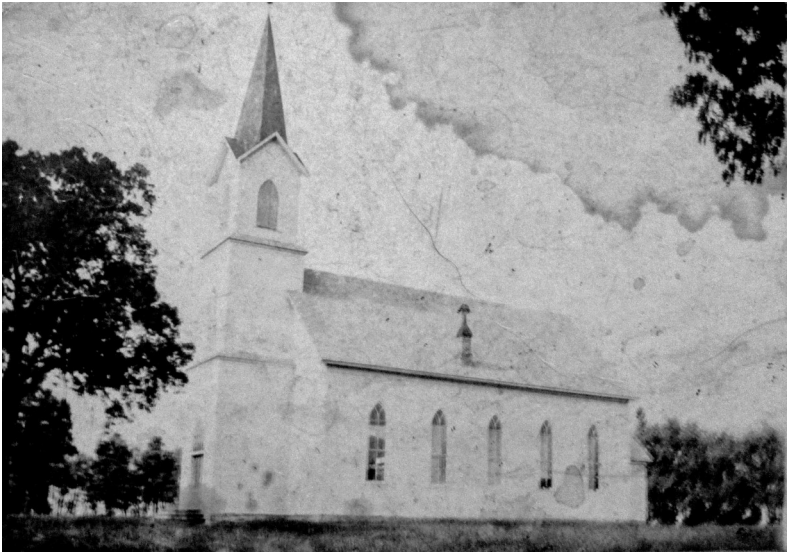


WELS Historical Institute

Journal

Volume 36, Number 2

Fall 2018



WELS Historical Institute Journal

Volume 36, Number 2
Fall 2018

1. WELS and ELS
100 Years of Walking Together
Craig A. Ferkenstad

- 18 A Violent Interchange of Sin and Grace:
Cap Ehlke, the Peace corps, and the Austin Sniper Shooting
Mark E. Braun

- 38 *U. V. Koren's Works*, edited and translated by Mark DeGarmeaux
Mankato: ELS Historical Society, 2014-2017.
Four volumes, 2,065 pp. hc, \$27.50/volume
John M. Brenner

Editor: John M. Brenner

The *WELS Historical Institute Journal* is the official publication of the WELS Historical Institute, N16W23377 Stone Ridge Drive, Waukesha, WI 53188. Copyright 2018 by WELS Historical Institute.

Cover Picture
Lime Creek Church, 1918

WELS and ELS

100 Years of Walking Together

by Craig A. Ferkenstad¹

In 1917 when the Wisconsin, Minnesota, Michigan, and Nebraska synods united to form the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod, the merger of other Lutheran synods also was taking place. During that same year, Norwegian Lutherans united into what would become the Norwegian Lutheran Church in America (NLCA). During the following year, in 1918, a small group of pastors and congregations reorganized the former Norwegian Synod into what today is known as the Evangelical Lutheran Synod (ELS) which walks in fellowship with the Wisconsin Synod. This year the ELS is observing the centennial of its reorganization.

The First Anniversary Date – 1853

Like the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod, the ELS observes dual anniversary dates. The ELS considers itself to be the continuation of the Norwegian Synod which was organized in 1853 in Wisconsin. This was only three years after the formation of the Wisconsin Synod.

Norwegian immigration began in full force in the 1850s with most Norwegian immigrants first settling in Wisconsin and Illinois. From there, settlement expanded into Iowa, Minnesota, South Dakota, and North Dakota. Several Norwegian Lutheran church bodies were formed. The Norwegian Synod was the largest and most conservative of the bodies. Its educated clergy were trained in Norway by professors who were committed to the Lutheran Confessions. Norwegian Synod members recall the historic service which was conducted southwest of Madison, Wisconsin at a place known as Koshkonong. Here on September 1, 1844, the first regularly trained pastor from Norway conducted a communion service beneath two oak trees. On that day, his confessional address was based upon Psalm 78:19 as he asked the question, “Can God furnish a table in the wilderness?” Of course we realize that the Lord does prepare a table for his people through his word and sacraments.

Three men are regarded as the “fathers” of the Norwegian Synod which was organized in 1853. The Rev. H. A. Preus lived at Spring Prairie, Wisconsin. He was the model administrator and served as the synod’s president for thirty-two years. The Rev. J. A. Ottesen lived at Koshkonong, Wisconsin. He was the model pastor and served as the synod’s secretary and as a member of the synod’s church council. The Rev. U. V. Koren lived near Decorah, Iowa. He was the model theologian and served as the synod’s president for sixteen years.

The Norwegian Synod found its fellowship with like-minded Lutherans in the synods of Wisconsin, Minnesota, Missouri, Illinois, and Ohio. In 1872, these syn-



Pastor H. A. Preus



Pastor J. A. Ottesen



Pastor U. V. Koren

ods organized the Synodical Conference. The ELS has walked side-by-side with the Wisconsin Synod and its predecessors since that date.

The Norwegian Synod founded Luther College in Decorah, Iowa. It also established Luther Seminary in Madison, Wisconsin. The seminary was later relocated to Minneapolis, Minnesota. In addition to many academies, the synod also established the Lutheran Normal School in Sioux Falls, South Dakota for the training of teachers. The Lutheran Publishing House was located in Decorah, Iowa.

Through a series of doctrinal controversies, the Norwegian Synod continued to contend for Biblical truth. The most serious of these controversies was the so-called "Election Controversy" which arose in the Synodical Conference in the late 1870s and 1880s. At issue was whether salvation is completely a gift of God through Jesus Christ. At that time, there were some who said that "salvation in a certain sense does not depend on God alone."² This prompted a controversy throughout the Norwegian Synod. During those tumultuous years, the Norwegian Synod withdrew from the Synodical Conference. This was not because of any disagreement with the doctrine or practice of the conference but because the Norwegian Synod wanted to discuss the doctrine of election entirely on a religious basis without any nationalistic influences. In doing so, the Norwegian Synod unsuccessfully hoped to be able to prevent a schism within her own midst. The Norwegian Synod, however, continued in fellowship with both the Wisconsin and Missouri Synod and continued to send delegates to Synodical Conference conventions until 1912. By the time the Election Controversy had subsided, most congregations of the Norwegian Synod were divided, pastors deposed from their calls, and rival congregations established. Until this time the Norwegian Synod had been the largest Lutheran Scandinavian body in America. By the time the controversy ended most congregations had been divided and one-third of the pastors and members had withdrawn their membership from the synod.

Soon there was an attempt to reunite these divided Norwegian Lutherans. This action was prompted by a rising tide of Norwegian nationalism and a new generation's desire to move beyond the controversies of the past. Already in

1905, an invitation was received by the Norwegian Synod to enter into doctrinal discussions with the other Norwegian Lutheran synods. These discussions led to no agreement on the issues of the 1880s on the doctrine of eternal election. New committees were then selected, and in 1912 a joint document was written in Madison, Wisconsin known as the "Settlement" ("Opgjør" in Norwegian). At first it was felt that the Settlement was in harmony with the teachings of the Lutheran Confessions and the Norwegian Synod, but it soon became apparent that everyone did not understand this document in the same way. Throughout the next five years, until the merger was consummated, a so-called minority group continued to make substitute motions, petition the synod, and call for necessary changes to be made in the Settlement before a union took place.

This was to no avail. Eventually even the minority was shattered and only a few remained. The Norwegian Synod ceased to exist when the merger of three Norwegian Lutheran synods formed the "Norwegian Lutheran Church in America" (NLCA) in June 1917. The impressive ceremonies have been described as the "greatest church demonstration ever held by Norwegians anywhere in the world."³ The name of this church body was later changed to the Evangelical Lutheran Church (ELC). It became a part of the American Lutheran Church in 1960 (ALC) and after 1988, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA).

The Second Anniversary Date – 1918

Only a few members of the Norwegian Synod remained outside of the 1917 merger. They established a publication and the following year, the announcement was made: "Pastors and members of congregations who desire to continue in the old doctrine and practice of the Norwegian Synod will, God willing, hold their annual meeting in the Lime Creek congregation, Pastor H. Ingebritson's charge, June 14 and following days."⁴ Plans were made, but on May 23 the governor of Iowa issued what is known as "The Babel Proclamation." While other states passed laws banning the use of the German language during World War I, no other state went as far as Iowa to outlaw the use of *all* foreign languages "in



public places, on trains, and over the telephone." It further stated that "all public addresses should and must be in the English language." Because of this law, a sixty-foot square tent was erected one mile north of the Lime Creek church building across the

Clergy gathered at Lime Creek Lutheran Church in 1918

state line in Minnesota. Here the Norwegian language could be spoken without the appearance of disloyalty. So it was that at least thirteen pastors and nearly two hundred others met at Lime Creek Lutheran Church near Lake Mills, Iowa on June 14-19, 1918. English sessions were held in the church building in Iowa and Norwegian sessions were conducted in the tent erected in Minnesota. Here the Norwegian Synod was reorganized as the "Norwegian Synod of the American Evangelical Lutheran Church." In 1957, the name was changed to the "Evangelical Lutheran Synod" (ELS). Because the ELS considers itself to be the continuation of the Norwegian Synod, it observes the dual anniversary dates of 1853 and 1918.

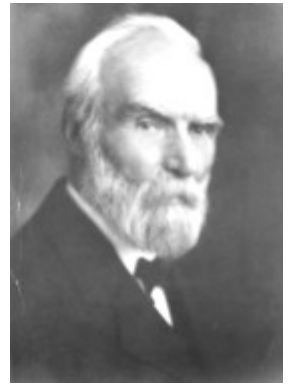


Lime Creek Lutheran Church

The Rev. Bjug Harstad was elected as the first president of the reorganized synod. At this time, he was sixty-nine years old and had served as the Minnesota District president prior to moving to Parkland, Washington where he helped to establish Pacific Lutheran Academy which today is known as Pacific Lutheran University. In the opening sermon, he remarked:

"Under exceedingly strange circumstances we greet one another here today having always before gathered under a well-defined and well-understood apostolically [sic] free church organization; we today meet as scattered sheep without any formal system of government.

"We have, dear friends, gathered here by the liberty which we enjoy in Christ Jesus. We are, as it were, clustering around the old building site which is storm swept and waste. A destructive hurricane has swept away the dear old mansion, even taking with it most of them that dwelt there. Discouraged, looking around, we discover only the bare ground with wreckage and dangerous crossroads. Yet let us not be too much alarmed nor discouraged. Worse things have repeatedly happened to the church before this, without its being destroyed. Let us remember and follow these words of Jeremiah the prophet, 'Thus saith the Lord, stand ye in the ways and see and ask for the old paths, where is the good way and walk therein, and ye shall find rest for your souls (Jeremiah 6:16).'⁵



Pastor Bjug Harstad

The college, the seminary, the normal school, and the publishing house were gone, along with the mission field in China. Also gone were the institutions supported by groupings of congregations including two hospitals, three orphans' home, three old-peoples' homes, and twelve academies. Yet the small group was dedicated to God's Word of the Bible and determined to continue. Pastor John A. Moldstad, who was the synod's vice-president, remembered, "We were free, we were unafraid, and we were happy. We felt that the Lord was with us and that His grace was abundant."⁶

The members of the reorganized synod found themselves in much the same situation as sixty-five years earlier. The work began anew with few pastors and scattered congregations. The president of the recently merged church body even questioned the small synod's right to use the name "Norwegian Synod." The derogatory term "the little synod" was used to imply that the reorganized synod did not have the right to exist.⁷

Fortunately, the sister synods in the Synodical Conference assisted as the Evangelical Lutheran Synod rejoined the Synodical Conference in 1920. Already in 1918, the Missouri Synod offered the use of its seminary in St. Louis, Missouri. The next year, the synod turned to Concordia College in St. Paul, Minnesota which was both a high school and a junior college of the Missouri Synod and served as a preparatory school for the seminary in St. Louis. A Norwegian professorship was established at Concordia College. Dr. S. C. Ylvisaker was appointed to fill this position and watch over the Norwegian students. He was salaried jointly by the ELS and the college. He began his work in September 1919 bringing with him eleven boys of Norwegian descent who intended to study for the ministry.

In 1921 it was reported that "the Director of Dr. Martin Luther College invited the synod to use the school for the training of ELS students who wished to become parochial school teachers. The invitation stated that the ELS students should have the same privileges as the Wisconsin Synod students, but they hoped the synod would send a teacher who might tend to the special needs of the ELS students."⁸ It was then reported to the ELS convention:

Prof. Oscar Levorson was called jointly with the Wisconsin Synod to teach Norwegian and religion at Martin Luther College [sic] at New Ulm, Minn. The agreement was made that our Synod pay such a proportion of his salary of \$1,200 as the time used for the instruction of our pupils bears to the time used for the regular branches of the school. The result was that our Synod has contributed \$200 towards his salary of the past year....⁹

During his first year in New Ulm, there were only three students from the ELS and Prof. Levorson taught a class in Norwegian. In 1924, the number had risen to eight pupils and in 1925 there were twelve ELS students enrolled. Even though in that year the Wisconsin Synod called him as a permanent professor, he yet continued to make an annual "Report from Dr. Martin Luther College, New Ulm" to the ELS conventions. He reported to the 1924 ELS convention:

Then we have had repeatedly pointed out to us the danger of hearing the preaching of false doctrine. Allow me to point out that this danger is the same, whether the false doctrine is preached by a minister or taught by a teacher. It is necessary not only to have ministers and teachers thoroughly founded in the doctrines of our church, but also to have laymen so founded. Let this be done first of all in the home and the congregation; and secondly, whenever a high school education is desired; let our boys and girls get this at a Christian school. Through the kindness of our German brethren, our Norwegian Synod has provided for this at Concordia College, St. Paul and at Dr. Martin Luther College, New Ulm, Minn.¹⁰

He continued to teach at DMLC until his retirement in 1963.

The synod was small in size. But this did not dampen the spirits of its members. In 1926, S. C. Ylvisaker wrote, "A small body such as our synod still enjoys certain privileges and advantages. Much machinery and organization are still more or less unnecessary. It is a fairly simple matter to keep the membership informed on the needs and activities of the synod. The pastors are on terms of intimate friendship, as well as connected by ties of a common faith. The laity is not as yet a vast number where the individual cannot be heard. We are, as it were, one family and still of the first generation; and though it is readily granted that large numbers can accomplish vastly greater things, we do well in enjoying, while we have it, the intimacy, the direct contact, the fervor and zeal which so often manifests itself in a body where plans and aims and hopes still largely take the place of accomplishments and past success."¹¹

Mission Work

In its early years, after reorganization, the focus of the ELS was to serve the many former members of the Norwegian Synod who found themselves without congregations. Home mission work became very important as the reorganized synod wanted to serve those disenfranchised members who were in need of the gospel. Often these were small groups of people who withdrew from their congregations or were amalgamations of like-minded Norwegian Lutherans. Some former members attended nearby congregations of the Synodical Conference. Others formed small congregations that needed assistance.

Realizing these needs at the first convention when only the most pressing business was addressed, a mission committee was formed. The importance of foreign missions was seen at the 1919 constituting convention when the Mission Committee was enlarged as committees were established for both home and foreign missions. The following year, the Foreign Mission Committee reported that the most practical plan for the synod would be participation in the work of the Missouri Synod since that synod had established overseas missions. The immediate result of this enabling resolution is seen the next year when more than 10% of the synod's budget contributions were designated for foreign mission fields.

In 1920 a call was extended to George Lillegard to serve in the “Evangelical Lutheran Mission” which was operated by the Missouri Synod and centered in Hankow, China (today: Hankou). This mission had operated since 1913 and, in time, would consist of seven mission locations along 800 miles of the Yangtze River in south-central China. Lillegard was suited for this work as he had previously served as a Norwegian Synod missionary in China from 1912–15. This was the Norwegian Synod’s first undertaking of foreign mission work when the Student Missionary Society at Luther Seminary (St. Paul, Minnesota) offered to pay the salary of a missionary in a location to be determined by the synod. Immediate action was taken and a field was established in China. This field was known as “The Lutheran Synod Mission.” It centered in the Honan (today, Henan) province with the headquarters at Kwangchow (today: Huangchuan). By 1917, when this mission field was lost to the merger, it consisted of six missionaries.



*Missionary
George Lillegard*

The members of the ELS gave significant financial support to this mission in China. Contributions were sufficient to care for Missionary Lillegard’s salary but fell short of paying other expenses. The Missouri Synod reported this was “Quite an undertaking for a body having only 33 pastors and supporting a professor in St. Paul! May God bless the plucky little band.”¹² Work continued in this field until January 1927 when Missionary Lillegard wrote, “We are on the way home! The Consuls have ordered all Americans out of Szechwan and Hupeh, so we have had to close down our stations.”¹³

Yet the synod was not without a foreign missionary. The previous year, the Foreign Mission Board reported that it was “a cause of gratification to the members of our synod to know that another worker has gone out from our circles.”¹⁴ Miss Anena Christensen entered the Missouri Synod mission field in southern India. For twelve years she became the only face of ELS foreign mission work and was the longest tenured ELS mission worker during its first half century.

Anena Christensen had served as a teacher at Norwegian missions in both Natal, South Africa and Madagascar. After she resigned from the Norwegian Lutheran Church in America (NLCA) for reasons of conscience, she completed a colloquy with Missouri Synod. She was then commissioned in a formal service conducted at Fairview Lutheran Church, in Minneapolis on April 18, 1926. Anena Christensen managed the Girls’ Boarding School in Ambur, India, where sixty children were under her care. Soon after her arrival, the inadequate quarters were replaced by new buildings. The financial contributions of the synod turned toward this new field, especially during the first years when financial support exceeded that of the field in China and was second only to the Synodical Conference Negro mission. Financial support of the work in India waned after Miss Christensen returned to the United States in 1939.

While this was happening, a young man from Nigeria came to the United States. Through contact with Jonathan Udo Ekong, the Synodical Conference eventually entered into this mission field in 1935 when Dr. Henry Nau (Missouri Synod) and his wife arrived for preparatory work. Dr. William Scheweppe (Wisconsin Synod) and his wife Leola arrived to lead the mission in 1937. Through their efforts, working with established Ibesikpo churches, the Lutheran Church of Nigeria took shape. The ELS was directly represented on the field by Missionary Paul and Emily Anderson (1946–52) and Missionary Gerhart and Catherine Becker (1953–57). Pastor Anderson recalls, “In January of



Missionary Paul Anderson

1948 there were ten churches with ten teachers and six schools.... I have a picture of the Okon church on the day of the adult baptism service. On the back was written that I baptized fifty-seven people on that day in October 1948.”¹⁵

In 1949 a seminary was opened. Two years later a Lutheran School for teacher training, was opened near the village of Ibakachi with Missionary Anderson in charge of its establishment and construction. ELS foreign mission work in Africa was brought to a close with the withdrawal of the ELS from the Synodical Conference in 1963. By that time, the field numbered more than 33,000 souls with approximately 200 congregations and preaching stations.

The ELS also heeded requests for mission work in Cornwall, England, and Hong Kong, but the synod longed for its own field. In 1965, the Board of Missions reported,

Since leaving the Synodical Conference we are no longer along in the mission work in Africa which was conducted by this body. Recently we have had correspondence with the Executive Secretary of the Board for World Missions of the Wisconsin Synod, the Rev. Edgar Hoenecke of San Diego, Cal. He has assured us that the Wisconsin Synod would be happy to have one of our men work in Puerto Rico, collaborating with their two missionaries, or on one of the adjacent islands. He says that this would be of mutual benefit.¹⁶

Several other fields also were considered, but the decision was made to send a missionary to the shanty towns known as *barriadas* circling the city of Lima, Peru.

Missionary Ted and Helga Kuster arrived in Lima, Peru on July 16, 1968. They were accompanied by Orlin and Judy Myrlie who were lay workers supported by WELS Lutheran Collegians. The following year, Gloria Bublitz arrived serving under the Lutheran Collegians “Project GO” and it was reported that open air Sunday Schools were being taught with up to 1,500 children hearing the weekly Bible story. As adults became interested, services and classes also began, and by 1971

twenty-three adult confirmed members officially organized the church in Peru which was referred to as Centro Cristiano.

The field expanded as people moving to the shanty towns of Lima also invited our missionaries to visit their mountain villages. In 1999, one of the national pastors began exploring the possibility of working in the Amazon jungle and work in the area of Tarapoto. Missionary Terry Schultz, who today serves the WELS mission in Haiti, said: "In the remote Amazon, Jesus has gathered a precious flock. He will protect his little lambs and teach them. Then, one day He will bring these children home to live with him in heaven. We praise God for His extraordinary acts of power and grace among these jungle people!"¹⁷

At its origin, the ELS envisioned an indigenous church which would be governed by its own membership. A major step toward this occurred in November 1991 when three men were ordained and began to serve the church in Peru. Fifty years after the work began, the final American missionary returned to the United States leaving an indigenous church body. The Peruvian Evangelical Lutheran Confessional Church joined the Confessional Evangelical Lutheran Conference (CELC) in 1996 and is served by twenty-eight pastors, vicars, and pre-seminary evangelists with approximately fifty congregations in the national church. Sunday worship attendance in Peru totals about 1,200 individuals.

Central American mission work was conducted for a short time in Managua, Nicaragua, as the ELS was asked to continue the work supported by Independent Lutheran Missions and the Federation for Authentic Lutheranism (FAL).

Mission work also has been supported in Chile since 1992, Czechia (Czech Republic) since 1990, Ukraine since 1992, Latvia since 1995, India since 2005, and South Korea since 2006. ELS pastors also have served in Norway and Australia. Since its reorganization in 1918, the ELS has participated in foreign mission work in fifteen countries!

Walking Together

Since their beginnings, the WELS and the ELS have walked together in the Synodical Conference. This was especially evidenced in the trying years leading to the breakup of the Synodical Conference. The precious fellowship among the synods constituting the Synodical Conference began to show signs of stress in the 1930s. Both the WELS and the ELS protested against the actions being taken by the Missouri Synod. In 1936, the ELS prepared a set of six theses on church union entitled "Unity, Union, and Unionism" which frequently is referred to as the "Triple-U." These theses were adopted by the ELS General Pastoral Conference in January 1936 and given approval by the Synodical Conference at its 1938 convention. The following year the theses were mailed to all pastors and professors of the Missouri Synod.

Despite the protests of the WELS and the ELS, the rift within the Synodical Conference continued to widen. Finally, in 1950 the Missouri Synod and the ALC adopted the "Common Confession." The ELS viewed this confession as being like



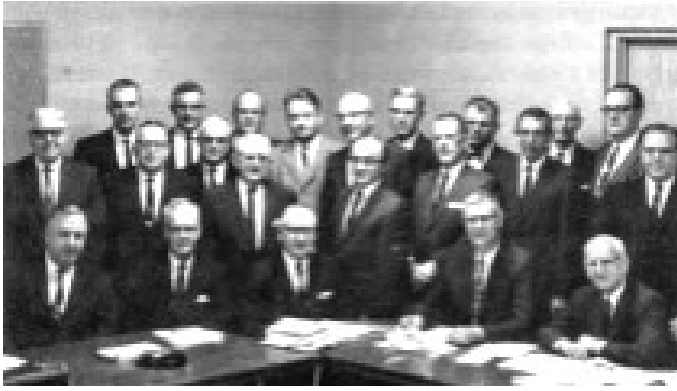
*Presidents of the four synods comprising
the Synodical Conference, 1961*

the 1912 Norwegian “Settlement” (Opgjør) from its own history and viewed it as a compromise document which allowed for contradictory teachings. As a final attempt to restore the precious fellowship of the Synodical Conference, after numerous overtures to the Missouri Synod, the ELS petitioned the 1954 Synodical Conference convention to adopt five statements to reaffirm its doctrinal unity. After this failed, the ELS unanimously suspended fellowship with the Lutheran Church–Missouri Synod in 1955. The ELS stated, “As for ourselves, we affirm that we want to remain true to the Word of God and the Lutheran Confessions. We want to continue in the old paths in which our fathers walked.”¹⁸

While the Wisconsin Synod was struggling with the question of when to suspend fellowship with the Missouri Synod, the ELS now struggled with the question of whether to withdraw from the Synodical Conference. Those years likely were among the most traumatic years for the synod. Finally, in November 1960, a special recessed ELS convention met at Jerico Lutheran Church near New Hampton, Iowa to address the issue. By the following year, the synod had concluded that the unity of the Synodical Conference could not be restored and asked the conference to dissolve itself.

In 1963 both the ELS and the Wisconsin Synod voted to withdraw membership from the Synodical Conference. Following the ELS resolution, President Theodore Aaberg asked the assembly to sing the hymn, “O Lamb of God, most holy ... have mercy upon us.” This action was not without stress. In the years prior to this action, ten pastors and two congregations withdrew their membership from the ELS and joined their counterparts from the WELS in forming the Church of the Lutheran Confession (CLC) which was organized in 1960. At the same time, two pastors and three congregations joined the Missouri Synod. Subsequently, four pastors joined the ELS coming from the Missouri Synod.

After 1963, the ELS became increasingly dependent upon Northwestern Pub-



1966 meeting of the Evangelical Lutheran Confessional Forum

lishing House for Sunday School and devotional materials. From 1941 until the publication of *Christian Worship* in 1993, the synods of the former Synodical Conference also shared a common hymnbook. Whereas *The Lutheran Hymnal* met with widespread use within both the Wisconsin and Missouri synods, it received only reluctant acceptance within the ELS because of what was perceived as a lack of Scandinavian hymns and liturgy. When the WELS began to compile a new hymnbook in 1983, the ELS was invited to observe the work. By 1993, when *Christian Worship* was published, the ELS Committee on Worship was undertaking the formation of the *Evangelical Lutheran Hymnary* (ELH) which was published in 1996 and has received wide-spread use throughout the Evangelical Lutheran Synod.

After their withdrawal from the Synodical Conference, both the WELS and the ELS found themselves in a new situation. The 1965 ELS convention made a request to explore ways of again establishing a permanent forum to give outward expression to the unity of the faith. The WELS took similar action. Two years later, a first meeting was held in Milwaukee, Wisconsin. Such meetings became known as the Evangelical Lutheran Confessional Forum which continues to meet on a biennial basis.

The dissolution of the Synodical Conference also affected other confessional Lutherans around the world. Prof. Wilbert Gawrisch (WELS), along with Pres. George Orvick (ELS) and Pres. Gerhard Wilde (Evangelical Lutheran Free Church—Germany) promoted the formation of an international conference of confessional Lutherans. President Orvick said, “It is important for our ELS to demonstrate our support for small groups around the world who are struggling to uphold the truth. Such groups are found behind the iron curtain in East Germany, in Sweden and Norway, and in Australia. They need our prayers and encouragement just as we did when our synod was reorganized in 1918.”¹⁹ Realizing the importance of expressing doctrinal unity, the Confessional Evangelical Lutheran Conference

(CELC) was organized. This historic event occurred in 1993 in Oberwesel, Germany. The desire was to continue the worldwide fellowship which had earlier been expressed by the Synodical Conference.

There were thirteen charter members of the CELC. Today, the CELC consists of thirty-two church bodies with approximately one-half million members. It is the third largest worldwide Lutheran fellowship, following the Lutheran World Federation (LWF) and the International Lutheran Council (ILC). The ELS hosted the 1999 CELC convention in Winter Haven, Florida and co-hosted the 2001 convention in New Ulm and Mankato, Minnesota.



1993 meeting of the C.E.L.C.

Upon the seventy-fifth anniversary of the reorganization of the ELS, in 1993, the convention essayist was Bethany Lutheran Theological Seminary President Wilhelm Petersen. In his anniversary essay, he wrote this tribute to her sister synod:

The Wisconsin Synod proved to be a true brother during those trying years, fighting shoulder to shoulder with us over the same issues. And since the break-up of the Synodical Conference the two synods have been drawn closer together and have given expression to their fellowship in various ways, the latest being the formation of the Confessional Evangelical Lutheran Conference (CELC) in Oberwesel, Germany, April 27-29, 1993. This Conference, international in scope, consists of lonely confessional Lutherans scattered throughout the world. A true unity of spirit was certainly evident at this constituting convention and it was only right and proper to give expression to this unity. As the reorganized Synod was the spiritual heir of the old Norwegian Synod, so the CELC is a true successor to the Synodical Conference, because it is built on the same scriptural principles.

The ELS has been in fellowship with the WELS since 1872. We have passed many synodical resolutions over the years expressing gratitude for this fellowship and imploring the Holy Spirit to strengthen the bonds of this fellowship. On our anniversary year we thank God again for the blessing of this fellowship over the years and pray that the Lord will continue to pour out his blessing on this fellowship.²⁰

College and Seminary

The Evangelical Lutheran Synod is known by many because of Bethany Lutheran College in Mankato, Minnesota. After its reorganization in 1918, the syn-



Bethany Lutheran College, 1920

od had no institutions of higher education and relied upon the schools of her sister synods. Yet in 1925 a special opportunity presented itself. Bethany Ladies' College, which had been in operation since 1911, was for sale. This school had been operated by the National Lutheran Education Association which consisted of members of the Synodical Conference. The Rev. Albert F.

Winter, who was the pastor of Immanuel Lutheran Church (WELS) in Mankato, was instrumental in the establishment of the college. Lacking any firm synodical backing, Bethany Ladies' College struggled and in 1925 was offered for purchase to the ELS; however, the young synod did not feel capable of making such a commitment. Others, including the Wisconsin Synod also expressed interest in the school.

The following year, a small group of pastors and laymen acted out of necessity and solicited members and funds to form the Bethany Lutheran College Association and purchase the school. Again, in 1927, the college was offered to the synod. The association stated, "Once we are convinced that the school is a necessity, we will also discover that we can afford it. We can do a lot of things that we think are absolutely impossible once they have become a matter of life or death to us."²¹ By a vote of thirty-three in favor and twenty-one opposed, the synod assumed the ownership and operation of the college. When classes began that fall, the enrollment doubled to sixty-three students in the high school and junior college levels. The Rev. S. C. Ylvisaker served as the college president during those formative years.



*President S. C.
Ylvisaker*

Bethany Lutheran High School conducted classes side-by-side with the college, sharing the same faculty and the same dormitories. In the early years, the number of high school students exceeded that of college students, but by the 1960s those numbers had reversed. Combined with the need to seek accreditation from the North Central Association of Colleges and Secondary Schools, the operations of the high school were suspended in 1969.

From 1962–88, Bethany Lutheran College became the home for a number of students from the WELS. For twenty-six years these students took their pre-theological training at Bethany in what was known by the ELS as the "Mequon Program" and known in the WELS as the "Bethany Program."



Bethany Lutheran College, 2018

Following several years of study the synod determined to move from a two-year associate-degree granting institution to a four-year baccalaureate-degree granting institution. In 2001 the first class graduated with baccalaureate degrees in five major fields. This has now expanded to twenty-four major and twenty-five minor fields along with nine pre-professional programs. This college, which stands high amid the trees in Mankato, yet remains the public face of the Evangelical Lutheran Synod.

After the synod's reorganization in 1918, seminary training depended on sister synods of the Evangelical Lutheran Synodical Conference. Concordia Seminary (Missouri Synod) in St. Louis, Missouri was of special significance. But the ELS has a unique history and needs which prompted the establishment of her own seminary. This, coupled with growing concerns about the Missouri Synod, first drove students to attend the WELS school of Northwestern College (Watertown, Wisconsin) and Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary (Thiensville, Wisconsin). There was even talk of placing a Norwegian professorship at Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary and sending students to Thiensville rather than St. Louis. By 1946 when Bethany Lutheran College established a seminary department, thirty-one men had graduated from Concordia Seminary (St. Louis), one man from Concordia Lutheran Seminary (Springfield, Illinois), and four men from Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary.



Theodore A. Aaberg

For thirty-two years, the seminary shared classroom space with the college and administrative work of the seminary was provided by the Dean of the seminary. In 1974, the Rev. Theodore Aaberg, himself a graduate of the seminary, accepted the call to serve as the first full time seminary president. Shortly before this, the synod gathered an anniversary offering, part of which was used to construct a seminary building which was dedicated in 1978. This building served well



Bethany Lutheran Seminary, 2018

for twenty years. By 1986, the synod president's office was made a full-time position and his office moved to Mankato. The current seminary building was dedicated in 1997 to house the seminary, synod offices, chapel, and archives. Over the years, 234 students have been graduated from the seminary in Mankato.

The Evangelical Lutheran Synod observed the centennial of its reorganization in June 2018. On that occasion, WELS President Mark Schroeder addressed these words to the synod.

One hundred years ago a very small number of faithful pastors and laymen stood firmly on God's word and made a very bold and courageous decision—a decision to establish a new, or rather reorganized, synod and head into what was humanly speaking a very uncertain future. In the century since that time, successors to those original forefathers and mothers have stood also firmly on the truth of God's word and have gone through some very difficult and challenging times. ...Yet through all those times of challenge and difficulty the Lord has enabled your synod not just to survive but to thrive and flourish. He has enabled you to establish a college and a seminary. He has enabled you to plant missions at home and abroad and to continue preaching and teaching the pure truth of His word. How is that possible? When I ask that question, how is that possible, I know that we talk a great deal about sanctified forefathers, people who faithfully led our church bodies in years gone by. Yet I know that we don't celebrate them today. I think about the prayer that Luther prayed as he waited in his sacristy before he preached ..."Lord God, You have appointed me as a Bishop and Pastor in Your Church, but you see how unsuited I am to meet so great and difficult a task. If I had lacked your help, I would have ruined everything long ago. Therefore, I call upon You: I wish to devote my mouth and my heart to You; I shall teach the people. I myself will learn and ponder diligently upon Your Word. Use me as Your instrument—but do not forsake me, for if ever I should be on my own, I would easily wreck it all."

So why is the ELS still here today? Why do people still gather in congrega-

tions to carry out God’s work? It’s not because of us. We would surely wreck it all. But it is because of the grace and promises of our God—a God who promised us that he would never leave us or forsake us, a God who told us that his word would always accomplish his purposes, a God who told us that the gates of hell itself would not overcome his Church. It is with his help, by his strength, and with his blessing, that the Evangelical Lutheran Synod is what it is today and does what it does today. You continue to stand firmly on God’s word. Your synod continues to focus on Christ as the one foundation. You continue to take seriously the mission that God has given each individual Christian, and given to his Church as a whole, to take the good news of Jesus to people that you’ll never meet and to places that you’ll never visit. You recognize still today the importance of training your young with Christian education. You also boldly confess the Lutheran Confessions recognizing how important it is for you today to be distinctly and unashamedly Lutheran. You also take joy in the fact that you know that the growth and the health of the Church does not depend on you, but completely and entirely on the means of grace and the proclamation of law and gospel. I’m thankful to say that you do those things by God’s grace and my synod stands next to you and with you as you do them also by his grace. So we are so thankful today to have you as partners in the gospel, to be joined and united with you in a common faith and a common mission, and to recognize that as we carry out that work together, it all depends on one thing—on one person really—on our gracious God in his word. So as you go into the next century, continue to stand on his word, continue to trust that word, continue to defend that word when it is attacked, and continue to proclaim the wonders God has done.

Endnotes

1. Pastor Craig A. Ferkenstad serves as the secretary of the ELS and also the chairman of the ELS Centennial Committee. He has authored the book *Proclaim His Wonders: A Pictorial History of the Evangelical Lutheran Synod*. The book is available for \$20 plus shipping from the Bethany Lutheran College Bookstore in Mankato, Minnesota (507-344-7777).
2. F. A. Schmidt, *Festskrift til Den Norske Synodes Jubilaeum 1853-1903* (Decorah, Iowa: Den Norske Synodes Forlag, 1903), 275, in Norman A. Madson, “Wherein Lies the Tragedy?” *Lutheran Sentinel*, 25 August 1955, 250.
3. Abel Ross Wentz, *A Basic History of Lutheranism in America* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1955), 257.
4. *Luthersk Tidende*, 1 April 1918, 144.
5. Bjug Harstad, “Opening Sermon,” *Beretning* (Evangelical Lutheran Synod) 1918, 78.
6. John A. Moldstad, “Lest We Forget,” *Lutheran Sentinel*, 27 April 1943, 28.

7. See T. N. Teigen, "The Trumpet Call to Freedom," *Synod Report* (Evangelical Lutheran Synod) 1968, 28, quoting from "Stenographic Report of the Meeting," 25 September 1918, translated by Christian Anderson.
8. Theodore A. Aaberg, *A City Set on a Hill* (Mankato, Minnesota: Board of Publications, Evangelical Lutheran Synod, 1968), 92.
9. "Report of the Board of Education," *Beretning* (Evangelical Lutheran Synod) 1923: 68.
10. Oscar Levorson, "Report from Martin Luther College, New Ulm, Minnesota," *Beretning* (Evangelical Lutheran Synod) 1924, 85.
11. S. C. Ylvisaker, "The Annual Convention," *Evangelisk Luthersk Tidende and Lutheran Sentinel*, 16 June 1926, 272.
12. Board of Foreign Missions, Evangelical Lutheran Synod of Missouri, Ohio, and other States, *Our Task in China* (St. Louis, Missouri: Concordia Publishing House, 1922), 11.
13. George Lillegard, "George Is the 1st To Leave the Mission Station," *Called According to His Purpose*, 480.
14. S.C.Ylvisaker, "Report of the Foreign Mission Committee," *Beretning* (Evangelical Lutheran Synod) 1926: 79.
15. Paul Anderson, "Mission Work in Nigeria through the Synodical Conference," *Oak Leaves: Newsletter of the ELS Historical Society*, Special Edition, 1998, 9.
16. "Report of the Board of Missions," *Synod Report* (Evangelical Lutheran Synod) 1965, 45.
17. Terry Schultz, "Lutheran Day School Opens in the Upper Amazon!" *Lutheran Sentinel*, September 2009, 5.
18. M. H. Otto, "The Meaning of Our Resolution of Suspension," *Lutheran Sentinel*, 11 August 1955, 228.
19. George M. Orvick, "Report of the President," *Synod Report* (Evangelical Lutheran Synod) 1989, 33.
20. Wilhelm W. Petersen, "Our Great Heritage," *Synod Report* (Evangelical Lutheran Synod) 1993, 102.
21. Bethany Lutheran College Association, "Bethany Skolesagen," *Beretning* (Evangelical Lutheran Synod) 1927, 81, trans. Theodore Aaberg in *A City Set on a Hill* (Mankato, Minnesota: Board of Publications, Evangelical Lutheran Synod, 1968), 100.
22. Mark Schroeder, Oral greeting to the ELS Centennial Convention, 19 June 2018.

A Violent Interchange of Sin and Grace: Cap Ehlke, the Peace Corps, and the Austin Sniper Shooting

Mark E. Braun

On March 28, 1891, a man wielding a double-barreled shotgun fired into a crowd of students and faculty attending a school exhibition in Parson Hall School, Liberty, Mississippi. The shooter wounded at least fourteen people, mostly children.

The Mississippi shooting may be regarded as one of the first instances of a mass shooting in the United States, defined by Grant Duwe, criminologist and author of *Mass Murder in the United States*, as the murder of four or more people in a public place without a connection to drug deals, gang disputes, or other underlying criminal factors. Duwe concluded that between 1916 and 1966, there were 25 mass shootings in the country. Highlighting that year is neither arbitrary nor accidental. In the judgment of NBC News, the modern era of mass shootings began at the University of Texas on a searing summer day in 1966. The killing spree on August 1 of that year fixed in the nation's consciousness the concept of a "mass shooting" outside the context of a military battlefield.

The Texas shooting ushered in the notion that any group of people, anywhere—even walking around a university campus on a summer day—could be killed in a random act by a complete stranger. In the half century since 1966, the number of mass shootings in the United States stands at 150, and growing. Some mass shooters seemed to be largely fine until they attacked; others were known to have violent or criminal histories. All but three shooters were male. More than half died at or near the shooting scene. Many killed themselves.

The Austin mass shooting was an astounding and terrifying event to everyone who heard about it that day, and it has been recalled and studied many times since. It was most traumatic to its victims and to friends and family members of those wounded or killed. This account is about the interchange between an anonymous killer and one he wounded but who survived. More than that, it was also an incident in which the worst of sinful actions intersected with the unfathomable grace of God.

"A fresh-faced Midwestern boy from Wisconsin"

Roland "Cap" Ehlke was born in Two Rivers, Wisconsin, in 1944, the middle child of a Lutheran pastor, also named Roland, and his wife Mary. In 1949, Pastor Ehlke accepted a call to Resurrection Lutheran Church in a middle class neighborhood on the south side of Milwaukee. Cap followed a familiar pattern, growing up in a parsonage, attending a Lutheran elementary school, then completing high

school at Northwestern Preparatory School in Watertown and Northwestern College on the same campus. One later biographer described him as a “soft-spoken kid who loved school, played intramurals, dated a few girls casually, and stayed out of trouble.” Further, in a depiction Cap may not agree with or appreciate, this biographer pictured him as “a fresh-faced Midwestern boy from Wisconsin” and “as white and impressionable as a fresh sheet of paper.”

Cap’s graduation profile in the June 1966 issue of *The Black and Red*, the student magazine of Northwestern College, noted that he served in a range of activities, including two years as art editor of that magazine, an officer in the campus drama society, a voice in the all-male chorus, and a year as a collegiate tutor in the Prep dorm. The authors of these profiles found various creative ways to say that, one by one, almost every member of the class would be headed for Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary that fall, to enter the next phase of their training to become Lutheran pastors. Cap’s profile, however, contains the first indicator that he did not plan to follow the prescribed and expected route his classmates were taking: “Following graduation Cap will enter the Peace Corps Training Center at the University of Texas. After this training, he will serve a two-year tour of duty in Iran, where he will teach English. Upon his return Cap will enroll at the Seminary.”

His college president tried to talk him out of his decision, reminding him that he could affect more lives as a pastor than by spending a couple years on the other side of a troubled planet. But Cap persisted in his decision, and on June 26 he went to the University of Texas in Austin to begin training for the Peace Corps. He learned that upon completion of his training, he would be assigned to teach English to Iranian children, and he later admitted that he had to consult an atlas to be sure where Iran was. He made it clear from the start that he intended to become a Lutheran pastor like his father, yet it seems he wanted more, something else or something different, if not for the rest of his life, then at least for the moment.

Classmates who had gone through school with each other for eight years and who knew each other well were not surprised at his decision. “Cap wasn’t the only one thinking about training for the Peace Corps,” recalled one, and another remembered that “there were so many PKs (pastors’ kids) who felt it was their duty to follow in their fathers’ footsteps, only to find out later in their ministries that the ministry was not for them.” Cap “was never a typical WELS student even though he had gone through the normal school system. He was independent, and his family contributed to his world view.” Another classmate, although begging “imperfect memory,” recalled that Cap’s plans seemed to have been something of a last minute decision. He was “not afraid to take some time off to pursue other interests, which was not so common back then.” A classmate remembered him as “unlike the rest of us who simply took the path of least resistance in the system and went on to the Seminary.” He was “bright but not all that concerned about grades.” He had “broader interests than the rest of us, including travel and the reading he did.”

Some classmates remembered with dismay that “we lived in a cocoon. We didn’t read a newspaper or watch the evening news. We weren’t entirely compassionate back then, either,” and in that way also Cap appeared to be different: “He felt more.” Another classmate echoed the thought. “Cap was one of the more progressive thinkers of our company of friends. He seemed to be aware of issues of the day, about which [most of us] knew little and did not feel we needed to know.” This classmate elaborated on the political and cultural indifference he remembered on his campus in the mid-1960s:

As a college student I was shamefully out of touch with burning issues of the day. Ours was a closed world and a sheltered environment, so why should we burden ourselves with such things as the Vietnam War or Racial Equality? We were exempt from the draft; there were no protests on our campuses. . . . The anti-war movement was associated with students in the hippie culture with their long hair, casual drug use, and protest songs. So it was easy for us in our very conservative culture to dismiss the issues they were bringing to light. And in our mono-cultured community, the Civil Rights movement could just as well have been happening on Mars.

Cap “was daring to do what most of us did not have courage to do,” to “move out of our secure world and become concerned with things which were larger than financing an automobile or paying for a seminary education.”

Lack of interest in world affairs at Northwestern was apparently not something new. Edward Fredrich, professor at Dr. Martin Luther College in New Ulm, Minnesota, in the 1960s, and later at Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary, remembered his era, the 1930s, for producing “a breed of college students who were tempered by the Depression and isolated from the experiences of World War II and whose chief characteristic was a vast unconcern, tremendous even for college students.” If the name of Adolph Hitler appeared in *The Black and Red* at all in those years, Fredrich charged, “it was not on the editorial pages but in the humor section.” This lack of concern about matters in the world “manifested itself also and regrettably in matters academic.” Fredrich marveled that college students in the 1960s devoted as much time as they did to their course work and showed so much concern for their grades. “We read little beyond our few textbooks.”

The allure of the Peace Corps

The idea of sending young Americans to serve people in foreign nations arose from the conviction that the United States possessed a unique responsibility to spread liberty and progress. Some of this impulse was an inevitable outgrowth of missionizing Christianity. The Peace Corps was established as an agency designed to promote world peace and international friendship by helping interested countries fulfill their needs for trained men and women. In addition, it was intended to help non-Americans gain a better understanding of Americans and to foster in Americans at home a better understanding of other cultures.

The origins of the idea for a Peace Corps went back to the end of World War

II, when the United States felt obliged to focus on international assistance. The U.S. emerged from the war as the preeminent economic and military power in the world and the only state capable of leading global reconstruction. Such idealism was also intertwined with American self-interest in numerous postwar American foreign policy initiatives. In the late 1950s, Congressmen Henry Reuss of Wisconsin and Senator Hubert Humphrey of Minnesota proposed the idea of an overseas people-to-people program. Reuss introduced the first Peace Corps-type bill into legislation in 1960. Humphrey wrote: "I envisioned a program of national service in an international endeavor. This was not to be a substitute for Selective Service for the military. It was to be another dimension of American aid to the less fortunate."

Senator John F. Kennedy of Massachusetts, running for president in 1960, appeared at the University of Michigan on October 14, and although he arrived exhausted at 2 a.m., he agreed say a few words to the more than 10,000 students waiting to greet him. Kennedy challenged them to help people in developing nations:

The opportunity must be seized. . . . How many of you who are going to be doctors are willing to spend your days in Ghana? Technicians or engineers, how many of you are willing to work in Foreign Service? . . . The effort must be far greater than we have ever made in the past.

At 43 years old, Kennedy was the youngest candidate who would ever be elected president. American youth seemed especially attracted to his athletic and exciting image. His energetic, charismatic attitude helped him connect with young voters.



President Kennedy signs Peace Corps bill September 22, 1961

Only days before the 1960 election, Kennedy officially proposed a “peace corps” during a speech in San Francisco. While there was “not enough money in all America to relieve the misery of the underdeveloped world,” he said, “there is enough know-how and enough knowledgeable people to help those nations help themselves. I therefore propose that our inadequate efforts in this area be supplemented by a Peace Corps of talented young men and women willing and able to serve their country in this fashion for three years as an alternative to peacetime selective service.” In his inaugural address on January 20, 1961, Kennedy promised “those people in the huts and villages of half the globe” that America would pledge its best efforts “to help them help themselves, for whatever period is required—not because the communists may be doing it, not because we seek their votes, but because it is right.”

By 1966, 15,000 volunteers—almost all of them idealistic young students—were digging wells, teaching school, harvesting crops, and administering medicine throughout the Third World.

The Northwestern campus was predominantly inclined toward conservatism and Republican Party positions in the mid-1960s. One conclusion arrived at in a campus debate on October 28, 1964, a week before the presidential election between Lyndon Johnson and Barry Goldwater, was that “Northwestern was not in the least influenced by how the rest of the nation feels.” In a mock election several days later, Goldwater carried 65% of Northwestern College voters—compared to the actual outcome in which the incumbent Johnson won more than 61% of the popular vote and 486 Electoral College votes. Reporting on the political debate and the mock election for *The Black and Red* was Cap Ehlike.

Yet Kennedy enjoyed a surprisingly high level of popularity among Northwestern students, and they felt a deep sense of loss at his assassination on November 22, 1963. One editorialist called his death “probably the most universally shocking event in the history of the world.” Millions of people found themselves “thrown into such profound grief,” one reason for which was that “John Kennedy’s character and personality showed his courage, resolve, humor, and tastefulness that are universally admired.” In another, longer reflection, Kennedy was characterized as “a generous man, giving of his time and himself, receptive to all demands,” and “in spite of his learning,” he “did not lose sight of the importance of the Church. His life was a moral example to the nation.” Kennedy’s virtue was remembered as “outstanding when placed before the more sordid affairs of Washington,” and he was “honest above all.” The author of a third reflection on the assassinated president decided that although “we cannot directly blame ourselves for murder in this event,” Americans “can censure and attempt to correct the weak and passive segments of our society which set the stage for fanatic violence of this nature and do everything in our power to present a wholesome atmosphere which will not encourage, allow, or permit such overt violence.”

Thus, even on such a politically conservative college campus, Kennedy’s youthful optimism and his dramatic call to selfless service may have been a pow-

erful allure to some students to consider such service. In fact, a 1963 Northwestern graduate joined the Peace Corps and later reported on his experience. He credited an “annual case of spring fever” with leading him to consider change and adventure, and “the Peace Corps seemed to offer what I was looking for, [so] I joined.” After a crash course in Spanish and training in regional history and geography, Communism, cross-cultural communication, and overseas living and health, he flew to Quito, Ecuador, then made the bumpy 14-hour bus trip to Zarama, in El Oro, Ecuador. As the bus trip wore on in the darkness, he began to wonder “if we should even be going there” and thought he may have been better off staying home where there were better roads. In time he adjusted to living quarters in converted space in the back room of a factory, with no hot water, and meals consisting mostly of rice. He also grew to be reasonably assured that he was helping the local farmers. Asking himself about the value of Peace Corps service for those he served, he concluded, “I believe it is doing as much as any of the other forms of aid, but it’s certainly not working any miracles.”

Other church bodies were asking questions about such forms of international service. “Does the response to the appeal for Peace Corps volunteers suggest that religion is playing a residual role in American life?” asked one writer in *The Christian Century* in 1962. “Many volunteers, though professing the Christian faith, frankly state that they prefer to serve through the Peace Corps and government rather than through the church. These people are willing to serve but not to proclaim.”

Herman Nibbelink, a graduate of Calvin College, wrote that “after spending two years in Ethiopia as a Peace Corps teacher, I was somewhat taken aback when I was asked more than once how I could, with a clear conscience, leave a position as a teacher in a Christian high school to accept a position that placed my teaching under the federal organization of two nations.” Such a question, he felt, was emblematic of those in his denomination “who assume that since we support Christian schools and colleges, we have the right (the duty?) to neglect other institutions of education. . . .

We say that we educate our children in Christian schools so that they can later take their places in the world at large, remaining firm in their commitment to and understanding of Christianity. But what we have often done is to educate our children to educate their children; and rather than send large numbers of educated Christians with Christ’s command into the world of non-Christians, we find our resources more than expended on our own progeny. This is, perhaps, one of the reasons that the names on our churches and school enrollments remain overwhelmingly Dutch.

This and other observations, Nibbelink continued, “reveal not so much a symptom of weakness in our Christian education system as they reveal the larger tendency we have long had of separating ourselves,” and such a tendency was not

peculiar to Dutch Calvinists in America. "Life is often uncomfortable for a Christian who is compelled to witness individually," but "what is inexcusable is that many of us use our organizations and communities so that we will not have to face that discomfort. We have long ago given up as lost the public school, and many of us shun existing labor organizations. There are those who would organize separate political parties." Yet there are Christians in many church bodies who are "ambassadors for Christ in secular universities, in public schools, in secular agencies, in labor organizations, and in many other secular institutions that exert an influence on society at large." Though he regretted that his own experience in this kind of Christian service fell "far short of being exemplary," Nibbelink was convinced that "as a teacher in an Ethiopian government school I had opportunities to witness that I could not have had elsewhere."

Writers in *The Black and Red* did not discuss such questions to this degree, yet a 1964 editorialist acknowledged that "today there are so many seemingly better occupations than the ministry. Higher pay, more excitement, fewer problems, and more worldly prestige are definite advantages which the world can offer." He listed the Peace Corps as one such alternative. Yet he said that the benefits of entering the ministry of the church included "the unsurpassable satisfaction that you are a member of the world's most necessary fighting force; that you are promoting that Peace which passes all understanding; that you are conserving the faith of the fathers; and that you are cultivating new fields of faith daily." So how does one know if the Holy Spirit is calling one to ministry? "Few of us, if any, will be given an outright, visible call such as that of the Apostle Paul." Instead, the call is "a continuing, growing experience," often beginning with "a personal feeling that this is something we ought to do. As our experience grows, we realize that this is not just a personal matter." He and his classmates would "begin to sense the need which the world has for men of our potential." As they matured they would become increasingly convinced that "through the Gospel we will be able to answer all of mankind's most challenging and disturbing questions." Further, they would sense that the special abilities evident in their lives "were put there by God for a very special reason. Without actually realizing it, God's call has been given to us."

Austin, August 1, 1966

Charles Joseph Whitman was the oldest of three brothers who grew up in Lake Worth, Florida, an altar boy and an Eagle Scout. He had a sharp mind and was outwardly happy. After high school graduation, he joined the Marines and became an expert sharpshooter. He was recommended to the Marine college scholarship program and enrolled at the University of Texas, where he met his wife, Kathleen. He returned to active duty in the Marines in 1963, then was readmitted to the University in 1965. One day, chatting with a friend in an off-campus residence hall, Whitman looked at the tower in the center of the campus and made a passing comment, "A person could stand off an army from atop it before

they got him.”

Just after midnight on August 1, 1966, Whitman killed his mother. On a yellow legal pad he wrote, “I have just taken my mother’s life. I am very upset over having done it. However, I feel that if there is a heaven she is definitely there now. And if there is no life after, I have relieved her of her suffering here on Earth.”

Several hours later, he murdered his wife. “I love her dearly,” he wrote in another note, “and she has been as fine a wife to me as any man could hope to have. I cannot rationally pinpoint any specific reason for doing this. I don’t know whether it is selfishness, or if I don’t want to have to face the embarrassment my actions would surely cause her.”

Six hours after that, now early in the morning, Whitman purchased a 12-gauge shotgun on a time payment plan, took it home, cut off the stock and sawed off its barrel. He assembled an additional arsenal that included two larger pistols, a 6.1 millimeter Remington magnum rifle with telescopic sight, a .25 caliber Remington pump rifle, a 30.06 rifle, a .357 magnum pistol, a new shotgun, and three knives, as well as more than 700 rounds of ammunition. He packed everything into a foot locker, along with containers of water and gasoline, and some sandwiches. Later Monday morning, he rented a dolly and, posing as a repairman, lugged all the equipment to the campus tower and up the elevator. He got off at the last stop and dragged his foot locker up a long flight of stairs to the observation platform near the top of the tower, a slender, four-sided structure 307 feet high in the center of campus. Built in 1937 of Indiana limestone, it was the university’s most distinguishing landmark, regarded as a symbol of academic excellence.

Just before the tower’s clock struck noon, Whitman started killing.

Two unarmed campus security guards heard the initial shots, entered the building, and took the elevator to the top. There they found three bodies and quickly sent warnings to stay away from the tower. City police were alerted and the siege was on, described as “a desperate encounter between a small army of

THEN SUDDENLY THE MADNESS WAS ENDED

For the dozens of students, faculty and staff who gathered on the tower's observation platform, the day was a nightmare. The gunman, Charles Whitman, had been on the tower for hours, firing at random. The tower was a slender, four-sided structure 307 feet high in the center of campus. Built in 1937 of Indiana limestone, it was the university's most distinguishing landmark, regarded as a symbol of academic excellence.

THE KILLER'S ARSENAL, HIS VICTIMS AND WHERE THEY FELL

HEAD OF DEATH AT TEXAS II

law officers and a single, well-armed man who held the strategic heights.” More shots rained down and more people fell. The officers prowled the malls surrounding the tower. An airplane circled the tower, firing at the sniper.

Whitman fired from all sides and all levels of the observation area. Burst after burst of gunfire poured from the tower, preventing rescuers from getting to the victims scattered below. Police crouched behind trees and buildings and returned fire with rifles and shotguns. With rescuers pinned down by the relentless gunfire, some victims lay unattended as long as an hour under the 98-degree sun, until armored cars were pressed into service as makeshift conveyances. Ambulances took victims to Brackinridge hospital, where many had to be treated in hallways, and hospital resources were soon overtaxed.

One newspaper man said that he and another reporter came to a broad open space about 150 yards wide where there was no protection. They could hear “this funny noise every now and then,” like bullets “whining off in the distance.” He said to himself, “That gunman probably saw two victims nearby and he will be waiting for me.” He paused, then ran. “I was almost across the open space when something hit me, whirled me around, and knocked me onto the pavement.” He thought, “That guy must be an incredible shot. Six inches more to the right and he would have hit my heart.”

After about 20 minutes, students and residents went to fetch their own high-powered rifles and began shooting back. Some took positions on rooftops or from behind bushes. Others partnered with Austin police officers, whose handguns and shotguns could not reach Whitman. “These guys were pretty good shots,” remembered one graduated student who witnessed the mayhem. “There was a lot of lead flying around up at him.” This return fire largely succeeded in pinning Whitman down. Most victims were struck in the first 20 minutes of shooting before this citizen cavalry pitched in. According to press reports the day after the shooting, no one seemed to be fazed by such a large number of armed civilians present on the campus that day. With few exceptions, they were treated as heroes.

Ramon Martinez, a five-year veteran of the Austin police force, was at home cooking a steak when he heard a radio report about a sniper shooting up the university campus. He left his steak, pulled on his uniform, and sped to the campus. On his own, Ramirez crawled and ran to the main entrance of the building, where he quickly deputized Allen Crum, an employee at the university cooperative store, and handed Crum a rifle. The two men made their way to the observation deck. As Martinez rounded a corner, he saw Whitman and fired one shot at him, who fired a single shot back. Martinez then emptied his revolver at Whitman. A second officer, who had followed Martinez and Crum, rushed the platform and emptied his shotgun at Whitman. One of Martinez’ pistol bullets smashed Whitman’s rifle and another hit him in the neck. A buckshot pellet from the second officer’s shotgun struck Whitman between the eyes from about 25 feet away. Police later determined that this was undoubtedly the bullet that killed him.

Less than an hour after he had been home making his lunch, Officer Martinez killed a man and found himself being treated as a hero. But he was shaking so badly that his superiors excused him from work for the rest of the day. Austin Police Chief Robert Miles reported that there had been no specific plan to capture Whitman. "In a situation like that, it all depended on independent action by the officer."

The shooting lasted 96 minutes. More than 400 unused rounds of ammunition remained on the tower platform after Whitman was killed. Thirty-one people had been wounded, and sixteen were dead.

Cap in the Crosshairs

Cap was walking with a couple of new friends in the Peace Corps training program, across Guadalupe Drive, the main street in front of the campus. They had just eaten lunch. They heard noises, which at first Cap thought were the sounds of firecrackers being set off in the distance. A first bullet tore through the wrist of his friend Dave, who had raised his arm to look at his watch, and the shrapnel hit Cap in the back of his left arm. A second bullet cut through the back of his right arm. One of his friends who was not shot ran for cover to a nearby storefront. Another friend who had also been shot in the wrist sat stunned on the curb. Cap tried to run to help his friend to enter the storefront, but he was then hit in the leg by a third bullet. The two of them made it to relative safety inside a jewelry store, only to see a bullet smash through the store window and hit the store's manager. As ambulances pulled up to the store and drivers got out to assist victims, one driver was shot in front of the store.

THE MILWAUKEE JOURNAL

Eighty-fourth Year—56 Pages Circulation Monday—37,000 Tuesday, August 2, 1966 Price 10¢ per copy, 12 copies for \$1.00, 48 copies for \$4.00 Latest Edition 11

Senators Push Bill to End Air Walkout

Senators today introduced legislation to end the air traffic controllers' strike. The bill would force the union to accept a 5% wage increase and a 4% cost-of-living adjustment. The bill also would require the union to accept a 4% wage increase and a 4% cost-of-living adjustment. The bill also would require the union to accept a 4% wage increase and a 4% cost-of-living adjustment.

Mad Litterbug Strikes Again in New York

New York, N. Y.—A mad litterbug struck again in New York City today, as a man threw a brick through a window of a building. The man was arrested and charged with vandalism.

Texas Sniper's Killing of 15 Spurs Call for Gun Controls

Johnson Sees Urgent Need for Law

President Lyndon B. Johnson today called for a law to control the sale of handguns. He said the killing of 15 people by a sniper in Texas was a "terrible tragedy" and that the government has a duty to act.

Officers Slay Student Atop School Tower

Gunman's 80 Minute Spree Terrorizes College; Autopsy Reveals Laceration

Rescue Efforts Futile, Boy, 12, Dies in River

A 12-year-old boy died in a river today after a rescue attempt failed. The boy was found floating in the river and was pronounced dead at the scene.

USSR Elects Kosygin for 4 Year Term

Moscow, USSR—The 22nd session of the Supreme Soviet today elected Premier Alexey Kosygin to a four-year term.



Mad Litterbug Strikes Again in New York

New York, N. Y.—A mad litterbug struck again in New York City today, as a man threw a brick through a window of a building. The man was arrested and charged with vandalism.

Milwaukee City's Interest Calls for Selling Safety

Cap had been wounded three times, but he was alive. He did not yet know that another of his new friends in the Peace Corps training program, whom the three had been on their way to meet, had already been shot dead.

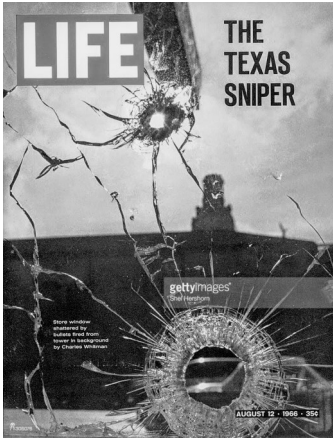
In Milwaukee, Cap's father was on his way out to make hospital calls with his car radio turned on. He heard a newscaster report that a sniper had gone on a shooting rampage on the University of Texas campus. "My son is on that campus right now," Pastor Ehlke said to himself. "But it's a big campus. He won't be involved in this." He kept hearing the report "about three different times," the pastor remembered the next day. "I'm not a psychic or anything like that, but I was a little bit concerned when I heard of those people being wounded and shot to death."

Pastor Ehlke got first word about his son around 6 o'clock Monday evening. Peace Corps officials called to say that he had been injured but assured his parents that he was in no danger. Later that evening, Cap called his family from Brackinridge hospital. Pastor Ehlke recalled briefly the details Cap told him, then said, "I guess that's about it." Later that evening Cap was transferred to the university's student health center, where he was listed in satisfactory condition. A doctor told him that his wounds had been treated and that he would be hospitalized for several days. "As I lay in the clean, white bed at the clinic," Cap later recalled, "I could look out the window and see that lofty tower. At night it was lit up. Piercing into the dark sky, it gave me an eerie feeling as stark as death itself. It made me think about the ultimate meaning of things."

The usual questions but no answers

As news of the campus shooting spread, Whitman was initially remembered as a "nice guy." People around campus called him Charlie. "It was hard to find anyone who knew him who didn't like him," one said. Whitman used to "joke with passengers in his car on the way to classes." He "seemed more mature than most people his age." Once a borderline student, he was now making good grades and working hard toward his degree in architectural engineering. He and his wife Kathleen were thought to be a happily married couple who shared a love for children, though they did not have any. Whitman and his wife "were just as sweet as they can be. They were two of the nicest people I ever met," said a sophomore student and neighbor. "I never heard a harsh word spoken when I was present. Charles was always kidding and joking." Photographs showed him as a handsome, blond, crew-cut young man "with eyes that crinkled down when he smiled." Whitman's father-in-law, whose only daughter had married Charlie, said, "He was just as normal as anybody I ever knew, and he worked very hard on his grades."

Soon, however, reports surfaced telling of a darker side to Whitman, and a more disturbing history emerged. The college sophomore who lived two doors away acknowledged that Whitman "had a little bit of a temper." Another



*The Texas Sniper
Life 8/12/1966*

er report which surfaced later said that Whitman’s wife was about to divorce him. “He was a perfectionist, and he began almost from the beginning to expect more of Kathy than she could give. On at least three separate occasions he had hit her.”

Neighbors of Whitman’s family when he grew up in Florida said his mother was a “God-fearing woman” and remembered his father as “generous but firm,” a prosperous plumbing contractor who gave his three sons everything they wanted, “but when their father said ‘frog,’ they jumped.” The father often beat his wife and children when they displeased him. Just before Charlie’s 18th birthday, when he returned home after

a party having had too much to drink, his father beat him and threw him into the family swimming pool, where he almost drowned. In the notes Whitman left behind, he said he hated his father “with a mortal passion” and lamented that his mother “gave the best 25 years of her life to that man.”

About six months before the shooting his parents had separated, which according to one Florida neighbor hurt Charles deeply. The day after the shooting his father came out of seclusion. “My son has committed a crime that is a great horror to the whole world,” the elder Whitman said. “He just snapped. He had pushed himself tremendously hard” in recent months. “I know you all realize that this boy was sick. I don’t know what else to say.” Whitman’s father added that he felt great sympathy for the victims. He later admitted that “I did on occasion beat my wife, but I loved her. I have to admit it, because of my temper, I knocked her around.”

Portions of Whitman’s typed letter from July 31 said:

It was after much thought that I decided to kill my wife, Kathy, tonight after I pick her up from work at the telephone company. I love her dearly, and she has been as fine a wife to me as any man could ever hope to have. I cannot rationally pinpoint any specific reason for doing this. I don’t know whether it is selfishness or if I don’t want her to have to face the embarrassment my actions would surely cause her. At this time, though, the prominent reason in my mind is that I truly do not consider this world worth living in, and [I] am prepared to die, and I do not want to leave her to suffer alone in it. I intend to kill her as painlessly as possible.

Similar reasons provoked me to take my mother's life also. I don't think the poor woman has ever enjoyed life as she is entitled to. She was a simple young woman who married a very possessive and dominating man. All my life as a boy until I ran away from home to join the Marine Corps I was a witness to her being beat at least once a month.

News reports regarding an autopsy performed on Whitman's body the day after the shooting revealed that he had a small brain tumor which, some initially suggested, could have caused intense headaches and may have indirectly contributed to his shooting rampage. In his July 31 letter, Whitman also admitted:

I am supposed to be an average, reasonable, and intelligent young man. However, lately (I can't recall when it started) I have been a victim of many unusual and irrational thoughts. These thoughts constantly recur, and it requires a tremendous mental effort to concentrate on useful and progressive tasks. In March when my parents made a physical break, I noticed a great deal of stress. I consulted [a doctor] at the University Health Center and asked him to recommend someone that I could consult with about some psychiatric disorders I felt I had. . . . After one session I never saw the doctor again, and since then I have been fighting my mental turmoil alone, and seemingly to no avail. After my death I wish that an autopsy would be performed on me to see if there is any physical disorder. I have had some tremendous headaches.

The day after the shooting, an editorial in *The San Antonio Express* said, "And so—as they asked about Lee Harvey Oswald and accused nurse killer Richard Speck—why did it happen? And comes the same inconclusive answer: something must have snapped."

Gary Lavergne, author of the 1997 book, *A Sniper in the Tower*, reported that the school psychiatrist, Dr. Maurice D. Heatly, claimed that he had many students who recounted violent fantasies during therapy sessions. "Today we take it a whole lot more seriously because of our history. But back then, that kind of thing didn't happen." Soon after the shooting, Heatly announced at a news conference: "It's a common experience for students who come to the mental hygiene clinic to refer to the tower as the site of some desperate action. They say, 'I feel like jumping off the old tower.' [But Whitman had] no psychosis symptoms at all!" He never went back to the clinic but he did return to his violent fantasies. Lavergne characterized the 25-year old Marine veteran and Eagle Scout as "incredibly methodical as he went about killing his mother the night before the tower shootings, [and] placing her body in bed as if she were sleeping. Then he went back home and stabbed his wife." Until he went to the campus the next morning, "he spent the rest of his time polishing, getting weapons ready, buying more ammunition. All for the specific goal of going to the top of the UT tower and shooting people."

Lavergne does not believe Whitman suffered from a serious mental illness, although he had challenges common to many people—depression and anxiety. “But more than anything else,” he wrote, Whitman “was manipulative. He was always who he was expected to be. In front of his father-in-law he at times appeared to be a dutiful husband, when in fact he assaulted his wife, just as his daddy assaulted his mother. He gave people the impression [that] he was an honor student when, in fact, when he died he had a 1.9 grade point average.” While admitting to having unusual and irrational thoughts, Whitman failed to mention that he had also been abusing amphetamines, but the potential impact of his amphetamine use was no longer discussed after the discovery of a possible brain tumor. A medical panel later diagnosed the mass as a glioblastoma, which could have contributed to Whitman’s inability to control his emotions and actions. But Lavergne insisted, “Plenty of people have tumors and are not violent. And plenty of people have depression, anxiety, and depression and aren’t violent.”

Soon after the shooting, hundreds of University of Texas students combed the campus. “Why them?” they asked somberly. “Why those 45? Why not us?” Parents “were calling the dorm and crying and asking where their kids were,” said another student. “If the operators told them they didn’t know, the callers begged [the operators] to find them. It was panicky, frantic.”

On August 2, President Johnson deplored the “shocking tragedy” and said “we must press urgently” for a federal gun control law. Congress had been considering such legislation for many months, Johnson said, but “Now is the time for action.” White House press secretary Bill Moyers said the president wanted legislation to address controls on rifles and shotguns as well as handguns. Senator Thomas Dodd, Democrat of Connecticut and chief senate sponsor of gun control legislation, hoped that the Austin shooting would spur passage of such a law. The incident in Austin, Dodd said, was “an extreme example of what has been going on for much too long in this country. Rifles are used to murder and wound tens of thousands of people annually.” Dodd’s measure proposed to “ban mail order sales of pistols and revolvers and restrict interstate purchase of rifles and shotguns,” but the proposal had been “bottled up in the senate judiciary committee” for several months. No action had “ever been taken on or this or any similar bills by the house,” and none seemed likely.

Senator Edward V. Long, Democrat of Missouri, countered that he was “not sure that the Dodd bill would prevent another mass killing.” He said, “All it does is prevent mail order sales. Perhaps this will give impetus to legislation to limit sales to children and criminals. Something will have to be done.” The chief opponent of all gun legislation, the National Rifle Association, quickly reacted. Franklin Orth, its executive vice-president, insisted that a gun control law would not have prevented the murder of eight student nurses in Chicago or the killings in Austin.

Some observers questioned whether the “Texas gun culture” helped to create an environment in which such a shooting was more likely to occur. The link between Texas and guns was treated as “an immutable law of nature.” The day

after the shooting, stories published in the United Kingdom explicitly blamed the number of guns in American society for what happened. “Sudden violence was familiar in America.” Neighbors of the Whitman family in Florida said that Charles was raised in a house “full of guns” and that his father taught him how to use firearms from an early age. “It was one of the ways the two men related to each other, and it was one of the few things about his son that the elder Whitman praised unreservedly.”

An article in *The Austin Statesman*, entitled “Arsenal Ordinary in Texas,” published three days after the shooting, examined the weapons Whitman brought to the tower. “To those who did not grow up in a gun culture, this collection sounds excessive. However, several sportsmen said afterwards that arsenals this size and even larger were not uncommon in Texas households. The secretary of the Texas Senate himself reported owning six rifles, three shotguns, and a pistol.

Whitman was buried next to his beloved mother—his first victim—in a Catholic cemetery in Florida. His wife Katy, only 23 years old, was buried in Rosenberg, Texas, not far from where she grew up.

“Is it true that Roland was among those wounded by that Eagle Scout?”

The day after the shooting, Cap’s parents received a hand-written letter from Carleton Toppe, President of Northwestern College. “After the initial shock of seeing your son’s face on the TV screen last night, it has been gratifying to hear that his wounds are not considered serious and that he will soon be his normal self.” Toppe wrote. He added that he was pleased to see that Cap did not “intend to dramatize the experience. The newspaper account stated that he denied being a hero,” which to Toppe “seemed to be something rather typical about his attitude toward heroics; he’s not the display type.” There certainly was “a protecting arm” which shielded Cap from suffering death or serious injury. “My prayers join yours in gratitude to our Lord,” Toppe concluded, “for his gracious protection.”

The next day Pastor and Mrs. Ehlke heard from Robert Voss, President of Milwaukee Lutheran Teachers College. “The news of Cap’s injuries sustained at the hands of a demented man was most shocking,” he wrote. “May our gracious Lord, who does all things well, watch over your son and restore his strength and health.”

The day after that, Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary President Carl Lawrenz wrote to Cap’s parents. “I followed the [news] reports with a great deal of anxiety both for you and for Roland, hoping and praying that the Lord had spared Roland very serious harm.” Lawrenz offered his prayer that “the Lord [would] graciously speed Roland’s recovery from the bullet wounds,” so that “he may again with a cheerful heart pursue the piece of training that he has mapped out for himself before beginning his theological studies at our Seminary.” He expressed the hope that this experience would encourage all involved “to think anew in humble faith

of what is brought to our remembrance in Lamentations 3:22,23: 'It is of the Lord's mercies that we are not consumed, because His compassions fail not; they are new every morning. Great is Thy faithfulness.'"

On August 6, Wisconsin Synod President Oscar Naumann wrote to Cap: "We were indeed saddened to hear that you, too, were one of the victims in the Austin shooting. But we are grateful to know that our Lord and Savior was with you in trouble and that He kept you from being wounded mortally as were so many others." The Synod President noted "how true are the words of the hymn:

In the midst of earthly life
Snares of death surround us;
Who shall help us in the strife,
Lest the foe confound us?
Thou only, Lord, Thou only (TLH 590).

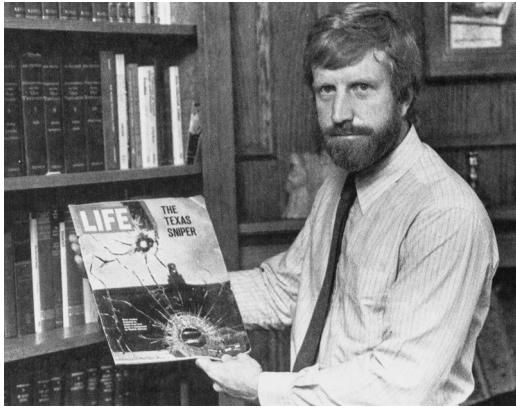
Sometime later, in a short P.S. to a letter about another subject, Prof. E.E. Kowalke of Northwestern College asked Cap's father, "Is it true that Roland was among those wounded by that Eagle Scout down in Texas?" One must know the long-standing theological opposition of the Wisconsin Synod to the Scouting program, and be familiar with Prof. Kowalke's distinctive sense of humor, to grasp the full import of his question.

Finally, on August 24, Texas Pastor Vilas Glaeske wrote to "Brother Ehлке and family" in Milwaukee to tell them, "I had an opportunity to visit with your son, Roland, a few minutes between classes [at the University of Texas] a week ago last Monday. Be assured that he is doing just fine. It was his first day back in class and the bandages were the only clue to his injuries." He wrote to them, he said, "to dispel any apprehension you might have had."

Pastor Ehлке soon after wrote to Cap and enclosed the letters he and his wife had received. "They give some small idea of the people who were concerned and prayed to God for your safety. Take care of yourself and I hope we hear from you soon. Love, Dad."

"The shooting convinced me that I was meant to go into the seminary"

After he was released from the university's health center, Cap joined another Peace Corps group sent to Mexico to practice teaching before going to the Middle East. He was assigned to a high school in Mexico City, but at first his wounds were not healing properly. He continued to think about his sudden encounter with death. Soon he called the Seminary; classes had already begun, but he was re-enrolled. In summer 1967 Cap went to Iran to visit some of his Peace Corps friends, explored Europe, and visited Jerusalem just six weeks after the Six-Day War between Israel and Egypt. Later he attended the Hebrew University in Jeru-



*High Calling—The Northwestern Lutheran
September 15, 1986*

salem. Cap returned to the Seminary in fall 1967, graduated four years later, was a pastor for six years in Little Chute, Wisconsin, then served as an editor at Northwestern Publishing House. Later he became Chair of the Liberal Arts Major at Concordia University Wisconsin in Mequon, where he has taught Theology, Writing, and Literature courses. In the half century since that day in Austin, he has earned four masters' degrees and a doctorate. Among the numerous books he has written are *Cross and Crescent: A Christian Introduction to Islam*; *Christianity, Cults, and World Religions*; and *Speaking the Truth in Love to Muslims*.

Cap still reflects on that day. "It was as if the Lord was telling me that the thing to do was get directly into his work. So I entered the ministry." In retrospect, at least, he says he had had some reservations about how important it was to go into the Peace Corps, and he had never ruled out becoming a pastor. "The shooting convinced me that I was meant to go into the seminary."

One of his classmates does not recall hearing Cap speak much about Austin. "It was almost as if he was embarrassed about the event." Cap says the incident has left no lasting emotional scars. "It hasn't been anything traumatic. I haven't had any recurring nightmares. It was a striking and powerful experience. It made me think that at any point a person's life can come to an end without warning." He has never looked at his survival as "some kind of great accomplishment. It was just something I was involved in. In some ways it seemed kind of morbid to revisit it." He compares it now to being hit by lightning, "being touched by some force outside of me."

Yet certain things from that day are still so vivid in his memory that it hardly feels like more than 50 years have passed. "I still think back on one of our friends, Tom Ashton, who was shot and killed that day." It "made me aware of how we are always close to death."

Cap said he would not have hated Whitman if the gunman had survived. "In a way I felt sorry for him and his family." He did a terrible thing, and he "went over

the edge.” Cap concludes, “I happen to have been shot by him, but my relationship to Charles Whitman is no different than someone who wasn’t even there.”

His life is now “very blessed with children and grandchildren.” On August 2, 2017, Cap’s son Josh visited the University of Texas campus. Four days later, Josh posted on Facebook his photo in front of the tower.

This is where, 51 years ago, my father, a student at the time, was shot three times during the fatal tower shooting. Being here was quite surreal. I can’t imagine the fear and pain he must have felt that day. Had he not survived this, my family and I would not exist. It’s crazy to think of “What if?” situations like this, but I just want to say I’m thankful for my dad and everything he’s done for me throughout my life. I love you, dad.

One of his 1966 college classmates who read in his graduate profile that “following graduation Cap will enter the Peace Corps,” now says: “I know that Cap served the church well and has been an effective servant of Christ. His areas of service have been as diverse as the world we are called to serve.”

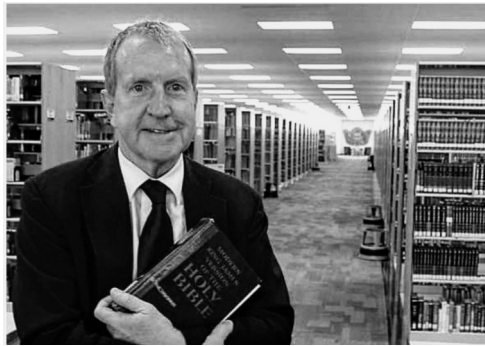


Photo courtesy of Roland Ehlke

Sources

“Austin Snipings Another in a List of Mass Killings.” *San Antonio Express* (August 2 1966).

“Beginning of an Era” The 1966 University of Texas Clock Tower Shooting.” NBC News (August 1, 2016).

Berkowitz, Bonnie; Denise Lu; and Chris Alcantara. “The terrible numbers that grew with each mass shooting.” *The Washington Post* (April 20, 1999).

Christman, Robert. “Editorial.” *The Black and Red* 67 (December 1963): 96.

“Class of ‘66.” *The Black and Red* 70 (June 1966): 34.

Coloff, Pamela. “96 Minutes.” *The Daily Texan* (August 2006).

Dum, Larry. “Same Non-Answer: Something Snapped.” *San Antonio Express* (August 2 1966).

- Duwe, Grant. *Mass Murder in the United States*. Jefferson, N.C.: McFarland and Company, Inc., 2007.
- Ehlke, Roland Cap. "Politics." *The Black and Red* 68 (November 1964): 106.
- Ehlke, Roland Cap. "Presidential Poll – '64." *The Black and Red* 68 (October 1964): 70.
- Ehlke, Roland Cap. "Reflections of Violence." *Concordian* (Fall 2006): 12-13.
- Engel, Jon. "To a Far Country." *The Black and Red* 67 (April 1964): 162-63.
- "Father-in-Law Liked Man Who Killed 'Only Daughter.'" *San Antonio Express* (August 2 1966).
- Franschell, Ron. *Delivered from Evil: True Stories of Ordinary People Who Faced Monstrous Mass Killers and Survived*. Beverly: Mass.: Fair Winds Press, 2011, 142-65.
- Fredrich, E.C. "Northwestern During the Late Thirties." *The Black and Red* 68 (February 1965): 174.
- Garza, Alejandra. "'The eyes of the World are Upon You, Texas': How the Austin Newspapers Covered the UT Tower Shooting." <http://behindthetower.org/how-austin-newspapers-covered-the-shooting>
- Gumbell, Andrew. "Vegas raises specter of first US mass shooting in 1966—when far fewer died." *The Guardian* (October 2, 2017).
- Hammack, Maria Esther. "A Brief History of Mass Shootings." <http://behindthetower.org/a-brief-history-of-mass-shootings>
- "He was a Nice Guy, Killer's Friends Say." *The Milwaukee Journal* (August 2, 1966).
- Heard, Robert. "6 Inches From Death." *San Antonio Express* (August 2, 1966).
- Henderson, Nat. "Sniper 'Worst Type' Psycho." *The Austin American* 53 (August 5, 1966): A6.
- "Heroic Policeman Showed Initiative." *San Antonio Express* (August 2 1966).
- Ibisch, John. "President Kennedy—The World's Ideal." *The Black and Red* 67 (December 1963): 97-98.
- "Johnson Sees Urgent Need for Law." *The Milwaukee Journal* (August 2, 1966).
- "Just a Part of His Job." *The Austin Statesman* (August 2 1966).
- Lavergne, Gary. *A Sniper in the Tower: The Charles Whitman Murders*. Denton, Tex.: University of North Texas Press, 1997.
- "Mass Slayer Had 'Nice Guy' Image." *San Antonio Express* (August 2 1966).
- McCreary, Anna. "Survivor recalls confusion, terror of Tower shooting." *The Daily Texan* (August 1, 2016).
- McQuiston, Isaac. "Armed Civilians and the UT Tower Tragedy." <http://behindthetower.org/armed-civilians-and-the-ut-tower-tragedy>
- McQuiston, Isaac. "Texas Gun Culture and the UT Tower Shooting." <http://behindthetower.org/texas-gun-culture-and-the-ut-tower-shooting>
- "Milwaukeean Heard Shot, Was Hit," *The Milwaukee Journal* (August 2, 1966).

Nevin, David. "The Eagle Scout Who Grew Up with a Tortured Mind." *Life Magazine* (August 12, 1966).

Nibbelink, Herman. "Ambassadors to the World." *Reformed Journal* 16 (April 1966): 10-11.

Personal correspondence.

Peterson, Karl. "The Call." *The Black and Red* 68 (October 1964): 58.

Phalichanh, Justin P. "The Peace Corps: An Altruistic or Imperialistic Enterprise." Master's thesis, Brandeis University, May 2010.

Responses by email from classmates and contemporaries of Cap Ehlke, received February 14-22, 2018.

Rice, Gerard T. *The Bold Experiment: JFK'S Peace Corps*. South Bend, Ind.: University of Notre Dame, 1985.

Rohde, Marie. "High Calling." *The Milwaukee Journal*; reprinted in *The Northwestern Lutheran* 73 (September 15, 1986): 308-309.

Rosenwald, Michael S. "The Loaded Legacy of the UT Tower Shooting." *The Washington Post* (July 31, 2016).

Schroeder, Lynn. "The Unpopular Conservative." *The Black and Red* 67 (November 1963): 72.

"Sniper Had a Tumor." *The Austin Statesman* (August 2 1966).

"Sniper Purchased Shotgun on Credit." *San Antonio Express* (August 2 1966).

"Shock Wave Hits Campus." *San Antonio Express* (August 2, 1966).

Silverman, Lauren. "Gun Violence and Mental Health Laws, 50 Years after Texas Tower Sniper." NPR Morning Edition (July 29, 2016).

Stoerker, C. Frederick. "A Church View of the Peace Corps." *The Christianity Century* 79 (November 14 1962): 1381-82.

"Student Slays 15 From Tower Perch," *San Antonio Express* (August 2 1966).

Todd, Leon, "Ideals and Actions." *The Black and Red* 67 (December 1963): 99

"Texas Sniper's Killing of 15 Spurs Call for Gun Control." *The Milwaukee Journal* (August 2, 1966).

"U.T. Spree Bloodiest?" *The Austin Statesman* (August 2 1966).

Whitman, Charles Joseph. Letter to his mother, July 31, 1966. <http://alt.cimedia.com/statesman/specialreports/whitman/letter.pdf>

U. V. Koren's Works,
edited and translated by Mark DeGarmeaux.
Mankato: ELS Historical Society, 2014-2017.
Four volumes, 2,065 pp, hc, \$27.50/volume.

Professor Mark DeGarmeaux and the ELS Historical Society have done a great service to the cause of confessional Lutheranism in America by translating and publishing the collected works of the “Norwegian Walther,” Ulrik Vilhelm Koren (1826-1910). Koren was a father of the old Norwegian Synod, arriving in America a few weeks after the founding of the synod in 1853. He was responsible for starting and establishing several congregations and was instrumental in establishing Luther College in Decorah, Iowa. He served as president of the synod’s Iowa District and as synod president. He helped lead his synod into the Synodical Conference and provided confessional leadership in several controversies, supporting Walther’s position in the Election Controversy.

After Koren's death in 1910, his son Paul compiled his works in a four-volume set in the Norwegian language. The current collection is a translation of the Norwegian original. Some of his writings appeared previously in translation in various church publications. DeGarmeaux has included those previously published and has added translations of some recently discovered correspondence.

The first volume contains sermons for every Sunday and major holiday of the church year. The sermons are simple, clear messages that are full of comfort and practical applications for his parishioners. The heart of a pastor who loves his people is evident throughout. The second volume includes presidential addresses and speeches delivered at dedications, etc. The third volume is a theological treasure. These doctrinal essays and articles, which are the fruit of his years of study and experience in America, address the theological issues of the day and the doctrinal controversies (particularly the Election Controversy) which were plaguing Lutherans in America. The essays contain timeless truths and warnings that continue to be pertinent today. Volume four is a potpourri of memoirs, correspondence, poems, brief periodical articles, biographical information, and tributes to Koren. Those who have a penchant for history will find much to pique their historical curiosity.

Koren had the ability to write clearly and express profound truths simply. DeGarmeaux has a gift for rendering Koren’s Norwegian into readable, contemporary English. This four-volume set is a treasure chest of historical, doctrinal, and devotional material. It deserves a wide readership and circulation. The current generation can learn much from this confessional Lutheran giant.

John M. Brenner

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, including the cost of subscription: Individual: \$20.00; Husband/Wife: \$25.00 (2 votes but only one publication issue); Congregation, School, Library, Corporation: \$40.00; and Student: \$15.00. Fees may be sent to the WELS Historical Institute, N15W23377 Stone Ridge Drive, Waukesha, Wisconsin 53188.

The board members are: Prof. Joel Pless, president; Mr. Daniel Nommensen, vice-president; Mrs. Naomi Plocher, secretary; Mr. Ryan Haines, treasurer; Rev. David Dolan, Rev. Joel Leyrer, Mr. Steven Miller, Mr. Carl Nolte, Prof. Joel Otto, Rev. Benjamin Schaefer, Rev. William Schaefer, and Rev. Robert Weiss. Advisory members are: Mrs. Susan Willems, synod archivist, Prof. John M. Brenner, and Ms. Charlotte Sampe, designer and museum curator.

For membership information contact:

Mr. Carl Nolte

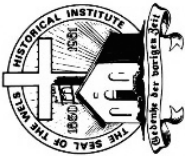
(414) 975-0672 • cbnolte@gmail.com

Correspondence may be sent to the editor:

Professor John M. Brenner

11844 N. Luther Lane, Mequon, WI 53092

(262) 242 - 8138 Email: john.brenner@wls.wels.net



Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod

N16W23377 Stone Ridge Drive
Waukesha, WI 53188-1108

Address Service Requested

Non-Profit Organization

U.S. Postage

PAID

Milwaukee, WI

PERMIT NO. 2927
