwaukee at the end of June (the district synods meet in the days before the general body).

Ratified: the Wisconsin District is to maintain ownership of the seminary in Milwaukee under the Northwestern charter. The board continues to serve both institutions.

Ratified: the profits of the publishing house are to be given to the general body.

The Minnesota District formally offers the use of the New Ulm college to the Joint Synod for use as a teacher training seminary. Prof. Schaller is called as director (president).

1893 The Joint Synod begins mission work among the Apache tribe of Arizona when Pastors Meyerhoff Sr., Adascheck, and Plocher begin a mission survey of the Apache reservation. Adascheck and Plocher take the San Carlos or southern half of the reservation; Meyerhoff locates in the northern part near the Indian agency on the north fork of the White River, making camp at East Fork. Adascheck returns to Wisconsin in 1896; Plocher to Minnesota in 1899, succeeded by Candidate Carl Guenther.

1893 On September 6, Dr. Martin Luther College opens as a "normal school" to provide teachers for the parochial schools of the Joint Synod of Wisconsin.

1893 Michigan Lutheran Seminary continues to operate its theological department in violation of the terms of the Joint Synod's merger agreement.

1893 The seminary building at Wauwatosa is finished and the seminary moves from its location at Eimermann's Park (later site of the Lutheran High School in Milwaukee). Overtures to bring the seminary back to Watertown fail. On September 17 the seminary at Wauwatosa is dedicated. Thirty-one students are enrolled, including 16 newcomers: 11 from Watertown and 5 from New Ulm.

1894 The election of Prof. Boehner from Michigan Lutheran Seminary at Saginaw, as the Michigan Synod's president, signals dissatisfaction among the state's clergy with the conversion of the Saginaw seminary to a mere preparatory school.

- 1894 In July, the "Old Coffee Mill," the recitation hall and main building on the Northwestern campus, is struck by lightning and destroyed by fire. The reconstructed building is ready for use by the next March.
- 1895 A number of pastors in the Michigan Synod memorialize the district synod that they had lost confidence in their own Michigan Synod officials. They appeal their case to the Joint Synod.
- 1895 In August, the Joint Synod meets at St. Paul, Minnesota. It attempts to address the issue of the Michigan Synod division without success.
- 1895 The Michigan Synod's official paper "Synodalfreund" attacks the minority of pastors who oppose the stand of the officials on the Saginaw seminary problem.
- 1895 The invitation of Pastor Wolf and his congregation in Tacoma, Washington marks the beginning of the synod's home mission expansion from the Midwest.
- 1896 In April, the Michigan Synod majority holds a pastoral conference without inviting the minority. The minority complain of the action and are suspended from the Michigan Synod. They again appeal to the Joint Synod.
- 1896 The Joint Synod announces that its fellowship is dissolved with the president of the Michigan Synod and his followers for their wrongful treatment of the minority over the Saginaw seminary issue. The Joint Synod files a complaint to the Synodical Conference on the matter.
- 1897 The Joint Synod in session ratifies the action by which the Michigan Synod was suspended from the Joint Synod.
The seminary board calls attention to the need for a library and for English teaching at the Wauwatosa institution. Pastor Adelberg is called to the seminary to provide necessary English instruction.
The conferences in Nebraska appeal for status as a separate district in the Joint Synod. In 1902 the Nebraska conferences are constituted as a district.
- 1897 The Michigan Synod, now separated from the Joint Synod of Wisconsin, decides to consolidate with the Augsburg Synod, a group of German Lutherans from various states who had organized in 1876 in protest to the General Synod's theological liberalism. In 1900 the Michigan Synod left this organization.
- 1898 The Michigan Synod experiences a complete change in officers. Pastor Bodamer is elected president. Anti-Wisconsin leaders at the seminary in Saginaw resign, signaling changes in the Michigan Synod's attitudes.
- 1898 The Northwestern Publishing House moves to 329 Third Street and four years later moves once more down the street to 347 Third Street. Julius Luening becomes its manager (until 1945).

- 1898 The Joint Synod supports a congregation for a time in Salt Lake City.
- 1899 The Wisconsin District Synod meets at Jerusalem church in Milwaukee.
The synod makes plans to celebrate the 50th anniversary of its founding. Prof. J. P. Koehler of Watertown is appointed to write the history of the first half century. Pres. Bading, Prof. A. Hoenecke, and Dr. Notz are to serve as collaborators in the publication.
- 1899 The Joint Synod meets in Columbus, Wisconsin. The synod resolves to create a separate board of directors for the seminary at Wauwatosa. The board of trustees of Northwestern University in Watertown remains the same.
- 1899 The "Cincinnati Case" in Trinity congregation of the Missouri Synod begins. In the Synodical Conference the case soon highlights differences on the teaching concerning "church and ministry."
- 1899 Pastor Keturakat, a Lithuanian Lutheran associated with the Joint Synod, founds the German Nazareth congregation in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. From this station he canvasses 25 cities from Boston to Kansas City searching for Lithuanian Lutherans. William Notz, son of Dr. Notz, succeeds Pastor Keturakat in Philadelphia shortly thereafter. The congregation joined the Missouri Synod in 1918.
- 1900 The Wisconsin district synod celebrates its jubilee year. The Sunday prior to the synod meeting is designated as jubilee Sunday. A special service is arranged and an offering taken throughout the synod.
- 1900 Prof. J. P. Koehler of Watertown is called to teach church history and New Testament exegesis at the Wauwatosa seminary as Prof. Thiele's replacement. Dr. Ernst declines to be a candidate for reelection as the president of the Joint Synod of Wisconsin. The decision of both men indicates concern for transferring work in the synod to the English language.

The Joint Synod of Wisconsin entered the 20th century with a vigor born of the merger and unity in doctrine. Within the first decade, the Michigan Synod problem was resolved, and the theological faculty at Wauwatosa raised a distinctive voice in American Lutheranism with the publication of its new theological journal, the "Quartalschrift" ("Quarterly").

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Muehlhaeuser's Pilger-mission

Translated by Dr. Arnold Lehmann

THE FOLLOWING REPORT by Pastor Johann Muehlhaeuser, one of the organizers and first president of the Wisconsin Synod, was found in the J. P. Koehler collection of letters and papers, at present stored in the Northwestern College archives. This handwritten report was prepared for his friends and supporters and definitely not for publication. Muehlhaeuser used many abbreviations for localities and persons, at times perhaps to hide identification. His use or lack of use of proper punctuation symbols often posed contextual problems. Incorrect spelling of names of persons and of places caused further difficulties. Some of this may have been due to the different dialects encountered. Logical sequence is often lacking, causing this translator to feel that Muehlhaeuser may have used this account as a sketch to be supplemented by his own oral presentation. Nevertheless we do get a picture of his Pilger-mission.

The term pilger-mission is retained in this translation because of the lack of a corresponding English term. On a pilger-mission the theological graduate from the mission house was to gain experience. He had to function as an itinerant missionary, vicar, colporteur, Bible class teacher and assistant to an area pastor.

Special thanks to Dr. and Mrs. John Sullivan and Dr. Winfred Lehmann for their help in translating some of the difficult passages.

English Bible verses are taken from the NIV.

BRIEF REPORT OF MY PILGER-MISSION

“Take me away with you — let us hurry. Song of Solomon 7:4¹
Christ came and preached peace to you. Ephesians 2:17.
O you evangelicals! spread the word of Jesus’ death, even if you suffer indignities and scorn.”

This was my New Year’s watchword² from the mission house in 1829. Taken from the B[ibellosungen],³ these words gave me the impetus to begin my pilger-mission more easily.

After we were given our dear assignment according to God’s will and good pleasure to be permitted to participate in a small way as co-workers in the affairs of the glorious kingdom of Jesus, I accepted this as grace from the Lord without considering my own weaknesses and deficiencies. Frankly I still belonged at that time to those youngsters who soar upwards like eagles.

But the Lord Jesus did not permit me in any way to be put to shame because of his name, but held to that which he promised me: through

suffering to joy, from belief to seeing. And just as I had plenty of suffering for Jesus’ sake, so I was also comforted through Jesus, so that I can say with Paul (but not with the same authority): Who will separate me from the love of God, my Savior? Adversity, fear, persecution, hunger, nakedness, peril or sword? Romans 8.

Thus we (I) can say: The Lord is my helper. What can man do to me? Hebrews 13:6. After I had to leave Austria⁴ according to God’s will and planned counsel, and had come to Stuttgart for a visit, the brothers in the Lord there counselled me. They said that it is the practice — where someone leaves, he must also return. This was my motive to return to Basel, which I gladly accepted, since I had a dear brother and also many dear friends there.

Then secondly, I accepted this invitation more joyfully because I know that our dear Savior — in a manner to be adored — has glorified himself through me, first on myself and then on other souls! Yes, he will make something out of nothing so that the glory be given to him alone. Yes, he is worthy, for his is the kingdom and the power and the glory now in time, and perfected in eternity.

Secondly, it is my duty to inform my dear Christian friends who offered prayers and gifts, often at great cost. I cannot truly make an accurate accounting of what was spent because my writings and papers are still in Bruenn, along with several of my books. In regard to money, I still brought twelve florin with me to Wuerttemberg which Dr. Roemer⁵ gave me for my journey here.

This I am permitted to say, and I will say it: God knows, I did not seek anything for myself in any way nor did I desire honor from mankind, but the love of Jesus compelled me to give my life for my brethren.

I could have expanded this report much more, especially if I had related my mistakes, unfaithfulness, lukewarmness, laziness, unwise actions and anything similar that could have come up in such a long period of time. I am sure that my Savior has by grace forgiven me and I rely on this that you have also forgiven me.

To him, who till now has in so friendly a way, and so condescendingly and so graciously led me by his pierced hand, guided and so wondrously ruled me, to him be given all thanks and glory and honor. Yes, Lamb, you are worthy to receive it. You have bought us with your blood, and have made us kings and priests. Therefore before you all knees must bow, and all tongues must confess to the glory of your Father that you are the Lord of lords. May your kingdom come, your will be done.

He who testifies to these things says, “Yes, I am coming soon.” Amen. Come, Lord Jesus.

Dr. R[oe]mer can give a more complete report. He says that 400 copies of the Old and New Testaments came to Austria through him, and that besides the Bibles, 80 copies of Gossn[er’s]⁶ “Schatzk[aestlein]”, 20 copies of “Etwas fuer Herz”⁷, 12 copies of Arnd’s⁸ “Wahres Christentum — Thomas a Kempis” have come to Bruenn through the book dealer.

1829

In the month of February I began my journey through Wuerttemberg, happy and in good spirits, putting my trust in him who has all power in heaven and on earth. But first I stopped off at my parents’ home for a few

days which passed very quickly. Even though I felt so poor and so weak, nevertheless I hurried to get to my assigned place, especially since there was little information about several places in the plan of my pilgrim-mission, and hence I was fearful.

I stayed with Mr. Pleuderer in B.⁹ overnight. He strengthened me with the words: "See, I have placed before you an open door that no one can shut." Revelation 3:8. That was balm for my heart. Then I visited no one until Munich.

Dr. Schubert¹⁰ himself received me in a very friendly manner, but my stay there was brief. At my departure he spoke such a forceful "God be with you" that it penetrated my entire inner self. At Passau I went on the water, hired myself out for a job on the ship, and so had to pay no more than 22 Kreuzer to Vienna. On ship it was very godless. I said very little, which made me conspicuous to the passengers. If I did say anything, it made a big impression upon them so that they all paid attention and usually were more quiet. In this way I, by the grace of God, arrived in Vienna safe and sound.

In Vienna I immediately looked up dear Dr. Roemer, who was very happy at my arrival. After a few days a residence was found for me. Vienna proved to be a new experience for me because after my commissioning¹¹ I took on a very strict-according-to-the-law life style. There were many alluring situations which were available through the eyes and ears for the corrupted heart. It cost me many a prayer and supplication to withstand them. But what it cost the Lord to let me be punished by the chastisement of his Holy Spirit for each trespass of that sort, God alone knows — but so do I. I was without a job for six long weeks. But dear Dr. R[oemer] always counselled me with this — The Lord has placed you here, he will, he shall, he must also take care of you. Now and then I visited him.

Among our acquaintances was a family, the wife being from Wuerttemberg. She came one day to Dr. R[oemer] and said that she had taken over a vegetable business, and that she needed a man whom she could trust with this business. Dr. R[oemer] thought that I might qualify for the job. To be truthful, he himself did not know how to conduct a business, and I could never get work as a baker in Vienna. I could not have spared the time for my real purpose with that kind of job. Since there was hardly any other choice, I decided because of my love for my Savior to take on this business.

The woman promised much but did not deliver. I had to work from 2 a.m. to noon for my board and room. In the morning I went to the vegetable market with a pushcart. But I was very frightened there finding myself to be among the rawest and lowest of godless classes, mostly females. Everything was then taken home and sold for practically nothing. The concern of dear Dr. R[oemer] was so great for me that he not only furnished money for this business, but also for my sake took home with himself a nine-year-old youth. He then went back to Stuttgart. The souls who gladly listened about God and Jesus as long as Dr. R[oemer] was there now stayed away. They were serious, so now I was there alone with the youth, who seized by the truth attached himself to me.

I was now in Vienna three months, and still no home and no heart wanted to open up. The earlier joy left me. In order not to give up under these circumstances, I was driven to prayer. Since I had no place to go, I had to go to a cellar. My young friend took me to a man who, after the people left the

church service, remained and then, alone, prayed on his knees. I visited him. He was evangelical and was so concerned about his salvation that he was mentally disturbed (depressed).

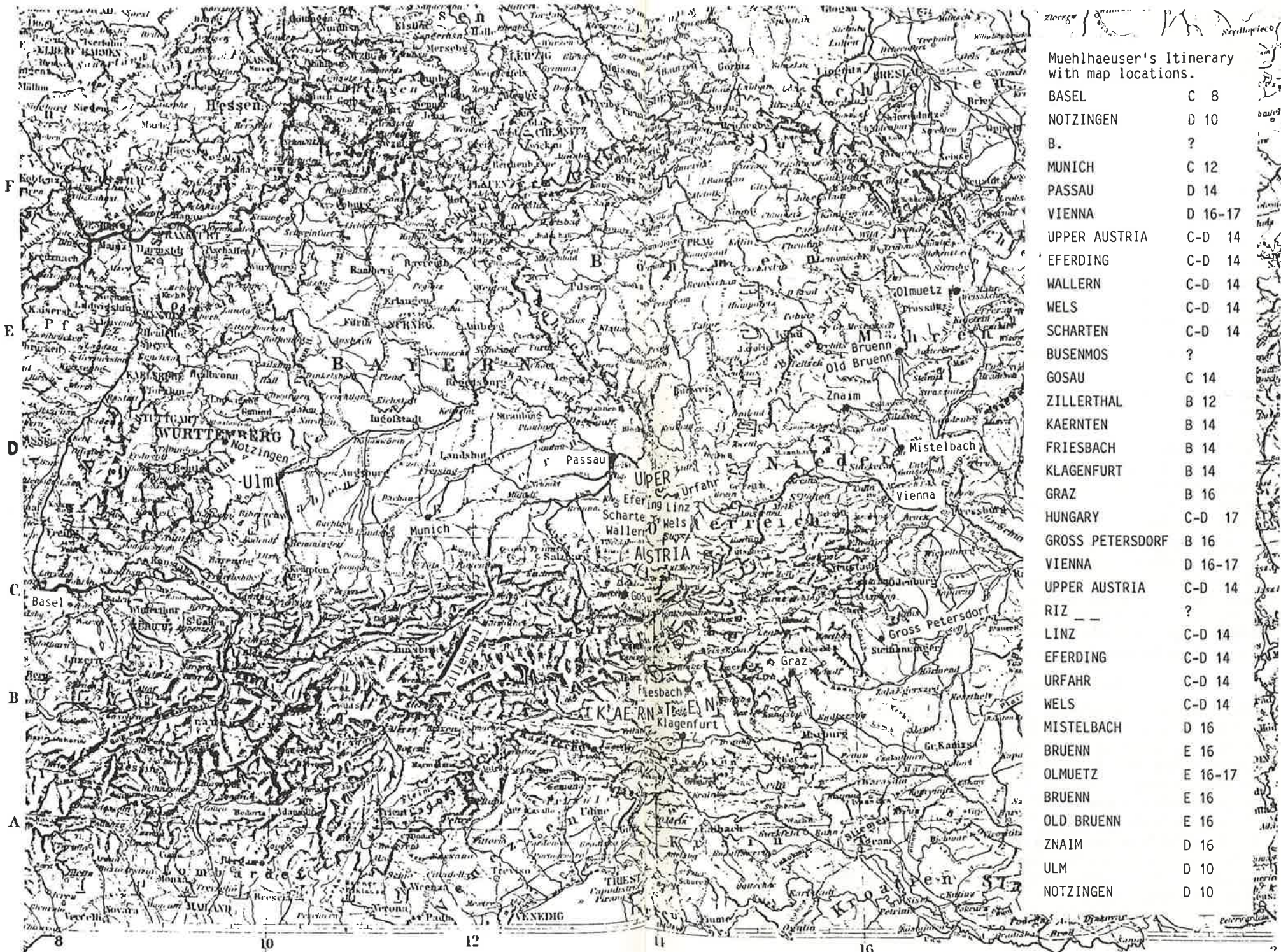
Because of this visit I met another man who was quite unsophisticated. As he heard me speak, he described a family to me and then asked me to visit them, which I did. I was received into this house most cordially. This family also knew two other families, whom they said were good religious people. I decided to visit them the next day. They were very happy to make my acquaintance. After conversing a while I asked them to pray and to give thanks for the faithfulness of our dear Savior for graciously bringing us together in this friendship. We then fell on our knees and I prayed. After the prayer was completed, one after the other embraced me, wept for joy, love and thanks.

Among them were two officials, S. and U., and a private citizen. For several years they had been forming a religious group, and with a few others were reading especially Boehme's¹² writings. They had much head knowledge of Scripture, but had little or no knowledge of their own sinful condition.¹³ Their joy was great, but mine was still greater. This was the first satisfying day since the departure of dear Dr. R[oemer]. As I got to know these friends better I told them as much as I felt was necessary about the purpose and intention of my stay in Vienna. This increased their joy still more. Now we began to come together regularly on Sundays, because my other job was of the type that would make any sensible man think that this young man must be a good-for-nothing, otherwise he would not seek to earn his bread in such a despicable manner. In this way all suspicion disappeared.

Now a second affliction began to press upon me. The dear new friends had a better knowledge of Scripture than I. But their entire religious foundation rested on sheer self-righteousness, holiness and piety. Yet they were filled with joyful activity and each one in his own way began to bring in souls so that the little group soon grew to about twelve to fifteen persons. The most active but also the most exuberant one, my dear Swo., moved by God's power and the grace of Jesus, and on the basis of his own interpretation of Scripture, opposed me at an evening service as I was speaking about the effects of the grace of Jesus who loves sinners. This disturbed me no end because I knew that he was zealous but had a lack of understanding.

I said to him: "We must permit our basic corruption to be uncovered through the Holy Spirit and then as lost and condemned people seek grace and forgiveness in the death of Jesus on the cross and in his blood and wounds. And we will be made righteous, blessed and holy before God through Jesus' merit and Jesus' perfect righteousness." "No," he said, "your way you will always remain a sinner, but that isn't the sense of Scripture. God wants us to be holy because he is holy." To these expressions of opinion I gave my answer but I cannot say for sure what the exact words were.

I accompanied him home. On the way I said to him: "Dear friend, I want to tell you something; from today on I shall begin praying to God in Jesus' name for you, that he should be merciful to you, so that you, being drawn by Jesus' grace, may permit yourself to be drawn to him and seek forgiveness and righteousness in his name. If you, however, oppose the Holy Spirit, I will not stop praying for you. But need, sickness and suffering will come upon you." After I said this, he said trembling and with anxiety: "You can pray that. Yes, in such a manner you can pray me to death, etc."



Muehlhaeuser's Itinerary
with map locations.

BASEL	C 8
NOTZINGEN	D 10
B.	?
MUNICH	C 12
PASSAU	D 14
VIENNA	D 16-17
UPPER AUSTRIA	C-D 14
EFERDING	C-D 14
WALLERN	C-D 14
WELS	C-D 14
SCHARTEN	C-D 14
BUSEN MOS	?
GOSAU	C 14
ZILLERTHAL	B 12
KAERNTEN	B 14
FRIESBACH	B 14
KLAGENFURT	B 14
GRAZ	B 16
HUNGARY	C-D 17
GROSS PETERSDORF	B 16
VIENNA	D 16-17
UPPER AUSTRIA	C-D 14
RIZ	?
LINZ	C-D 14
EFERDING	C-D 14
URFAHR	C-D 14
WELS	C-D 14
MISTELBACH	D 16
BRUENN	E 16
OLMUETZ	E 16-17
BRUENN	E 16
OLD BRUENN	E 16
ZNAIM	D 16
ULM	D 10
NOTZINGEN	D 10

Then we parted. It appeared as though he wanted to continue his own way, but I cried to the Lord and he heard me. Swo. had no peace. The Lord overpowered him, and the grace and merciful love of Jesus uncovered his perdition and he was won. Now he became a blessed instrument in the hand of the Lord. Thus the entire summer of 1829 passed with all of my weaknesses. But in spite of these weaknesses the loyal Savior did not permit a lack of great blessed experiences of grace. To him — the true and sincerely friendly God and Savior — be given all glory and honor.

The close of the year 1829 and the beginning of the year 1830 were difficult for me. My outside obligations became more and more pressing; I was relieved of these with the arrival of dear Dr. R[oemer]. I was then 15 weeks without a job. The number of souls of our dear friends amounted to 18, 20, 22 persons. Even though the growth of the inner life was lagging with several of them, yet the Lord did not let the daily displays of his grace be wanting.

Wisdom dictated that I again find a job, and just then an order came from Basel to do that. This however was always a difficult assignment for me in Vienna. The opportunity came for me to go to a cake baker again for room and board. Here my chief job was to take care of an 18-week-old child. In caring for the child the great friend of children, the Lord Jesus, often came to my aid because he is indeed concerned about children. My old Adam was often ashamed of my job. Dr. R[oemer] and I had for some time spoken about taking a trip this spring to Upper Austria, if it be the Lord's will, and this did occur.

In the month of April we began our journey to Upper Austria.¹⁴ In Eferding we were cordially received by Pastor Kotschi.¹⁵ We visited dear Pastor Koch in Wallern, Pastor Trautenberger in Wels, Pastor Saeff in Scharten. Whoever would hear someone speaking about the sad state of Christianity in Austria would hardly believe it, if one would relate to him the situation in some congregations in Busenmos where the sainted Pastor Plank (now Trautenberger) had been or in Gosau where Pastor Wahrenpfennig is. Nowhere have I met up with so much evangelical living and so many reawakened and converted souls as here. It is very gratifying when one finds the love for the pure evangelical truths of Scripture accepted simply and uniformly throughout. The Lord up to this time has protected this area through his grace from the abominable spirit of sectarianism.

My Journey in Zillertal in the Tyrol

After the passing of eight days the dear Dr. R[oemer] returned to Vienna, and I was advised by him and several other Christian friends to make my journey in the Zillertal. There were many rumors concerning it, but no one knew the reason why. When I arrived there I made inquiry in an inn. But soon someone said: "It appears that you have been sent here to make an inquiry." I kept quiet and turned to the innkeeper, who had a youth lead me to the peace officer of Zillertal.¹⁶

An 80-year-old man was lying on the green grass in the shade of a tree. "God's blessings to you, dear old man!" "May God thank you! You are evangelical!" "Yes." "Then come in." I asked him about the particulars of Z[illertal], especially about its origin. Then he told me briefly the following.

"From my earliest youthful years I dealt in oil in Steiermark and Bavaria. There I always bought one, two or more books, Bibles, Arndt and G. Stark,

Schmolck, etc. These I now had to sell without ever having given it a thought that I would have to do so. These people who now want to transfer to the evangelical church are for the most part children of believing parents who have already died. Now I am not involved in this matter very much any more, going only to a house in [unreadable]. He will tell you more about this."

I was thankful to the Lord Jesus that he had led me to this honorable old gentleman. I soon came to that house. The joy was great and they entertained no doubts about me. Several were then called together. The reception was: "Are you a fellow believer?" "Yes!" They told how they were being watched from all sides. Eight days earlier they had visited a teacher. The government wanted to lead him away bound, but because of a Tyrolean this did not happen. "Just so this doesn't happen to you." This made me observant.

Then they said further: "Eight days ago we made the beginning of our public confession and now there are 150 persons." I admonished them to have patience and love for everyone, prayed with them, took down an exact address and took leave, which was difficult on both sides.

I then journeyed to Kaernten (in Austria). Friesach was the name of the village, where a school teacher had been recommended to me. But if I had passed through the place, it did not occur to me, and I recalled it only when I arrived in Klagenfurt. I gave myself a terrible scolding because of my lack of brains. I had passed the place twelve hours earlier. Should, I thought, something be left undone because of my absentmindedness? I decided to backtrack, since it was only a few hours farther to Graz (in Steiermark). I went on the following day to the named street and visited this family.

The schoolteacher was not married; his unmarried sister lived with him (she had belonged for several years to a religious group in Vienna). She was very happy and said immediately that there was still a sister in the Lord here, and she led me at once to her. "Here is a brother from Vienna." "Praised be the Lord in you!" She clasped her hands over her bosom and expressed great joy and embraced me. Because of her joy she did not really know what she was doing. She asked that her basic statements not be spread further.

Journey Through Steiermark to Hungary

In Hungary I undertook to visit the pastors, but I was received very coldly by several. So I lost heart and continued on. Finally I arrived again at a locality. It was raining. I had already gone through a village when it came to me to turn back because the going got very difficult. I dared not go any further, so I went back. Here there was no pastor. A schoolteacher functioned also as the pastor, because the congregation, even though it was not small, was poor. The man was happy about my visit.

I began an earnest Christian conversation with him, particularly concerning the doctrine of the atonement in the blood of Jesus for fallen sinful mankind. This was something unknown to him, and he did not argue against this. I promised to get Hofacker's¹⁷ book of sermons for him in which those things which we had discussed could be recalled. His joy was great.

As I was leaving I said that I had already passed through the village but felt compelled to turn back. "Dear friend," he said, "you did well that you

listened to this divine voice." This visit was the cause of the conversion of this dear man, and as Dr. R[oemer] wrote, he is now holding Sunday and weekly services in his congregation with great blessings. This village was called Gross Petersdorf.

Thus after an eight-week journey I arrived back in Vienna safe and sound to the glory and praise of Jesus' name. Very tired and worn out, I longed for and rejoiced in a rest. For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways. Isaiah 55:8.

Although I did not know when I arrived in Vienna where I should begin visits, there was great anxiety about me. It was said that there must have been some betrayal. Mr. Baur, the evangelical second preacher, was to have publicly preached about my return without personally naming me. On the third day the secret police of Vienna were already looking for me. A very well-dressed man with diamonds on his fingers inquired about me under the pretext that I should begin to work for him. I recognized who he was and in order to escape from their grasp, I had to leave Vienna.

Journey to Upper Austria — Experiences

I decided to journey to Upper Austria. Twelve hours from Vienna I planned to take a side road in order to save two hours. I ran a half hour when suddenly at noon I became very tired. Although it was not my habit to take a nap at this hour, it was so pressing that I did not even care to fight it. I lay down on the ground, slept a while and then rose again.

Stay in Ruz — —¹⁸

I did not know how things had developed in Vienna. I waited here for a definite report. The dear sainted Pastor Plank gladly but somewhat apprehensively took me in. I made visits here and there in his congregation. Finally I stayed one hour by rail from R[uz — —]. Here I was constrained to hold meetings which the Lord in his great mercy blessed so much that during this time several were brought back into the church which pleased my dear Pastor P[lank] very much. People streamed in from all directions so that I was often thoroughly at a loss what to do. But our dear Lord and Savior, to his glory, did not let me bog down in any way. I received correspondence from Vienna that after several days of mere inquiry the matter was dropped without further investigation.

I stopped off in Linz for ten days, but in vain since there was no work there. In Linz I often sat by the Danube River and let many tears flow downstream in it.

Then I went to Eferding to Pastor K[otschi] and related to him my situation. He had already been informed about my stay in R[uz — —]. It was hoped that I would remain in his area, which did occur as a result of his commendation. Two hours from E[ferding] I arrived in U.¹⁹ and at the home of a teacher where I could stay until Dr. R[oemer] would travel through here from Wuerttemberg to Vienna. I conducted small meetings here and there. A dear treasured schoolteacher, Fuchsmeier, came there for vacation. I had already met him previously. We became close friends.

Now for six weeks meetings were held secretly every day in this and in that out-of-the-way place. People streamed together often traveling two and three hours. First of all I dared not let my fears be apparent, for I often spoke

of the power of faith and of the faithfulness of the Lord. Had I shown my own weak faith, I would have witnessed against myself. The vacation period of my teacher friend came to an end and Dr. R[oemer] had not yet come. I saw very well — you must walk here in danger. During this time many conversions took place among the old and young souls.

Praise God! Dr. R[oemer] and Brother Ropp finally arrived. We remained here a few days longer. I then traveled toward Vienna with Brother Ropp. On the last evening we still held a meeting in the Wels congregation. In this meeting at the end of our stay in Upper Austria three souls made their confession and were subsequently blessed. Yours is the kingdom, power, strength and honor!

On the following day and night the law searched for me everywhere, but in vain. I was gone. Because of this many were interrogated, but without any further action.

Brother Ropp was assigned to carry on further the work of the Lord in Vienna. Two hours from Vienna we parted. Ten hours from Vienna in Mistelbach I found some work, but found few souls there. But as noted on my pilger-mission itinerary, I did find the family which took care of brothers passing through here.

1831

As indicated in the plan of my pilger-mission, I now decided to set out for Bruenn. I immediately got a job there which was a miracle for me, a German, because there were only Bohemian workers in that city. I stepped into a great school of suffering. There were five workers in all, and I was at the bottom of the list, thus having to serve everyone. All kinds of wickedness were in vogue openly. Each one tried to outdo the other. The owner's son wanted very much to make me his companion, but I wanted to spend all the time that I could spare with reading the New Testament. He then came up with the idea of burning my New Testament, which he did.

My hours of work lasted until 2 p.m. At 7 p.m. I went out, so I dared not go to sleep. Finally my relationship with my co-workers improved. I was in Bruenn for eighteen weeks and still had not met a single person who had shown a desire for the truth. This often caused me to cry out: "Dear Savior, let me depart from here if you do not need me here, or will not need me."

Finally I was led to the house of a brush maker, who was a wine drinker, just as the proverb states: "To drink to excess like a brush maker." However his parents were believers, and he no doubt felt very uneasy about this. In order to find peace of mind he was overly generous in helping all kinds of poor people. His wife, a God-fearing soul, was much ashamed of her husband who was so given to drink. As to disposition, I have not met a better person.

I visited this family often, but the spirit of wine and the spirit of God do not have a place in the same house. "My dear friend," I said to him, "are you in earnest about being a follower of Jesus?" (The poor man considered himself to be just that.) "Yes, that I want to be with God's help." I: "Whoever wants to follow Jesus must be able to deny things for himself. Can you do that?" "No, not everything just yet." "If you are sincere about this, you must avoid wine houses." He: "Not all immediately." "Yes, immediately. If you do not have that much love for Jesus, then you do not have real sincerity." "May

God help me. I will avoid them." An illness cured his wine stomach. Both of them were won over. In a short time eighteen persons met together with them, with whom I then held small meetings every Sunday.

The Lord Jesus richly blessed our meetings. We then also met on Mondays and soon also on Fridays. Each one made it his duty to secretly bring along others, and the number increased to fourteen. It stood at that number for a long time, but then a few fell away. I already was known in the city as a sect organizer. I became concerned about this and made a trip to Olmuetz. There the cholera still raged heavily. My friends in Bruenn urged me to return, and it seemed fitting that I do so. Everyone was very happy about my return to Bruenn.

More people wanted to take part in our meetings, and the number of souls rose to twenty-two. The cholera was an added blessed means which made their minds not only anxious but also sincere. It was evident to the eye how mightily the grace of God worked in their hearts, even though Satan sought through all kinds of means, this way and that way, to incite disunity, hatred and jealousy. But the right hand of the Lord gained the victory.

Already for some time I had learned to know a man who had proclaimed for two years that he had turned from the Catholic to the Evangelical Church. Because of his love for the truth, and because he had no German Bible but a Hebrew one, he learned Hebrew so that he could read it. (Bibles were so rare here that I bought out three book stores of two Bibles and a couple of New Testaments. The population of the city is 33,000.)

His defection from the Catholic Church was made very difficult in a variety of ways until they apparently bought him back with an amount of money. Since he came to our meetings several times, he became our betrayer. Likewise several others went back so that I could count only sixteen to eighteen persons who were fully committed to Jesus. Because of my health I did not work at a job for several weeks. But I considered it best to return to work even though I almost always had the misfortune of getting into the most godless houses.

January 1832

Thus I enjoyed above all much attention and love. At this time it pleased the Lord that I enter a house that was the same as that of Zacchaeus. This attracted attention everywhere. However I did not consider it wise to continue meetings here any longer, with which Dr. R[oemer] in his letter also agreed.

About this time Saint-Simonism²⁰ became known in Austria from France. The Catholic Church accused me of being one of them. I was already prepared to leave and had set March 10 as the day of my departure. On Sunday, March 7, I dined at the above mentioned Schak home at noon, where this dear brother in the Lord said: "Indeed, you could have stayed here a while longer. Now everything is quiet again."

Taken into Custody on March 7, '32

That evening we came together as usual. After we had sung and prayed, events took place in a most unusual manner. Now a police commissioner, a police lieutenant and several policemen entered. "We are to conduct a search here under orders of the K.K.²¹ police department." Then everything was

recorded. All the books were packed up. All of this naturally made a very deep impression on all of us. None of the local citizens could be taken into custody, so this fell now simply on Z. and myself. Before I got to the door of the house, a large mob had already gathered. Before the last of our friends was forced to leave, all the streets were crowded and it was announced to them that we were Simonists. Because of this the house of our dear Schak is still called "the house of the Simonists." The loyal Savior sent me so much strength and peace at this time that it appeared to me as if nothing was happening to me.

When I arrived at the police station, one policeman said: "So we now have one of that bunch already." I had to go immediately for questioning. As I was asked about the connection with the Simonists in France, I laughed to myself. It definitely wasn't something for me to cry about. Someone then said: "I'll drive the laughing out of him," and he presented me at once with some strokes with his stick. Now we went through an iron gate to jail. Since a journeyman baker in Bruenn is never provided with a proper bed, it was not difficult for me to lie on a sack of straw with a carpet as a cover.

Monday March 8

First, all of my friends had to register. That took several days. Three were under arrest with me. They were on the first floor and I was on the eighth floor. A Jew, who was baptized fourteen days later, was freed. Two others were not. The reason — they were both Catholic. One of them was a very dear energetic man, filled with strength and love of Jesus. He was to take my place. The other, a 19-year old convert, wanted to use this opportunity out of zeal and lack of knowledge to transfer to the Evangelical Church. He remained locked up for ten weeks. I was interrogated for several days. The Lord stood by me and it appeared as though I would soon be set free.

When the correspondence with Dr. R[oemer] came to light, the investigation moved to Vienna. This lasted four weeks. This was a hard time for me: no book, no one around me except two Jews who were locked up near me. Although they were innocent, they had already sat there for two and one-quarter years. Then the passage came to me: May your unfailing love be my comfort. Psalm 119:76. This I often sang a hundred times a day. Tears were not lacking during this time.

When the Vienna investigation came to Bruenn, then came the hardest time of all for me. They learned everything because I wrote everything in detail to Dr. R[oemer]. My stay in Austria was investigated step by step, but they did not find that for which they were searching. It could not be pinned onto me that I had given a Bible or some other book as a gift. I simply had sold them. I could not be accused of proselytism because they could present no evidence, even though more Catholics came to the meetings than Protestants. It was not my concern to win souls for the church but for Christ. As soon as they recognized Jesus as their Savior and Redeemer, the ceremonial worship service [i.e. the mass] as a sign of Christianity fell away of its own accord as scales from the eyes.

I was especially accused of converting this Jew to the Evangelical Church. It had never happened in Bruenn before, even though many Jews had become Catholic Christians. But this man could never say that I held him to an Evangelical conversion. No, I had often said to him, that if he did

not want to turn to Jesus, and if he wanted to become a Christian only for earthly advantage, he should turn Catholic or even remain a Jew. Now I was declared to be an organizer of secret societies, but the evidence failed because a secret society invites no one without knowing him well. A society has a man in charge as well as statutes which we did not have. Private worship services are forbidden in Austria. The law was transgressed. Reading and singing can be done without punishment, but not praying!!

Our entire report of the thirty-two persons took up 180 pages. After this investigation they left me sitting there undisturbed. I received a Bible; now I was sufficiently rich. I was filled with praise, thanks, glory and joy. A thousand gulden could not have given me as much joy as that dear Bible. But complete peace was not as yet fully established in my heart.

In order to stop all doubt, evil spirits, Ephesians 6:12, and devils from entering my heart, I set up a daily routine, in which every hour was given its own assignment. The work consisted of praying, reading, listening, concentrating, memorizing, recalling the same; the only non-scheduled time was from three to four o'clock in the morning.

With the two Jews near me, especially with one of them, I went through the entire Old Testament. Eight to nine o'clock each evening was scheduled for this. He was not lacking much to become a Christian.

I prayed especially for light, wisdom and knowledge to know the secrets of the cross of Jesus Christ according to Colossians 2:2,3,9, so that I together with Paul could not glorify anything more in the truth than Jesus Christ, the crucified. For ten weeks I prayed and I listened. Finally, yes, finally, it pleased God in his great wisdom to reveal the big secret to me in my high school,²² and he declared his Son to me according to Galatians 2:19,20! I threw myself down into the dust, prayed and said: "Great and wonderful, just and true are your ways. Now you can lock me up as long as you wish; the victory which surpasses everything is here — !" Now it no longer was: your grace must be my comfort, but, your grace is my comfort! The joy of the Lord Jesus was my strength. — I will not say that I did not weep tears of pain and suffering in the beginning. I often said with David: Why are you downcast, O my soul? Why so disturbed within me? Put your hope in God, for I will yet praise him, my Savior and my God. Psalm 42:12. From this time forth the prison was God's front courtyard for me, a place of grace, a holy place. I then received Gossner's "Schatzkaestlein" from which my favorite song was: "My Lord is indescribably good, and what he does for me daily is nothing but pure grace." I had very few sleepless nights because of pain and worry. Captivated by joy, by grace and peace, many times I spent half the night awake.

I was then allowed to be alone. Only once was a man locked up with me. He said that he was a baron, and was my cell mate for 3 days. Another time a boy of ten, who was already so corrupt that he committed immoral acts with girls of ages fourteen to fifteen years.

The commissioner brought him to me and said: "You can perform a good deed here if you can establish better basic principles in this boy." The last eight days I had to share my area with another man because of lack of space. I was so content in my chapel that I preferred to go in rather than to come out.

For food my friends could send me something, but it was always inspected. No pen, no paper, not even an eraser was given me. But I had one thing, a

white plate was my writing tablet. This the Jews left behind. Both being judged innocent were set free after two and one-half years. On October 3, 1832 my freedom was announced to me with the words: "Didn't I tell you, it would go well with you? You must remain with the truth." I: "I dare not as a Christian tell a lie."

I asked if I might also still bid my friends good-bye. "No." But could they bid me farewell? "Yes, in my presence. Whom do you want?" I: "Indeed if it comes to desires, I would desire all of them; they are as dear to me now as they were beforehand." The next day two sisters and one brother in the Lord came. The commissioner considered the matter as something dull, but when he saw the love and tears, his heart broke and he left. At first they wept because of sorrow, but when they saw my joy, they wept for joy. Now, however, no one else could come.

The next day at noon I was set free. The city of Bruenn delivers the prisoners to the city of Old Bruenn. As I came through the gate, at one corner one of my dear friends was standing, at another were two friends. However they were not supposed to talk to me, but it was allowed for only a bit. At the first station it was stated: "He is a dangerous one. Two messengers must accompany him." I was tagged with that name — on my required passport was written — "Founder of secret religious society."

Fortunately they were a pair of poor men. My superior in Old Bruenn had already prepared a noon meal for us. Several of my dear friends were there, but there was much weeping so that no one was really hungry. The two messengers had a much better appetite, and they let us do what we wanted. Now they had to go ahead of us until we were outside the city. Ten or twelve of my dear friends were there. One cannot actually describe this; it must be experienced. Some cried themselves out, others rejoiced with great joy. Since I was still not released as a prisoner I said to the government servant with one of my friends: "To speak for only one hour [i.e. with my friends] I would gladly pay for that with fourteen days in jail," and this the Lord permitted beyond all of my expectations. Two hours were allowed for the first meeting; however we needed four. This was indeed a sorrowful parting, but also a happy one. Dear Brother Ankeln still accompanied me for four hours on the following day. This dear brother came to Bruenn without having planned it; the Lord deals especially graciously and mercifully with the dear Vienna friends. The investigation commission took them under protection in several instances.

For that reason Brother Haller and Brother Ankeln were led only across the border. Brother Haller decided to go to Munich, Brother Ankeln to Bremen, but the commissioner understood to Bruenn. The dear brother²³ was perplexed in that he knew I was imprisoned in Bruenn, but he finally decided without letting it change his mind to go to Bruenn. He finally managed to get to Bruenn to the joy of all, and was a half year in Bruenn without my knowing it. I saw him several times looking up to my high school,²⁴ but could not speak with him. In the last weeks I became aware of something which gave me great joy in that I was able to conclude that it went well in Vienna.

Ten days after my departure my dear Ankeln was also imprisoned.

I had to pay six Kreuzer daily on the transport. At first it was difficult. It was good that during the daytime we did not have to be on the way for more

than 3, 6, 8 hours each day. It was a most difficult time. It was very chilly, and there was still no heat at any stop, no straw, no carpet, only lying on boards. I could not often fall asleep because of the cold. In Austria I was known at every station as a sect organizer.

In a country town called Znaim there was a registrar who was happy to meet me. "A friend of mine near Bruenn has written to me about your group,²⁵ because you are the organizer; tell me the particulars and your purposes." I told him the whole story. He accompanied me for a quarter hour, and it was very revealing to him. He said: "But after you are gone, what's going to happen to the group?" etc. Even his Bruenn friend judged the entire meeting very well and in a Christian manner.

Austria transported me to the boundary where I had to delay in quarantine for five days because of the cholera. I thought that I would be free, but unfortunately, instead of continuing with the messengers, it now was with gendarmes. The Lord, however, stood by me with strength and power according to his great love and mercy. Then the rains came, which I had to endure for a long trip, and I already was weak and exhausted without that.

Finally I developed a bad foot. Then the Lord directed a gendarme to have a heart, and he procured a wagon for me. On the second day, because it became very raw and cold, I was locked up in the wagon in the Bavarian manner²⁶ for six hours along the way. As difficult as this was supposed to be for me in the beginning in that I could not move, I still was very happy to be so closely attached to the gospel. The next day the wagon was taken from me and eventually I arrived in Ulm, well and strengthened in body and soul to my own amazement. There I was set free without ceremony.

The head registrar, a very friendly man, said: "Do tell me, what did you pull in Bruenn? You can go home. Your papers will be sent to you later." The heading on my travel pass read: "Founder of secret religious organizations at various places in Austrian cities."

Oh how well I now felt that I no longer had to be in the custody of a gendarme with a loaded weapon. My dear brother Haller led me through the streets of Ulm to the dear Siegle family. I stayed there overnight and enjoyed love and happiness from everyone. Too bad though that the dear Siegle family was in deep sadness at that time. Their only child, a Jesus-believing daughter of nineteen, had just been buried. We comforted each other. It was so nice for me not to have to hear iron gates groan anymore, nor to have the rattling of the prison keys announce the day to me.

Finally after three and one-half years of journeying, long awaited and greatly blessed, I came home to my dear parents, brothers, sisters and friends to the glory of the holy God Jesus Christ!

ENDNOTES

¹The Scripture reference is incorrect. It should read: Song of Solomon 1:4.

²The German word is "Loos" (English is "lot" as casting lots). It is usually translated with "watchword." See endnote 3.

³The English counterpart is "The Daily Texts." The following definition is taken from the glossary of *The Bethlehem Diary* Vol. I, 1742-1744. Translated and edited by Kenneth G. Hamilton. (Bethlehem, Pa: Archives of the Moravian Church. 1971.) "A manual meant to assist congregations or individual members in their daily devotions. The Moravian Church has published it annually since 1731. From 1770 on, the booklet usually contained suggestions for Bible readings and also two verses of Scripture for

each day of the year; each of them was followed by an appropriate hymn stanza. The first passage was called the watchword and was drawn by lot from the Old Testament, following earnest prayer. The second was referred to as the *Text* or *Doctrinal Text* and was selected from the New Testament to underscore or expand the thought contained in the watchword. Moravians early came to trust in the spiritual guidance afforded them by the texts for each day."

⁴18th century Moravians made frequent use of lots besides the selecting of watchwords because they believed that the outcome would be the will of God.

The Moravian Church was quite close to the Lutheran and Evangelical Churches in Germany and as a result these churches made use of the Moravian "Losungen" or "Daily Texts." The third item in Muehlhaeuser's "Loos" is a hymn or stanza in the German consisting of 3 lines, 7 syllables in each line.

⁴This departure from Austria was prior to his entering the Basel Mission House for theological study.

⁵No information on Dr. Roemer has been found. He may have been the bishop of Wuerttemberg and thus had to supervise the small Lutheran groups in Austria. Austria was Roman Catholic and the Lutheran Church was not recognized in Austria as legitimate until 1849.

⁶Johann Evangelista Gossner (1773-1858) converted to Protestantism from the Roman Catholic priesthood. Among other things he organized in 1836 a Mission House in Berlin because of disagreement of policy with the Berlin Mission Society. One of the fruits of his Mission House was the Gossner Lutheran Church in India, organized by his students. Gossner was an eloquent preacher, a teacher and an author of books and articles. Well known and widely used was one of his early works, *Schatzkaestlein*, a book of devotions.

⁷These words are unclear and undecipherable.

⁸Johann Arnd(t) (1555-1621), a Lutheran mystic, studied Tauler, Thomas a Kempis, Luther and others and wrote six volumes entitled "True Christianity" which were translated into every language in Europe. Referring to the Christian situation of his time, he wrote the following oft quoted line — "Everyone indeed wants to be a servant of Christ, but no one wants to be his follower."

⁹This place cannot be identified from the initial.

¹⁰Dr. Gotthilf Heinrich von Schubert (1780-1860), son of a Lutheran pastor, studied theology but discontinued because of rationalism. He pursued his interests from early youth and studied medicine and natural sciences. A professor and author, he was teaching at the University in Munich when Muehlhaeuser arrived there. Schubert remained a staunch Lutheran.

¹¹Muehlhaeuser used the German word "Erweckung" which means "awakening" or in religious usage "revival." The word is used in several other instances and could also be translated "conversion."

¹²Jakob Boehme (1575-1624), son of a German farmer, and by trade a shoemaker (ala Hans Sachs), was a mystic and theosophist, but subscribed to the Lutheran Confessions. Through his writings he influenced many thinkers, one of whom was Hegel.

¹³The word Muehlhaeuser used is "Selbsterkenntnis." It is translated "self-knowledge," but that does not give the meaning Muehlhaeuser intended here. Therefore it has to be translated with the phrase used.

¹⁴The word "Upper" here means the same as in "upper room." It is the western part of Austria which is "up" in the Alps.

¹⁵No information as to the identity of the pastors named in this paragraph is available.

¹⁶The meaning of this paragraph is unclear as are several others in Muehlhaeuser's account. It appears that Muehlhaeuser intended his report to be an outline which he filled in with additional oral material.

¹⁷Ludwig Hofacker (1798-1828) and his brother Wilhelm (1805-1848) were powerful, popular Lutheran preachers in Wuerttemberg, and were very influential in the return to Christian faith from rationalism in Wuerttemberg. Ludwig wrote a book of sermons that was very popular.

¹⁸The last part of the name of this locality is illegibly written.

¹⁹This is probably Urfahr, a city near Linz, about 10 KM from Eferding — a two hour walk. Roemer probably travelled from Stuttgart to Vienna on the Danube.

²⁰The name given to French socialism. It was founded by the philosopher and Christian socialist, Claude-Henri de Rouvroy, Comte de, Saint-Simon (1760-1825). His philosophy of the relationship of worker and employer was continued and advanced by Karl Marx, and his influence on other philosophers and thinkers was widespread. The movement was feared by many.

²¹*Kaiserlich-Koenigliche* or royal. The German kaiser was also the king of Austria.

²²Muehlhaeuser's word "hoch Schule" should be translated "university" but the pun on high school (on the eighth floor) would be lost. He considered this God's university for him, thereby implying that God was using this time to educate him, and this is borne up by the thoughts in the paragraph.

²³Muehlhaeuser inserts a flashback to the time when he was still in jail.

²⁴See endnote 22.

²⁵Those with whom Muehlhaeuser held worship services or meetings in Bruenn.

²⁶"in the Bavarian manner" is a phrase that is not complimentary. The Bavarians were considered by others to be rather coarse and gruff, possessing a lack of consideration for others.

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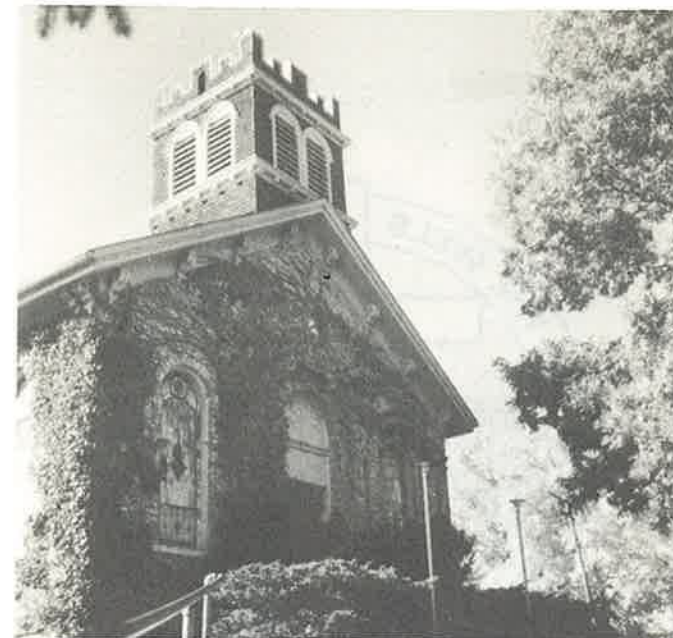
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Located at 6814 N. 107th Street, Milwaukee, Wisconsin

Numbers in parentheses indicate number of people in each tour.

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Oct. 4, 1986	Wiechmann Family	(9)
Oct. 31, 1986	Lonie Waechter and Alma Ihlenfeldt	(2)
Nov. 2, 1986	Reformation service open house	(150)
Mar. 11, 1987	Wis. Luth. High School, Junior religion students, Milwaukee, WI	(25)
Mar. 15, 1987	Christ the Lord School, Houston, TX	(14)
Mar. 19, 1987	Faith Ladies Aid, Sussex, WI	(6)
Apr. 1, 1987	Trinity, Union Grove, WI	(14)
Apr. 10, 1987	Calvary, Happy Hearts Seniors Groups, Sheboygan, WI	(13)
Apr. 10, 1987	Milwaukee area WELS Seniors	(75)
May 6, 1987	Shoreland Lutheran High School, Junior class, Somers, WI	(42)
May 6, 1987	St. John School, Sleepy Eye, MN	(14)
May 7, 1987	Mt. Zion Church, Ripon, WI; Grace, Pickett, WI; Peace, Green Lake, WI	(41)
May 13, 1987	Bethany Ladies Aid, Hustisford, WI; St. Matthew, Iron Ridge, WI	(51)
May 14, 1987	Frieden, Kenosha, WI	(7)
May 16, 1987	SS. John and Peter, Cleveland, WI	(9)

To arrange a tour, please contact: Mrs. Evelyn Schafer, W145 N7336 Northwood Dr., Menomonee Falls WI 53051. Phone 414/251-4093.



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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