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The Cover
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From Petersbach to America The Life Story of the First “Hermannsburgers” from Alsace.

Martin Siegwalt

Translated by Wilbert R. Gawrisch

It is indeed remarkable that among the boys who were running around in Petersbach in the 60's of the 19th century there were two who wanted to become missionaries. Where did they get this idea? None of their relatives or acquaintances was a missionary. The men in the village were for the most part farmers, like the father of George Schmitt, who was also the mayor. Others were laborers, weavers, masons, brick makers, carpenters, cartwrights, shoemakers, wooden shoemakers, pig herders, or stone masons, like the father of George Hoelzel. The natural thing would have been for the son to become a stone mason like his father. How did he get the idea that he wanted to become a missionary? Where did he hear that there were such people as missionaries? Certainly not from his pastor. Karl Gruenewald, the pastor of Lohr-Petersbach, was a rationalist. He did not want to hear anything about mission life, which had started in Alsace only a short time before. And now it was confronting him in his own congregation - and it made him angry!

The Conflict

The first thing we hear about George Hoelzel is that when he was twelve years old he came into conflict with his pastor. Before that we don't hear anything about him. He was born February 9, 1850, the son of the stone mason Philipp Hoelzel and his wife Christine Saxman. (The pastor obstinately wrote in the church books Philippe Hoelzel. The latter in an equally obstinate way signed his name in medieval Gothic script, Philipp Hoelzel.) His four sponsors also came from the village; in the village also lived his great grandparents on both sides. To his childhood memories belonged the death of his four great grandparents; all four of them died before his 11th birthday.

“As a 12 year old boy on his own initiative he collected gifts for Lutheran missionary institutions, for which he was publicly reprimanded by his rationalistic pastor.” This short remark which we take from the Evangelical Lutheran *Gemeindeblatt* of the Wisconsin Synod in North America raises a number of questions. Where did he get to know the Lutheran missions - the Leipzig and Hermannsburg mission societies? How did a love for them arise in him? Certainly not in his own congregation but probably in the neighborhood. In the vicinity of Petersbach two confessionally faithful pastors were working, who celebrated mission festivals. One was Karl Adolf Loewenguth, who was serving the Drulinger-Ottweiler parish since 1853. The other was Adolf Oschmann, the first pastor of the Buest-Sieweiler parish, newly established in 1861. One can imagine that the youngster went with his parents one or more times to Buest or Drulingen and that there his love for missions was awakened, so that he collected money for missions in the village and that, yes, the desire arose in him to become a missionary himself. His pastor, however, became angry at this. He considered his younger brethren in the ministry in Drulingen and Buest to be overly enthusiastic. He disliked their direct way of

preaching God's law and gospel. Furthermore, he was also jealous that people from his congregation went to their mission festivals. Their influence in his congregation had to be dampened. For that reason he publicly reprimanded the Hoelzel youngster. So this one was drawn into a conflict which at that time involved many people in the Alsatian Lutheran Church. Most of the pastors were rationalists, who did not want to share with their listeners the biblical message but preached only what seemed reasonable to them. Since the middle of the century they saw themselves opposed to a small group of pastors - Horning in Strassburg, Magnus in Beschheim, Huser in Rothbach were the leading men - who emblazoned the Lutheran Confession on their flag and proclaimed the biblical message with freshness and zeal. There was concern about an uproar in the church. In many places new spiritual life arose on the basis of the holy Scriptures and the Lutheran Confessions, and in many places there was also a sharp conflict between the various church tendencies.

Twelve year old George Hoelzel of Petersbach experienced this conflict in his own way. His soul was touched by the gospel, and he wanted to proclaim it to the heathen. But how could this be if his own pastor was hostile toward him?

The Preparation

It was the new pastor in Luetzelstein who was to take an interest in George Hoelzel. In the spring of 1864 Adolf Reichard came into his first pastorate at the age of 30. It was the fortified city Luetzelstein which was at that time still occupied by the military. He had at that time almost given up the hope of getting a parish since he had been dismissed as a vicar. In 1861 he came to Niederbronn as vicar and became known as a confessionally faithful Lutheran. In Niederbronn he quickly became a friend of the hymn writer Friedrich Weyermueller. He preached God's commandments and promises without compromise and gained visible approval. When he preached, many more came to church than when the old Pastor Baumann occupied the pulpit. The latter did not like the theology nor the success of his vicar and brought about his dismissal. What should he do now? Reichard went first to Hyeres on the Mediterranean, then returned to Alsace, did some vicar service and waited. In the spring of 1864 he finally received the pastorate in Luetzelstein which had become vacant. He had hardly been there three weeks when people in Petersbach heard about his powerful sermons, and many Petersbachers no longer went on Sundays to their own church because their rationalistic pastor could not satisfy them with his meager fare, but they went 5 kilometers [3 miles] to Luetzelstein and took their places beneath Reichard's pulpit. "From Petersbach they are going in droves to Luetzelstein" a contemporary wrote already in June 1864.

It was no surprise also that Pastor Reichard soon learned to know 14 year old George Hoelzel. He was at this time confirmed, out of school, and wanted to become a missionary. Reichard liked the alert, pious youngster and quickly came to the decision to prepare him for the mission seminary in Hermannsburg. He, Adolf Reichard, together with his brother Max, had been in Hermannsburg, became acquainted with the great preacher of the awakening, Louis Harms, and was deeply impressed by him. He had also heard a number of lectures at the mission seminary and was convinced that George Hoelzel would fit in there. He was now, however, still too young and had to be prepared for the seminary. So Pastor Reichard offered to instruct the 14 year old boy. Before his vicarship he had been a home teacher for two years and so was experienced. Thankfully George Hoelzel accepted the offer. So now for several years he went regularly to the

parsonage in Luetzelstein, received instructions, and became educated. He realized that he owed a lot to Pastor Reichard and thankfully still remembered him when he was on his death bed.

These four years of preparation were not without problems. His parents did not want him to go off unconditionally as a missionary to some distant place. Could he not become a pastor? No, he did not want to become a pastor. Or a teacher? If so, only as a stepping stone to missionary calling. Finally the parents gave their consent. That was important, because without it no one was accepted into the seminary in Hermannsburg. Hoelzel knew the requirements. The three most important were: to be a believer at heart, to be inclined at heart to the Lutheran Confessions, and to have the necessary gifts. He agreed to the first two, and for the third Pastor Reichard gave such a persuasive guarantee that he was accepted into Hermannsburg at the earliest date.

George Hoelzel did not know when he could begin in Hermannsburg. For admission in the fall of 1867 he was still too young. One had to be 18 years old. In the Mission News from Hermannsburg he read about the admission of 24 aspirants. At six in the evening there was a service. The 24 sat before the altar and the director preached a sermon to them. At the end he listed their duties: during their training they could not become engaged to be married; they should obey their superiors and put up with them; they should love one another as brothers; they should work faithfully and energetically. Solemnly they had to promise before the altar to live in this way. George Hoelzel knew, therefore, what was ahead for him. He may have asked himself if he would be able to do this in two years. Then in May 1868 there came the surprising news from Hermannsburg that one of the 24 students had died and Hoelzel could immediately take the place that had opened up. The training that he had received from Pastor Reichard would probably enable him to make up the half year that he had missed. So George Hoelzel, who had become 18 a fourth of a year earlier, went at once to Hermannsburg, and at the mission festival at the end of June the mission director could announce that in the mission house there now was a young man from France.

In Hermannsburg

Was it difficult for him to fit into life in Hermannsburg? We don't know. At any rate he now had an altogether different kind of life from that in Petersbach. With the 23 other students and their dean, Inspector Baustaedt, who also did most of the teaching, he lived in the "old mission house." His "brothers" were all older than he. The oldest was 34; the others were all more than 22 years old. In the "new mission house" there were 30 other students who had entered a year earlier. Most of them came from northern Germany. When they spoke Low German with one another, Hoelzel did not understand them. But he knew High German as well as they. For most of them that was also their "Sunday language."

Daily life was strictly regulated. Morning devotions were held at 6 o'clock. From 8 to 11 o'clock there were classes. After the noon meal there was physical work in the garden, field, house, or work place. At 4 o'clock classes resumed. After the evening meal there were singing, speech or reading classes, and now and then brotherly discussions. In the house there was good order and discipline. Emphasis was put on letting physical activity accompany spiritual work. The students did not live apart in their mission house, however, but took part in the entire congregational life. Not only on Sundays, but also on Wednesdays they attended services in the village church. They at-

tended the Bible classes and mission hours. The local pastor was their mission director. That was Theodore Harms, who in 1865 after the death of his brother, Louis Harms, took over the congregational pastorate as well as the direction of the mission. Louis Harms, the founder of the mission, was not forgotten. Every year on the day of his death, November 14, a service was held commemorating him. The big event of every year was a mission festival that was held for two days at the end of June. The students participated with presentations and brass music. They became acquainted with the large mission-minded congregation that supported them with their prayers and contributions. In the course of time Hoelzel came also to the large, old farm estates that were scattered over the heath and that made an impression on him. There he also later conducted a mission hour.

Was there undisturbed peace in the mission house? No, for in the year 1869 a severe crisis broke out. Ten of the students of Hoelzel's class revolted against their Inspector Baustaedt. They demanded that he should change his method of teaching. Director Theodor Harms took the matter very seriously. He saw in this rebellion a breaking of their vow. Had they not promised before the altar to obey and tolerate their inspector? He admonished them earnestly, but they did not back off from their demands. So the ten were dismissed from the mission house. They went to America, finished their studies at a seminary, and became pastors.

Hoelzel's class now consisted of 14 students. The year 1870 came and with it the Franco-Prussian war. Hoelzel heard about the war situation in Alsace and worried about it. He was put at ease when he heard that the fortified city of Luetzelstein was occupied without a battle, and so his home village of Petersbach was spared. The same year, 1870, he experienced great joy: the young man Schmitt from Petersbach, the son of the mayor, came to Hermannsburg. He too wanted to become a missionary. At the following mission festival the director could announce that now there, in the mission house, "was one who shortly before had to bear arms against the Germans."

The training in the mission seminary lasted five years. For Hoelzel and his "brothers" the year 1872 was an examination year. After passing their examinations, they would find out where they would be sent. They would not be asked where they wanted to go. They should obediently go the way that was assigned to them. At that time the Hermannsburg Mission had three fields of work. In South Africa there were 39 stations with 59 missionaries, in India five stations with eight missionaries, in Australia one station with two missionaries. Where would Hoelzel be sent? Or would he perhaps be sent to North America? Since 1866 the mission had sent people there because among the emigrants there was a dire shortage of pastors. Every year many thousands emigrated from Europe. The Lutheran churches let their members go and did not concern themselves about them any longer. Then a mission house like Hermannsburg had to jump in to relieve the shortage. In 1867 alone Theodore Harms received 40 requests for pastors from North America. The first one who was sent to America from Hermannsburg in 1866 wrote that the work among the emigrants was as necessary as mission work among the heathen: "A hundred times as many are lost here as are won in the heathen world."

Where would Hoelzel be sent? He would most have liked to become a missionary in Africa. And now he was informed that he together with seven others from his class was destined for America. He accepted the assignment and saw in it God's way for him. Later he was happy that he did not go his own way. In August he together with seven

other brothers was commissioned for North America in the Hermannsburg church. A few weeks later he took a ship to New York. He would never again see Hermannsburg or Petersbach.

In Wisconsin

In New York the eight Hermannsburgers had to separate because they would work in various synods. George Hoelzel and John Lange, who were assigned to the Evangelical Lutheran Wisconsin Synod traveled to the state of Wisconsin, which is west of Lake Michigan. It is one of the newer states which became a state in 1848. Its fertile soil attracted ever more immigrants. Many of them speak German. Among them Hoelzel will work. The Wisconsin Synod had a rural character and was German speaking. Far into the 20th century German was spoken there.

George Hoelzel also met acquaintances here. In the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Church there were already eight pastors who had studied at Hermannsburg. The Synod was established in 1850. Among its first pastors were some who had come from the mission houses in Basel, St. Chrischona and Barmen. These were Union institutions, that is, a union of Lutherans and Reformed. As the synod took on a confessional Lutheran character pastors from Union institutions were no longer wanted. So it turned to Hermannsburg and was happy that every once in awhile some Hermannsburgers came. A professor from Wisconsin recently wrote: "We were looking for men who were confessionally faithful Lutherans, sound theologians, spiritually strong, and qualified for a call. The men from Hermannsburg came equipped with these highly valued characteristics."

Such a Hermannsburger was George Hoelzel. Shortly after his arrival he was ordained for the pastoral ministry and sent to Ripon. Ripon was a small place, which was established in 1844 and lay in a farming area. People were happy that a pastor had been found for Ripon because there were not nearly enough pastors for the rapidly growing work. When the Wisconsin Synod was founded in 1850 there were five pastors and nine preaching places. In 1866 there were 52 pastors and 125 preaching places. Many people, however, who lived in the far reaching countryside were not reached with the Word of God. Pastors who made exploratory trips found Protestants who had not seen a pastor for 15 years, whose children were not baptized, and who lived a godless life. So the pastors were both pastors and missionaries. They began their work in the place to which they had been sent, traveled throughout the surrounding area, visited the settlers and established preaching stations wherever possible.

Such a pastor was George Hoelzel. Ripon with its surrounding area was his parish and his mission field. In his biography we read that he worked in the Ripon congregation "with great faithfulness and tireless diligence, Under the heavy workload he suffered a breakdown, but God visibly blessed his work there." We do not know the details. But when one reads what other "Americans" wrote to their director in Hermannsburg, one can imagine what Hoelzel's situation in Ripon was. The American pastors were generally poor. Their salaries did not suffice to make a living. They planted gardens, kept a cow in the barn, and had a horse and wagon for the long trips. Many conducted three services on Sundays between 9:00 and 5:00 o'clock. During the week they taught school on four days, for if many settlers were not concerned much about the church, they nevertheless were concerned that their children should learn something. For that reason many pastors conducted schools and in that way reached the parents

through their children. The pastors were often on the road to visit the widely scattered people and win them. They met not only welcome but also rejection and scoffing. A pastor had to have for his work a great deal of strength, not only physically but also spiritually.

George Hoelzel settled in Ripon and to his joy saw that his work had results, and the congregation grew. He did not remain single, but married, and soon the parents rejoiced over the birth of a daughter. But the work was too much for him, and his health broke down. After four years he went to Fond du Lac. This place at the southern end of Lake Winnebago was somewhat larger and the congregational work was supposed to be somewhat light. He thought he would regain his strength. In addition, he now got some help. His parents together with an aunt and his younger brother Philipp had emigrated to America and lived with him. His brother served as his preaching assistant for the last months of his life. A sickness overcame him and on the 22nd of December, 1877, he died at the age of 27 years, 10 months and 13 days.

His death made an impression on his surroundings for he rejoiced "to be going home to his Savior." As long as he could, he sang the hymn "For me to live is Jesus; to die is gain for me." In the hour of his death they had to sing for him the third stanza of another hymn, in which it says, "If I have only Thee, eternal Lord, I wish for nothing more." He murmured, "I wish for nothing more" and died. He was buried on December 26. As the text for his funeral sermon he had chosen Luke 2: 10, 11 - "Do not be afraid, I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all people. Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you; he is Christ the Lord." George Hoelzel had only a short life. But he placed it all in the service of his Savior. And when his hour came, he could die with joy. That is a great deal.

From North America Pastor Hoelzel reported several times on his work in the *Evangelisch Lutherische Friedensbote fuer Elsass-Lothringen*. So we are informed that on the 16th Sunday after Trinity, 1874 he was able to dedicate Immanuel Church in his affiliated parish in Brandon. The church was built by twenty families which Pastor Hoelzel had gathered. He also alluded to the fact that the religious press in North America reported on a mission festival in Rothbach which induced several Lutheran pastors also to celebrate a mission festival. One year later he reported on a mission festival on the seventh Sunday after Trinity in his Ripon congregation. It was an experience for the widely scattered congregations in the area. Two special trains brought guests, one 500, the other 200 attendees. When the festival began at 10:30, 1500 persons were present. In the morning they heard two sermons, and in the afternoon two more. At noon and at supper time they were served at long tables. "So the festival was celebrated in a rather grand way and all participants were richly blessed thereby. At 7:30 the out of town guests returned home in a happy mood on their special trains."

In 1877 the *Friedensbote* knew of six Alsatians who were serving as pastors in Lutheran synods of North America: W. Streissguth, Ph. Hoelzel, F. Eppling, J. Krieger, G. Hoelzel and F. Waldt.

In 1877 the *Evangelisch-Lutherisches Gemeinde-Blatt* carried the following obituary for George Hoelzel:

It has pleased the Lord of life and death to take our Christian brother in the minis-

try, George Hoelzel, out of the church militant into the church triumphant. He was born on February 9, 1850, in Petersbach, Alsace. Already as a small boy he showed great love for the kingdom of God and it was his earnest effort to serve the Lord Jesus. At an early age he asked his parents to let him become a missionary in order that he might bring the Gospel to the heathen. On his own initiative as a 12 year old boy he gathered funds for Lutheran mission institutions. For this he was openly admonished by his pastor, who at that time was a rationalist and who had done nothing for missions but who was prompted by this action to work for the Union Mission House in Basel.

Hoelzel's zeal for extending the kingdom of God showed itself also in this that when his parents did not want to let him become a pastor, he asked that they at least let him become a teacher. Then he would be able to earn some money and eventually enter a mission school.

When he was fourteen years old, Pastor Reichardt of Luetzelstein became acquainted with him and offered to give him some schooling. For this the pious youth was very happy. The instructions started immediately. Young Hoelzel derived a lot of benefit from Pastor Reichardt's excellent teaching, for which he is herewith publicly thanked. The intention was that Hoelzel should become a Lutheran pastor in Alsace, but from this he backed off because he did not want to go to a rationalistic university for fear that he would lose his faith. But then with the consent of his parents in his nineteenth year he entered the mission house in Hermannsburg to prepare himself for mission work among the heathen. But in his faithfulness God arranged it that Hoelzel later was very happy because he had not gone his own way.

In the year 1872 he landed in New York and was soon called by the congregation in Ripon, Wisconsin, where he worked with great faithfulness and tireless diligence. Under his heavy workload he suffered a breakdown of his health there, but God visibly blessed his work there. After he had worked in Ripon for four years, he accepted a call to neighboring Fond du Lac, where he hoped with God's help to regain his health. But God in his faithfulness had determined otherwise. On December 22 of the preceding year (1876) his hour of deliverance came, and his Savior took him to himself.

As the devout Hoelzel felt his end approaching, he could not sufficiently express his joy that he was now "going home to his Savior." Again and again he said, "You cannot imagine how happy I am that I am now going to my Savior." "Oh how the angels will rejoice that another sinner is coming to them." With a broken voice he then sang the hymn "For me to Live is Jesus." His family had to sing it again and again while he, as well as he could, joined in. Then they had to sing the hymn for him, "When will the hour come for me to go home, yes, home, to go home, I long to see my Savior in heaven." This song too he sang with broken voice, especially the third stanza, "If I have Thee, eternal Lord, I wish for nothing more." Then as long as he could speak, he repeated the words, "Wish for nothing more" and looked at those around him with inner joy. Then he quietly fell asleep without any movement. Daniel 12:2.

The funeral took place with the participation of many on the second Christmas Day. Pastor Brenner of Oshkosh, upon the request of the deceased, preached the funeral sermon on the basis of Luke 2: 10, 11, and Pastor Liefeld, his successor in Ripon, spoke words of remembrance and comfort. The deceased leaves a widow and a three year old daughter. In addition, he leaves his parents, who lived with him, an aunt who also lived with him, and his younger brother, who since August served as his preaching assistant. But we, dear reader, want to pray God to grant us also a blessed end.

The obituary of Pastor Philipp Hoelzel
from the *Gemeindeblatt* of 1904

On April 30 of this year Pastor Philipp Hoelzel, president of the Nebraska District of our synod, fell asleep in his Savior.

He was born in 1854 in Petersbach, Alsace. After he had been confirmed and received higher schooling, he came with his parents to America in 1872. Like his older brother, he also wanted to serve the Lord in the ministry and so attended the preacher seminary in St. Louis. He passed his examinations in 1876 and accepted a call to Grand Bend, Barton County, Kansas, where he was ordained on November 19.

After the death of his brother, who served our congregation in Fond du Lac, Wisconsin, this congregation called him in 1878 to be its pastor, and he accepted the call. Here he married Elise Wambsganz. He worked for 22 years in Fond du Lac with great blessing, but he also had to suffer many crosses and troubles, especially with sickness in his family. After 15 years of marriage he lost his first wife and two years later married Anna Rickemann, who is now his widow. His first marriage was blessed with two children, of whom a son died soon after birth, and a daughter who survives her parents but is handicapped. In his second marriage the deceased had five children, one son and four daughters, of whom the oldest died in early childhood.

Since his health was not good and he was looking for more rest, he accepted a call in 1899 to a congregation affiliated with us in Norfolk, Nebraska. Here he was able to celebrate his 25th anniversary with the joyful participation of his congregation. Here, too, he worked with great blessing along with the experience of various sorrows as well as many reasons for thanksgiving. His congregation, which stood in support of the afflicted family, will remember him with deep gratitude.

He wished that after his death his family would move to Watertown, and therefore he was also buried there. On May 5 a funeral service was held in Norfolk, in which his longtime friend, Pastor P. Brauer of Hadar, preached, and many pastors of the district were present. Then the casket was brought to Watertown, where in the afternoon of May 6 another service was held. Here Pres. von Rohr preached. Here too many pastors from his former conference in Fond du Lac and the surrounding area were present. Also representatives of his former congregation in Fond du Lac with their pastor were in attendance.

He was then laid to rest in the congregation's cemetery. May God grant him a joyful resurrection. For us, however, who for the third time in this year within a short time had to experience a pastor's funeral, it was doubly hard to lose a brother in the ministry who was not yet 50 years old. He has been delivered from all sorrow, cross and trouble, but in our midst a gap has again been torn. May God make us faithful and strong so that we faithfully fulfill our calling. May he also cause new messengers to arise who will carry his work forward according to his gracious will.

August F. Ernst

Two additional immigrants from Petersbach entered the ministry of our Wisconsin

Synod. They were George and Philipp Saxmann. The two Saxmann brothers were cousins of the two Hoelzel brothers. Because of the shortage of pastors George Saxmann after two years at the Milwaukee seminary accepted a call to Eldorado, Wisconsin, and Philipp Saxmann, after being graduated from the Normal Department of Northwestern College, accepted a call as teacher in Grace Congregation's Christian day school in Oshkosh, Wisconsin. Both became members of the synod in 1888.

W. R. G.

Petersbach is a village in Alsace, France, about 30 miles north of Strassburg. After the Franco-Prussian War of 1870 it became a part of Germany. After World War I it reverted to France.

The original article was published in German in *Kalendar*, a Yearbook published in Alsace, France.

Christine Saxmann, mentioned in the second paragraph above, was the sister of Philipp Saxmann. Philipp was the great grandfather of the translator of the above article, Wilbert R. Gawrisch.

Development of WELS into a Mission Church

Edgar H. Hoenecke

The very title of this brief essay must strike anyone who is not acquainted with the first one hundred years of our synod's history as strange indeed. Is there a church which calls itself Christian which is not by the same token a mission church? Is it not self-evident that a church which follows Jesus Christ, the **world Savior**, also initiates Jesus' zeal for saving the souls of lost sinners, even without His explicit exhortation, "follow Me and I will make you **fishers of men**?"¹ This activity in which we are to follow our Lord is clearly stated by Him, "For the Son of Man is come to seek and to save that which was lost."²

The Example of the Missouri Synod

This was the attitude of Dr. C. F. W. Walther, founder of the Missouri Synod, as is seen from a sermon in which he refers to the period following Rationalism in Germany:

The old Good Book, the Holy Bible, was sought out again and nearly everywhere, where believing preachers filled the pulpits, the churches that had grown empty, were filled again.

Now what was it, beloved, by which this change for the better made itself known? Among other things, especially by a newly awakened **zeal for mission to the heathen** ...

But, beloved, the mission societies that had arisen as a sign of the newly awakened Christian life, were also a sign that the whole church was not what it should have been. For where things are as they should be, there is no need for small mission societies to be organized **within** the church, **for the whole church** itself must be a great mission society ... The Christian Church itself is the proper mission society founded by God Himself.³

Here lies the secret of the phenomenal growth of the Missouri Synod. From the history of this synod we read:

From the hour of its birth in 1847 the Synod had a board charged with **Heidenmission**, which soon engaged in an active mission to the heathen, the Indians of the Michigan forest.⁴

Our Wisconsin Synod Beginnings

Our Wisconsin Synod's Constitution also provided for a dual objective, holding fast to and sharing the Gospel:

The object and purpose of the Synod shall be **to extend and conserve** the true doctrine and practice of the Evangelical Lutheran Church.⁵

It may be of little significance that the article places "extend" (missions) first and

"conserve the Truth" second. But it is significant that for many years it seemed as though we had forgotten that the sharing of the Gospel with all the world is the self-evident concomitant of the conservation of the Truth.

What is strange is that the clearly intended **mission thrust** of the Epistle Lesson, Revelation 14: 6-7, chosen by the church fathers for the Reformation festival, is often overlooked in the sermon books of our theologians. It is strange that Adolph Hoenecke, like R. C. H. Lenski, gives little thought to this explicit mission thrust.⁶

The text, [KJ] Rev. 14: 6-7: And I saw another angel fly in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting Gospel, to preach to them what dwell on the earth, and to every nation and kindred and tongue and people.

The Views of Historian J. P. Koehler

More than strange also is the fact that the eminent historian of the Wisconsin Synod, Prof. J. P. Koehler, writes what is clearly a defense of the indifferent attitude and practice of the Wisconsin Synod in its lack of active zeal for sharing the Gospel with the heathen. His remarks in connection with the opening of the Apache Indian Mission in 1893 are strange indeed:

There was something not entirely sound about the Synod's heathen mission endeavor, namely this, that it was said that a church is not living up to its mission unless it engages in heathen mission work according to the Lord's Great Commission: "Go ye into all the world and preach the Gospel to every creature." That idea is dogmatism with a streak of pietism, and it provoked the criticism of Professor Adolf Hoenecke. In distinction from the mission houses abroad, the tackling of the work in Arizona was unintelligent in that the prospective missionaries were not given adequate training at the college and seminary. - A further mistake was to train young men who were still unknown quantities in this inadequate way, and then put them on their own in strange surroundings, which were equally strange to their superiors. These mistakes, outside of being a part of the general slipshod management, also arose out of the lukewarm attitude of the Synod's leadership that dreaded the added cost to the budget. But the constituency showed enthusiasm for the mission undertaking, and so the "mission brethren" had to be given free rein.

As it was, the same "mission brethren" were the very ones who already did more than their share for the Synod's institutions! But their dogmatizing about the mission principle, to wit, that heathen mission is the best spur to the church's home endeavors, remained a pious slogan at best.⁷

To understand the full implication of this quotation we adduce another from the same source. It seems to be a common human frailty that when a certain failing is allowed to continue, extenuating arguments are adduced to justify it and, finally, even positions are set up to salve the conscience. Thus it seems to have been with the lack of simple obedience to the Great Commission. We quote from the same source:

In outward matters the church is subject to natural developments like the rest of the world under God. Not all groups or organizations have the same tasks. There

are organizations, like peoples, that remain small in number, and in that very fact have a token of their mission to intensive, rather than extensive, work by which the world may profit even more. The Wisconsin Synod had a college that was off to a good start along fundamental lines. To maintain and develop that was mission enough for a while.

The same applies to the preacher and teacher seminaries and the whole educational system. The numerical growth of the organization ought to have come from within to insure compactness of the body and the inward strength that grows from close identity and singleness of purpose, instead of having heterogeneous elements thrown together and scattered units annexed that always require support that ought to go to the institutions and, besides, did not receive the proper supervision.⁸

The Persistent Synod Debt

There was another real barrier during the years which constantly blocked the synod's way for both the support of the synod's schools and the entire work program plus any serious mission outreach. This was the great debt which had been incurred partly through building programs at the synod colleges and seminary, but also through the repeated large deficit in offerings to cover the running expenses of the synod. These amounted to an average of \$48,592 per biennium from 1923 to 1934.

The debt was at the all-time low of \$752,649.69 in 1932! This resulted in the action of the Board of Trustees in reducing the salaries of missionaries by 28% and that of the professors by 36%.

In his presidential report President August Bergemann stated very sadly that most of the graduates of the Seminary and of Dr. Martin Luther College had not been assigned during the past two years.

This continuing shortage of funds understandably had a most discouraging and enervating effect on the synod's membership which caused the Praesidium to assign the essay to be read at the 1933 convention by Prof. August Zich on the topic: "Defeatism in the Church."

Reaction to Defeatism in Michigan

Pastor Karl Krauss, president of the Michigan District, evaluates the situation and the negative attitude toward mission outreach in his essay "Our World Missions" in the following words:

One can understand that our fathers placed the emphasis on the strengthening of the stakes to the virtual exclusion of the lengthening of the cords. But all Scripture is written for our learning and guidance. The Isaiah 54:2 passage does not limit; it directs us to do **both** and not neglect neither one, as the Germans are wont to put it: *Das Eine tun und das Andere nicht lassen.*⁹

During the same years, 1930 to 1934, at the lowest ebb of the Depression, the essay on "Defeatism" by August Zich¹⁰ brought about a positive reaction in many of the members of the synod. The essay was sent to every pastor to be shared with his congregation, similarly as the earlier essay of Prof. August Pieper¹¹ had done, which was entitled "The True Reconstruction of the Church."

The Change in the Wisconsin Synod

Our Wisconsin Synod has changed! This was apparent to even a casual observer, Dr. Hermann Sasse of Australia. In one of his published letters he exclaimed, "*Die Wiskonsin=synode ist im Aufbluehen!*" (The Wisconsin Synod is about to break into bloom!)

The unusual action of the convention of 1977 serves as an eloquent proof of this change. In one resolution ten new world missionaries were authorized! Equally remarkable was the funding of these missionaries, involving a 25% increase in our foreign mission staff, although the funds were not already on hand. The synod by this action expressed full confidence in the constituency to meet the challenge with a comparable increase in offerings. Forty years ago this would have been unthinkable.

The change in the synod's thinking was also shown in the fact that for the first time the Wisconsin Synod led the Lutheran synods in average over-all contributions in 1977, unheard of forty years earlier:

Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod	\$37.80
Church of the Lutheran Confession	36.35
Evangelical Lutheran Synod	30.75
Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod	28.00
American Lutheran Church	26.67
Lutheran Church in America	22.77

The Positive Effect of August Pieper

The Pieper "Reconstruction of the Church" essay had been read at the 1919 convention of the synod, the year before I entered the seminary and had the benefit of his lectures on Isaiah and Pastoral Theology.

From my class note book (*Konzeptbuch*) on Pieper's lectures on Isaiah I gleaned these gems:

Vor allem erfordert das Studium der Theologie eine wahrhaft heilige Herzensgesinnung, die sich aeussert in dem lutherischen ORATIO, MEDITATIO, TENTATIO (Gebet, Studium, Beharrlichkeit) (testing and proving), weil sie nichts Hoeheres kennt, als dem Herrn in seinem Reich dienen zu wollen. Wuesste ich, dass ich Ihnen meinen Geist, wenn er der rechte ist, gegeben haette, dann schliefe ich sicher, denn dann wuesste ich das Reich des Herrn wohlgeborgen.

(Above all, the study of theology requires a truly dedicated attitude, which is expressed in Luther's three requirements: ORATIO, MEDITATIO, TENTATIO (Prayer, Intensive Study and Perseverance), because it knows nothing of higher importance than to serve the Lord in His Kingdom. If I knew that I had given you my spirit, if it is indeed the right one, then I would sleep securely, because then I would know that the Kingdom of the Lord was well secured.)

This was carried out in a most forceful way in the essay which Pres. Bergemann had assigned to Pieper for the 1919 convention, an essay which we had all been assigned to read. Pieper was well aware of the inroads of empty cant and formalism which

was making inroads into the church. He was also reacting to the stubborn resistance on the part of some of his fellow-pastors against the introduction of the English, instead of the German, in the churches.

He urged the pastors and churches to emphasize and intensify the Holy Scriptures as the true fountain of life and true reconstruction, to retain the true treasure of the Word during the transition to the English. In matchless German rhetoric and forceful prose he wrote:

Dies, dies, die tote Handwerkerei, Maschinenarbeit im Lehramt in Kirche, Schule and Klasse, das ist der sichere Tod des Evangeliums.

(This, this dead mechanical working, machine work, in the teaching office in the church, the school and the higher classroom, this is the sure death of the Gospel!)

We must finally begin to do mission work among our **English-speaking American people** to bring the Lutheran Gospel to our own nation; to say it in plain language, to make America Lutheran!

Our mission work until now, our Indian Mission, our *Reisepredigt* (home mission), even our educational institutions, has been but a miserable, pitiful bungling, a botchery lacking both fire and force. At every one of our conventions it is as though we were asking ourselves, do we, actually, want to, or do we not want to do this work? Half a heart, half a job, half a result! We worked as though we were dreaming. Mary has become a pokey daydreamer sitting at the Lord's feet. She has developed the habit of only listening, until her hearing has become dull, her heart languid and her feet and hands leaden and lazy.

Wake up, wake up, Mary! Rub the sleep out of your eyes, shake the lethargy out of your limbs; it is time to get to work!

Don't you see the vast throngs of English people thronging about your house, crowding and milling around your open door, the unnumbered multitude of those who would also like to hear something of that glorious thing which the Lord has showered upon your happy heart? Can't you see that these English-speaking people are famishing on their diet of the common-sense "Gospel" - the gospel of human reason and lodgery, which has been dished up to them by their liberal preachers?

Don't you see the millions of children who are waiting for you to take them also on your lap in the Christian day school to tell them also about this wonderful thing which has entranced and enraptured you? Oh, don't you see the shining eyes of the thousands of dark-haired lads and the yearning glances of blond-haired maidens who, fascinated by your own beaming faces, are just as eager as you to learn well the Good News of God's grace, also to place themselves into the Lord's service in church and school, to shout it aloud to the crowd that is surrounding your house?

It is high time! The sun is still shining and the daylight is still with us. But it is toward evening and the day is far spent already! ¹²

The effect of this great essay on the delegates was profound. A resolution was passed to publish it in both German and English for free distribution to all churches.

The congregations were also encouraged to invite August Pieper to larger group assemblies to read it in person.

Gradually more and more work was done in the synod's congregations in the English language and they began more conscientiously to reach the unchurched. At the synod's 75th anniversary, 1925, the annual report listed 70% of the congregations offering also English morning services.

The Period of Mission Awakening

In deciding on the scope of the material and the years to be covered by this brief resume of our Wisconsin Synod's awakening to her mission destiny it was necessary to limit myself to the period which most dramatically marked this change. The decision to concentrate on the past fifty years was arrived at arbitrarily.

It is clear that even before 1930 there were great forces astir in our synod which on the one hand were wholly dissatisfied with the lack of mission activity by the synod and, on the other hand, were well aware of God's mandate to those who truly followed and obeyed the Lord, "teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you" but also "going out into all the world teaching every creature."

We have shown above to what great extent the teaching of men like August Pieper affected his students and his contemporaries through his public essays. This began to be especially evident among Pieper's former students, pastors in the Southern Michigan Conference [of the WELS].

The Birth of the "Michigan Plan"

At conferences and in informal discussions the topic was usually the sad financial plight of the synod during the years of the Great Depression. Having been fired up with a mission zeal by men like Pres. Bergemann and Prof. Pieper, the younger pastors were impatient with the constant restraint which had to be put on any increased mission outreach and determined to get the pastors and congregations of the conference into a more responsible condition in their mission offerings.

With little fanfare an illustrated bulletin was sent to the pastors, graphically showing the various efforts and the results in terms of a congregation's mission contributions. Although this was rather plain talk, the cartoons were taken in good nature by most of the pastors. At the same time the district president encouraged the practice in the Southeastern Conference which required each pastor to report openly on his synodical offerings and to accept the suggestions of the brethren for improvement. It was this personal encouragement of one another which brought about the best results. The personal admonition on the floor was followed in some cases by the "elder statesmen" taking an admonitory walk with some brother pastors to help them face the realities of their delinquency.

The Michigan Plan Introduced in the Synod

When the new Synod President, Pastor John Brenner, was informed by Michigan District's Pres. John Gauss of the efforts in the Southeastern Conference, he referred to it at his first convention, in 1933, and in December of the same year he requested the pastor who prepared the Michigan bulletins to make them available throughout the synod. He referred to the program as "The Michigan Plan." Under this title the work

was expanded and by 1935 it had helped to increase the general synod contributions from all districts by 14%.

The 1935-45 Debt Reduction Program

The general mood at this second "Brenner" convention was noticeably receptive to the serious change. The delegates were restive about the repeated failure of programs which involved greater allowances for institutions and missions from being adopted. The last word in any floor debate on these projects was the flat declaration of Pastor Paul Pieper or Pastor Leonard Koeninger of the Board of Trustees - "We cannot afford to expand; the payment of the interest on our \$650,000 debt must be made to preserve our credit." It was on the last day of the convention. Again the embarrassment of having a large number of graduates of our preacher and teacher seminaries not receiving a Call and the "wasted" interest item of \$32,000 again taking priority position in the budget cast a spell of frustration on the convention. The whole atmosphere seemed charged with gloom, as we prepared for the closing service.

Sitting in the front row, the bulletin secretary could bear it no longer. On an impulse he asked for the floor. He tried to describe the downcast mood of the delegates because no forward-looking programs could be adopted. He also spoke of the Lord's words of expectation that we should be His witnesses of the **Good News** together with the unlimited word of promise given by our almighty Savior. Then on the basis of all of this he blurted out the words, "I would like to make the motion that we retire the synod debt!"

President Brenner smiled and said, "Young man, I like your spirit; but it is much too late for us to consider the debt matter at this session. We're ready to adjourn."

The Synod Resolves to Retire the Debt

The motion would have died there, had it not been for Mr. Frank Retzlaff, a respected member of the synod, owner of the Retzlaff Hardware at New Ulm, MN. He was about to leave the hall for lunch, hat in hand at the door, when Pastor Brenner said it was too late to consider the motion to retire the debt. He asked for the floor and said, "I like what that young man has proposed and I would like to second the motion." Despite the lateness of the hour, Pres. Brenner had to present the motion to the floor. It was the first positive, forward-looking action before the meeting which went right to the heart of the problem. After only a brief discussion the motion was adopted overwhelmingly.

The Debt is Wiped Out in Ten Years

Ten years, but under the very able leadership of the Debt Committee, headed by Prof. E. E. Kowalke,¹³ and supplied with information and encouragement by the "Michigan Plan" committee, the Board of Trustees reported in the spring of 1945 that the whole debt had been paid and \$350,000 was on hand as a reserve fund after all salary cuts had been fully restored.

With this good news from Milwaukee and the wonderful dispatches from both World War II battle fronts of hope for a victorious end of the horrible global conflict all of the departmental boards and commissions of the synod prepared their biennial reports to the convention to be held in early August at New Ulm, as ten years earlier.

The 1945 Report of the Indian Mission Executive

When the Indian Mission executive, early 1945, met at the Saline [Michigan] Bank with bank president, Mr. Albert Burkhardt, and Pastor Alfred Maas, the other members of the committee, they heartily endorsed the report submitted by the chairman of the committee. This included the reference to the text of Isaiah 49: 6 and the committee's earnest suggestion as the only mission agency engaged in truly **heathen** mission, that the synod seriously "take thought and action in the matter of mission work among those who have no opportunity to hear the sound of the saving Gospel." No suggested motion was ever presented by the Indian executive committee.

This report, as it is printed in the 1945 Proceedings of the Synod, was read at Milwaukee to the General Mission Board and again to the General Synodical Committee, where all reports were customarily placed under the final check and scrutiny of about 100 department leaders in May. With only minor comments and no changes the Indian report was authorized to be printed in the report to the convention.

The Indian Mission Report Urges Mission Outreach

This 1945 convention at New Ulm has been properly called "The Happy Convention" for several good reasons. It marked the end of the years of financial stringency which had so long interfered with and precluded every plan for outreach at home and abroad in the Lord's work. Now the delegates had the final report of the trustees in hand and were overjoyed that the debt was paid, salary cuts restored and a \$350,000 surplus on hand in the synod treasury.

But their hearts were also full of gratitude to the Lord for His answer to their prayers for an end to the World War. There was a sure outlook for peace and the return home of thousands of fathers and sons from the bloody foreign battlefields, home where they would not, like hundreds of thousands of their companions in arms, become mere members on rows upon rows of white crosses.

There was no way to check the surge of gratitude and readiness to show it to the Lord in positive, long-delayed action. The intense interest was almost palpable during the reading of the Indian Mission report with its suggestion of an increased missionary activity. The chairman's curt, "You're out of order!" after this reading shocked not only the young committee chairman, but it also aroused the convention to a very lively discussion. Pastor Karl Krauss, convention secretary, reports on this in his essay:

A lively debate ensued in which the administration leaders expressed their opposition, insisting that we must have a direct assignment from the Lord, a "Macedonian Call", to undertake new world missions. Having seen the deterioration of doctrine in the mission fields of other bodies, they were apprehensive of such expansion without a clear directive from the Lord. Others, among whom were especially representatives of the Michigan District, took a countering stance and moved the convention to resolve: that the president appoint a committee to gather information regarding foreign fields that might offer opportunity for mission work by our synod. When ready, this committee shall report the results of its study first to the General Mission Board and then to the synod.

What Happened After the 1945 Convention

Pastor Arthur Wacker, member of the General Mission Board, reports in great detail what happened to the matter during the two years following. His report was made to the Pastoral Conference of the Michigan District in January of 1951, in response to the request for more detailed information because Pastor Wacker had stated that he could not continue the fight and had resigned.

His report had the title "The Procrastination of the Wisconsin Ev. Lutheran Synod in pursuing the course set by the synod in convention in August 1945."

At the convention of 1947, after strong opposition from the synod leaders, a resolution was passed by the delegates "to authorize expansion of our work in foreign heathen fields and that the Mission Board be instructed to continue its investigation and explore the most promising heathen fields and report to the General Committee for further instructions." The Mission Board decided to explore Africa for a field, but met with great difficulty in finding someone to make the exploration. Finally, after eighteen months, two pastors were persuaded with a leave of absence from their congregations to undertake the difficult assignment from April to September of 1949.

The 1945 Resolution Is Carried Out

The full story of this five-month 7,500 mile mission safari through sub-equatorial Africa will be told in a later sequel of this report with excerpts from the sound tapes made en route to produce a more vivid report to the Arizona-California District convention next June, 1979. [Note: This preceded the WELS Historical Journal Quarterly booklet, written by one of the explorers, "The WELS 49s", by six years.]

Here today it will suffice to summarize this mission exploratory adventure in the words of Pastor Karl Krauss,

It was four months of hard work (driving a truck!) in unknown areas and amid dangers. But it certainly proved worthwhile, because it gave the synod concrete and visual evidence of the advisability of starting our mission work in Northern Rhodesia (now Zambia).¹⁵

Although a most promising virgin area, that of the Hook of the Kafue River, west of Lusaka, had been staked out for our synod by Sir John Moffatt, Commissioner for Native Development, the indecision and resistance in the synod lost this field to us. Another mission agency entered the field.

It was the 1951 convention which authorized two new fields, one in Africa and the other in Japan. But it was not until June of 1953, after nine Calls, that the first two mission couples, Pastor and Mrs. A. B. Habben and a mission-minded member, Mr. and Mrs. Paul Ziegler, arrived in Africa. The work was begun in a location, a suburb, of Lusaka, and in the next year was extended to the Sala reserve, forty miles from Lusaka. The same tribal chief, Shakumbila, who had seen the Dodge Power Wagon of the 1949 explorers at Lusaka, was still in office in Saialand.

Subsequent Mission Developments

The Lord richly blessed the work in Central Africa. This essay is presented in the twenty-fifth year after our first missionaries arrived in Lusaka. It is gratifying for your

essayist in this year of his retirement from office to know that the Lutheran Church of Central Africa is in very good hands.

The Lord of the Church has granted us a staff of very competent, faithful missionaries. Under the leadership of my successor, Pastor Theodore Sauer, the national church is flourishing. At present the church has only one expatriate missionary, Pastor Raymond Cox, in the administration as chairman of the 6,000 member church with over 100 local churches and preaching places, while five national pastors and 28 evangelists and vicars, trained in their own Bible Institute and Seminary, are in charge of the churches.

A most unusual development has taken place since the early 1950's when a veteran stateside pastor, Ernst H. Wendland, accepted the Call to develop a native theological training program in Bible School and Seminary in 1964. Two years ago he accepted a Call to the faculty of our seminary at Mequon, leaving the post at Lusaka in the hands of a man who carried through the program established.

Gradually a ten-year theological course has produced the native pastors and evangelists of the African church, even leading to the Calling of one of the graduates, Pastor Salimo Hachibamba, as director of the seminary.

Other Foreign Heathen Missions

The mission in Japan, also begun in 1953, has had to cope with tremendous problems. After four years of work, our first missionary left our synod for confessional reasons and a new start had to be made.

Another missionary, Pastor Richard Seeger, had to begin from scratch near Tokyo and was soon joined by a veteran Japanese missionary, Pastor Richard Poetter, who had left his former synod at the time of the dissolution of the Synodical Conference. The theological training program was begun in 1965 with Pastor Harold Johne in charge. This has produced four native Japanese pastors. One language coordinator, Mr. Igarashi, joined Pastor Poetter to produce and refine printed material in Japanese. The work has now expanded over three prefectures, or states, fanning out from Tokyo north.

Latin-American Missions

Our Spanish language mission was begun when Pastor V. H. Winter was called in 1948 to open work along the Mexican border at Tucson. In 1963 an exploration of the island by Pastor H. C. Nitz led to the opening of work in Puerto Rico. El Paso was begun in 1966. A call for help from Dr. Orea Luna, a Mexican church leader, opened that country to us in 1968. Until then we were unable to enter with American men and the churches which we built at various places had to be assigned to the Mexican government. Through a generous gift of \$144,000 our synod was able in 1973 to send several teams of missionaries to Colombia. Theological seminaries were opened in El Paso and Medellin, Colombia for the training of nationals to take over the work.

The Missions in Southeast Asia

As in Mexico, the thrust into Southeast Asia was begun by an appeal from a young Chinese graduate for a Lutheran seminary at Hong Kong, Peter Chang. He came to us for confessional reasons with several small groups and a few rooftop Sunday Schools. To keep this little church indigenous our board sent several Friendly Counselors, like Prof Conrad Frey who opened a theological seminary course in rented quarters and su-

pervised the work of several preaching stations. He was followed by Pastor Marlyn Schroeder and Pastor Richard Seeger. After a few years' interruption, the theological training was resumed by Pastor Gary Kirschke who acquired facility in Chinese and laid the foundation of the present Chinese Lutheran Church which is sponsored, and partially supported by our synod.

Guidance and Support Programs

The guiding policy of the world board from the beginning has been to open fields with a view to founding national churches no longer dependent on us.

When this could be achieved more quickly by lending help and guidance temporarily, the world board has been ready to do so. This has been possible in several world areas. When the world board instructed me on the occasion of my European assignment to represent it and the Commission on Doctrinal Matters in 1966, one of these opportunities came to our attention. I had been asked to visit Denmark, Sweden and Norway. Arriving in Stockholm to pay a call on Dr. Tom Hardt, a conservative Lutheran, he encouraged me to run up to Uppsala to encourage Dr. David Hedegard, a Lutheran theologian who had just completed a new Bible translation.

Dr. Hedegard was doubtful about trying to found an independent Swedish orthodox church because of Swedish law, but he and several other orthodox theologians had founded an orthodox Bible society with headquarters near the university which they called *Biblicum* (for Bible research).

The director of *Biblicum*, Dr. Seth Erlandsson, wrote to Dr. Siegbert Becker of our Mequon Seminary faculty after he had read some of Dr. Becker's articles and in 1974 Becker learned Swedish and delivered lectures to that Bible research society at Uppsala.

This led to the founding of the Lutheran Confessional Church of Sweden, several exchange visits between the two faculties and the world board's creation of the Sweden Conference and Aid Fund under the direction of a committee, headed by WELS Pres. O. J. Naumann, with Seminary President Carl Lawrenz, Dr. Siegbert Becker as advisor, and your essayist as members.

Although an informal Sweden aid fund was administered by this committee and regular visits were made to assist the young church which soon spread to Norway and Finland, the Swedish church carried on independently. To make this possible the pastors of the church carried on a part-time ministry, supporting themselves by taking secular jobs.

The Lutheran Church of Cameroon

Another infant Lutheran church came to the attention of Pres. Naumann in Cameroon on the west coast of Africa, adjacent to Nigeria. In fact, two of the assistant pastors in the Cameroon church had received theological training in the Lutheran seminary in Nigeria. An exploratory visit to the church, after it had elected Pastor Bruno Njume as its president, was made by Missionaries Theodore Sauer, Ernest W. Wendland and the world board executive secretary. The actual support and guidance program began in 1975. This consisted of periodic visits of various missionaries from our Central Africa Lutheran Church. On these visits the church and its pastors were given the benefit of training in theology and church administration.

This will be intensified as soon as the Cameroon Lutheran Church is formally reg-

istered by the federal government and some expatriate counselors can be called to give more than periodic guidance. The Cameroon church will not be placed on the regular mission budget, but will be partially supported by extra budgetary contributions.

Help for the Lutheran Church in Brazil

A wealthy layman at Porte Alegre, Senor Luis Rauter, formerly a Lutheran school teacher, heard about the stand taken by our synod in the Synodical Conference, resigned from the Missouri Synod and appealed to our president for a missionary for the little church he had founded and, ultimately, for membership in our synod. Several meetings were held in the United States with Senor Rauter by Pres. Naumann, the Doctrinal Commission and the World Board and the board was encouraged to continue contact with the Brazil church. A confessionally sound professor, Dr. Abrelino Borges, was temporarily serving as pastor, awaiting a theological graduate from our synod. No financial support is involved.

The Work Goes On

Thus our missionary outreach goes on and expands into "all the world" as our Savior had ordered and promised it would - "The Kingdom of Heaven is like a grain of mustard seed which a man took and sowed in a field; which indeed is the least of all the seeds, but when it is grown, it is the greatest among herbs and becomes a tree, so that the birds of the air come and lodge in the branches thereof."¹⁶

Our Wisconsin Synod has now served its apprenticeship in world and heathen missions. Our firm confidence is that as a new experienced mission leader, Pastor Theodore Sauer, takes over my position as executive secretary, an era of still more sound growth will follow in keeping with the Lord's promise:

For thou shalt break forth on the right hand and on the left; and thy seed shall inherit the Gentiles and make the desolate cities to be inhabited.¹⁷

Endnotes

1. Matthew 4:19
2. Luke 19:10
3. C. F. W. Brosamen, pp. 283-284
4. Moving Frontiers p. 294
5. Article IV
6. Ad. Hoenecke: *Predigtentwuerfe* of the old line pericopes, free text for Reformation, and *Predigten ueber die 2. Wuerttembergische Perikopenreihe*; and Lenski - The Epistle Selections of the ancient Church, and four sermon outlines on Rev. 14:6-7, and not one with the mission thrust.
7. Koehler, John Philipp. *The History of the Wisconsin Synod* (Sauk Rapids, MN: Sentinel Printing Co. p. 198
8. *ibid.* p. 196
9. (Do the one, but do not forget the other] Wisconsin Lutheran Quarterly, October 1975, p. 275
10. A professor at Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary.
11. Also a professor at the same seminary

12. WELS Proceedings, 1919, pp. 58-59
13. President of Northwestern College, Watertown, WI
14. WELS Proceedings, 1947, p. 51
15. *Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary Quarterly*, October 1975, P. 282
16. Matthew 13: 31-32
17. Isaiah 54:3

History of Suspensions in the West Wisconsin District [1928]

Presented to the Minnesota District Pastoral Conference
at Zumbrota, Minnesota, June 25-29, 1928

Immanuel Frey
with foreword and endnotes by Peter M. Prange

Forward

The following paper was presented by Pastor Immanuel P. Frey at the Minnesota District's pastoral conference held at Zumbrota between June 25-29, 1928. It is no doubt the earliest history of the Protéstant Controversy ever written by a Wisconsin Synod pastor.

The Protéstant Controversy raged in the Wisconsin Synod, particularly in the Western Wisconsin District, between 1924-1936. A group of pastors, teachers and laypeople were unhappy about the way in which Synod and District officials were involving themselves more and more in matters of church discipline. Two cases in particular stirred up this dissension: the so-called Watertown and Fort Atkinson Cases. When protests were made concerning the actions of officials in these cases, the protesters (later known as Protéstants) were mostly - and sometimes unkindly - rebuffed, leading to a further heightening of tensions.

Finally in September 1926, William Beitz, a pastor at Rice Lake, Wisconsin, and a leading Protéstant, presented a paper to his Chippewa-Wisconsin Valley Conference entitled: "God's Message to Us in Galatians: The Just Shall Live by Faith." This paper quickly became a matter of considerable debate. Many charged Beitz with judging hearts, while the Protéstants stood by Beitz's presentation, discounting the charges made by others against his "Message" as proof of their hardened hearts. Soon Beitz's paper was practically raised to the level of a confessional statement to which you must either subscribe your allegiance or publicly denounce as being heretical. Those who subscribed allegiance were summarily suspended by the Western Wisconsin District. At the time of Frey's presentation in June 1928, nineteen pastors and teachers had already been suspended, most on account of their public subscription to Beitz's paper. More would soon follow, a sad conclusion to an even sadder controversy.

If anyone was qualified to write a first history of these sad events, however, it was Pastor Immanuel Frey. He had previously served in Phoenix, Arizona, where he had opportunity to get acquainted with and befriend many pastors who would later be involved in the Protéstant Controversy. Among his closest Arizona associates was Pastor William Beitz, who served at Grace Church in Tucson from 1917-1924 before accepting a call to Rice Lake. Frey even makes subtle reference to his amiable relationship with Protéstants when he points out how he "begged to be excused [from the assignment of writing this paper] because he felt that the members of the Conference might feel that they had good reason for believing that he was not altogether unprejudiced in the case and might present the matter from the peculiar angles of his personal views." But Frey proved that he was the man for the job.

In preparing this paper, Frey had extensive correspondence with Beitz to get his take on the events surrounding the controversy. Beitz finally responded to Frey's first request for information on May 18, 1928, writing:

All these days the specter has haunted me, namely, a letter to you. Should I try to give you a detailed account of my case it would become of such proportions that I feel like John: "all the books of the world would not be able to contain it." Yet I feel that without details you will be little profited. So where begin and where end? Then add to that my weakness of long-windedness and you will have a little idea of the specter that has haunted my dreams these days concerning this letter.

Beitz went on to explain:

You have certainly undertaken some task. It is simply an impossibility to do the work assigned to you. You simply can't delve into the details of all these affairs and without doing that your Minnesota brethren may have done their "*verdammte Pflicht und Schuldigkeit*" [confounded obligation and duty] in this affair, and be able to salve their conscience as it were, but it will only be the devil's dupe again. As I see it you have such a stupendous task before you, not only you as the leader, but all the Minnesota brethren, that my "*Verstand*" [comprehensive understanding] stands still to even think of it. You people don't suppose that you will be able to properly digest in a synod session, or perhaps even a day of it, or a half day and pass judgment upon a matter that has its incipency with Adam and Eve and its immediate history, as far as the cases are concerned, would take days to look into—just a few cases—with a view to proper understanding.

Eventually Beitz and Frey would engage in a month's worth of correspondence with Beitz answering the questions that Frey would pose. This paper is the fruit of Frey's research.

To put this paper and Immanuel Frey into some historical context, it is interesting to note that the Minnesota District was one of the earliest bodies to question the suspensions of the Protéstants by the Western Wisconsin District.¹ It is also interesting to note that when a Peace Committee was formed by the 1929 Synod Convention in an attempt to sort out the Protéstant Controversy, Immanuel Frey was appointed as a member. Thirty years later he served on another synodical committee which again investigated the Protéstant Controversy and encouraged the Western Wisconsin District to reconsider the suspensions it had handed down in the 1920s. The suspensions were finally lifted by the Western Wisconsin District in 1962, but sadly it had little effect on reestablishing church fellowship with those of the Protéstant Conference. The Protéstant Conference of the Wisconsin Synod exists to this day.

Also of great interest is Frey's discussion of a fundamental issue which helped trigger the controversy, namely, synodical suspension and its similarity and/or distinction from excommunication. This extremely important discussion had been going on for almost thirty years, dating back to the famous Cincinnati Case of 1899-1911.² As a result of that case, the Wauwatosa faculty, and Professor August Pieper in particular, wrote a series of *Quartalschrift* articles beginning in 1911 concerning synodical suspension and excommunication. Pieper concluded that synodical suspension and excommunication were one and the same thing.³ Frey himself states that this "is also my personal view,"

all the time realizing that there was still in 1928 a great variety of opinions within the Synod concerning this issue.⁴

While Pieper's Wauwatosa colleague, Professor Joh. Ph. Koehler, agreed with Pieper that synodical suspension and excommunication were one and the same thing, he was greatly disturbed with the seemingly high-handed way in which suspensions were often leveled by synodical and district officials who hadn't taken the time to patiently hear all the issues. Along with the Protéstants, he saw this as an especially prevalent problem in the Western Wisconsin District suspensions. Koehler himself would eventually be suspended in 1933 for having fellowship with the Protéstant Conference. In Koehler's opinion, these suspensions gave the appearance of "cleaning house" for the purpose of maintaining an artificial, worldly peace rather than the intended purpose of church discipline, namely, the winning back of a Christian brother for all eternity. He would later explain in his *History of the Wisconsin Synod*: "Excommunication, finally, rightly understood is not an enforcement of damnation, but should serve the sinner's ultimate salvation by bringing him around."⁵ The suggestion on Koehler's part was that the evangelical intention of synodical suspension—not to mention congregational excommunication—was often forgotten, as could be evidenced from the way that these suspensions were often handed down.

Which finally leads to the question that Frey subtly poses in the second part of this paper: Were the suspensions handed down by the Western Wisconsin District justified or not? According to the opinion of the Wauwatosa faculty and Frey himself, suspension is equivalent to excommunication. By suspending a person or party, you were publicly declaring them outside the Kingdom of God, the Christian Church. Frey clearly states: "It is evident at least in the practical cases under discussion excommunication is involved when such statements are made in the suspension announcement as that the ties of brotherhood have been severed." But again, Frey brought his conference to this important question: Are we really ready to say that these Protéstants, who had formerly been our brothers, are no longer Christians? That question has never been unequivocally answered by the Wisconsin Synod, not even by the Western Wisconsin District in 1962 with the lifting of the suspensions. And it probably never will be.

Introduction

At the general pastoral conference of our district, held at Wood Lake about two months ago, there was placed upon the calendar for discussion, at the request of one of the brethren, the topic designated by him as "The Wauwatosa Gospel." No explanation was given what was meant thereby or why it should be discussed, but it was evident, I think, to most if not all of those present, that by "Wauwatosa Gospel" was to be understood a booklet which had just been published by the Protéstant Conference Press under that title, this booklet containing the conference paper by Pastor Beitz: "God's Message to Us in Galatians: The Just Shall Live by Faith," the *Gutachten* of our Theological Faculty on the same, and a review of the *Gutachten* by Pastor Paul Hensel of Manitowoc, a member of the North Wisconsin District.

This topic on the calendar was not reached at Wood Lake until, I believe, less than an hour before final adjournment. Voices were, therefore, at once raised against discussion of the topic at that time since the subject was too big and controversial to be handled in the few minutes that remained. Motion was then made that the matter be taken up at a special session of the Conference during the Synodical Meeting in Zumbrota. It

was so decided. It was further decided that someone be appointed to present a paper on the subject. The motion that the appointment be made by the chair having been amended, in order to relieve the chair of the responsibility, the work committee was directed to make a nomination and its nomination was accepted by the Conference, though the nominee begged to be excused because he felt that the members of the Conference might feel that they had good reason for believing that he was not altogether unprejudiced in the case and might present the matter from the peculiar angles of his personal views.

Since my objections to the appointment were not regarded I accepted the assignment with great reluctance and resolved to carry it out with the prayer to God that He would give me wisdom and understanding, realizing that my handling of it could either do much harm and add to the havoc and disturbance in the Church of God, or possibly do some good and help to repair the damage which has been done. For that reason I proceeded very slowly and carefully, keeping an open mind, before finally deciding what shape and form my assignment should take. I believe I have not received one letter in regard to this matter, and there has been considerable correspondence, in which the writer did not at the outset make some such remark as: You have a difficult and delicate task. There was the feeling that there was the need of careful and prayerful meditation on my part if untold harm was not to be done.

The situation was made more complex by the fact that the nature and scope of my paper was not clearly defined, by the fact that Conference did not tell me what I should do and not do. Since this assignment was made in the closing rush there was no time to get precise instructions. All I knew was that the general topic "Wauwatosa Gospel" was to be taken up and that I was to lead in the discussion of it. I endeavored to get clear to some extent as to what was expected of me by getting in touch by letter with a number of representative brethren who, so far as I could judge, represented different shades of opinion. Some did not reply at all. Others did, for which I am deeply grateful, but the replies I received clearly showed that there was a great variety of opinion concerning the scope and nature of my assignment. One said that I must do so and so, while another wrote that I dare not under any circumstances do that. One wrote that my business was to show whether the suspensions in the West Wisconsin District were justified, while another wrote that we have absolutely no business to sit in judgment of the suspensions. One wrote that I must get all the material from the West Wis. officials and district, another that I must present the side of the Protéstants or suspended persons as published in their various statements and publications, a third that I had no right to approach either side for material in so far as my assignment comes into consideration. These are just a few samples of difference in views concerning my work as they developed in the course of my efforts to get clear on my assignment. From the foregoing it appears that the members of Conference are not agreed in their opinion of what I was to do, at any rate that Conference failed to give me explicit instructions which would make my duties clear and which would have enabled me to proceed with my work without losing much time, which until three weeks ago was already crowded with school work, in arriving at the scope and nature of my paper.

In the preparation of my work I have been guided by the principle that I am merely the servant of the Conference, that as such I have no right to put forward my personal views and judgments, unless the Conference expressly instructs me to do so, but to present such matters as Conference as a whole desires to have presented, in order, if for no

other reason, to avoid the possibility and probability that all our time be taken up with endless discussion as to whether or not this or that should be taken up. There are some things which, I believe, all will agree are in order, to judge from what I have been able to learn. These could be heard before deciding what else shall or shall not be done. In regard to the other matters, the discussion of which may meet objection, I have tried to be prepared so far as my time permitted. I have tried to keep my work in an elastic form, especially to give whatever information may be desired. You will realize that the task is so stupendous, has so many angles and features, that it would require far more time than I had at my disposal, to know and digest all its details.

History of the Suspensions in West Wisconsin District

If we look into the history of the controversy which resulted in the suspension of more than a dozen pastors in the West Wisconsin District, it seems that, so far as it appears outwardly, it dates back to the conflict between the Watertown faculty and the Watertown board. It appears that the faculty felt constrained, as a matter of discipline and character-training, to expel a number of boys for theft. Some of the parents appealed to the board, whereupon the board, after an investigation, requested the faculty to reconsider their action and reinstate the boys. This the faculty refused to do, whereupon the board proceeded to reinstate those who had been expelled. As a protest against the action of the board, Prof. Karl Koehler and Prof. Herbert Parisius resigned. This was, I believe, the spring of 1924.⁷

This conflict between the faculty and the board aroused considerable feeling, and a meeting of a number of pastors and other interested persons was held in Watertown on June 12, 1924, to get information concerning this controversy. Prof. Ruediger of our Seminary in his published confession assumed responsibility for the calling of this meeting. The journal of this meeting in which the utterances of the various speakers were set down, known as the Watertown Transcript, together with the meeting itself, was strongly denounced by some as meddling slander and defamation of character. From the first the controversy revolved chiefly around the person of Prof. Karl Koehler who had made certain charges against certain members of the board and especially against the general President [Gustav Bergemann].⁸ A special committee [the *Dreierkomitee*] was appointed to hear these charges.⁹ So far as my knowledge goes this committee held a number of hearings which were continued during the sessions of the Joint Synod at Grace Church, Milwaukee, August 1925. This committee reported to the Synodical Committee that the charges against the general President had not been substantiated. The Synodical Committee, during that synod week, held a number of public meetings which continued into the early morning hours. At these meetings, which were attended by practically all the delegate and visiting pastors, everyone was free to express his opinion pro or con. Finally the matter was in a manner patched up when Prof. Karl Koehler at the request of his father talked privately with the general Praeses and withdrew his charges. Still quite a few expressed themselves as not being satisfied since other accusations had not been withdrawn, and the matter did not come to a definite settlement. A significant aspect of this case is the fact that nearly all of those who have since been suspended on other grounds were prominent in protesting the action of the Watertown board and in rallying to the defense of Prof. Karl Koehler, emphasizing in that case already what they term the highhanded action of officialdom. It must, however, be stated as a matter of historical fact that a number of those who were loud and

prominent in the Watertown case and Karl Koehler case have since withdrawn from the group of their former allies and their names are not found on the list of what may be termed the anti-official party. Some have been elevated to positions of honor and responsibility in the synod and in at least some cases became the leaders in the fight against the so-called Protéstants over subsequent issues.¹⁰

The next case, which is perhaps even more significant than the former case because it served to consolidate the so-called Protéstants, was the Fort Atkinson case. I am not familiar with the details of the case, but I believe that the principal features of the case were briefly these. Two lady teachers at Fort Atkinson got into conflict with the pastor and board of the congregation and were accused (I will not now say whether rightfully or wrongly) of slandering the pastor.¹¹ Some time thereafter the officials of the West Wis. Dis. published in the church papers [*Northwestern Lutheran*, May 16, 1926] the announcement that they would not for the present recommend their employment in any of our Christian schools. Against the publication of this announcement a number of members of that district protested. At the synodical meeting of that district in Beaver Dam, June 1926, the matter was referred to a committee. This committee upheld the action of the officials. Protest was made against this committee report. The Protéstants were requested to present their protest in written form. This was done, and the protest was signed by fifteen pastors and professors and two laymen. The district accepted the committee report and declared the protest invalid. It is significant that of the 13 pastors who signed the protest not a single one is now recognized as a member of the district, having been suspended or having withdrawn for one reason or another in recent months. Of the two professors who signed the protest, one is now a pastor in the Mo. Synod, while the other still holds his professorship though, according [to] the published report of [the] Feb. meeting of that district, his case was still pending.¹² The Beaver Dam district meeting in 1926 provided for the final settlement of the protest cases by authorizing and empowering all the Presidents of the various districts of the Joint Synod to deal with the protesting parties with a view to a final settlement (*abschliessend mit ihnen zu verhandeln*). In what way these Presidents responded to [the] resolution of Synod I am not fully informed. I understand that one meeting was held which was attended by very few of the Protéstants. At any rate it appears that this college of district Presidents did not oust the Protéstants.

Upon the Fort Atkinson case followed the Ruediger case. There was a strong and insistent demand from certain circles that Prof. Ruediger be relieved of his position as professor at our Theological Seminary, on account of his connection with the famous or notorious Watertown Transcript Meeting and his defense of the Fort Atkinson lady teachers, while the Protéstants were equally insistent that there was no just cause for his removal. To what extent he may have been dealt with by the Seminary board, officials of Synod and others has never been published, therefore I am unable to give information as to that. But it is a matter of public record, as [a] result of the circular sent to all the pastors of Synod, that [on] Sept. 18, 1926, Prof. Ruediger addressed a letter to the faculty and board of the Seminary in which he made a confession and asked for forgiveness and that on Jan. 31, 1927, although accepting his confession as sincere, the Seminary board felt constrained to relieve him of his duties as professor at the Seminary. This did not involve his suspension from the synod. He is, so far as I know, still a member of Synod and in charge temporarily of a congregation of the Michigan District.

Historically all these cases: the Watertown case, the Ft. Atkinson case, and the

Ruediger case, served to solidify and consolidate the ranks of these Protéstants. They were drawn together by the common cause, common interests and common opposition. But in the fall of 1926 (I am not sure of the exact dates in all cases and, therefore, those who are better posted may make the necessary corrections) a new controversy arose which served to emphasize the issue and to fan the controversy into brighter flame. This was the conference paper by Pastor Beitz on "God's Message to us in Galatians: The Just Shall Live by Faith." This paper was first read before the Chippewa [-Wisconsin] Valley Conference at Schofield and later at a mixed conference.¹³ This paper at once became a storm center. I am not able to trace this paper at this time through all the ways which it took¹⁴ but it appears that later there was also a conference at Marshfield, official or unofficial, which was also attended by several district presidents by whom and others the paper was strongly attacked.¹⁴ It appears also that the conference before which the paper was officially read never took final action in regard to this paper, neither officially accepting nor rejecting it. At any rate in the summer of 1927 [June 11], just a year ago, the faculty of our Theological Seminary published a *Gutachten* in which the Beitz paper was condemned as containing gruesome slander and judgment of hearts and certain false doctrines. For the sake of clarity we shall not now follow this paper thru its controversial courses to its present status. That involves a separate question. It is mentioned here merely as a matter of history in tracing the development of the so-called Protéstants or Third Party. In the general development these four factors: Watertown case, Ft. Atkinson case, Ruediger case, and Beitz conference paper played a leading role. We now proceed to the individual cases of suspension as they developed historically according to the official published documents. In tracing them I am, at this time, taking into consideration only the official pronouncements as published in the church papers or synodical reports.

The first two to be suspended were Pastor Walter Motzkus and Pastor Oswald Hensel. Pastor Motzkus had been called to the pastorate of the congregation at Globe, Wis., but Pastor H[erman] Brandt of Neillsville protested against his installation because he had not retracted his protest in the Ft. Atkinson case. The officials of the West Wis. District upheld the protest of Pastor Brandt and, to use their own words as found in the *Northwestern Lutheran*, June 12, 1927, "after thorough discussions with Pastor Motzkus felt conscience-bound not to sanction his installation." Pastor Motzkus was installed by Pastor O[swald] Hensel of Marshfield, whereupon the officials announced "That synodical relations between them and us are for the time being, suspended."

The following issue of the *Northwestern Lutheran*, that of June 26, contained the announcement of another suspension, that of Pastor Hans Koch, of Friesland, Wis. The officials announced that he had severed his connection by teaching and adhering to false doctrines as to Law and Gospel, that this false doctrine had been clearly expressed in a congregational meeting May 20, that in a subsequent congregational meeting June 6 he had admitted that he had made incorrect declarations in the first meeting and asked for forgiveness, but that he had soon thereafter retracted his confession before the trustees of the congregation and on June 16 before the officials, declaring that he still held the same position he had expressed at the first meeting.

The next announcement of suspensions appeared on the July 21 issue of the *Northwestern Lutheran*, those of Pastors W[illiam] F. Beitz and W[alter] Bodamer. Since nearly all the other suspensions and separations are closely connected with the Beitz case, it will be well to hear the official announcement in full. "At a conference meeting

held at Marshfield, Wis., April 20-21, this year [1927], Rev. W.F. Beitz was admonished because of his untenable erroneous doctrines, his enthusiasm and fanaticism, and judgment of hearts contained in his paper, 'The Just Shall Live by Faith.' Rev. Beitz, however, adhered to his opinions set forth in this paper and declared, 'I stand and fall with them.' When later the undersigned tried to confer with him on the basis of the *Gutachten* of our Theological Faculty, he laid down conditions that could not be met and declined to deal with them as officials. Another attempt to get together was frustrated by his non-appearance. The undersigned, therefore, declare herewith that with his judgment of hearts and public slander of his teachers and brethren, with his enthusiasm and false doctrine Rev. W. F. Beitz has separated from us. Here applies the Word of Scriptures, Titus 3, 10: 'A man that is an heretic after the first and second admonition reject.' Rev. W. Bodamer of Prairie du Chien, Wis., in an open congregational meeting, declared that he was in full accord with all contained in the paper of Rev. W.F. Beitz and steadfastly refused to deal with the officials of the District on the basis of the *Gutachten* of our Faculty. He has thus ceased to be our brother, Titus 3,10."

For several months there were no further announcements of suspensions. But there were other developments which must be touched upon here for the sake of keeping the history of the controversy clear. August 17, 1927, the Joint Synod was in session at Milwaukee. Protests had been sent in to Joint Synod against certain actions of the officials of the West Wis. District by the congregations of Marshfield and Prairie du Chien, and the Pastors Paul Hensel, Paul Kionka, and Henry Koch. The protests of the two last-named pastors had to do with the procedure of the officials in the Friesland case of Pastor Hans Koch and had nothing to do with the doctrinal aspects of the controversy. The other protests, I believe, also had to do with the actions of the officials. Just what the protests were is not clear, since neither the protests themselves were published in the synodical report nor a summary was given which would show what cases were involved. I believe, however, that only the Marshfield, Prairie du Chien, and Friesland cases were by means of those protests formally brought before the Joint Synod, not the suspensions of Pastors Motzkus, O. Hensel, or Beitz. We have men here among us whose official connection with the Joint Synod will enable them to give information as to this if desired.

A committee headed by President [Immanuel] Albrecht of our District was appointed to study these protests and to make recommendations to the Synod. This committee later reported that since these protests were directed against the officials of the West Wis. District the matter properly belonged before that District and that an investigation on the part of Joint Synod would be tantamount to improper meddling. The committee further recommended that the officials of that District and the appellants agree as soon as possible upon a committee to investigate the matter and try to bring about a settlement in a God-pleasing manner. This committee report was accepted by Synod and President Albrecht was appointed to see to it that such a committee was brought into existence. He took the matter in hand, adopting the plan that all concerned were to nominate candidates for this committee, from which group of candidates a committee was to be selected whose members would be satisfactory to all concerned. This committee never came into being because some of those concerned delayed to nominate candidates or perhaps even refused to do so.¹⁵ President Albrecht himself can give the details if desired.

The next development was the calling of a special meeting of the West Wis. Dis-

trict to be held at Watertown beginning Nov. 15 [1927]. The reason for it was stated by the officials in the words, "Since two months have already elapsed since the sessions of Joint Synod, and the prospect seems very remote that the 'Committee' recommended by above Synod, will materialize in the near future, the undersigned deem it expedient and necessary to call a special meeting of the West Wisconsin District." Purpose of said meeting was stated to be: 1. Discussing of the theme, "Suspension and our attitude toward suspended persons." 2. Definition of Synod's attitude toward the conference paper: "The Just Shall Live by Faith" and our Theological Faculty's *Gutachten* on the above-mentioned essay. 3. Definition of Synod's attitude over against the pronounced suspensions, and consideration of any and all appeals in this matter.

Another development, which antedates the special meeting of the West Wisconsin meeting and the published announcement that such a meeting was to be held, was the attitude which the Synodical Committee took toward the Beitz paper at its meeting, Oct. 17-20 [1927]. In his report of this Synodical Committee meeting published in the Nov. 27 issue of the *Northwestern Lutheran*, Secretary Haase writes: "In regard to the discussion on the paper written by Pastor Beitz concerning which an opinion of the Theological Faculty was requested by the officials of the West Wisconsin District your secretary was instructed to make this statement for the Board of Regents of the Theological Seminary: concerning the deliberations on the paper of Pastor Beitz, we hereby report that the entire committee including all members of the faculty of our Theological Seminary *without exception*¹⁶ declared that the aforementioned paper contains slanderous libels and false doctrines." The purpose of this report was evidently to stress the fact that all the members of the faculty and all the members of the Synodical Committee (which would include the representatives of our own District) were unanimous in condemning the Beitz paper.

The next thing to be considered is the meeting of the West Wisconsin District which is reported by Pastor R[ichard] Siegler in the Dec. 11 [1927] issue of *Northwestern Lutheran*. I am going to mention only the outstanding features of the meeting as they bear on the entire controversy. If all the details are desired, the entire report should be read, which I am ready to do if Conference desires it. At the request of the District the general President Bergemann occupied the chair during the sessions. A committee was appointed to do preliminary work. The officials reported to Synod on the suspended pastors and the Marshfield and Friesland cases. The Friesland case was taken up by Synod and hearing on same was continued before the committee in the evening. Pastor [Oswald] Hensel gave his report on the Marshfield case. The Synod voted to denounce the publication and distribution of the so-called Blue Books¹⁷ by Pastor O. Hensel and his church council and that those responsible should not be dwelt with unless the "slander" be withdrawn. The cases of Pastors [Walter] Bodamer and [Walter] Motzkus were not taken up because the two pastors had already left when these cases were reached, but it was resolved that they might hand their reports to the respective committee for examination. The Beitz case took up a great deal of time. Pastor Beitz was permitted to read his paper and by special request the Professors Pieper, Meyer and Henkel were present. Finally the District, according to Pastor Siegler's report, adopted the following resolution, "That we reject the condemning judgments and the false doctrine as set forth in the Beitz paper." (Note: Others say that the resolution also contained the following element: "*Dass wir uns zu den Ausfuehrungen der Professoren bekennen*" [That we subscribe ourselves to the explanation of the professors].) Those who voted against

the resolution were requested to give their reasons in writing to a committee to be appointed to deal with them. The District also adopted the following resolution, "That we consider those teachers, professors and pastors, who subscribe to the paper of Pastor Beitz and persist therein as such who have severed themselves from us." President Bergemann was instructed to appoint a committee to deal with those who were willing to be dealt with." Another meeting of the district was to be held to hear the committee reports in the last full week of February 1928. In the Dec. 25 [1927] issue of *Northwestern Lutheran* Pres. Bergemann announced the appointment of the following committee pursuant to the resolutions of W. Wis. District: Rev. H. Brandt, Neillsville; Rev. J[ohn]G. Glaeser, Tomah; Rev. C[harles] Siegler, Bangor; Mr. J. Gawrisch, LaCrosse; Mr. C. E. Schwarz, No. LaCrosse. The members of this committee are here mentioned because the Protéstants and others have taken strong exception to the personnel of this committee because of the active part which at least one [Pastor Brandt] is said to have taken in his opposition to the Protéstants.

The report of the adjourned or second special meeting of the West Wisconsin District is found in the March 25 [1928] issue of *Gemeindeblatt* and April 1 [1928] issue of *Northwestern Lutheran*, having been prepared by a special committee consisting of Pastors Chr[istian] Sauer, W[illiam] J. Nommensen, and F[rederic] E. Stern. The German and English reports were evidently originally written by two different men, for though the ground covered in each is about the same, one is not a translation of the other, as was evidently the case in Pastor Siegler's report of the first meeting. Three different committee reports were taken up. Synod accepted the report of the committee of Twelve "that the pastors: J[ohn] Abelmann, P[aul] Lutzke, R[obert] Ave-Lallemant, W.F. Beitz, W. Motzkus, O. Hensel, W. Bodamer, by subscribing to Beitz's paper, by persistently defying Synod's suspension in the Fort Atkinson case and by arrogantly refusing to be dealt with, have separated themselves from us and are no longer our brethren." "In regard to Immanuel's [sic] Congregation at Marshfield, Wis. Synod also resolved that this congregation had separated itself from us, because it held to Pastor Hensel and refused to deal with Synod." In regard to the Friesland case "Synod adopted the verdict of the committee, namely that Pastor H.W. Koch has separated from us, and that the protest of the pastors P[aul] J. Kionka and H[enry] Koch, Sr., are not justified."

Next comes the Committee of Five appointed by President Bergemann to deal with those who in November had voted against Synod's resolution: "To accept the exposition of the Professors and therewith reject the judgment of heart and false doctrine contained in the Beitz paper." It is reported that few responded to the invitation to appear before the committee. The committee submitted a document known as the Elroy declaration signed by most men in question and forwarded to the committee. The document follows: "To the Joint Synod of Wisconsin, especially to the West Wis. District, committee of twelve. Brethren: Answering your invitation received lately to discuss the existing differences in the week of Christmas, the following be imparted to you: We the undersigned in future refuse most vehemently to deal with any committee of the Joint or District Synod or appear before such committee in order to submit further information: 1. because our time will be claimed at home, which in many cases has been neglected because of the sad disturbances, and we in view of past occurrences must consider all further dealings useless and time wasted; 2. because the committee of Twelve had all necessary information in writing to judge the cases, or could have had it, if Synod had entered upon the recommendation submitted in the memorial; 3. because Synod in Water-

town as also in Beaver Dam committed unheard of impieties (*unerhoerte Gottlosigkeiten*), or at least tolerated them silently; 4. because we unreservedly subscribe to Beitz's paper and intend to adhere to it. Only then will we be ready to appear if the resolutions passed in Watertown and Beaver Dam which were rash and forced be rescinded, all cases taken up anew from the beginning, and Synod therewith shows an altogether different spirit which would give hope of a profitable discussion." Synod adopted the recommendation of Com. that all pastors and teachers who had signed this document be considered as having separated. That involved the following: Phil. C. Schroeder, E [rwin] Abelmann, Gerh[ardt] Gieschen, O[tto] Kehrberg, W[illiam] H. Parisius, M [artin] Zimmermann, and Teacher A.V. Gruber.

In regard to Pastor W[illiam] Hass and Teacher H[erman] Jaeger Synod decided that the congregation at Oconomowoc should again deal with these men in the presence of President Thurow, the faculty of our Theological Seminary and others whom the congregation may desire. In regard to Prof. E[lmer] E. Sauer Synod referred the matter to the Committee of Five and the Faculty of our Seminary with the instruction to report the result of the dealings to the Board of Northwestern College, which should act accordingly.

The Committee of Three consisting of Pastors F. Stern, R. Siegler, and G[erhard] Pieper seems to have received instruction in the November meeting to ascertain the views of Karl Koehler, a former pastor and professor of the district, though the published report of the November meeting says nothing of the appointment of such a committee. Upon the recommendation of this committee Synod resolved "to consider Karl Koehler as one who has separated from us, 1. because he subscribed to Beitz's paper; 2. because he continues to live in impenitence regarding the slander which he committed over against our general president and others; 3. because he refuses to the deal with Synod."

In answer to certain rumors concerning the administration of trust funds of Northwestern College, a report of the administration of the funds was submitted to Synod. Synod voted its confidence in the integrity of the custodian of the funds and requested [Northwestern College] Director [E.E.] Kowalke to publish the report in the church papers. This report is found in the same issue of *Northwestern Lutheran* as the report of the Feb. district meeting.

The April 1 [1928] issue of *Northwestern Lutheran* contained the following announcement of West Wis. officials: "Pastor A[dolph] Zuberbier, Hamburg, Wis., has severed relations with our Synod. Before severing relations, however, he flatly refused to discuss the following accusations with his Visitor, viz.: Spreading false doctrine in his congregations and perfidious agitations and slanders against our synod.

His declaration of severing relations, therefore, implies also the lifting of the ties of brotherhood. He can no longer be trusted with a pastorate in our midst." This announcement was signed in addition to the three West Wis. officials by Visitor W[illiam] Eggert.

In the April 29 [1928] issue the West Wis. officials published the announcement: "Ex-Professor H[erbert] Parisius of Woodland, Cal., has accepted the call of a congregation which has severed relations with our Synod because of Synod's attitude and action against the Beitz paper. Because the Ex-Professor has accepted this call without discussing the matter in question with the representatives of our Synod, he has, thereby, cut asunder the ties of Brotherhood."

The May 13 [1928] issue contains the following announcement of the same officials: "Inasmuch as all attempts to carry out the resolutions of Synod: That the officers of the District and the Theological Faculty deal further with Pastor Hass [St. Matthew, Oconomowoc] were frustrated through his continued opposition to the calling of a congregational meeting for this purpose, in utter disregard of the conscience of these members, who demanded such a meeting, the undersigned officers of the West Wisconsin District herewith publicly declare that brotherly relations between Pastor Hass and us are severed."

That concludes the list of suspensions published to date. Some of the brethren desired that I state in this paper the number of those suspended, the congregations lost to the synod, their plans for the future. Those whose suspensions were brought about by the West Wis. District, as related in the foregoing, number 19. So far as I know, the congregations of all those suspended stand by their pastors, with the exception of Pastor Hans Koch's case. He resigned before he was suspended. In regard to Pastor Hass's congregation I do not know definitely but have been told that he has resigned the ministry. Pastor Beitz's congregation at Rice Lake stood with him, but he has since accepted the call to start a mission in La Crosse, and the former Prof. Parisius became his successor at Rice Lake. Karl Koehler has not served as pastor or professor since he resigned at Watertown four years ago. We may say, therefore, that 19 pastors, professors, and one teacher have been compelled or have chosen to sever their connection with the West Wis. District, and in round numbers about the same number of congregations, depending on whether the suspended pastors served one or more congregations. The foregoing has been an attempt to present the matter objectively, to trace the development of the controversy in the West Wis. District as gleaned from the published announcements and reports of synodical officials. No attempt has been made in the foregoing to present the other side of the case, the objections and charges of those suspended and those protesting against their suspensions. That is a matter by itself, which involves the taking up of each individual case or grouping those cases which revolve around the same issues, as a great many do. In the foregoing the purpose was merely to show how the West Wis. District, according to its official, published records, explains the many suspensions occurring in its District.

The Meaning of Suspension and the Attitude Toward Suspended Persons

We have in the foregoing part of our paper heard that about a score of persons engaged in the Ministry of the Word in some form or other have been suspended in the West Wisconsin District in recent months. That is a very serious matter not only because it involves the loss to the synod of a great number of workers and congregations and the stirring up of much bitterness, but also because suspension itself is a very serious matter.

There has, indeed, been in our synod a sharp difference of opinion in regard to the meaning of synodical suspension. This flared up some fifteen or sixteen years ago as a result of the publication in the *Quartalschrift* of articles dealing with the question of synodical suspension.¹⁹ A goodly number of pastors took issue with the doctrine set forth by the theological faculty concerning synodical suspensions, the objections were taken up in subsequent issues of the *Quartalschrift*, and were discussed in a goodly number of

conferences with the professors. It appeared at the time that the controversy over this question would become serious and bring about a split in the synod, but this was averted at the time by the agreement of the faculty to drop the matter temporarily by not writing about the matter for a while. The issues themselves can be found in the 1911 *Quartalschrift* in an article entitled, "*Menschenherrschaft in der Kirche*," ["*Man's Authority in the Church*"] whose continuation was interrupted by the aforementioned opposition and led to the publication instead of the article, "*Suspension noch einmal*." The question was reopened to some extent by Prof Pieper's essay before the Nov. [1927] meeting of the West Wis. District on suspension, which essay was reprinted in an extended form in the January issue of the *Quartalschrift* this year [1928].

It can be stated with certainty that some pastors, if not a great number, disagree with the teaching on synodical suspension as set forth by the Faculty. The Faculty contended that synodical suspension is exclusion from the church, in other words, excommunication in the same measure as if it had been pronounced by a local congregation. The other side replied that the synod was only a human institution, not a divine body like the local congregation, and that, therefore, the synod could not excommunicate but merely oust from the man-made organization called synod. It would lie outside the scope of this paper to review this whole question. I am in the following proceeding from the premise that synodical suspension is in effect excommunication as the articles in the *Quartalschrift* set forth. That is also my personal view. It is evident at least in the practical cases under discussion excommunication is involved when such statements are made in the suspension announcement as that the ties of brotherhood have been severed.

We are told that these suspended persons are no longer our brothers. If they are no longer our brothers, then they are no longer our fellow-Christians, then they have denied the faith, they have forfeited the fruits of Christ's atonement, the doors of heaven are closed to them and, unless they repent, will become the prey of eternal hell and perdition, that is, if the suspension was done justly, in accordance with the Word of God. But whether rightly or wrongly carried out, it is a serious matter. It involves immortal souls for which the Son of God shed His blood. It is incredible, therefore, that any Christian should be able to view the whole matter with indifference, simply shrug his shoulder over the whole matter as though it were a trifle and never give it further thought.

It was no doubt due to a feeling of the seriousness of the matter that our Conference felt constrained to discuss the matter. There is no doubt that many souls among us have been deeply stirred and troubled. They are unable to shake the thing off with a simple shrug of the shoulder. They are at a loss just what to do in order to keep their consciences clear in the matter. They would like to know what attitude to take in the suspension matter. Some may look with contempt upon such troubled consciences. Perhaps the thing does not phase or bother them at all, and they don't see why it should bother anyone else. Such had better inquire whether there is any concern for souls and for the welfare of the Kingdom of God in their hearts.

I believe that we can serve one another by discussing the attitude which should be taken toward persons suspended by the synod. This question might have been worked out originally, but since a treatment of it from nearly every angle has been published and we are looking merely for a basis of discussion, our purpose will be served if I set forth here the various attitudes toward suspension recommended in the April 1911 issue of the *Quartalschrift* and as restated in the January 1928 issue. Possible additions and corrections can be made in the discussion of the various points.

By way of introduction we may remind ourselves that not all suspensions or excommunications are valid because they have been pronounced by a church or church body. Whether they are godly or ungodly, valid or invalid is determined by the fact whether or not they have been pronounced in accordance with the teachings of God's Word. True children and teachers of God may be and have been falsely put out of the church. Jesus himself forewarned his disciples, "They shall put you out of the synagogues, yea, the time cometh that whosoever killeth you will think that he doeth God's service." It is possible even that those who suspend and excommunicate may do it with the best of intentions and from the best motives, and still their action may be unjust and invalid in the sight of God. As the author of the articles referred to remarks: "Theoretically everything is at once clear: If the excommunication or suspensions have been rightfully pronounced, then the Lord has acted, and we deny the hand of fellowship to those suspended or excommunicated. In the contrary case we refuse to respect the suspension of excommunication because it is a horrible crime, and we proceed to have fellowship with the suspended more than ever. But practically my attitude toward the *de facto* suspended or excommunicated person depends on my personal conviction concerning the justice or injustice of the applied suspension or excommunication." He states that in practice several different cases are thinkable and arranges them under five heads.

The first is this: "I know from personal knowledge of the case and from the Word of God that the suspension is justified. The case is settled for me. I suspend the suspended person also myself. If he comes to me, I will have nothing to do with him and admonish him to repent."

The second case is this: "I read of the suspension in the church paper, I do not know the case or merely from hearsay, and in practice I do not come into direct contact with the case because the suspended person does not appeal to me or because practically I need not practice fellowship with him. In this case I need do nothing because I have no call. Views will differ. He who has heard much about unjust suspensions, will be inclined to doubt the justice of the pronounced suspension. Another who has great confidence in the suspending official or body and perhaps knows the suspended person as a lax character will have no doubts at all. In general the confidence which we must place in the wisdom and piety of our officials demands, especially if no protest be made, that we take for granted that the suspension was justified. But practically this case is of little concern because we do not come into practical contact with it."

The third case discussed by the author is the one which chiefly concerns us in the situation in which we find ourselves now. He raises the question: what should be done when we come into actual, practical contact with the suspension case because I am the relative, friend, neighboring pastor or the like of the suspended person, or because he appeals to my Christian fellowship by the fact that he protests against his suspension? "How about it if in such a case I am in doubt about the justice and propriety of the suspension? It will not be to say, 'Suspension merely suspends synodical relations and does not involve the denial of Christian fellowship (*Glaubensbruderschaft*) so that one must refuse synodical fellowship to such a person, but that giving both parties the benefit of the doubt, brotherly relations may be continued with both.'—That would be a horrible brotherhood: The one of three brethren damns the other and you as the third bless both of them, the one who damns and him who is damned.—Now, what is to be done? If he does not know which is right and which is wrong, he cannot suspend the one and prac-

tice fellowship with the other to please himself, but, until he knows who is right and who is wrong, he must suspend both from the Lord's Supper and all fraternal fellowship. And can he then wait peacefully until, in the course of years, the matter is finally investigated and settled? Never! He must at once investigate the matter and as soon as possible bring the matter to a decision, and not until he knows who is right and who is wrong can he resume brotherly relations with the one who is right and permanently suspend fellowship with the other. If we would do this in every case of suspension, excommunication, or synodical exclusion, whose justice we may be inclined to doubt, then the fire of discord, which is kindled by such cases, would be smothered in the spark. On the other hand it would instill in the Presidents, congregations, and synods a wholesome fear that by means of a case of suspension, excommunication, or exclusion whose propriety cannot be clearly demonstrated to all, they may fall into the ditch which they are digging for others. These things are no children's playthings. We do not want any popery again in the church no matter what the form may be. On the other hand it would be an abomination in the church if fellowship is practiced with a suspended (etc.) person without first dealing scrupulously with those who pronounced the suspension, etc."

The fourth case listed by the author follows: It is the case of suspensions against which not only the suspended person but also others protest. "What shall the other Christians say to that if they do not know which party is right? This is essentially not different from the preceding one: One must suspend both parties until certainty is gained, to express it differently, the case must be brought to a settlement immediately so far as one comes into practical touch with it. By all means do not postpone it and treat both parties as brothers, between whom all fraternal relations have been discontinued. This case emphasizes one thought in particular. A President ought to consider ten and twenty times before he proclaims a suspension, if he knows that the one who is to be suspended will protest against it. If conditions are so difficult that it is impossible for him to convince at the outset all those brethren who know of the case that the suspension is justified and necessary, is it not to be expected then, that he will meet with the opposition of others, disturb their consciences, plunge a great part of the church into dissension, yes, that he runs the risk of being suspended himself by many, until he has succeeded in justifying his action before them? We shall not be able to get along without suspensions, also not without such against which protest will be made, even by several, but that the greatest care is necessary in such cases, must be clear."

The fifth case. "Finally the case can be imagined that I have through exact knowledge of the case gained from the Word of God the conviction, that the suspension (excomm., exclusion) is unjustified, a terrible tyranny. That is the worst case imaginable. There dare be no delay, no sitting still. Here is a brother who has fallen among the thieves. The thing to do is to run to the aid of the brother at once. Here help and save, who can help and save, let the cost be what it may. The thing to do here is to have and practice fellowship with such an unfortunate brother, and to proceed against the murderers with every particle of power. At once proclaim that he is your brother, notify the one who suspended that the hand of fellowship has been withdrawn from him until the awful crime, however well-meaning, has been remedied. But that will not suffice. The suspending person has kindled a fire in the church, which must be put out while it is small. He has started a war which may disrupt the church, which must be smothered in the germ so that peace may be restored. Dealings with him must at once be instituted, in order to show him his sin and lead him to repentance. Will he not heed the admonition,

then go further, call in a few brethren, if necessary try to call together a conference or special synodical session. If the way is barred by means of synodical arrangements, then try to gain the ear of the church by way of synodical organs. If these remained closed to you too, then go into print before the brethren at your own expense, (of course in a decent manner). And if all this does no good and if you fail to bring about the retraction of the awful edict at next synodical meeting, then separate yourself in the name of God from such a President or synod and do not make yourself guilty of their sins."

Endnotes

1. cf. Edward Fredrich, *The Wisconsin Synod Lutherans* (Milwaukee: Northwestern Publishing House, 1992), 162; Edward Fredrich, "The Protéstant Controversy, (Essay delivered at the Minnesota District Pastoral Conference, Rochester, Minnesota, May 1, 1984; Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary Essay File 490), 10.
2. cf. Fredrich, *The Wisconsin Synod Lutherans*, 107-111; Joh. Ph. Koehler, *The History of the Wisconsin Synod* (Sauk Rapids, Minnesota: Sentinel Publishing Co., for the Protéstant Conference, 1981), 233-234.
3. cf. Koehler, op. cit., 236.
4. Koehler (p. 236) writes of the immediate objections that Pieper faced as a result of his writing a *Quartalschrift* article entitled "Menschenherrschaft in der Kirche" ("Man's Authority in the Church") in 1911. It was in this article that Pieper first proposed that synodical suspension and excommunication from a local congregation were identical.
5. Koehler, op. cit., 236.
6. While the Western Wisconsin District lifted the suspensions in 1962, they did so without passing judgment as to whether or not the suspensions had been justified thirty years earlier. They were instead rescinded on the grounds of unclarity and lack of unanimity.
7. The theft ring was discovered by tutors at Northwestern College after an evening of investigating on March 31, 1924. Eight students were expelled, eight were suspended until the end of the school year, and eleven were given campus arrest. On April 23, the College Board resolved to lift the suspensions after hearing the protests of many parents. On April 29 Professors Karl Koehler and Herbert Parisius resigned as a result of the Board's action.
8. Karl Koehler had charged Bergemann with misrepresenting the facts of the Watertown Case in several instances. In particular, Bergemann had apparently suggested to some that the NWC faculty had refused to meet with disgruntled parents, to which charge Koehler answered: "I know the source of that story. That is a lie. It's either that, or the man who says so is so woefully incompetent to absorb information, when he sits in at a hearing, that he ought not to be in office" ("The Watertown Transcript," *Faith-Life* [July 1940 Supplement], paragraph 55).
9. It was at the October 1924 *Dreierkomitee* meeting that Karl Koehler made his famous statement that "the Wisconsin Synod lies under the judgment of hardening." August Pieper, who was a member of the committee, reported the following reaction in a letter to his son, Gerhard (October 31, 1924): "A terrible dismay and serious opposition was the result of this speech, those terrible accusations of Karl. Once I cried out loud, because I was so horrified: 'Ach Gott in Himmel.' Praeses Sauer, who was taking down the minutes, interrupted him, outraged: 'You must

- have been in heaven and looked into the heart of the Almighty God to say such things.' Pastor Brenner declared that he lacked words to respond properly to such a judgment over against our Synod. He refused to continue to negotiate with Mr. Karl Koehler; there was no more common ground between him and us. Pastor Walter Hoenecke said he felt compelled to publicly testify here against K.K's speech, which was very difficult for him. ... Years ago when he had been sick ... he was reading the latest issue of the QS [*Quartalschrift*] (in bed) and there he had come across those same terrible remarks and had thrown the paper under the bed in indignation. He now wanted to testify: yes, there was indeed a hardening in the Synod, but not against the Gospel, rather a hardening against the person who had thrown such things at us [a none-too-subtle reference to Koehler's father, Professor Joh. Ph. Koehler]." Karl Koehler would later assert that others had read too much into his statement, but Pieper had already made up his mind in October 1924, as he explained to his son: "The matter can only end - unless K. retracts - with his exclusion and with the exclusion of all who side with him."
10. Some of the pastors who had attended the Watertown Transcript meeting included Gotthold Thurow, William Eggert and Frederic "Fritz" Stern, all three of whom would become Western Wisconsin District officials who would deal with the later Protéstants.
11. Teachers Gerda Koch and Elisabeth Reuter of St. Paul, Fort Atkinson, charged Pastor A.F. Nicolaus with not properly disciplining what they viewed as unbecoming and unchristian behavior, including short dresses, bobbed hair and church bazaars. Eventually they charged Nicolaus with being a false prophet when he suggested to them that they curb their pietistic bent.
12. The case of NWC Professor Elmer E. Sauer, who was suspended on October 10, 1928.
13. The Chippewa-Wisconsin Valley Conference took place on September 14-15, 1916. The mixed Wisconsin-Missouri Conference took place at Rusk, Wisconsin, on October 5-6, 1926.
14. Apparently Frey is referring to the Wisconsin-Chippewa Valley Conference held at Marshfield on April 19-21, 1927.
15. President Albrecht's inability to form a joint Synodical-Protéstant committee was apparently due to Pastor Oswald Hensel's tardiness or refusal to appoint Protéstant members, as can be surmised from Gotthold Thurow's October 13, 1927 letter to Pastor Jules Bergholz: "[District Vice-President] Kuhlow and I were at Marshfield Tuesday night and had a meeting with over 50 in the city hall, - 26 of them being voting members of our congregation to be. We read to them Im. Albrecht's letters, showing that [Pastor Oswald] Hensel's tardiness was responsible for the delay in selecting a committee."
16. Italics are found in the original, presumably to stress the fact that even Professor Joh. Ph. Koehler, who was sympathetic to the Protéstant cause, finally agreed with this statement.
17. These "Blue Books" were published by Immanuel, Marshfield, to present their side of the case against them and their pastor, Oswald Hensel. The books contain mostly correspondence that took place between the congregation, its pastor and Western Wisconsin District officials.
18. The Committee of Twelve
19. cf. Koehler, op. cit., 236-239.

from the editor ...

Arnold O. Lehmann

The articles in this issue were sent to the editor this past year for publication. The first two were sent by the writers, who since have been called to the church triumphant. The translation by Prof. Gawrisch, a retired Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary professor, follows well the chief article of our April issue of the *Journal*. The essay by Pastor Edgar Hoenecke, formerly a mission administrator of the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod, was presented in El Paso, Texas, in 1978. Shortly before his death the article, together with others, was sent to the editor. In the case of both contributors the editor had asked for clarifications, but unfortunately they died before they could answer. In the case of Pastor Hoenecke, I was interested in getting a brief addendum in which he might give a brief review of the period from 1978 to the present. Possibly some other researcher can complete the account.

The third article was uncovered by Pastor Peter M. Prange, to whom we owe thanks. With more research on the topic of the Protestant controversy, a definitive and impartial paper may finally be written. The writer of the article, Pastor Immanuel Frey was president of the Nebraska District of WELS.

Announcements of major anniversaries of congregations in the WELS have been appearing regularly in *Forward in Christ (Northwestern Lutheran)*. Well researched and documented papers on the history of the respective congregations would be most appreciatively received by the editor for publication.

Translations of German Wisconsin Synod Proceedings will resume with the April 2003 issue.

The Lord's blessings to all readers in the 2002 Advent and Christmas seasons.

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The WELS Historical Institute was given formal approval by the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod (WELS) in convention in 1981 to organize for the purpose of collecting and preserving historical data and artifacts that are related to the various periods of Lutheranism in America, especially of the WELS. In recent years the synod took over the responsibility of maintaining the archives. The Institute maintains a museum and publishes a *JOURNAL* and *NEWSLETTER*. Membership is open. Fees are as follows, which include the subscription fees: Single: \$15.00; Family: \$20.00 (2 votes but only one publication issue); Congregation, Library, Organization: \$30.00; and Student: \$10.00. Fees may be sent to the WELS Historical Institute, 2929 N. Mayfair Road, Milwaukee, WI 53222.

The board members are: Dr. James Kiecker, president; Prof. Alan Siggelkow, vice president; Dr. Mark Braun, Pastor Curt Jahn, Pastor Mark Jeske, Clarence Miller, Naomi Plocher, and Duane Kuehl.