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Editor James P. Schaefer

Assistant Editor Beverly Brushaber

Associate Editors Arnold Lehmann, Thomas Schultz

Editorial Staff Roland C. Ehlke, Edward C. Fredrich,
Mark A. Jeske

Contributing Editors Mark E. Braun, Arnold J. Koelpin, Victor H. Prange,
Carleton Toppe, Thomas I. Ziebell

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

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Cover photograph: Professor August F. Ernst

The President's Report

THANKS BE TO GOD! In each area of its work the WELS Historical Institute continues to experience God's blessings.

For the first time in its 138-year history the Wisconsin Synod has suitable archives for the preservation of its history. This spring construction was completed on the new synod archives, located at Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary in Mequon, Wisconsin.

The new archives share the seminary's renovated old gymnasium with three classrooms. The archives cover over 1900 square feet and include such features as temperature and humidity controls to help preserve important documents.

Cost for construction of the archives and classrooms is \$209,832, divided between the WELS Historical Institute and Seminary. Both portions are being paid from non-budgeted sources. The archives portion came to \$109,113; \$75,940 of that came from special grants, the rest from money in the Historical Institute and personal and congregational gifts.

Synod Archivist Martin Westerhaus is using student help to move archival materials from temporary storage at Salem Lutheran Landmark Church to the seminary. Then comes the process of classifying and storing the documents.

In addition to sponsoring the archives and museum (see the special report on page 44), the institute holds a spring and fall meeting each year. These meetings are held at various locations and center around presentations of historical topics. The 1988 spring meeting was at Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary on April 21. Presentations dealt with the seminary, which this year celebrates its 125th anniversary. Anyone interested is welcomed to attend institute meetings.

Since 1983 the institute has also published the *WELS Historical Institute Journal* each spring and fall. It is edited by Rev. James Schaefer and sent to institute members.

All work of the institute is non-budgetary. It depends entirely on membership dues, grants and gifts.

The 1987 synod convention resolved that "the synodical membership be encouraged to support the work of the institute and submit items of historical interest to the archives and museum." We look for such support on the synod, district and local level. Our heritage is a precious, God-given treasure. Let's all do our part to preserve it!

Roland Cap Ehlke

Turning the Corner: The Establishment of the Ernst Presidency

James F. Korthals

THE YEAR 1865 RECEIVES a great deal of attention in the history of the United States. On April 9th of that year the War Between the States ended with Confederate General Robert E. Lee's surrender to the Union commander, Ulysses S. Grant, at Appomattox Courthouse in Virginia. Five days later President Abraham Lincoln was mortally wounded by an assassin, while attending a play at Ford's Theater in Washington, D.C. Compared to such events the opening of a small parochial college in Watertown, Wisconsin commands little, if any, attention. It was just another in a long list of denominational schools which had been springing up in Wisconsin since the 1840s.

The First President: Adam Martin

To the congregations of The First German Evangelical Lutheran Synod of Wisconsin, however, the dedication service on September 14, 1865 of their own institution of higher learning was a momentous occasion. From the time of its founding fifteen years before, this synod had continually been handicapped by a shortage of pastors. After exploring the possibility of sharing the seminaries of other synods, the decision had been made to educate its own church workers. The congregations of the Wisconsin Synod now looked forward to the day when their "Watertown Institution" would send large numbers of graduates on to the seminary and finally into the pulpits of their small but growing church body.

The man called to turn this dream into a reality was Adam Martin. Born in Germany, he appeared to have much in common with the Lutherans living in Wisconsin. But unlike the other pastors in the Wisconsin Synod, Martin had been raised and educated in America. Accordingly he was more thoroughly an American, speaking English by preference, than were the people with whom he would work in Watertown. Since his ordination in 1861 Martin had served as a Lutheran pastor in New York state. During March 1865 he applied to the Northwestern's Board of Trustees for the position of president at their new Watertown college. Subsequently the board called Martin as the first president of Northwestern.

President Martin had all the academic qualifications the head of a new and growing college should have. He had a pleasing personality and was a good speaker. He was ambitious and sincere in his desire to help the college

prosper. At the dedication service of the college Martin impressed the editor of the local English-language newspaper with his address entitled: "The College and the Man, the College and the State, the College and the Church." The editor of the *Watertown Democrat* insisted that it was "the most instructive and admirable address ever made before any assemblage in this city."¹

Although the college was opened with a great deal of enthusiasm, a cloud of skepticism soon covered the institution and its president when it became apparent that Martin's philosophy of education and his theology were at odds with the original purpose of the school and the growing confessional integrity of the synod he was to serve. Already in November 1865, President Martin angered his local supporters by submitting a plan to the school's board of trustees which suggested that the new institution be transferred to Milwaukee. After only a few months the new president was displeased with the choice of the little community on the Rock River as the location for his dream university. Likewise, his scheme to establish an endowment fund by selling "perpetual" scholarships also raised doubts among the members of area congregations and continued to haunt the school long after his departure from Watertown.

President Martin's high, perhaps unrealistic, ideals can be seen in the name which he chose for this new school. At his suggestion the board of trustees adopted the official designation "Wisconsin University" in 1865. Because another school in nearby Madison was already using that title, Martin finally incorporated the school under the more familiar, but no less pretentious, title of "Northwestern University." Repeatedly President Martin used the phrase "a first-class college for Watertown" as a popular slogan to rally support for the institution.

An American-style University

To his credit, it must be pointed out that the first president of Northwestern University met with almost immediate success. The college enrollment in the 1866-67 school year was an impressive sixty-eight students, but only a half dozen of them were preparing for the ministry. Most of the enrollment came from well-to-do German, English and Irish families in Watertown and vicinity, families which did not belong to congregations of the Wisconsin Synod. The German Lutherans of the area generally did not have the financial resources to give their children more than an elementary school education. For this reason President Martin felt Northwestern's program had to appeal to the public at large. To aid in the recruitment of students the language of instruction was exclusively English, even in the German courses. This fact did attract non-German-speaking, tuition-paying students but it also offended the German Lutherans of the Wisconsin Synod who still felt more at home in the German language than they did in the English.

Surprisingly, the board of trustees, men of German background, went along with this stress on English. The regulations which they passed in 1867 continued to promote the English language at the expense of the German. At that time the board decided that world history, geography, German and English grammar would be required of all students. However, English-speaking students could be excused from the German, but there was

no such choice given to German-speaking students when it came to the English course. In fact, students for the ministry, while in preparatory school, were required to take part of their language instruction in English so they would be able to follow the language instruction in the college department.

As it turned out, 1867 was the high point for Martin and his American-style university. By 1868 the spirit of cooperation between the president, the board of trustees and the faculty had disappeared. Martin had hoped that Northwestern would be a melting pot in which the crude Germans would be mixed with cultured Americans and that the Germans would emerge as English-speaking Americans. Once again this idea offended the congregations of the Wisconsin Synod. They had no intention of dropping the German language and little desire to support a school which did.

Martin's Resignation

In addition to the language issue, it became apparent that President Martin disagreed with the developing doctrinal position of the Wisconsin Synod. In its infancy the synod had not been overly concerned with confessionalism. Although the Wisconsin Synod always bore the name "Lutheran," some of the synod's early pastors felt equally at home in Lutheran and Reformed settings. Other pastors, while preferring Lutheranism, were, at the very least, tolerant of the Reformed point of view. However, by 1868 the First German Evangelical Lutheran Synod of Wisconsin had clarified its doctrinal position and had taken a stand in favor of the Lutheran Confessions. This confessionalism made it necessary to cut all ties with the eastern churches that displayed strong unionistic practices. More surprisingly, the synod also ended its relationship with the German societies that initially had helped the synod. These mission societies promoted an ecumenical style of church for America, similar to the church which the Prussian Union² had installed in parts of Germany. By 1868 the Wisconsin Synod's newly discovered confessional integrity could no longer tolerate such principles.

As a result the 1868 synod convention severed pulpit and altar fellowship with those church bodies who were not in full agreement with the doctrinal and confessional position of the Wisconsin Synod. Professor Adam Martin was openly opposed to this action. When the action was not rescinded, he resigned his membership in the ministerium of the synod, insisting that "the American Lutheran church was a missionary church and should not hamper the work of its preachers and congregations by such restrictions."³

Although this seems strange to us today, Adam Martin's resignation as a Wisconsin Synod pastor did not immediately sever his relationship with Northwestern University, but it did make him vulnerable to attack. This man who only a short time before was considered an excellent teacher, now had his qualifications as a teacher called into question. The questions apparently originated in the student body and then gained support in the faculty. In July 1868 the board of trustees took action and removed President Martin from some of his teaching assignments. By the fall of 1868 Martin had offered his resignation to the board, asking, however, that he might remain in his office until September 1, 1869. After receiving Martin's

assurance that he would faithfully serve the school and do his best to restore order on campus, the board accepted the resignation on his terms. But even this awkward arrangement came to an end in April 1869, when synod president Johannes Bading dismissed Northwestern's first president.

Thompson Becomes President

Immediately the board of trustees asked another faculty member to assume the presidency. Lewis O. Thompson had been serving the school as a professor of English, Latin and history since 1866. Although a very capable teacher, President Thompson, by present standards, seems a most unlikely candidate for leading a worker-training institution. Although he could read German without difficulty, he could barely converse in the language. In addition he was not a member of the Wisconsin Synod or any other Lutheran body. His family had emigrated to America from Lutheran Norway and he always had the warmest regards for the Lutheran Church, but he was and remained a member of the Presbyterian Church.

Considering his background, it is understandable that President Thompson had as his ideal a college which followed Adam Martin's pattern, a school that would serve the public and quickly Americanize the children of German immigrants. The newer members of the faculty, however, did not share this view. Feeling the pressure of being both non-German and non-Lutheran in a German, Lutheran institution, the 1869-1870 school year was Thompson's first and last as president. Thompson's resignation prepared the way for the man who was to hold the office of president at Northwestern for forty-eight years and in the process mold the institution in his own image. That man was Augustus Friedrich Wilhelm Ernst.

Ernst's Presidency Begins

During Ernst's lengthy presidency, Northwestern's educational philosophy shifted from that of Adam Martin's American university to that of the German *gymnasium*. At the same time Northwestern's reason for existing became clearly established. Northwestern University existed to produce future pastors. It was to be a feeder school for the synod's seminary. With its purpose clarified, the poor financial support from synodical congregations, which had troubled the school from its founding, also began to improve.

August Ernst was a relative newcomer to the Northwestern faculty when he became president. His call to Northwestern is recorded in the 17 August 1869 minutes of the school's board of trustees. During the 9 November 1869 meeting of the same body, Ernst was formally ratified as a faculty member. At the time his duties included "Professor of the Latin Language and Literature" and "Inspector," the equivalent of the present "Dean of Students." Although he had just arrived on campus, it was during the course of this 1869-70 school year that Professor Ernst made his first contributions to changing the direction of Northwestern University.

Even before Ernst arrived at Northwestern, the board of trustees had ordered the faculty to work at revising the curriculum. This revision was intended to remove ex-President Martin's "American University" emphasis and to replace it with an increased emphasis on the German language. Since



Adam Martin
1865-1869



Lewis O. Thompson
1869-1870



August F. Ernst
1871-1919

this directive was not being implemented, the board late in 1869 once again directed the faculty to draw up a new course of studies.

Despite his youth and his limited experience, Professor Ernst assumed a major role in making the necessary changes. His own training in Germany had engrained in him the value of a classical education. Not only had he received his education in a *gymnasium*, he had also taught in Germany under such a system. In addition Ernst was also familiar with the way in which the liberal Lutherans of the eastern United States managed their church schools. During his five years in the east he had observed that these schools lacked a strong foundation in the classics, language, literature and history. Therefore, when Ernst arrived at Northwestern, he could easily see the shortcomings of the curriculum which Adam Martin had initiated.

The German Gymnasium

The reference to *gymnasium* today conjures up the image of a rather large building in which athletic contests are held. As the word is used in this context it refers to an educational system; one entirely different from the American system of education which was developing in the nineteenth century. The German *gymnasium* is not the equivalent of a German university, although many Americans when they see the course of study would assume that it is the same as an American college. The *gymnasium* was in fact a bridge in the educational system of nineteenth century Germany. A professor at Vassar College, who toured Germany at the end of the nineteenth century, described the system in this way:

The German *gymnasium*, whether the *gymnasium* proper with its course based on the classics and mathematics, the *real gymnasium* that omits Greek from its curriculum or the *ober-realschule* that omits both Latin and Greek — the German school, whatever its variety, takes the boy when nine years old and at 18 sends him to the university, the higher technical schools, or into business life with a well-rounded, symmetrical education.

This symmetrical education is made possible through the careful construction of the school curriculum. . . . The curriculum is a unit, as the gymnasial system is a unit; it is complete in itself, but it represents at the same time one stage in the development of the educational system.⁴

The *gymnasium* proper was vigorously regulated. Instruction tended to be inflexible and severely disciplined. Nine years of *Schulzwang* (compulsory drill by recitation) was considered necessary before the student could pursue the earnest, methodical, independent search for truth in the university. The German university had one and only one objective: to train thinkers.

The American higher educational system which was developing in the nineteenth century was different from that found in Germany. It lacked the *gymnasium's* rigid structure and provided a variety of educational experiences. That did not automatically make it inferior. It was a system which had grown out of the American situation to serve American needs, but not necessarily the needs of pre-theological students who would be

working in the German language and needed to be familiar with the theological writings of the Lutheran church which were also in German.

Unfortunately for Northwestern the revision of the curriculum still was not completed in 1869-70. President Thompson was stubbornly opposed to the German *gymnasium* which Ernst, along with other faculty members and the synod's leadership favored. This impasse became evident when the Wisconsin Synod met in a special convention early in 1870.

Although the special synod convention was called to deal with the continuing financial crisis at Northwestern, it also dealt with the source of the problem. Until the members of the Wisconsin Synod's congregations were convinced that this school would produce the German-speaking pastors which they needed, these people would not support the college wholeheartedly. With that in mind Professor Ernst submitted a memorial to the board of trustees, which was to meet on 4 January 1870, the day before the full convention assembled. At this meeting Ernst proposed that the English-speaking high school and college be separated from the *gymnasium*, i.e., the German-speaking high school and college which prepared students for entry into the seminary. He noted that Northwestern University was legally obligated to offer courses that would prepare the holders of the "perpetual" scholarships for "any career in America," as Martin had promised. Ernst also added that since the *gymnasium* was the source of the synod's pastors and teachers, the synod should provide financial support at least for this part of the institution. The board agreed and asked the synod for \$4,000 a year with the understanding that the English-speaking academy and college should pay a reasonable rent for using the Watertown property. When the convention met the next day, Professor Ernst spoke for Northwestern and presented this proposal to the delegates.

The real debate at this special convention centered around whether Northwestern needed both a German and an English department or whether it simply needed better financial support. The convention set the stage for much of Professor Ernst's later work as president when it resolved that Northwestern was to be a German-English school. The delegates also agreed that the congregations of the synod should collect a free will offering of \$4,000 every year to support the teachers at this German-English institution.

The 25th Anniversary

Twenty years later, as Northwestern University was celebrating the twenty-fifth anniversary of its founding, Professor Ernst gave his personal summation of the beginning years of the school. After pointing out that the school had started out with auspicious signs for future growth, he continued:

The young institution, however, would not grow properly. This appears to have happened mainly for two reasons, partly because it was patterned after the model of the so-called American college, and partly because of the plan to endow the school through the sale of scholarships, again according to the American model. Through both measures the trust of the congregations was largely forfeited.⁵

Later in the same report Professor Ernst included his own involvement in the revamping of Northwestern. He stated:

At the same time the present president, Professor A. F. Ernst, was called as inspector. Now at that time the entire institution was reorganized and received for the first time a complete, systematic shaping. The basic idea of the German *gymnasium* crystallized. However, the plan had to deviate from it in many points and it again came close to the American college. The proportion of languages was regulated, so that German and English should have equal rights. The instruction in religion, in the classical languages, in German and in part of the history was to be in the German language, all other instruction was given in the English language. Therefore in the lower classes of the *gymnasium*, in the academy and in the teacher-training division English dominates, while in the upper classes of the *gymnasium* the German was pushed more vigorously.⁶

Unable to contend with such drastic changes which ran contrary to his personal educational philosophy, President Lewis O. Thompson resigned his office as stated above. The board of trustees, not wanting to deal with an uncooperative president again, delayed the appointing of a new president. During the vacancy, which stretched from June 1870 until March 1871, Professors Meumann and Ernst alternated as chairman during faculty meetings.

Dr. Theodor Meumann, a graduate of the German universities at Halle and Berlin and a member of the Northwestern faculty since 1867, had been instrumental in pushing the synod toward confessionalism and Northwestern University toward a German-based curriculum. Meumann, together with Professor Ernst, had encouraged the board of trustees to take a stand in favor of the *gymnasium* concept of education. Since he had been at Northwestern longer, it would appear that Dr. Meumann was the most likely candidate for the office of president.

At its March 1871 meeting, the board of trustees was finally ready to appoint Northwestern University's third president. In an afternoon session to the surprise of some, they called August Ernst, not yet thirty years of age and only in his second year on the faculty. These men had no way of knowing that Ernst would continue to hold that office until 1919. They had no way of knowing what a profound impact this man would have upon the school.

Much to the relief of all concerned, the 1870-1871 school year ended quietly at Northwestern with no major disruptions on the part of the students and no faculty quarrels. That summer when the Wisconsin Synod met in its twenty-first convention, for the first time since its establishment Northwestern University was spoken of with some real enthusiasm. Synod President Bading in his opening address sounded much more hopeful than he had the previous year:

It is of the Lord's undeserved mercy that this year we can step before you without bitter complaints and dire fears. No longer is our institution in the sad state of a year ago; it has made excellent progress. Although all our congregations have not yet come to our aid, so that all [financial] concerns can be quieted, still their response has been so gratifying that the continued existence of the college is no longer in doubt.⁷

As chairman of Northwestern's board of trustees, Bading also happily announced that fifty-eight students had attended the German *gymnasium* in the previous year. Of that number twenty-four were members of the Wisconsin Synod and could be expected to join the synod's ministerium in future years. It seemed that Northwestern was finally going to fulfill its role as a worker-training school.

President Ernst was also quick to inform the constituency of the synod that Northwestern University had changed. This process began even before he assumed the presidency. In a report published in the January 1, 1871 issue of the *Gemeinde-Blatt*, the Wisconsin Synod's German-language magazine, Ernst confidently announced, "We are now a purely synodical institution, which is supported by the church exclusively. And to the glory of God we may say with due modesty that our service for the church is not in vain."⁸ In the lengthy article he provided the reasons for his confidence. Above all the other concerns, he pointed to the enrollment of the school:

The enrollment is larger than it was at any time in any corresponding term and totals 91, of which 51 attend the *gymnasium* and 40 the academy. Over 50 of these 91 students live at the school, almost all of whom want to dedicate themselves to the holy ministry. In addition over 20 notifications for the next term have already come in, so that the enrollment will likely grow to 120.⁹

Although the boast of being supported "exclusively" by the church may have been a bit premature, the announcement that the school's major purpose was the education of church workers rebuilt confidence in the college among the congregations of the synod. The results became apparent in the convention of the following summer when the icy, uncommitted attitude of many Wisconsin Synod Lutherans began to melt away.

Northwestern Becomes a Worker Training School

To be sure, the arrival of August Ernst on the campus of Northwestern University, Watertown, Wisconsin did not bring an immediate end to all problems; his elevation to the presidency did not mean that the school was never again going to experience difficulty. Yet under Ernst conditions were much better than they had been. The institution was established. It had survived some difficult years. It was now ready to produce graduates and prove its worth to the members of the Wisconsin Synod by sending young men to the seminary and finally into the pulpits of their congregations. The period following 1871 was a time for strengthening the building, but the foundation was to remain unchanged. Although he was not the charismatic individual Adam Martin had been, President Ernst did possess the necessary skills to handle Northwestern's problems and to lead it into this new era of its history.

Under Ernst Northwestern assumed the format which lasted decades beyond his departure from the school. The basic set-up continued to be the *Obergymnasium* or college department which was a German-English pre-seminary program; a German-English *Untergymnasium* or preparatory department which provided the high school phase of the *gymnasium*; and the English academy which allowed those benighted students who were

totally dependent on the English language to acquire the equivalent of a modern high school education. Included in the academy was an alternate program which was often called the "scientific department." This program allowed students to attend those gymnasial courses which were presented in English and provided business courses in place of the classical language courses and other subjects which were taught in German. Later this department would be subdivided to include a normal department for teacher education. The success of this three-headed program can be seen in the number of students in attendance: by the mid-1870s attendance was in excess of two hundred students.

The growth of Northwestern was a blessing which presented new concerns. The first indication of the new problems facing the school were reported to the 1872 synod convention when the board of trustees made mention of the increased enrollment and the steps which were taken to accommodate the extra students. The report stated:

In the past year the enrollment climbed to 111, of which 32 from our synod attended the *gymnasium*; the average attendance was 105. Since the room for sleeping was inadequate, last fall a new sleeping hall was established on the top floor of the school building. . . . For the next school year a large number of students again applied, who unfortunately cannot be accommodated due to the lack of room.¹⁰

An Expanding Enrollment

President Ernst once again reported the difficulties connected with the increased attendance in his address to the 1873 synod convention. He announced.

We almost had more pupils than the rooms of the institution's building could shelter, and so many students that the classrooms were almost filled. For 86 students lived at the school and 68 lived elsewhere and attended the hours of instruction. . . . Of these 154 students 77 attended the *gymnasium* and 77 the academy, and 67 of them intend to dedicate themselves to the holy ministry. Of this last number 35 belong to the Missouri [Synod], and 28 to ours, and three to the Minnesota Synod. We count nine of our theological students at [the] St. Louis [seminary of the Missouri Synod], so we have 37 young men who want to dedicate themselves to the service of the gospel. . . . For the new school year we will again have an enrollment of about 20 newly registered students, of whom two-thirds will go on to the *gymnasium*.¹¹

By 1874 Synod President Bading, in his capacity as chairman of the board of trustees at Northwestern, had to report that the enrollment situation had become critical.

The enrollment reached 174, 20 more than the previous year. Of these students 100 attend the *gymnasium* and 74 the academy. We have 23 more students in the *gymnasium* and three fewer students in the academy than the previous year. . . .

If we compare this enrollment with the premises of our institution, it becomes clear to us that the individual rooms must have been overfilled and no more new students can be accepted. Not only does it lack room for sleeping places, but also for classrooms, storage space for instruments and utensils. Likewise the cafeteria is so full that no new students could find a place in it. For these reasons more than 20 new applications must be declined. Therefore the question emerges, How should this be helped and according to what principles should the inspector of the institution deal with the admission of new students? If no more room is created, then we can accept only as many students as leave their old places.¹²

Increased enrollment, the very thing which the synod wanted and needed, had arrived. However, the influx of students meant that more room was necessary immediately, if the work at the school was not to suffer. The committee which reviewed the report of the trustees in 1874 recommended that "the creation of sufficient room for the admission of students for the coming year be seriously considered."¹³ The delegates responded to the recommendation by resolving "that the board of trustees should be empowered to rent a suitable house in the vicinity for the admission of students, if necessary."¹⁴ While this was only a temporary solution, it would allow additional students to enroll.

The move toward a longer term solution began when a change in policy lowered the number of non-Wisconsin Synod students on campus. Since 1869 the Wisconsin and Missouri Synods had been cooperating in the area of worker training. This came to a friendly conclusion in 1874 when the majority of the Missouri Synod students at Northwestern transferred. Ernst reported:

At the beginning of the 1874-75 school year a great change in the local school life occurred. The Lutheran Synod of Missouri cancelled its relationship with our school, and accordingly we lost Professor W. Stellhorn, after he had served well for five years at the institution. He left with about forty students to go over to the *gymnasium* of the Missouri Synod at Fort Wayne.¹⁵

This development should have allowed additional Wisconsin Synod students to matriculate without overcrowding the campus. But because of the dramatic increase in the enrollment of Wisconsin Synod students, there was no decline in the total number of students at Watertown, and the student body actually grew in size.

The 1874 Fire

To make matters worse on the evening of December 29-30, 1874 fire destroyed the one major building on the campus. For the remainder of the school year students were housed in rented facilities or in private homes. Prompt action made it possible to dedicate a new three-story building on September 1, 1875. Although the new building once again placed the school in debt, at least for the present the housing and classroom problems were solved.

A larger student body also required some adjustments in the classroom. More students meant that either a larger faculty was necessary or that a heavier teaching load was necessary for the men who were already there. During the 1870s Northwestern's faculty generally numbered seven and in three years the number was only six. The expanding enrollment therefore meant that the teaching loads of the faculty went from heavy to impossible. When seven faculty members were available the average load per professor was thirty-two classroom hours per week. That number increased to thirty-seven hours per week when the faculty was below full strength. While most schools operated with heavier faculty schedules than colleges today find acceptable, it should be noted that the German *gymnasium*, the model for Northwestern, considered twenty hours per week to be the maximum load a teacher could handle effectively.

This problem found no quick solution. Even as late as 1903 the average teaching load was still thirty-one periods per week. There was a time during this period when President Ernst taught forty periods per week while serving as the school's only administrator, writing for the *Gemeinde-Blatt* and serving on a number of synodical committees.

One difficulty surfaced repeatedly during the establishment of the Ernst presidency. Time and again the charge was leveled against the president that English was not given due consideration at Northwestern University. The faculty was often caught between the demand for providing German-speaking pastors and the need to prepare men for life in a country where English was the official language. President Ernst, himself German-educated and German-speaking, had to oversee the effort to raise the English standard at the school without allowing German to deteriorate.

Troubles Still Persist

The English problem was not helped by the continual changes in that department as men left Northwestern. The normal length of stay for an English professor at this time was less than five years. No one stayed long enough to properly organize and carry out the English program, and additional difficulties were therefore inevitable.

Equally troublesome to Professor Ernst were the repeated efforts of individuals within the synod to close the academy, which shared the campus with the college. Often the attacks were led by pastors of the synod who believed that students were lured away from the ministry into a course of study which was quicker and promised greater financial rewards than the ministry offered. Sometimes it was asserted that the students in the academy were a bad moral influence on the ministerial students. Whenever such charges were brought up in board meetings, Ernst refuted them and vindicated the academy.

Problems of one sort or another are a part of life. They can be expected to plague educational institutions as well. There would never be a shortage of difficulties at Northwestern. However, by the time Professor Ernst had served Northwestern as president for ten years, there were no longer any concerns about whether Northwestern would survive as a pre-seminary training school. During the 1870s Ernst proved that Northwestern could train a sufficient number of young men to fill the pulpits of the Wisconsin

Synod. Northwestern was not only surviving, it was fulfilling its mission. The Ernst presidency was established and would continue to prosper with the Lord's blessing until the second decade of the twentieth century.

ENDNOTES

- ¹"College Dedication," *Watertown (Wis.) Democrat*, 21 September 1865, p. 3.
- ²The Prussian Union of 1817 brought the Lutheran and Reformed Churches of Prussia into one church. In a Prussia stimulated by the national revival that followed the fall of Napoleon, King Frederick William III used the three hundredth anniversary of the Reformation as the time to unite these churches by royal decree. Despite resistance, the union was slowly accepted by the majority of Prussian congregations. Many of the more conservative Lutherans, rejecting the Prussian Union, emigrated to the United States.
- ³Arthur Hoermann, *Unser Northwestern College: Sein Werden und Wachsen* (Watertown, Wis.: Northwestern College, 1915), p. 13.
- ⁴Lucy Maynard Salmon, "History in the German Gymnasia," *The Annual Report of the American Historical Association for the Year 1897* (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1898), p. 76.
- ⁵A. F. Ernst, "Festrede, gehalten beim funfundzwanzig-jaehrigen Jubilaem der Anstalt zu Watertown, den 18. Juni 1890," *Verhandlungen der Vierzigsten Versammlung der deutschen Evangelisch-Lutherischen Synode von Wisconsin und anderen Staaten* (n.p., 1890), pp. 77-78.
- ⁶*Ibid.*
- ⁷Wisconsin Synod, *Verhandlungen der Einundzwanzigsten Versammlung der deutschen Evangelisch-Lutherischen Synode von Wisconsin und anderen Staaten* (n.p., 1871), p. 7.
- ⁸*Gemeinde-Blatt*, 1 January 1871, p. 34.
- ⁹*Ibid.*
- ¹⁰Wisconsin Synod, *Verhandlungen der Zweiundzwanzigsten Versammlung der deutschen Evangelisch-Lutherischen Synode von Wisconsin und anderen Staaten* (n.p., 1872), p. 25.
- ¹¹Wisconsin Synod, *Verhandlungen der Dreiundzwanzigsten Versammlung der deutschen Evangelisch-Lutherischen Synode von Wisconsin und anderen Staaten* (n.p., 1873), p. 20.
- ¹²Wisconsin Synod, *Verhandlungen der Vierundzwanzigsten Versammlung der deutschen Evangelisch-Lutherischen Synode von Wisconsin und anderen Staaten* (n.p., 1874), p. 45.
- ¹³*Ibid.*, p. 47.
- ¹⁴*Ibid.*, p. 48.
- ¹⁵*Jahres-Bericht des Gymnasiums der Evang. Luth. Synode von Wisconsin zu Watertown, Wis. fuer das Schuljahr 1875-76* (Milwaukee: Germania, 1876), p. 17.

James F. Korthals is professor of history at Northwestern College, Watertown, Wisconsin.

A WELS Historical Profile

Chronological Sketches of Our Synod's Past: 1900-1910

Arnold J. Koelpin

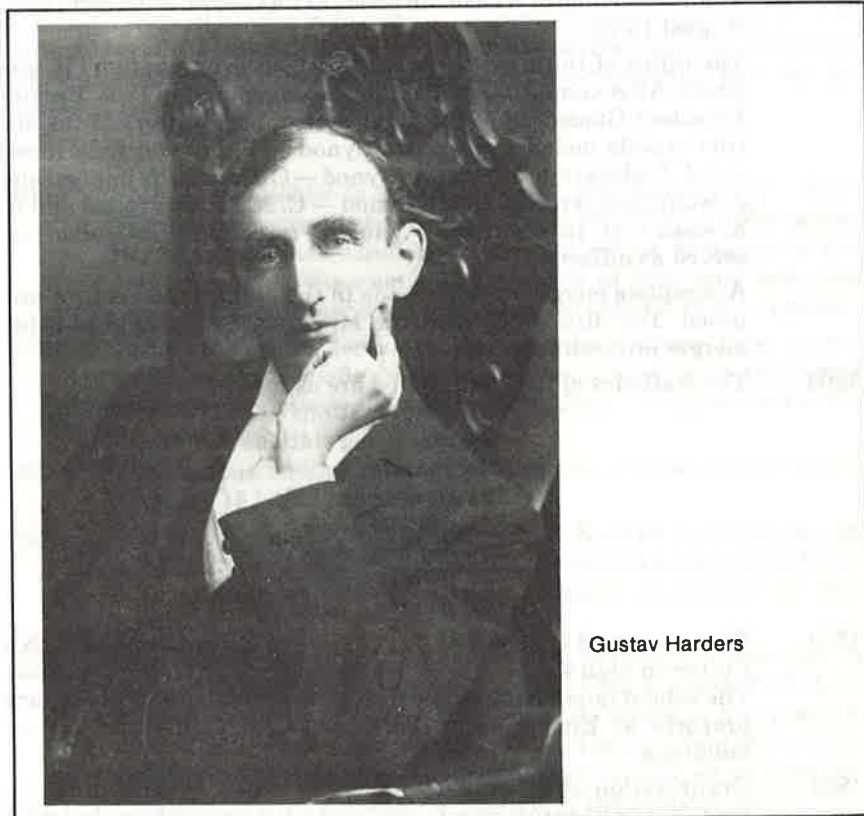
THE JOINT SYNOD OF WISCONSIN moved into the 20th century during an era of optimism. Many world leaders felt that a century of peace and harmony had dawned. Progress in technology and science created an atmosphere of security. Distances between peoples shrunk because of the automobile. Time telescoped with each advance in communication. In 1896 the first dial telephones went into operation in the city hall of Milwaukee.

The Lutheran churches also searched for a unity that transcended state boundaries and national barriers. The district synods of the Joint Synod of Wisconsin worked toward achieving an organic union under one administration. Use of the English language in ministry surfaced at the Wisconsin Synod seminary at a time when the synod was expanding into the far corners of the nation.

1900-1910

- 1900 Prof. J. P. Koehler is called to teach church history and New Testament exegesis at the seminary in Wauwatosa, Wisconsin. Dr. Ernst declines candidacy for reelection as president of the Joint Synod of Wisconsin. The decision of both men indicates concern for transferring synodical work to the English language.
- 1900 During the spring session at Northwestern College, three sophomores admit to disfiguring the steward's horse with paint and smearing the barn walls with graffiti. They are suspended for the rest of the school year.
- 1900 The Apache Indian Mission in Arizona, southern reservation, numbers 15 baptized converts.
- 1901 The Wauwatosa seminary grants Prof. Koehler a year's leave of absence because of throat problems. He spends some time in Colorado and later visits the Apache missions in Arizona for five months.
- 1901 The Joint Synod of Wisconsin meets in Mankato, Minnesota on August 15-20. Pastor C. Gausewitz of St. Paul succeeds Prof. A. F. Ernst as president of the Joint Synod. He serves in this position from 1901-1907 and again in 1913-1917. (The president of the Joint Synod first becomes the sole president of organic union after the district synods reorganize as districts of the synod in 1917.)

- 1902 Prof. Carl Bolle initiates the business course at Northwestern College in Watertown. The course extends through four high school years and the first year of college.
- 1902 The Northwestern Publishing House moves to its third location at 347 Third Street in Milwaukee.
- 1902 Pastor F. Beer becomes director of Michigan Lutheran Seminary at Saginaw. Within five years he is relieved of duties because only one student remains at the institution.
- 1902 Professor August Pieper is called as the fourth professor at the Wauwatosa seminary to replace Prof. Notz who had suffered a disabling accident. Prof. Notz dies on February 5, 1903.
- 1903 In January the Wauwatosa seminary interrupts its school year because of a smallpox quarantine.
- 1903 The first of the "Intersynodical Conferences" is held in Watertown on April 19-20. These free conferences attempt to achieve "unity of doctrine" among Lutherans of various synods.
- 1903 Professor (Gustav) Adolf Felix Theodor Hoenecke is honored with a Doctor of Theology degree by Northwestern College of Watertown and by Concordia Seminary of St. Louis on the occasion of the 25th anniversary of the Wauwatosa seminary.
- 1903 The Joint Synod of Wisconsin meets at La Crosse, Wisconsin from August 13-18.
- The office of full time president "without congregation" is proposed. After committee study, the plan is rejected in 1906. Besides President Gausewitz of the Joint Synod, past officers of the district synods include: Wisconsin Synod — Philip von Rohr (pres) and J. Bading (vp); Minnesota Synod — C. Gausewitz jr (pres) and J. Naumann (vp); Michigan Synod — C. A. Lederer (pres) and A. Moussa (vp). In Nebraska P. Hoelzel (pres) and G. Gruber (vp) served as officers.
- A complete merger of the synods in the Joint Synod is first proposed. The difficulties with the Michigan Synod help to delay merger proceedings.
- 1903 The statistics of the Joint Synod are as follows:
- 341 congregations
 - 38 preaching stations
 - 235 pastors
 - 181 Sunday schools
 - 241 schools
 - 107 male teachers
 - 34 female teachers
 - 117 teaching pastors
- 1903 Wisconsin and Missouri Synod pastors in Milwaukee establish a Lutheran high school. Pastor Harders serves as acting principal. The school later acquires the former Wisconsin Synod seminary property at Eimmermann's Park on North 13th Street for its buildings.
- 1903 Organization of a seminary library is begun by Prof. Koehler. Prof. Notz's library is purchased by Mr. Ferdinand Kieckhefer for



Gustav Harders

- \$1000 and donated to the seminary with the comment, "If we men of means had been shown such confidence before, synod might have long since profited by our wealth."
- 1904 The first issue of the *Theologische Quartalschrift* (Theological Quarterly) is published by the Wauwatosa seminary faculty. This publication is intended to be a professional magazine for pastors. The faculty, as editors, sets an independent course in Midwestern Lutheranism by announcing their intent to pursue a historical-grammatical approach to theology and the Scriptures.
- 1904 The congregations in Nebraska organize as the District Synod of Nebraska under the set-up then current in the Joint Synod.
- 1904 J. F. Gustav A. Harders, former pastor of Jerusalem congregation in Milwaukee, seeks recovery from a throat ailment in Arizona. Two years later he begins work as superintendent of the Apache mission.
- 1904 The Cincinnati case disturbs the relations between the Missouri and Wisconsin Synods. Trinity congregation of Cincinnati and its pastor, after suspension from the Missouri Synod, applied for membership in the Wisconsin Synod. The case is finally settled in 1909.
- 1905 The Joint Synod of Wisconsin meets at Bethesda congregation in Milwaukee.
- 1905 An addition to the refectory at Northwestern College increases the capacity of the dining room to 220. The largest building project to date on this campus also includes a new dormitory at a cost of \$55,000.00.
- 1905 The Wisconsin Synod starts two preaching stations in Alabama.
- 1906 Members of the Michigan District of the Joint Synod of Wisconsin meet with the Michigan Synod in Bay City to resolve their differences.
- 1906 In October the final meeting of the Intersynodical Committee is held at Ft. Wayne, Indiana. The delegates discuss differences in the doctrine of conversion. After the meeting the Missouri Synod announces that it rejects the Intersynodical Theses as a basis for settling doctrinal differences.
- 1907 The Mission Board of the Joint Synod of Wisconsin sends Martin Raasch as a missionary to the north-central part of the state of Washington.
- 1907 Pastor F. Soll is elected president of the Joint Synod of Wisconsin. He serves until 1913.
- 1908 The deaths of Dr. Adolph Hoenecke (of pneumonia) and President von Rohr of the Wisconsin Synod signal the passing of the second generation of pioneer leaders. The necessity of preserving the history of the Wisconsin Synod becomes more urgent. Prof. John Schaller of Dr. Martin Luther College in New Ulm succeeds Adolph Hoenecke as professor of dogmatics at the Wauwatosa seminary. Vice-President G. E. Bergemann succeeds von Rohr to the presidency of the Wisconsin Synod.

- 1908 Prof. Fritz Reuter is called to Dr. Martin Luther College in New Ulm to teach church music and to cultivate vocal and instrumental music.
- 1908 Missionary work is begun at Mobridge, site of the great railroad bridge over the Missouri River (hence the name, Mo-bridge). The town later becomes home to Northwestern Lutheran Academy, a synodical training school.
- 1909 The Joint Synod of Wisconsin meets at Ft. Atkinson, Wisconsin in August. The general body is informed of the Michigan Synod's intentions of reuniting with the Michigan District and applying for readmission to the Joint Synod.
- 1909 The Minnesota Synod decides to appropriate funds for a men's dormitory at Dr. Martin Luther College, and, if possible, to include a music hall and chapel in the funding. At the time, offers for relocation of the school come from the cities of St. James and Hutchinson. But the city of New Ulm and the New Ulm Commercial Club offer land, needed water supply and sewer facilities as a counterproposal.
- 1909 By a "gentleman's agreement," the Missouri Synod's mission director of the California-Nevada District leaves work among the white population in Arizona to the direction of Superintendent Harders. By the next year Wisconsin Synod congregations are founded in Phoenix and Tucson.
- 1910 The Minnesota Synod celebrates its 50th anniversary.
- 1910 The Michigan Synod is readmitted into the Joint Synod of Wisconsin. As a result, a number of Michigan Synod congregations transfer to the Missouri Synod despite a formal protest to the Missouri Synod.
- 1910 The first pastoral conference in the Pacific Northwest is held in Tacoma.
- 1910 The Michigan Synod writes the 50 year history of its founding. Michigan Lutheran Seminary at Saginaw reopens its doors after a three year lapse. Otto J. R. Hoenecke is called to be its new director and professor. Five students are enrolled.

The first years of the 20th century set the stage for the eventful decade to follow. In 1917 the Wisconsin Synod united its component synods into an organic union under one administration. That same year marked the outbreak of World War I and brought unforeseen trials to a synod whose German relatives across the ocean had become the national enemy.

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

Wisconsin Synod *Reisepredigt* Program

Arnold Lehmann

INTERESTING IN THE HISTORY of the Wisconsin Synod in its first half century or so is how areas and congregations without pastors were served. This method known as *Reisepredigt* had periods of activity and of inactivity. The person who performed the duties was called a *Reiseprediger*. *Reisepredigt* had a dual meaning, namely, the program of ministerial services for which a *Reiseprediger* was responsible, and the worship service itself conducted by a *Reiseprediger*. The best translation of *Reiseprediger* is "traveling vacancy preacher." *Preacher*, not *pastor*, because his time was spent in preaching, administering the sacraments and occasionally holding confirmation instruction classes. Very little ministering was done.

Persons performing similar services and duties in a few other church bodies were known as "itinerant preachers" or "circuit riders." An itinerant preacher was usually one not sent out or supported by a church body and one who really had no definite area or groups of people to serve. A circuit rider, usually a Methodist, had a group or circuit of congregations which he served and from which he received his financial support. The former went anywhere, the latter had his "parish." One circuit rider in south central Wisconsin had a circuit of 19 congregations.

Not a Missionary

The Wisconsin Synod *Reiseprediger* represented a church body from which he usually received an assignment and from which he received some type of financial support.¹ The *Reiseprediger's* first obligation was to serve vacant congregations associated with but not necessarily members of the synod. The second was to find and to serve German Lutherans in the Wisconsin area who were not members of an organized Lutheran congregation. Mission work as we define it today was not a part of his duties, although the second *Reiseprediger* did feel this obligation toward the American Indian.

The terms *Reisepredigt* and *Reiseprediger* will be used in this article because they define more clearly the historical situation (practice and preacher of the synod) than do the corresponding English terms.

The practice of *Reisepredigt* in the Wisconsin Synod falls into two periods. The first began in 1857 and lasted until 1868. This period will be the subject of this article.

After a brief period of inactivity, a concern by President Johanne W. Bading to renew the *Reisepredigt* caused him to present the matter to the 1871 convention, at which time the convention resolved to reinstate the pro-

gram when feasible. However, each year after that the reports of the floor committees indicated no implementation of the resolution. Finally in 1879 the convention voted to start a *Reiseprediger* fund, and Pastor E. Mayerhoff of West Bend was elected to receive and supervise these funds. For that he was given the title of superintendent. All pastoral conferences were to place the *Reisepredigt* discussion on their agendas.

At the 1880 convention Mayerhoff reported that several pastors had been called to be *Reiseprediger*, but that all had declined the call. Similar reports were given at the next two conventions. Finally in October of 1882 Pastor G. Thiele accepted the call for the second time,² but he resigned after one year. Mayerhoff did get pastors to do some *Reisepredigt* work in their areas from 1880 to 1882.

In the following years the results were similar. It seemed that no one wanted the responsibility of the full-time position. Eventually the Wisconsin Synod (not the Joint Synod) was divided into *areas*. Pastors living within these areas functioned as *Reiseprediger*, especially in the case of vacancies. These pastors and their responsibilities were reported to each convention and are recorded in the *Proceedings*. This second period would furnish more than enough material for another paper because the reports to the synod on the *Reisepredigt* were quite comprehensive and long.

Exactly what gave rise to the practice of *Reisepredigt* and the position of *Reiseprediger* in the Wisconsin Synod has not been recorded.³ The reason, however, is quite evident.

A Struggling Synod

Established by four pastors in December 1849 and organized by five pastors in May of 1850, the struggling young Wisconsin Synod had but few pastors to handle a comparatively large number of congregations desiring Wisconsin Synod services. At the end of the first decade 20 member pastors were serving 48 congregations and 11 preaching stations according to the 1860 convention *Proceedings*. Of these only 26 congregations belonged to the synod. Additional organized and non-organized congregations and a variety of Lutheran groups scattered about in the Wisconsin area desired Wisconsin Synod shepherding.

Of these non-affiliated groups a number wanted nothing to do with the very conservative Missouri Synod, known as "Old Lutherans." They preferred the more liberal approach of the Wisconsin Synod men. Wisconsin Synod's liberal Lutheranism was due to the fact that many Wisconsin Synod's early pastors were trained in mission houses, and did not have the benefit of full seminary training. Not until Inspector J. Wallmann took control of the Barmen Mission House in 1848 and later the one in Berlin were the men who came to Wisconsin even trained by a teacher who practiced and taught confessional Lutheranism. Wallmann taught this in spite of the fact that the state church in Germany was a united (Unirte) or union church —combined Reformed and Lutheran — a result of the edict of Frederick William III of Prussia in 1817. The practice of combined Reformed-Lutheran congregations continued in many of the very early Wisconsin Synod churches. It might be mentioned that even one of the so-called Lutheran congregations desiring Wisconsin Synod services and receiving these from a *Reiseprediger* had a Roman Catholic layman as congregation president because he had as

much interest in building the Lutheran congregation in New Holstein as he had in building a Roman Catholic congregation in a nearby township.⁴

Another reason for establishing a *Reisepredigt* program was the aggressive activity in the German settlements by the Methodists, especially the German Methodists known as *Albrechtsleute*. Even though Wisconsin Synod Lutheranism with most pastors and many immigrants was watered down, yet the Methodist preachers were detested and every attempt was made by synod's pastors to repel their inroads. In certain areas, however, immigrants did turn to Methodism because they were hungry for church services. In a few areas Baptist itinerant preachers also gathered Lutheran immigrants and formed congregations.⁵

Another thorn were the Freethinkers from Germany who had no use for religion. They were often influential in causing shepherdless Lutherans to drop their religion and religious practices.⁶

To review then what undoubtedly caused someone to start the *Reisepredigt* in the Wisconsin Synod, we have:

- 1) The vacant congregations associated with the synod;
- 2) The many German settlements, especially in middle Wisconsin, without pastors and organized congregations;
- 3) The inroads by Methodist and Baptist itinerant preachers or circuit riders;
- 4) The negative approach to religious practices by the Free-thinkers; and
- 5) Not mentioned previously — the many children in the settlement areas that were not baptized and the many who received little or no instruction in the Lutheran faith in preparation for confirmation.

Two Events Hurry the Program

Two events, if we can call them that, occurred prior to the establishment of the *Reisepredigt* program in the Wisconsin Synod. The first occurred probably in 1856 when Pastors Johannes Bading and Philipp Koehler took a "missionary" walk from West Bend to Ahnapee (today called Algoma).⁷ They went via Manitowoc to Two Rivers and then along the lake shore to Kewaunee and Ahnapee. They did open up a field north of Two Rivers for Goldammer of Manitowoc, but Missouri also sent a man to the same area from Sheboygan. No report of the Bading-Koehler journey is extant, if one was ever written.

The second event was a journey taken by Gottlieb Fachtmann, who arrived from Germany in the summer of 1857 and was sent to the congregations at Town of Polk and Richfield.⁸ J.P. Koehler in his *History of the Wisconsin Synod* characterized Fachtmann as a man who had "a love of nature and of travel, the ability to mix with strangers and to size up men and conditions and in this special sphere the urge to spread the gospel" (p 53).

Apparently on his own, but with the knowledge of Muehlhaeuser, Fachtmann took a missionary journey in September of 1857 soon after his arrival in Town of Polk. In a letter sent to Muehlhaeuser dated October 2, 1857, he gave a report of this trip. This journey took place before he was accepted into membership in the synod at the convention in late May and early June of 1858. If we can read his meaning into the opening sentence of the letter, he apparently had discussed the journey with Muehlhaeuser and had been

given encouragement to make it. The first sentence reads: "In order to inform you of the latest results in the further progress of my mission journey, I am taking up my pen; may you be satisfied with a brief outline."⁹ Following are excerpts taken from the letter which was written in Oshkosh, where he apparently lodged for the night.

I went from Milwaukee to Port Washington, the area previously served by Brother Stark. The new Lutheran church is completed to the roof and should be dedicated before winter if possible. The congregation has been served in part by a fellow brother of the Missouri Synod from Sheboygan, but it does not want to join that synod, and it constantly hopes to be served again by our synod. . . . I learned from a local German Evangelical school teacher, Mueller, that about 17 families had transferred to the Methodists. . . . From Port Washington I went to Sheboygan and visited the school of Pastor Stecher of the Missouri Synod. It has two teachers and 150 children. This fellow servant housed me for the night and received me cordially. He is also the preacher in Plymouth, through which I went on the following day. From there I walked to Calumet where I preached the following Sunday. . . . From Calumet I went to Chilton. . . . No German preacher has as yet been there. I baptized six children. . . . Then I went to New Holstein, the declared German town. There are about 150 Lutheran families living there, about 1000 Germans who represent Germany in customs and culture in such a manner that one believes oneself to be in the fatherland. . . . One evening I was present at a meeting in which an Evangelical preacher was called; in the meeting a Catholic, Mr. Hachet [Hachez], elected by the Protestants to the council of the Lutheran congregation, was the president and showed the greatest interest in the church. On the following evening I preached to a large assembly. I was most heartily thanked and the wish was expressed that I might take over the congregation, which of course I had to decline. . . . On the following Sunday I preached twice in Fond du Lac, had a good attendance in the afternoon, went to Red River and on Tuesday of last week conducted two communion services in which 60-70 persons partook of communion; I traveled to New London on Thursday, held a communion service there in which 40-50 persons partook of communion. In the evening I confirmed a boy after an examination and on Friday conducted a communion service in the house of a certain Krehnke on the Wolf River, and am now on my way to Menasha and Neenah. There I will preach tomorrow and conduct a holy communion service, then at mid-week to Hardenville [Hortonville] and after that on the Fox River to Berlin. Up till now I have baptized 63 children and I estimate to have preached 30 times in the months of August and September. On the Red River one of the largest Lutheran congregations in the state will be founded in the near future; the congregation sought from me a preacher from our synod. . . . Thus once more with the result: preachers, preachers,

preachers. May the Lord of the church in due time also show mercy in regard to this.

In early 1858 Fachtmann sent another report to Muehlhaeuser. This one began: "I have just returned from the journey which I made at your request and counsel to Horicon and Beaver Dam." The letter goes into great detail about the lack of worship and ministerial services for the many Germans in the area, and about the requests for pastors. One farmer even promised that if he would harvest 1000 bushels of wheat from the 80 bushels planted, and get \$1 a bushel, he would lay the cornerstone for a new church in Horicon. In the letter Fachtmann also mentions the services held in the area by a Methodist circuit rider, Snake by name. The letter closes with "Streissguth will also be interested in hearing about this large working area that is without workers. Should we let our fellow Germans be so nourished by Methodists that they fall away? May the Lord guard against that and provide the workers so that we can give him the glory."

A Third Letter from Fachtmann

A third letter, dated May 15, 1858, was sent to Muehlhaeuser in which Fachtmann again reported the large number of Germans from Horicon to Beaver Dam who needed and desired preachers. With this letter he included the following letter dated May 10, 1858. It reads:

Honorable Pastor Fachtmann

On May 2 we met and all were unanimously satisfied with you. On May 3 I went to Mayville and spoke with the Lutherans there. They decided that they would discuss it among themselves and then give me the report that you should preach there also. The congregation is over 50 families strong and can hold services in the Papist church. On May 4 I went to the congregation near Hustisford. They also want you to preach there if you should come again. This congregation is over 100 families strong. They were also desirous of having their children instructed in religion. They are holding services in a school house, but not all can get in so they intend to build a church.

We would like to have you be with us on the first or second Pentecost festival and on the following day, and to come to both places if possible.

Thus I ask that you might have the kindness to inform me if you can come to each place, and designate for me the day and time so that I can inform these congregations.

When you come again to Horicon you can stay with me.

Your most obedient friend
John David Schmidt

Fachtmann asked that the matter be presented to the convention which was to be held after Pentecost. All of the above activities by Fachtmann took place before he was even accepted as a member of the Wisconsin Synod.

At the 1858 convention Fachtmann was accepted into synod's membership and on the following day, June 1, in the afternoon session, he was asked by Muehlhaeuser to give an oral report about his missionary journeys. He told the convention that he had found many "neglected" members of the

Lutheran church near Horicon, Beaver Dam, Mayville, etc. Statements by the lay delegate from Beaver Dam corroborated the report. Fachtmann was asked to devote several Sundays in the future to that area.

The minutes of the June 2 morning session read as follows:

Pastor Goldammer brought up the necessity of a *Reiseprediger*. This was supported by Pastors [Ph.] Koehler and [Ph.]¹⁰ Sprengling and others with reports about the many scattered Lutheran congregations. The subject was now discussed from these three points of view:

would the establishment of such a position be the will of the Lord;

would the synod have a qualified man for the position; and finally

could the necessary funds be raised for this position, and from what funds should they be taken.

The synod believed that the first question must be answered in the affirmative according to the needs of the church. About the other two points Pastor Binner¹¹ gave an informative report based upon the experiences of the Kirchenverein des Westens.¹²

Further discussion was referred to the Ministerium session. Unfortunately no minutes of the Ministerium (or pastors only) session were taken, or at least have not come down to us. The 1858 minutes continue:

At the same time the synod resolved that the present secretary of synod, Pastor Streissguth, take along an authorized request and recommendation to the Lutheran church bodies and mission institutions in Germany asking that necessary provisions be made for these [vacant] congregations.¹³

Fachtmann Moves Quickly

Fachtmann was called to be the part-time *Reiseprediger*.¹⁴ He let no grass grow under his feet. In a letter to Muehlhaeuser, dated August 9, 1858, he informed the president that a congregation is to be established in Fond du Lac and that at least 50 members would be present for the organizational meeting. Already by this date Fachtmann had been on a mission journey for 14 days and had visited Horicon, Waupun, Oshkosh, where a reported 2700 German Protestants were living, and Eldorado. In Oshkosh there was a small Old Lutheran congregation which did not appeal to the majority of Germans. Also, only a few Germans joined the Methodists. In this letter Fachtmann asked Muehlhaeuser to send immediately to the Fond du Lac congregation 20 copies of the synod-approved congregation constitution.

A week later in a letter he thanked for the booklets and added that he had visited a 51-member congregation in Menasha, as well as people in Appleton, Calumet and Fond du Lac. He showed great concern about the latter two places, especially Calumet. The letter reads in part:

Everything there is at present resolved. For a while the drunkard Binner preached there. The scoffers painted a cross on his robe while he was drunk and with this he mounted the pulpit on Sunday, etc. Then they appointed a previous German merchant

Rehkopf as preacher. He administered the sacraments without being ordained and was finally driven out by the Thierwaechter brothers. Now these deceived people desire an ordained pastor from any synod.

He proposed to the Fond du Lac and Calumet congregations that they form a dual parish.

In an August 23, 1858 letter Fachtmann wrote that he had been in Green Bay, but found a capable pastor there and saw no need for staying in the vicinity. He returned to Appleton and walked eight miles toward Hardenville (Hortonville) where he found about 60 families for whom he conducted a communion service. From there he went to Calumet, then back to hold a communion service for Lutherans living between New London and Appleton. He closed by asking Muehlhaeuser for counsel in regard to the request from the Fond du Lac congregation that he become its permanent pastor.

A letter dated September 1, 1858, and written from Menasha, is translated in Koehler's *History of the Wisconsin Synod*, page 55. Following is a list of places which he visited on this journey: starting from Oshkosh and going along the Red River and Wolf River, he preached twice in New London, once near Hortonville, once in Menasha, once in Neenah and also in Fond du Lac, Waupun, the penitentiary, Horicon, Town of Polk and Richfield (his home congregations), Two Rivers, New Holstein and Calumet. He added that in a month he planned to go to La Crosse and along the Mississippi. One interesting sentence in the letter reads: "My pocketbook is like the oil vessel of the widow of Zarepheth, almost empty but still enough to keep on going; the many baptisms, even though one third are baptized without compensation, help the *Reiseprediger* get back on his feet again."

In these early years the *Reiseprediger* as well as area pastors found opposition from many corners. In a letter of March 30, 1859 Fachtmann wrote:

Our opponents, the Humanists and Rationalists, put their greatest effort into the German school for which they held a masked ball at the beginning of Lent. In addition there are Turners, likewise inimically minded toward the church. Unfortunately many members of our Lutheran congregation are connected with this school without the Bible, and therefore also took part in the masked ball for the maintenance of the school in debt. Since I publicly opposed the dance and the ball, which the Findeisens¹⁵ totally supported, I had to be concerned about a rift, but the matter was settled in this way that I got the church's singing society, which also participated at the masked ball, to acknowledge my wish not to sing at sacred functions.

In his report to the synod in 1859 Muehlhaeuser told the convention: "Soon after the last convention Pastor Fachtmann started work in his new call as *Reieprediger* to which he devoted three months in the beginning and made repeated journeys later on."

The Search for a Candidate

While pastors had local problems to thwart their work, other problems were encountered with the supporting societies in Germany. What effect

Streissguth's trip, mentioned above, had on the German societies is unclear but he did return to Milwaukee with two young candidates, one of whom was Friedrich Waldt, a *Reiseprediger* from Alsace. However the Menasha and Neenah congregations which had been established by Fachtmann on a *Reisepredigt* were in dire need of a pastor, so Waldt was sent there instead of being used as a *Reiseprediger*.

At the 1859 convention a resolution was passed that a committee of five be appointed to formulate a letter directed to the friendly societies in Germany pertaining to: 1) the establishment of a library;

- 2) the establishment of the office of *Reiseprediger*;
- 3) the sending of workers to Wisconsin.

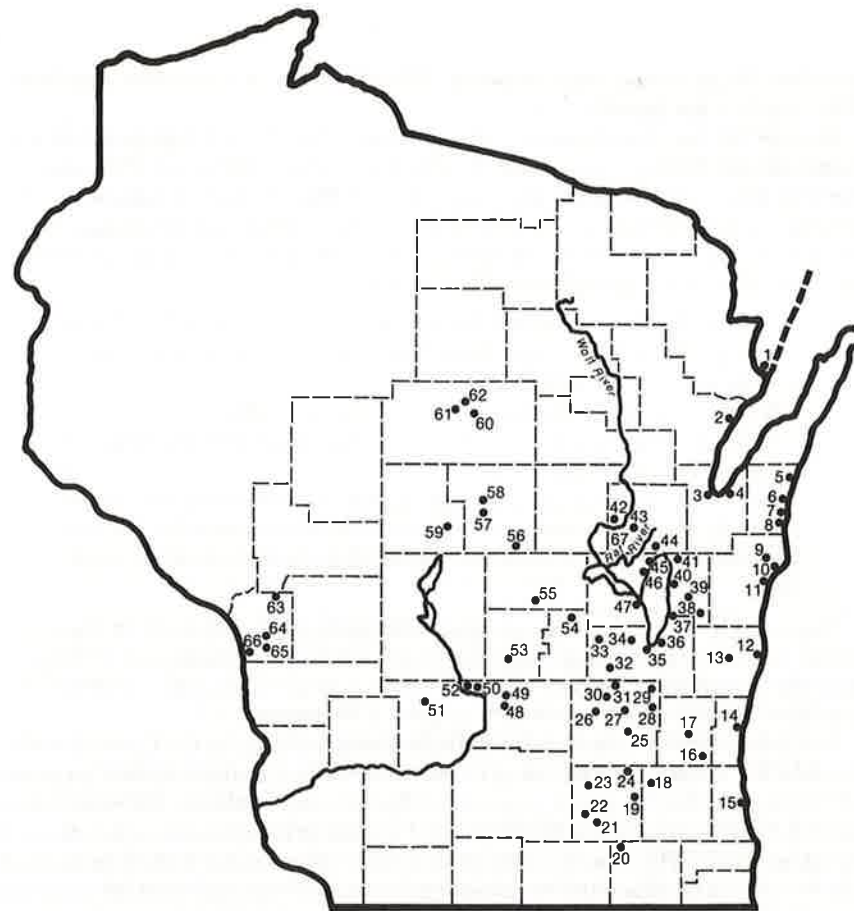
The committee consisted of President Muehlhaeuser, Secretary Streissguth and Pastors Christian Stark and the previously mentioned Koehler and Goldammer.

Unfortunately carbon copies of letters were not made in those years and we can gather information about the contents of transmitted letters only from letters received from Germany in reply and from references in the synodical proceedings. The authorized letter was drafted by Fachtmann and first mailed to each of the committee members. In a letter to Muehlhaeuser, dated July 24, 1859, Koehler of Manitowoc wrote that they approved of Fachtmann's letter with one exception. Koehler objected to the sentence: "The *Reiseprediger* would be in the service of the Berlin or Langenberg Societies and would carry out his duties for and be supported by the preachers and congregations of the synod." Koehler wrote that he believed a *Reiseprediger* in the service of a union or united society could not carry out his duties and be in agreement with a Lutheran synod, but that the *Reiseprediger* must be in the service of the synod, or definite harm could result.¹⁶

Koehler did not put his signature to the letter which was sent on August 1, 1859 according to one response from Germany. One result of this action by Koehler comes in a later letter from Germany to the synod praesidium, dated October 13, 1860, asking that a candidate (Dammann) being sent from Germany not be placed near Koehler because Koehler was too strict a Lutheran.

The response to the committee's August 1 letter is dated November 11, 1859. Prof. Dr. Hollenberg, principal teacher of the Berlin *Gymnasium*, directed it to the Hon. Ev. Lutheran Synod of the State of Wisconsin. He, in the name of the Society for Emigrated Germans in North America, suggested that the Wisconsin Synod furnish or get its own *Reiseprediger* rather than have the society look for one, because very few men are even interested in going to America to work among the Germans. Most enjoy their homeland, are satisfied with their church and do not want to leave its employ. However the society would consider raising funds to support a part of the cost of a *Reiseprediger*.

In a November 16, 1859 letter addressed to the above named committee in care of Muehlhaeuser and written by Meyeringh¹⁷ for the board of the Evangelical Society for the Protestants in North America, which was connected with the Langenberg Society, the writer indicates that the information in the committee's letter is unclear as to whether they want support for a man from their own synod or whether they want someone from the Langenberg Society and, if so, is he to be a theologically trained man. Clarification



PLACES MENTIONED IN THE FACHTMANN/MOLDEHNKE/THELIE LETTERS

- | | | | |
|-----------------------|-----------------------|------------------|--------------------|
| 1 Menominee MI | 25 Hustisford | 49 Portage City | 58 Stevens Point |
| 2 Oconto | 26 Beaver Dam | 50 Lewistown | 59 Grand Rapids |
| 3 Green Bay | 27 Horicon | 51 Reedsburg | 60 Wausau |
| 4 Green Bay Township | 28 Theresa | 52 Kilbourn City | 61 Town of Stettin |
| 5 Ahnapee (Algoma) | 29 Lomira | 53 Packwaukee | 62 Berlin Township |
| 6 Montpelier Township | 30 Atwater | 54 Berlin | 63 Burr Oak |
| 7 Kewaunee | 31 Waupun | 55 Dakota | 64 Bostrich Mills |
| 8 Sandy Bay | 32 Aldo (Alto) | 56 Almond & | 65 Mormon Cooley |
| 9 Mishicot | 33 Ripon | Almond Township | 66 LaCrosse |
| 10 Two Rivers | 34 Eldorado | 57 Plover | 67 Rat River |
| 11 Manitowoc | 35 Fond du Lac | | |
| 12 Sheboygan | 36 Taycheedah | | |
| 13 Plymouth | 37 Calumet | | |
| 14 Port Washington | (Calumetville) | | |
| 15 Milwaukee | 38 New Holstein | | |
| 16 Richfield | 39 Chilton | | |
| 17 Cedar Creek | 40 Stockbridge | | |
| (Town of Polk) | 41 Town of Woodville | | |
| 18 Oconomowoc | 42 New London | | |
| 19 Golden Lake | 43 Hortonville | | |
| 20 Whitewater | 44 Appleton | | |
| 21 Fort Atkinson | 45 Menasha | | |
| 22 Germany | 46 Neenah | | |
| 23 Lake Mills | 47 Oshkosh | | |
| 24 Watertown | 48 Caledonia Township | | |

Location not definite:

Horack's Mills is near Kewaunee

Red River not found. There is one north of Shawano, but this cannot be the one referred to by Fachtmann. There is a Rat River, identified at 67. Whether this could be the Red River is not known.

Kaklo is in the Calumet County area

The above places are taken from the letters. Other places were referred to in reports by the president at conventions, but these are not included.

is asked for in a requested response. Whether such a letter was sent from Wisconsin is not known.

In a letter to Muehlhaeuser, dated March 13, 1860, Meyeringh of the Langenberg Society responded to Muehlhaeuser's letter of February 6. Among the several items, the following is Meyeringh's response to the *Reiseprediger* request. He wrote that he and the members of the Langenberg Society most happily desire to have the following information reported to the next Wisconsin Synod synodical convention:

- 1) that the society has resolved to give \$100 a year for five years to the position of *Reiseprediger* but with the provision that this can be revoked by either side;
- 2) that the Berlin Society has resolved to do the same;
- 3) that both societies desire a capable, theologically trained man for the position;
- 4) that if such a person were found in the Prussian State Church, arrangements would have to be made so that he, if he so desired, could return to his homeland church without any penalties.

Meyeringh added that he had also approached other friends in Barmen, Basel and Stuttgart suggesting that they contribute funds and look for a qualified candidate. In fact he wrote that he might even put a notice for a qualified candidate in the church papers of Germany.

In a letter written two days later, Hollenberg, writing for the Council of the Society for Emigrated Germans in North America, indicated their support of \$100 a year for five years, also under the revocation clause. He would also search for a suitable candidate under the same arrangement as mentioned by Meyeringh. The council also shared this information with members of the Oberkirchenrath (the German church's highest ruling body) for possible action. In a second letter with the same date, and probably one that was strictly personal, Hollenberg stated that under no condition would the society support the appointment of Fachtmann as *Reiseprediger*, in case the Wisconsin Synod would have to select a man from its own ranks for this position. They did not question Fachtmann's confessional stand, but there were other difficulties, which were not mentioned.

Fachtmann Accepts Call

This problem was solved because Fachtmann had accepted a call to La Crosse in late 1859, and thus could not continue the position of part-time *Reiseprediger* in the eastern half of Wisconsin. However, Fachtmann did continue to show interest in as well as make suggestions for the program. His move to St. Paul, Minn., in 1863 virtually took him out of the Wisconsin Synod *Reisepredigt* program.

During the time that he functioned in connection with the synod's *Reisepredigt* program, Fachtmann wrote at least 21 letters. Many items of interest could be taken from them but space does not allow for this. However, these are the places that he visited as *Reiseprediger*: (taken from the letters he wrote) in addition to his first parish of Town of Polk and Richfield, and his second parish in Fond du Lac, (alphabetically), Appleton, Beaver Dam, Berlin, Burr Oak Valley (near LaCrosse), Bostric Mills and Valley (La

Crosse), Calumet, Chilton, Eldorado, Fond du Lac, Green Bay, Hortonville, Horicon, Kaklo (Calumet County), LaCrosse, Menasha, Mormon Cooley, Neenah, New Holstein, New London, Oshkosh, Plymouth, Portage, Port Washington, Red River, Sheboygan, Stockbridge (east side of Lake Winnebago), Taycheedah, Two Rivers, Waupun, the penitentiary and Wolf River. In several places he also went into the country near these towns for services.

In his final report as president of synod, Muehlhaeuser told the 1860 convention about the offers of the two German societies, and he urged further discussion at the convention. In a later session this was done and it was resolved that the new president, Bading, discuss the matter with the Senior¹⁸ and then carry out their decisions. In the meantime the Ministerium members, especially Waldt, were asked to devote some of their time to *Reisepredigt*, and that those who would do so should be paid for their travel expenses.

Searching for a Successor

The German societies were doing their job. A copy of a letter, dated July 25, 1860, written by one of the applicants, was sent to the Wisconsin Synod. The candidate, Theodore Lessing, a vicar or substitute pastor, read about the Wisconsin *Reiseprediger* opening and made application for the same to the Langenberg Society, but under the following conditions:

- 1) I would not want to be only a *Reiseprediger*, but at the same time would want a permanent place and working area in a city from which I can make my journeys into distant areas and to which I could always return;
- 2) I would want to take a *Frau*¹⁹ with me. I am now 31 years old and cannot see myself living as a bachelor in a strange land. I also know from the experiences of my brother who had been in America that a person needs a *Pflegerin* [nurse] and a female helper in America. My brother would have died had he not had a *Frau* with him who took care of him during a serious illness. I am indeed healthy and strong, but the strongest and healthiest person does not know if he can endure such a change of daily living, of climate and of work.

In a lengthy third condition he wanted a leave of absence from his native church body, the Wuerttemberg State Church, so that he would not by chance have to reimburse the church for the stipend (or tuition) that he received for the cost of his eight-year study. He also wanted to be able to return to his place in the Swabian (as he called it) State Church.

In two concluding paragraphs he wrote that he had no bride because, unlike most in his field, he wanted to become established in his profession first, and then seek God's help for a spouse; also — that his point of view is not Luther or Calvin, but Christ and his gospel "even though and because I am a good Lutheran."

In an August 6, 1860 letter to Muehlhaeuser, in which the above copy of Lessing's conditions was enclosed, Meyeringh asked Muehlhaeuser what he thought about Lessing's first two points. He began the letter by stating that they had published the request for a Wisconsin *Reiseprediger* in six church papers, and that they had received three inquiries. Prior to Lessing's they

had received one from Pastor Meumann, whom they recommended. The erudite Theo. Meumann came in the spring of 1861, but was not called or appointed *Reiseprediger*. Instead he was assigned to 5 congregations in Washington County, but soon accepted a call to Platteville. Later this classics scholar was called to Northwestern University in Watertown, WI. The third applicant was not recommended.

A letter dated October 13, 1860, written by Meyeringh contains some information sent by the Wisconsin Synod to Germany. Muehlhaeuser in three letters (June 7, August 29 and August 30) indicated that Lessing was the right person for the position of *Reiseprediger*. Meyeringh was happy about Muehlhaeuser's comments and was now awaiting synod action. He added that Lessing would also be a good man for the proposed seminary of the Wisconsin Synod.

In the same letter he suggested in addition to Lessing three other men who had had theological training, two of whom he names. They were Moldehnke and Nebe. Both were recommended, and as we know, Moldehnke did come to America. In addition Meyeringh spoke well of Dammann, but recommended that Dammann not be placed close to Koehler.

At the 1861 synod convention the topic of *Reiseprediger* was assigned to a committee which presented the following resolutions to the convention:

1) The *Reiseprediger* is under the supervision of the president of synod to whom he is to report at least every two months about his journey experiences, prospects and hopes;

2) The president should send the *Reiseprediger's* report to the various conferences — first to the Southern Conference, they to send it to the Northwestern Conference and they in turn to the Northern. Each conference should not keep the report longer than four weeks;

3) The conferences are to accept the obligation of informing the president of those areas which should be considered first (for *Reisepredigt*).

After point 2 was amended to read that the president decides which conference gets the report first the entire committee report was adopted.

At the 1862 convention President Bading reported that the Langenberg and Berlin Societies were eager to help establish a *Reiseprediger* position, and each offered \$100 a year financial support. They also responded to the request for a *Reiseprediger* by sending a candidate, Pastor Eduard Moldehnke, who was already ordained.

The Coming of Moldehnke

Moldehnke arrived in Wisconsin in late summer of 1861 and first settled in Watertown. Because of the condition required by the German societies that the *Reiseprediger* be given a permanent place for the winter, and because there was no vacancy in Watertown, he soon moved to Germany, Town of Oakland, west of Fort Atkinson, where he served a congregation, no longer existing. What this congregation did or who led them in worship when he was on his journeys is not recorded.

In a letter to Bading dated December 2, 1861, Moldehnke sent in his first report as a *Reiseprediger*. The letter is quite long and detailed, only excerpts are included here. They read as follows:

On September 17, 1861 I traveled from Watertown to Waupun. After searching for hours I finally found a religious German family — cabinetmaker Charles Hermann — where the name Muehlhaeuser, who had lodged there three years earlier, resulted in a friendly acceptance of me. [Moldehnke then goes into detail about previous attempts to establish a congregation there.] The pastor of the congregation in Waupun at that time was Schreck, previously a Methodist preacher, then a manual laborer, drunkard, Lutheran preacher and now a Holland Reformed preacher in Aldo [Alto]. . . . On September 19 I took the stage coach to Town Almond. . . . On September 20 I went on foot to look up four families who lived in the prairie about five miles out. . . . In the rain I went through a desolate area to Plover where I was unable to locate the only German living there. . . . On September 21, early, I went five miles to Stevens Point. . . . About 25-30 persons came to the service on Saturday. . . . I urged them to conduct reading services and Sunday school. . . . On September 23 I went by stage coach to Wausau. . . . On September 24 I, together with a young man, went 11 miles into the woods — Town Stettin. About 50 families lived scattered in the area. . . . On the 25th I went back to Wausau in the rain. . . . In that week I instructed two girls, ages 18 and 15. The older one is soon to be married and wants to be confirmed before that. . . . On Sunday, September 29, I conducted a confessional service in Wausau, preached, confirmed both girls, and communed 18 persons, baptized a child and went that afternoon on a miserable road to Town Berlin, seven miles out, where a very large group awaited me in the schoolhouse. . . . I stayed overnight with a farmer, Joh. Bartelt, and with him in bed — a terrible situation. After a sleepless night I went on September 30 on an indescribably bad road nine miles farther into Town Berlin, where I encountered very frightening experiences. In that corner several Old Lutherans live, difficult and religious, if both can exist together. After several consultations the people gave me permission to preach, but they would not give me the text until that evening. Treated in this unfriendly manner, I sat around until evening, but did instruct children. In the evening I received as a text a blank piece of paper, preached on that, namely, that a person is nothing in his own thoughts, etc., without God. I was tormented with many insidious questions and finally went to a terrible room for sleep. In the morning, October 1, again irksome debates about confession, etc. — I gladly left there in the rain on the worst possible road for three miles to those who had earlier invited me, preached there at noon and hurried the 16 miles back to the city in the rain. . . . On October 2 I went in cold weather and not yet completely dry, in an open wagon to Stevens Point. . . . On the 2nd at 6:30 a.m. I still baptized a child and went to Town Almond. . . . preached in the afternoon, and was invited to stay overnight. But I went in the rain to the other 16 families, preached in the evening in a private home, and afterwards sang

with the people. I found that they liked the Methodist melodies better than the Lutheran — just like the families living in the prairie. . . . On October 4 I went to Berlin, but because the road was so bad on account of the rain, we did not arrive there till 11:00 p.m. Thus I could not preach there. . . . On Saturday, the 5th, I went to Waupun, where I had promised to preach on the 6th. That is why I had to hurry so. Saturday afternoon I went to a settlement seven miles from Waupun, Atwater, to invite the people to church. About seven Lutheran families live there. Sunday morning I preached in Waupun, and in the afternoon to about 25 inmates in the prison — almost half of them were Catholic. On October 7 I walked from Waupun to Fox Lake and rode from there to Portage City. . . . Only 25 families — of 100 German families — assembled. To that number about 20 families from Lewistown, not far away, came. At that place a farmer, unfortunate in love, sold his farm and gave the money for the construction of a church. . . . I preached in Portage City on October 8, went to Watertown to recuperate from the many cares of the journey, then back to Portage City on October 13, where I preached morning and afternoon. On the 14th I went to Kilbourn City [today — Wisconsin Dells], arrived there at 6:00 p.m., made an appointment with the people, and preached at 7:30. . . . On October 15 I went back to Watertown in order to get ready for my move to Oakland Township near Fort Atkinson. . . . My first trip was done rather hastily because I wanted first to learn the layout.

An Effective Program

At the 1862 convention Bading asked Moldehnke to give his second report orally. It was favorably received. At the 1863 convention Bading showed the effectiveness of the program with this report:

The *Reisepredigt* program of the past synodical year has proved itself effective and filled with blessings. The following stations were served by the *Reiseprediger*: Germany, Fort Atkinson, Whitewater, Waupun — city and prison — Almond, Stevens Point, Wausau, Town of Stettin, Town of Berlin, Green Bay, Kewaunee, Town of Carlton, Forestville, Sandy Bay, Ahnapee, Portage City, Lewistown, Caledonia and the vacant synod congregations in Theresa, Lomira, Fond du Lac, Forest and Eldorado. We were able to place men in most of the congregations during the course of the year; the others are still awaiting preachers, but are from time to time served by the *Reiseprediger*.

During the course of spring, journeys were also made in Minnesota and four stations were visited. Furthermore 14 new stations were established in western Wisconsin, so that altogether 22 stations in Wisconsin and Minnesota are being served by the *Reiseprediger*. Reading services and Sunday schools were inaugurated by him wherever possible. Since most of the stations are so situated that several of them could be served by one



Fachtmann



Moldehnke



Hoenecke



Thiele

preacher, and since it has been indicated that new preachers will be sent to us, we certainly hope that most of these positions can be filled during the course of this summer.

Moldehnke wrote more letters in which he gave detailed reports to the president. Several items from two of these letters are of interest:

[June 5, 1862] In May I bought myself a horse and buggy in which to travel more comfortably and cheaply. . . . In Stevens Point an English school teacher was asked for the use of the school for holding German services. He said, "I would rather give you \$2.00 to find another place for yourselves." . . . On Wednesday I took the stage coach to Stevens Point. On the way near Mosinee the horses shied; I looked out and saw a drunken squaw lying in the road who did not move off. With great difficulty we were able to pass. A young Indian ran towards us. He wanted to ride along but the driver urged his horses to run fast. What could that Indian have thought of the whites?

[August 27, 1882] At the synodical convention I promised the delegates from Theresa and Lomira that I would come there to preach. On June 23 I went to Watertown and on the 24th wanted to go on, but I missed the train and at 9 a.m. started on foot in terribly hot weather. I was to preach in Theresa on the 24th. I walked the 18 miles to Hustisford. I was very much exhausted, but fortunately I met a mason from Mayville who took me to Theresa for \$2.00. It would not have taken much more for me to have suffered a sun-stroke on that day. . . . On July 15th I went to Portage where I preached that evening. Before the service I had to baptize a child. The wife said to her husband, "Go, sit next to a woman, you love the women so much." I am sorry that I performed the baptism. Children of that kind of people I will not baptize in the future. None of these came to the service that evening.

Bading Seeks Funds in Germany

Another problem arose in 1863. Bading was asked by the convention to go to Germany to collect funds for the new seminary about to be opened. His congregation in Watertown would need a temporary pastor, and Bading suggested that Moldehnke and A. Hoenecke of Farmington take turns in serving the Watertown congregation. Objections were raised at the convention about Moldehnke's serving because it would greatly disrupt the excellent *Reisepredigt* program.

Later in that same convention, after the establishment without delay of a seminary-college was resolved by the delegates, Bading moved that Moldehnke be released from his *Reisepredigt* responsibilities to become the instructor for the new institution, and thus could also be his substitute pastor while he was away. Moldehnke had been a *Rektor* (principal) of a German *gymnasium* before he came to America. When asked to take the teaching post, Moldehnke agreed, provided he be given three more months to wind up his *Reisepredigt* activities. This request was granted.

Naturally the 1864 convention heard no *Reisepredigt* report. Vice-president Reim in his report stated: "According to the resolution of the Hon.

synod our *Reiseprediger*, Pastor Moldehnke, moved to Watertown last year, partly to substitute for our president in his congregation and partly to begin the seminary and college."

An interesting item. At this convention Moldehnke took the opportunity to say a few words about Indian mission work, and how the English and German churches were working among the Indians. The convention resolved that Indian mission work be urgently impressed upon the congregations.

In 1865 Vice-president Streissguth reported that Moldehnke was unable to do any *Reisepredigt* work, but that older seminary students often served surrounding vacant congregations, thus already proving the value of the synod's own seminary.

The floor committee appointed to address the problem of relations with the German societies reported that both the Berlin and Langenberg Societies were trying their best to recruit men for Wisconsin and especially for the *Reisepredigt* post.

It was reported to the 1866 convention that Moldehnke spent several months in Minnesota as *Reiseprediger*. At this convention in Fond du Lac A. Hoenecke was called to be inspector and theological instructor at the new seminary. Moldehnke promptly resigned his post at the seminary. A bit later in the convention, when the *Reiseprediger* position was discussed, and after a resolution was passed that a *Reiseprediger* be called as soon as a qualified man is found, it was moved that Moldehnke be called. The minutes read: "At this motion the entire assembly arose and noted thereby that Prof. Moldehnke be asked to take over the *Reisepredigt*."

It was also resolved that the pastors underwrite contributions for the *Reisepredigt*. Subscriptions were then taken in the amount of \$440.00, with more anticipated from the absent pastors. A final resolution was passed that as much as possible the *Reiseprediger* was to serve vacant synodical congregations first, but also to be concerned about other fellow believers.

Moldehnke took a trip to Germany, and while there accepted a call, thus leaving the *Reisepredigt* post unfilled.²⁰ Moldehnke listed the following areas in his letters as being places where he conducted services: (alphabetically) Almond Township and Almond (near Portage), Appleton, Atwater (near Waupun), Berlin, Berlin Township (near Wausau), Caledonia Township (near Portage), Calumet, Chilton, Dakota (south of Wautoma), Fort Atkinson, Golden Lake, Grand Rapids (near Wisconsin Rapids), Green Bay, Green Bay Township, Horak's Mills (near Kewaunee), Horicon, Hustisford, Kewaunee, Kilbourn City, Lewistown (near Portage), Lomira, Mishicot, New London, Oconomowoc, Packwaukee (near Wautoma), Plover, Portage City, Ripon, Sandy Bay (near Kewaunee), Saxonburg (near Manitowoc), Stevens Point, Town Stettin Range 2 and Range 6 (near Wausau), Theresa, Waupun, the penitentiary, Wausau, Whitewater and Wolf River.

Whereas much of Fachtmann's energy was spent in Fond du Lac, Calumet and New Holstein, Moldehnke spent more time in the areas of Waupun, Wausau, Stevens Point and Portage. This of course includes many places in the vicinity of these small towns.

Thiele Becomes Reiseprediger

In the spring of 1867 the Berlin Society sent Pastor Otto Ebert as a ministerial candidate. Streissguth gave him a colloquy, then commissioned

him to be *Reiseprediger* in northwestern Wisconsin until convention time. On his way Ebert stopped in Manitowoc and the congregation there, left vacant because of Koehler's move to Hustisford, called him as pastor and he accepted the call.

Soon after the 1866 convention President Streissguth asked Pastor G. Thiele of Ripon to become the next *Reiseprediger*. On July 28, 1866 Thiele sent his letter of acceptance. At the 1867 convention Streissguth reported at some length about the *Reisepredigt* problem. In his report he stated: "I believed myself justified, indeed required, to look for another qualified person to be *Reiseprediger*, and I believed to have found him in Pastor Thiele,²¹ who just now was compelled to give up his place in Ripon. After consultation with the other officials and with the board of control of our institutions I offered him the position."²²

In a September 18, 1866 letter, Thiele reported to Streissguth that he had gone to Ahnapee and Kewaunee, and he urged that the vacancies there be filled immediately. On October 26, 1866 he sent the following letter to Streissguth:

After I returned yesterday, God be praised, safe and sound from my first tour as *Reiseprediger*, I take it upon myself to give you a brief report after which you may judge how well I followed your instructions to be diligent. The length of time of my absence was exactly six weeks; the scene of my activity was the north-eastern part of the state; only once did I cross the border itself and go into Michigan staying in this neighboring state only one half day. I traveled in all 700 miles, of which 270 were on foot. I preached 20 times on this trip, in several places twice, all in all at 12 or 13 different places. I distributed holy communion at two places, I baptized 24 children. I visited about 100 families in their homes. I gathered about 50 subscriptions for the *Gemeindeblatt*. Thus far with my statistics to show that I at least took pains to follow your brief instructions. Mere numbers, however, I feel, do not serve you well, therefore I am going into detail about several. The report about Ahnapee I gave to you in part from Kewaunee, and also about Kewaunee itself. As a result of the letter received from our brother secretary, the people in Kewaunee turned to Pastor Kleinert to try to get him to become their pastor. What the result is I do not know, but I suppose you know.

From Kewaunee I made a trip to Two Creeks. In Lake-in-Two Creeks itself, 12 miles south, which belongs to a company from Milwaukee, there are not many church people, but there are more in the surrounding area. About 25 families could form a congregation, the center of which would be Two Creeks. Most of these are Christians who hold God's word dear, and who are also ready to make sacrifices.

Farther into the country in Town Mishicot there are about as many families who are at building a church and organizing a congregation. It would be worth the trouble to place a pastor there; but because of the lack of pastors the people in Two Creeks itself are satisfied at least temporarily with periodic services on

the part of the pastor from Kewaunee. Besides that, the pastor from Kewaunee, in order to make a living, would find it necessary to take over this place because one of the joint congregations with Kewaunee which is in the woods, wants to be independent and have its own pastor. As an endowment for a church place they have bought 40 acres of land upon which an almost completed church is standing and next year a house should be built. The desire of this 25-30 family congregation to have a pastor living among them is not unwarranted because the distance and the abominable roads make the serving from Kewaunee exceptionally difficult. — On the way to Green Bay from the congregation in Town Montpelier I came upon a Schleswig settlement which for quite a while was a preaching station of a Buffalo Synod pastor, who is supposed to have drunk himself to death. — From Green Bay I took an exploratory trip along the west coast of the bay. The result is that a preacher for this territory is of the utmost necessity.

Peshtigo has a Mecklenburger settlement of good circumstances where a pastor could work with blessed results. Oconto would form a hoped-for joint congregation in that also here there is a group that longs for the fine services to the Lord. In Menominee on the other hand, a place which lies half in Wisconsin and half in Michigan, there are indeed also some evangelical families but they have all sunk into unbelief.

Through a letter from a man of Pastor Gensike's congregation to the latter, which you caused to be handed over to me, I came to town Woodville, ten miles east of Appleton. Here there is quite a large group of Germans among whom the Methodists have begun to peddle their wares. For a while a Reformed preacher from the vicinity of Appleton also preached here. I counseled the people to turn to Pastor Kluge²³ as the Lutheran pastor who lives closest to them. In Appleton where the above mentioned Reformed preacher likewise made an attempt, there is much unbelief and indifference, but along with that there is a small group of God's people that could be taken care of from Neenah, and which according to my humble opinion is a place that should be first in line for the placement of a shepherd. The people are worthy of this, that we show them the consideration: a fine congregation, whose church is near completion. Pastor Jaekel,²⁴ whom I visited for two days, wishes the early takeover by Neenah as being urgent for him, so that he could give up a part of his very large mission area. To serve nine or ten congregations exceeds the strength of a man. Therefore five men are necessary for the small area which I visited on this journey.

But from where should we take them? Oh that the Lord would have mercy on his poor people and would send shepherds for the sheep in order to put a limit and end to the devastation which unbelief and sectarianism is causing among them. Shortly yet before the real entry of winter I think, if the Lord wills, that I will travel the recently attached western section of the district in

which I am now traveling: Waupun, Ripon, Berlin and various other places which Pastor Jaekel serves on week days, and, if possible, also Stevens Point and Wausau. However it may be that you will direct me to visit other places before these, which according to your opinion need it more.

I do not know how filled the treasury is from which the *Reiseprediger* receives his salary, but should there be a sufficient amount of money on hand in order to pay my salary for October, I ask respectfully for the sending of the same. Please give my respects to your dear wife as I hold myself in respect of you and your faithful prayers.

G. Thiele

Would you please pay 20 dollars of my salary to your brother-in-law, G. Brumder, as payment of my bill, conjectured that I owe him that much.

The End of the Program

In November of 1866 Thiele visited the area from Portage to Reedsburg. In January of 1867 he was suddenly called to Milwaukee from Town Bloomfield, Washara County, by Streissguth. The pastor at Burlington who also served Kenosha and Racine because of the shortage of pastors, dropped Racine without notice. Because of previous difficulties in Racine, Streissguth felt someone had to be placed there immediately, so he sent Thiele, thus terminating Thiele's tenure as *Reiseprediger*. In his brief period as *Reiseprediger* he visited Ahnapee, Appleton, Kewaunee, Kilbourn City, Lake Mills, Menominee (Mich.), Town Montpelier (near Green Bay), Oconto, Peshtigo, Portage, Reedsburg, Town Woodville (near Appleton). There were also other places where he held services which he did not name in his letters, nor was it indicated what he was doing in Town Bloomfield.

The floor committee of the 1867 convention which was assigned the *Reisepredigt* topic realized the need of a *Reiseprediger*, especially for the Lutherans who, because of a lack of a local shepherd, had either fallen away completely or had become victims of (robbed by) the sects. A re-establishment of the program was urged.

In 1868 Bading reported that no qualified man had been found to fill the position. The convention floor committee reported its regrets over the failure to fill the post, and sought the Lord in petition to send the manpower for the same. No further action by the convention took place.

About this time more men became available to fill the vacancies, so that the need for a *Reiseprediger* as had been practiced waned. To use the *Reiseprediger* as a missionary did not seem to be a concern of the synod at that time. Also, there was the struggle of trying to maintain the seminary-college financially. As a result interest in the *Reisepredigt* seemed to have hit a low with synod pastors and delegates in 1868.

In the fall of 1868 a Pastor Hering of San Francisco offered his services as *Reiseprediger* in the San Francisco area, but what the response was to the letter has not been recorded.

Thus the first period of *Reisepredigt* ended for the Wisconsin Synod. To evaluate the effectiveness of the program is rather difficult. More than 60 congregations joined the synod during those years, but no record was kept

whether any joined because of the *Reiseprediger*. One can only believe that souls were saved because of the work of these three pioneers of *Reisepredigt* in Wisconsin.

ENDNOTES

¹The first *Reiseprediger* received no synod support. He was only part time and received major support from his home congregations. This salary was augmented with income from people for whom he administered the sacrament of baptism on his journeys.

²Thiele had served previously as *Reiseprediger* in 1866-67.

³It is this writer's opinion that the practice was a brainchild of young, energetic Pastor G. Fachtmann, as we shall soon see.

⁴A translation of a letter written by this Roman Catholic man, Hachez, to Fachtmann about the New Holstein congregation may be found in Koehler's *History of the Wisconsin Synod*, page 55.

⁵In 1846 an itinerant German Baptist preacher drew 12 families away from Immanuel Lutheran Church in Lebanon, WI (then Missouri Synod), convincing them that they were not properly baptized. This group built a church on the southeast corner of highways SC and CW in Dodge County, about one mile south of the present Immanuel Church on Highway 109, about three miles east of Watertown. See the spring 1984 edition of this *Journal* for more information on Immanuel Church.

⁶Still reminding us of the Freethinkers are the several Town Hermanns in Wisconsin and the statue in New Ulm.

⁷Bading, the future president of synod, arrived in Milwaukee in July 1853 and was sent by Muehlhaeuser to Goldammer in Newton to work west of Goldammer's territory. Goldammer sent him to Calumet where Bading accepted a call. In early 1855 he accepted a call to St. Jacobi in Theresa and St. Paul in Lomira Township. Philipp Koehler arrived in Milwaukee on December 2, 1854, and was ordained at the 1855 convention. Soon after his arrival he was sent to Pastor Conrad in Theresa who in turn sent him to a group of Germans half way between Woodland and Hustisford. Koehler found the area already being served by a Missouri pastor, so he returned to Conrad who then sent him to Town Addison near West Bend.

⁸A township and village about 15-20 miles northwest of downtown Milwaukee. There was also a Town of Richfield, but this town is never referred to by Fachtmann. In a later letter Fachtmann pins down the location of the Town of Polk church as being in Cedar Creek. The latter was the resident congregation.

⁹The originals of the letters quoted in this article are in the archives of Northwestern College. They are a part of the collection of letters to the early presidents of the Wisconsin Synod which Prof. J. P. Koehler gathered while in the process of writing the history of the Wisconsin Synod for its 50th anniversary in 1900. At present these letters, upwards of 2500, are being photo copied, transcribed and translated. All translations in this article, unless otherwise stated, are by the writer.

¹⁰Karl Friedrich Goldammer, the fifth pastor to sign the original constitution of the Wisconsin Synod, appeared at the 1851 convention as a licensed candidate. He was ordained at that convention and assigned to Newton, and prior to the 1855 convention went to Manitowoc.

¹¹Pastor Binner of Germantown was a member of the Kirchenverein des Westens, a Unirte (union) synod, which later became known as the Evangelical Church. It later united with the Reformed Church to form the Evangelical and Reformed Church. Later this body joined with others to form the United Church of Christ. Binner was accepted as an advisory member of the Wisconsin Synod at the June 2, 1858 convention (note the laxity of the practice of fellowship).

¹²The Kirchenverein des Westens was a synod or organization of German Evangelical pastors and congregations representing the doctrines and practices of the Unirte Kirche of Germany.

¹³William Streissguth came to America in 1848 as a missionary to the Swiss Reformed in New Glarus, Wis. He remained there for five years and then went to Milwaukee to visit Muehlhaeuser. In 1854 he was accepted as an advisory member at the synod convention. No other report about him is given. In 1855 he preached the sermon for the afternoon service of the opening day of the convention. At the first session on the following day Streissguth was again accepted as an advisory member of the convention. At the 1856 convention he was again accepted and proposed to be inducted as a member of the synod, which then took place. He first served the Newton congregation and in 1856 was called to St. John, Milwaukee. He later served as secretary of synod, then vice-president and president for one and one-half years. Streissguth lost his wife through death and was going back to Germany to get a new wife. She was a younger sister of his first wife as well as of George Brumder, the printer.

¹⁴Who issued the call is not stated. The only reason we know he was called is found in the *Proceedings* of the 1859 convention when President Muehlhaeuser in his report stated: "Pastor Fachtmann entered into the work of his new call as *Reiseprediger* soon after the last convention." The call was probably issued in one of the Ministerium (pastors only) sessions, of which we have no minutes.

¹⁵The Findeisens were a prominent family in Fond du Lac. They were Episcopalian, but he put much effort into the development of the Lutheran church there, as well as showing interest in the Wisconsin Synod's work.

¹⁶A portion of this letter can be found in Koehler's *History* page 63.

¹⁷Fritz Meyeringh was the agent for this society from 1853-1862. As agent he functioned about the same as an executive secretary today.

¹⁸After Muehlhaeuser asked the synod at the 1860 convention not to reelect him president, the synod responded by resolution to give him the title of *Senior Ministerii*, and that he was to retain his seat of honor on the platform at conventions.

¹⁹*Frau* can be translated woman or wife. It was not an uncommon practice in the last century for a bachelor to have a housekeeper, a practice followed by most Roman Catholic priests. His reference to the duties of such a *Frau* makes this writer hesitate to translate the word as "wife" as Koehler does (p. 77).

²⁰In a letter to President Streissguth, dated June 19, 1866, Moldehnke showed his great displeasure in the way he was removed through dirty tricks from his position as theology professor by synod action. He again tendered his resignation and said that he would go to Germany when the first opportunity presented itself.

²¹G. Thiele arrived in Wisconsin on January 12, 1864 and soon took the call to Ripon. After two brief terms as *Reiseprediger* and several pastorates, he was called to the seminary where he taught from 1887 to 1900.

²²Soon after his acceptance of the call Thiele took a quick trip to Lake Mills where he ran into Pastor Snell, a converted and married former Roman Catholic priest who was going to minister to the Lutherans there. This convert had had some difficult experiences in his attempt to find a Protestant pastorate in Illinois or Wisconsin. When he went to Jefferson to see Goldammer of St. John Lutheran Church, Goldammer sent him to Lake Mills for a trial run. Because Snell was fearful that Thiele had come to take away his possible position, Thiele let him preach and then left Lake Mills for home in Watertown. Thiele's description of the people in Lake Mills is not complimentary, a fact which may have aided him in deciding to go home.

²³A. Kluge, pastor in Reedsville.

²⁴Theo. Jaekel, pastor at Winchester.

Before his retirement Dr. Arnold Lehmann taught music at Northwestern College, Watertown, Wisconsin. He continues to reside in Watertown and serves the WELS Historical Institute on its board of directors and as an associate editor of the Journal.

Salem Lutheran Landmark Church Museum Plans

Alan H. Siggelkow

ON APRIL 21, 1985, the Salem Lutheran Landmark Church was dedicated for use as the official WELS museum. The WELS Historical Institute and Salem Ev. Lutheran Congregation promote and support the facility.

The old Salem Lutheran Landmark Church, built in 1863, is located at the northernmost end of Fond du Lac Avenue in Milwaukee, Wisconsin. The birth of the Wisconsin Synod occurred on that site in 1850. The church building was given landmark status by the Common Council of Milwaukee in 1977 and was declared to be a part of the West Granville Historic District. This designation, however, provides no funds for the preservation and use of the building.

In 1987 a committee was appointed to restore the building to look, as much as possible, as it did in its early days.

The upper level of Salem Lutheran Landmark Church will continue to function as a church for special occasions and meetings, even while it will showcase selected artifacts of the history of the WELS. The lower level will be the museum proper. It will house a pastoral old-fashioned study, classroom, kitchen, meeting room and display hall.

Along with displaying the history of the WELS and its work, the WELS Historical Institute Museum will seek to preserve some of the beautiful gifts of God to his church. Research has begun to establish the authenticity of various artifacts. Work on an oral history of the building has begun through interviews with several elderly members of Salem Congregation and its present pastor, Pastor Winfred Nommensen. Plans for the lower-level display area and the upper-level church area have been drawn. Group tours are being conducted at the present time by appointment with Salem Ev. Lutheran Church.

Work is about to begin on remodeling the lower-level of the building. We have sent letters to synod officials, administrators and schools requesting a listing of the artifacts which they have in their possession.

Our request now comes to you through this journal. Please inform:

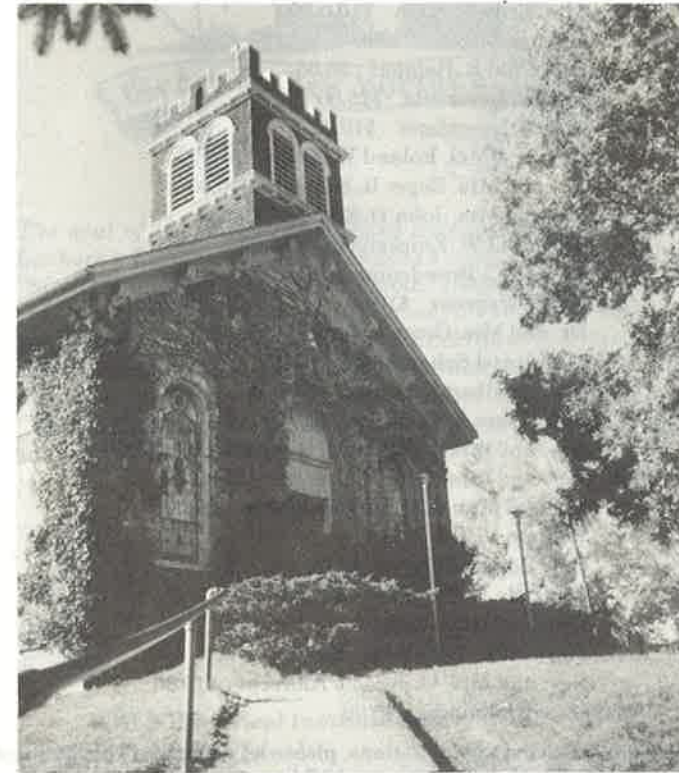
Pastor Alan H. Siggelkow
Salem Lutheran Landmark Church Museum Committee
2821 West Harrison Avenue
Milwaukee, Wisconsin 53215

if you have an artifact pertaining to the WELS history which you might wish to donate or loan for display at the museum. Please do not send

artifacts now. Storage facilities are limited at this time. Please send a description of the artifact, dates of use and by whom, a picture if possible, and other important information.

An artifact by our definition is a displayable item that gives the viewer a feeling for the history of the WELS and its time period.

Specific items we are looking for at this time include: an early altar, an early baptismal font, old pews, a pastor's desk from the turn of the century, early classroom desks (1880s), a conference table and chairs — pre-1920, old chalkboard, a wood burning stove (1900), book and display cases, lamps from different periods in history, an old globe or maps, rugs, antique hand-made sewing circle quilt with a Biblical theme, old pump organ, a camp organ used in a WELS mission, early vestments, communion ware, antique sinks, antique kitchen or bathroom fixtures, old clocks and old typewriters.



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

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

Monetary Donations to the WELS Historical Institute

December 1987 — March 1988

December	1987	Rev. and Mrs. Philip K. Press	\$45.00
		Ruth E. Ihde	\$10.00
January	1988	MSGT Edward R. Flenz	\$25.00
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March	1988	C. C. Frohmader	\$5.00

If we have neglected to list any donations, please let us know. (This listing does not include special donations for the archives building project.)

Rev. Roland Cap Ehlke, President
WELS Historical Institute



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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