

The WELS Forty-niners



Edgar H. Hoenecke

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In This Issue

- 2 Foreword *James P. Schaefer*
3 The WELS Forty-niners *Edgar H. Hoenecke*
(The chronicle of two mission pioneers.)
69 Afterword *Duane K. Tomhave*

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Cover photograph: Pastors Edgar H. Hoenecke (left) and Arthur G. Wacker walking the deck of the *African Crescent*.

Foreword

IT IS WITH GREAT PLEASURE that we present this account in its entirety to members of the WELS Historical Institute and to a wider readership. It is the account of an exploratory expedition to Africa in 1949 by Pastors Edgar Hoenecke and Arthur G. Wacker which signaled a new era in the history of missions in the Wisconsin Synod.

The 1947 convention of the synod had launched the new era with a 13-word resolution: "That the synod authorize the expansion of our mission work in foreign fields." The implementation of the resolution was delegated to the synod's mission board. The mission board wisely decided that no overseas field would be entered without a firsthand exploration to verify, under God, the potential of the field.

Almost two years passed, and the mission board was not able to find the men to conduct the search in Africa, the chosen field. Only months before the 1949 synodical convention the mission board persuaded Pastor Hoenecke of St. Peter, Plymouth, Michigan and Pastor Wacker of Salem, Scio, Michigan to undertake the African exploratory expedition.

Both men were deeply committed to the cause of missions. Hoenecke had been executive secretary of the Indian (Apache) Mission since October 1940 and in the 1945 convention had prodded the synod to embark on some overseas mission project. Wacker was active on the Michigan District mission board and had chaired a special Committee on Foreign Missions. The special committee resulted from the 1945 convention's reaction to the Hoenecke prod. In 1947 the special committee recommended to the convention immediate overseas mission expansion.

When Hoenecke's account of the expedition came into our hands, it was clear that the account should be printed in its entirety in one issue of the *Journal* even though it would substantially increase the size and cost of the *Journal* beyond its normal limits. To print the story in two or three installments was unthinkable from both a historical and literary point of view. We trust our readers will agree with our judgment.

When we received the 86-page typewritten manuscript, we read it at one sitting, held captive by the descriptive powers of Hoenecke so vivid after almost 40 years. Those who know Hoenecke recognize him as a world-class storyteller, a long and noble role in the literary forms of the ages. We have eavesdropped on his stories for 30 years. None was better than this one.

And what has become of our two "forty-niners"? After serving as chairman and executive secretary of the synod's Board for World Missions from 1955 to 1977, Hoenecke is now living in retirement in San Diego, California. Wacker returned to Salem, Scio, and served on the world mission board's executive committee for Africa from 1955 to 1961 when ill-health forced him to retire from the board. In 1963 he retired from Salem and in 1974 the Lord called this veteran of the cross and lover of missions home.

James P. Schaefer
Editor

The WELS Forty-niners

Edgar H. Hoenecke

TWO MEN IN GRAY TOPCOATS and homburg hats stood at the stern rail of the *African Crescent*, a trim freighter of the Farrell Lines, just before midnight on April 30th, 1949. The big ship was poised at Pier Four, Brooklyn, for the 8000-mile run down the full length of the Atlantic to Capetown at the very southern tip of Africa.

The ship's loudspeakers blared the warning for the last time, "All ashore that's goin' ashore!" Then signal bells rang, the loading ramps were pulled back with a loud rumble, and the stevedores cast off the huge hawsers which had held the freighter to the pier. Ever so slowly the big vessel was nudged away from its berth under the bright floodlights toward the East River channel.

The two passengers at the rail were watching the busy maneuver standing somewhat apart from the other passengers who were exchanging last farewells with their friends on the pier. There was no one to cry *bon voyage* to the two men at the stern. They felt and looked quite forlorn. On the purser's roster they were listed simply as "Mr. Arthur G. Wacker of Ann Arbor and Mr. Edgar Hoenecke of Plymouth, Michigan — in Stateroom No. 6." At the time Wacker was fifty, the pastor of Salem Church of Scio, Michigan's oldest Lutheran church. His companion served St. Peter of Plymouth. He was forty-five.

Now the tugs pulled away into the murky haze and the *African Crescent* moved seaward under its own power. Its sturdy engines took over with a steady throb that would not falter or fail for twenty days and nights, at first filling the landlubbers with an uneasy feeling of instability which kept them awake, then becoming a soothing soporific lulling them to unbroken slumber.

The Caravan

The two pastors had been on board since noon on that last Saturday of April to stow their luggage in the stateroom and to observe the loading of the big white vehicle which had carried them from Michigan to Brooklyn four days earlier. This was a large camper or *caravan*, as a house-on-wheels is called in Africa. They were concerned about loading its ungainly bulk in the ship's hold. They had no cause for worry. The ship's crane lifted its 10,630 pounds with ease, swung it high over the ship's rail and deposited it gently into the slot reserved for it between large wooden packing cases in the hold. As it disappeared into the hatch its function as well as the purpose of the journey of the two Michigan pastors could be read on its sides in bold letters,

superimposed on a gold cross: "Lutheran African Mission — Exploratory Expedition."

The interest of the pastors in the loading had not been caused by idle curiosity. They had a personal concern in its design and the supervision of its construction from the beginning. This *caravan* was to provide them with shelter and mobility for the next four months as they explored remote regions of Africa in search of a promising virgin mission site for their church. The vehicle was very important for their plan to penetrate areas which were normally almost inaccessible. In fact, they had not been able to find road and trail maps to guide them but had to depend on maps of the National Geographic Society which offered only general road information. They hoped that they would be able to subsist on the food and fuel which they could carry with them in addition to their own beds, appliances, tools and other items required for self-sufficient bush travel.

An important item which they could not carry with them was the ability — to say nothing of all the proper implements — which might make them self-reliant for major and minor automotive repairs. This was a deficiency which they could not provide, although Wacker had signed on as a self-styled motor "expert."

The vehicle, apparently well equipped for rugged terrain, was soon found to be too heavily built to take the continuous pounding and bumping in and out of deep hard-baked ruts with the single rear wheels which had been installed despite the owners' misgivings. Their failure to insist on dual rear wheels was to cost them dearly in time and trouble on the long safari.

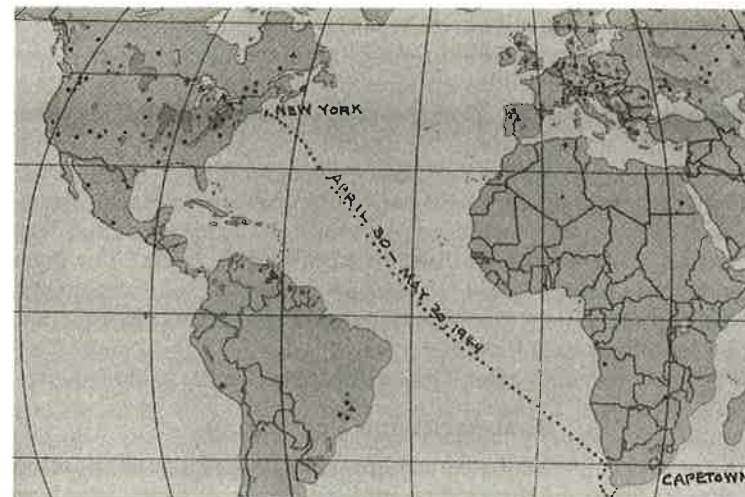
The camper was hardly an object of beauty. It appeared to be, and it was, an ungainly overweight monster on wheels. The body man at Fruehauf Trailer Company at Detroit was far more concerned about durability than streamlined beauty. Its gross weight of over five tons on a one-ton Dodge Power Wagon chassis was due largely to insistence on steel boiler plate for the body instead of the plywood or aluminum which had been specified. The auto dealer was certain that this weight could be safely carried on single rear wheels. The African bush trails proved him wrong.

For the expected hard pull in sand or mud the normal, four-wheel drive was augmented with a forward creeper gear and two reverse gears. Provisionally, a power winch, driven by the motor, was also welded to the front bumper and supplied with a steel cable which could be made fast to a conveniently placed tree.

The Shakedown Run to New York

The capability of the vehicle was to be demonstrated on the trip from Plymouth and Ann Arbor to New York and Brooklyn. It proved entirely satisfactory on the concrete pavement, even on the hilly stretches of the Pennsylvania Turnpike. The two-day run was without further incident than the discovery near Pittsburgh of a serious oil leak. A filling station attendant found that this was nothing more than a loose oil plug in the drip pan which was hanging by "just a thread."

Wacker was quick to paraphrase the thing about the lost horseshoe nail: "For want of a plug the oil was lost; the transmission was shot; the boat was missed — and the whole exploration for a mission field had to be called off."



The route of the "Forty-niners."

After having said rather boastfully, as he wheeled the behemoth down the pike, "Ed, this thing handles like a Cadillac," he broke into song. "There's a long, long trail a-winding into the land of my dreams," he sang at the top of his voice. His colleague was sitting at the collapsible table in the rear typing out the four-page bill of lading for customs. He felt Wacker's exuberance ought to be captured on tape for future reference, so he plugged in the tape recorder. Wacker was unaware that his interesting remarks were being taped. As he approached another steep grade on the pike, he said, "Let's see whether this creeper gear is all that it's cracked up to be." The rest of his words of praise at the success of the test are lost in the bone-shaking noise of that creeper gear. Every time it was used it seemed as though the gears would be ground to steel filings.

To hear this recording after 35 years is a rare treat!

Equipment and Provisions

Sitting at the typewriter in the living space afforded a good opportunity to check the condition of the equipment and furnishings in actual use. An upper and lower bunk, directly behind the cab wall, had proved comfortable on the first night out. The generator under the lower bunk had to be shut off during the night because it made sleep impossible. The trip would have to be made without a twenty-four-hour source of light and power for our appliances like the shiny new refrigerator which had been stocked with all kinds of food and drink.

The tools, utensils, appliances, dress clothes and other paraphernalia all stayed in place in the wall cupboards. Canned and packaged foods in cartons, kettles, pans and dishes remained snugly secure in closed shelves above and around the sink and butane gas stove.

Under the bunk were boxes of trinkets and junk jewelry, donated by a variety store. In a secret flat space above the ceiling of the cab were stowed our firearms — for emergency use only — and a gross of switchblades from a member at Toledo. He predicted that they would be gifts in most popular demand. He was right. A foam-rubber pad above the cab provided sleeping space, albeit a little tight, for occasional overnight guests.

All this equipment was thoroughly checked against the bill of lading at New York and the items which would be needed aboard ship were carried to the stateroom before sailing. The freighter's captain, A. R. Mortensen, had advised the twelve passengers that they would have no access to things stored in the ship's hold during the voyage because all hatches would be battened down as a precaution against stormy weather.

The First Night at Sea

As soon as the freighter entered the East River channel foghorns began to blast their dismal warnings. At increased speed the freighter now plowed a straight course through the inky black water, throwing only a shimmering spray on either side of the prow, visible in the soft glow of the riding lights. It became very chilly. Soon the two men at the rail followed their fellow passengers indoors and sought the comfort and warmth of their stateroom.

The two pastors were embarked on the greatest adventure of their lives. A safari through the wilds of Africa would excite the envy of most men. Still,

as they settled down in their cabin they felt no thrill or surge of excitement at the prospect of what lay before them. They were exhausted from the hectic pace of the past three months of preparation which coincided with Lent and Easter. They were apprehensive about their responsibility for finding the right field with the inadequate information which was at their command.

The unfamiliar throb of the ship's engines and the constant pitch and roll of the vessel kept them awake and they talked far into the night.

The Solemn Farewell from Home

They talked especially about their loved ones at home. Before boarding they had made telephone calls to their families and those only served to emphasize how much they were missed and how sorely they were needed at home. Pastor Wacker had lost his wife only a year earlier and had to leave his younger children in the care of relatives at the very age when they needed their father most. His companion also had five children, two of them still at home and three in college.

For both families it had been a very sad farewell because of the length of the absence and the uncertain and dangerous nature of the expedition across the ocean and through the wilds of Africa. This was underscored by the solemn fact that provision had to be made for the possibility of no return. All these thoughts occupied the minds of the two men as they prepared for their first night at sea and committed their loved ones and themselves to the Lord who had sent them through his church.

This was also the beginning of the first rest and relaxation which they had enjoyed since the beginning of January. Casting about for some distraction they decided to play the tape of their conference farewell on April 19th. It raised their spirits again to hear the sermon, the singing of the congregation and the pastors' chorus and the words of the commissioning and prayer which were read by President Karl Krauss of the Michigan District. They felt reassured that they were on an errand for the Lord and that they could count on his almighty protection and blessing.

But it also reminded them that this send-off of the Southeastern Conference of the Michigan District was only an informal, unofficial friendly gesture. Aside from a number of reassuring letters from individuals, from the synod's leaders they had received no official word commending them to the Lord's protection and guidance in the search for a promising mission field for the Wisconsin Synod.

That they were undertaking this hazardous venture for the church without the church's prayer of Godspeed and success kept intruding into their thoughts and conversation until Wacker finally blurted out, "Do you know, Ed, this absence of a single word of farewell and 'God bless you!' from Milwaukee [headquarters] makes one wonder whether we can expect any blessing on what we are doing."

His colleague agreed, but then recalled some of the developments which had led to the exploration.

How it had all Begun

"Art," he said, "we'll fail before we've even begun, if we let these human feelings rob us of the certainty that the Lord himself has sent us on this

assignment. He has commanded his followers to go into all the world to preach the gospel. And he has spoken clearly through our synod that our mission board should send two men to explore the African continent for a promising field. We are under God's orders!"

"That's right," Wacker responded. "Let's just go back to the beginning. When you submitted your *Indian Mission Report*¹ to the General Mission Board, you were asked to read it to the General Synodical Committee² in May and to propose it with the full approval of the mission board to the 1945 convention of the synod at New Ulm. No objection was raised against it by the Synodical Committee and its 65 leaders of the synod. It was also printed as you had drafted it in the *Book of Reports and Memorials* as a legitimate proposal. I'll tell you that I was shocked when the chair³ called you out of order."

"Art, I'm sure that this sharp rebuke had the effect of calling forth much of the spontaneous support which our proposal then received from the delegates. I sensed an eagerness on the part of the official delegates from the districts to put an end to the many years of negative reaction to every forward-looking proposal. With the announcement of the retirement of our huge synodical debt and the end of the world war it was almost inevitable that someone would propose the expansion of our mission program even if we of the mission board had not done so."

"You're right. Just think of it. The trustees reported not only that the big debt was wiped out, but also that a surplus of \$350,000 had been placed into a contingency fund. I know that they felt this to be good business as a hedge against a recurrence of the days when many graduates could not be given calls and the missionaries and professors had to take a cut of ten and twenty percent in their salaries."

"Let's not forget either, Art, that the big effort to retire the debt was begun in 1935 with a resolution which based its argument on the fact that we were making a mockery of our prayer 'Thy Kingdom Come!' by allowing the debt and its interest to block every move to suit action to the words of our prayer."

Enthusiastic Support

They recalled the wave of enthusiasm which swept through the synod with the news that the 1947 convention had authorized an expanded mission program at home and abroad. Instead of crying over perpetual deficits, as some of the synod's leaders predicted would be the result of the mission outreach, the congregations met the challenge by responding with a consistently higher level of gifts of faith.

When finally two pastors had been found to make the required exploration for the mission board, both individuals and congregations came forward with extra, voluntary gifts to defray the cost of items which could not be covered by the mission budget. Members from all the districts responded but especially those of the Michigan District.

It had been most difficult to find two men who were both qualified and able to undertake the African exploration. Almost three years had gone by in a futile search. Then a member of the mission board, Pastor Arthur Wacker, felt constrained to volunteer because he correctly feared that the whole project would be scuttled if the mission board failed to report an

on-the-spot investigation to the 1949 convention.

The mission board had twice approached the author of the 1945 Indian Mission proposal to be one of the team members because of his proven interest and his experience in producing sound films on mission operations. He was under doctors' care for renal calculi, had difficulty getting insurance coverage and his congregation had declined to release him. The congregation was then engaged in a major relocation and building program which had been interrupted by World War II.

The African exploration had to be made. The mission board was resolved not to propose a mission field to the synod without a first-hand survey and contact with the country involved. Pastor Wacker asked for permission to present the mission board's pleas before St. Peter's voters' assembly. After he pleaded the cause before this mission-minded congregation, they relented and agreed to release their pastor for an absence not to exceed six months.

Mission concern was evident in many other districts of the synod, but was most active in the Southeastern Conference of the Michigan District. Over \$2,000 was received to make possible the production of a sound motion picture for later showing in the congregations and of a complete tape recording of the exploration. A friend who was not a member of the synod donated a backup 16 mm movie camera. This proved to be a very good investment. The film *Africa Still Calls* brought in more than the cost of the exploration and aroused the enthusiastic support of the new mission throughout the synod.

The Farewell Service

A brief reference was made above to a recording of the farewell service of the Southeastern Conference. This requires a little further explanation.

President Karl Krauss of the Michigan District was greatly interested in the newly-developing mission enthusiasm, and he asked that a special farewell and commissioning service be held by the conference shortly before the departure of the two conference brothers for their arduous journey. It was on the Tuesday evening after Easter. The families of the two pastors and their parishioners were invited. Everyone was aware of the hectic three months of preparation which had gone on before and of the possible dangers of the journey. Even the informal social hour after the service could not dispel entirely the solemnity of the commissioning. President Krauss was noticeably moved as he read the solemn rite and the earnest prayer for the safety and health of the two explorers and for the success of their undertaking for the Lord and the church.

The entire service and the beautiful German and English numbers sung during the service and the social hour by the pastors' chorus, such as "Muede bin ich, geh' zur Ruh'," ("Now I lay me down to sleep"), "Now is the Hour that We Must Say Goodbye," and "Faraway Places," were recorded on tape for the travelers to play on their long lonesome trek.

Then came the moment when all the pastors and members came up individually to bid their friends Godspeed. Without the blessing of the Lord and the prayers of these good friends and colleagues the project must have failed. The awareness of their prayers did much to sustain the two pastors as they groped their way through the boundless expanse of Africa.

Final Preparations

Holy Week with its unusually heavy schedule of services and visits to shut-ins afforded the pastors little time for the last-minute preparations for their long absence and journey. Final arrangements had to be made with the vacancy pastors to insure the proper care of the congregations. Family matters had to be put in order for the long absence of the fathers. Final inoculations of several preventive series had to be taken. Some visas of the fourteen countries to be visited had not arrived and now would have to be picked up from the consulates at New York. The Plymouth pastor, finally, was sold a health insurance policy after making a plea for waiving certain restrictions.

Local police chiefs supplied official documents stating that the two pastors were in good standing. The local *Plymouth Mail* supplied free papier-maché mats of the vehicle and its two occupants to be given to newspapers en route for African illustrated coverage of the expedition. This was found especially valuable in the cities, Windhoek, Elizabethville, Lusaka, Salisbury, Bulawayo and Pretoria.

Special mention must be made of Dr. David Littlejohn and his Wayne County Health Department for supplying information regarding various African diseases and inoculations and medications free of charge. Dr. Littlejohn, a good Christian elder, also assured the pastors of his prayers for the success of their great undertaking.

The Planned Itinerary

Without all this moral support and the faithful help of the families and church members in testing and packing all the equipment, accessories and provisions the trip could not have been made on schedule. The week after Easter was one mad rush. The departure from Michigan had to be made no later than Monday morning, April 25th, to take care of matters at New York and to deliver the vehicle to the Brooklyn pier by Saturday noon, the 30th of April.

The mission board had not supplied any detailed instructions about the places to be visited. Everything had been left in the hands of the two Michigan pastors. This included the decision about the route of travel. It is difficult today, thirty-five years later, to appreciate what a woeful lack of information was available to us about conditions in Africa. We visited the export divisions of the Detroit auto manufacturers and others, but received only very sketchy information about travel or procurement of living necessities outside of the larger cities.

Letters had gleaned more information about areas already occupied by missions from the Nigerian Mission of the Synodical Conference and the German Bleckmar Mission in South Africa. Our own Wisconsin Synod man, Superintendent William Schweppe of the Nigerian Mission invited us to Nigeria and also offered to accompany us to the Upper Volta region which had been suggested as a mission opening. But both of these missions had been unable to answer our question as to where to begin and how to proceed to find the right field.

It was finally up to us on the basis of reports and maps to decide on a tentative itinerary. This had to include a visit to the southern as well as the

northern African regions just mentioned. After we were on African soil one week, we realized the folly of our first plan. This was to begin at Capetown, to visit the Bleckmar field to the east near Durban, then to drive north through the Rhodesias, the Congo basin and on to Nigeria and the Upper Volta. Northern Rhodesia was included because no Lutheran work was reported in this country. We knew that it was a British colony and that English was spoken, and this weighed heavily in favor of considering it seriously. It would not be necessary for our future missionaries to acquire a foreign language to work there.

Search for a Suitable Vehicle

The adoption of this itinerary involved also the finding of a means of transportation to penetrate to places which were too remote to be reached by normal travel facilities.

Inquiry about the availability of a suitable camper in Africa proved inconclusive and vague. We were told in Detroit that the best way would be to acquire a rugged vehicle in the States. We spent weeks searching for one in the newspaper advertisements. Finally, the *Detroit News* offered an opportunity. The "ideal safari wagon, used by actor Clark Gable in Africa," was for sale at a garage for only \$7,000. We considered the price too high. Had we but known what we knew later!

Since no other rugged camper was advertised, we came to the reluctant decision to have a body built on a suitable chassis. The Dodge Power Wagon was found to be the least expensive. At that time many people were building their own campers, so we thought that a good body builder in Detroit would meet all our needs most satisfactorily. We engaged the Fruehauf Trailer Company to do the job. On April 4th they advised us that other urgent commitments made delivery impossible by our deadline. We paid them over \$2,000, but had to have another body company build the cab and the interior furnishings such as bunks, cupboards, sink, refrigerator, stove, tanks and table. They completed their work on the Tuesday of Holy Week, only seven days before our planned departure.

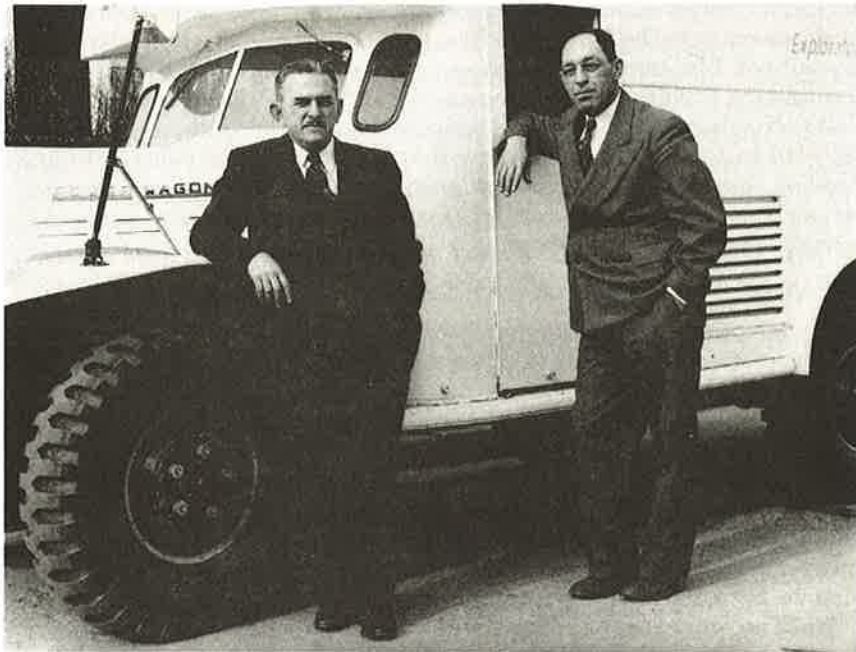
First Leg of the Big Trek

Monday, April 25th, dawned bleak and gray. A heavy fog lay like a pall over the valley behind the Plymouth church. The words of Werner's farewell in *Trompeter von Saeckingen* involuntarily came to mind,

"Rauh geht der See, der Wind schleicht durch die Blaetter;
ein Regenschauer zieht durch Wald und Feld.
Zum Abschiednehmen just das rechte Wetter;
Grau wie der Himmel liegt vor mir die Welt."

The lake is rough.
A gust of wind steals though the trees,
A showery drizzle covers wood and field.
For my farewell this is the perfect weather;
Gray like the skies before me lies the world.

My mood suited the weather as we did the final loading just before sunrise. Besides the family a number of faithful church members were on hand to see



Pastors Hoenecke and Wacker on Sunday, April 24, the day before departure.

Dr. David Littlejohn, chief of Wayne County Health Department, provided immunization and free medical advice and medications.



me off. With a heavy heart I took a sad farewell from my wife and children and climbed behind the big wheel to pick up Wacker at Scio, just west of Ann Arbor.

The fog began to lift as I drove into the driveway at Wacker's. He was ready with his gear and willing hands quickly stowed it in the camper. Another tearful farewell from his motherless children took place. Then we were off, determined to do our duty and confident that the Lord would provide protection for our loved ones and ourselves and his promised success for our undertaking. It was only a few minutes after nine o'clock.

The rather uneventful shakedown drive to New York has already been described.

Three Busy Days

A few words must be written about the warm send-off which we received from the people of the "Big Apple," who are so often thought of as indifferent to the welfare of strangers. New York, we found, has a heart. This was true of the traffic officer who waved us on when Wacker ignored the sign on the Skyway which is restricted to automobile traffic. It is also true of the staff of the City Bank of New York.

We went to the bank to cash some traveler's checks and to buy a few South African pounds. When we stated our plan to visit various African countries and requested a handy list of foreign currency values, we were introduced to the manager. He showed a great interest in our journey and assigned one of his vice-presidents to help us check our documents so that we might avoid problems in Africa. We were advised to obtain a *carnet de passage*, an international visa which would expedite our crossing of borders. On his advice we wired Milwaukee to obtain a letter of credit so that we would not be stranded in some remote foreign place for a lack of funds.

With these documents in addition to our international driver's license we were well equipped to handle the red tape involved in our journey through fourteen African countries.

Three Weeks at Sea

Having rehearsed these many matters in their stateroom on that first night at sea and having overcome the disturbance of the engine throb and the pitch and roll of the waves, the two landlubbers slept so well that they failed to hear the first call for breakfast. When they finally stepped on deck on Sunday morning, the first day of May, they were greeted by a truly glorious day. Instead of the fog the sun's rays danced on the rippling expanse of a calm sea. Captain Mortensen declared, "It's like a canoe ride on a millpond." And so it remained for twenty restful days. From horizon to horizon not a cloud and not a trace of land could be seen.

At breakfast we sat at a table for four with the ship's chief mate. He introduced himself as Alexander Emilianovich Troonin. Our other table companion was Mrs. Flora Peck of New York. When she heard that we were "reverends," Mrs. Peck said that she was going to Dar-es-Salaam for the *bar mitzvah* of her grandson and she added, "Religion is for the weak. I don't need religion; I am strong."

As our host Chief Troonin carried the conversation. He apologized for his

Russian accent and explained that he had served in the Russian navy under Tsar Nicholas and had been the skipper of the Tsar's racing yacht, the *Vamarie*, before he fled from his homeland because of the communists. He had also sailed one of the last grain ships, the *Joseph Conrad*, around Cape Horn. Having been an avid reader of Joseph Lincoln's books as a boy, I was delighted to be actually sitting for twenty days next to the skipper of one of the last grain ships! I never tired of hearing him tell of his sailing exploits, as when he sailed the *Joseph Conrad* into Christiansted harbor, the Virgin Islands, on a pitch-dark and stormy night.

Both of our table companions were fluent in Russian, Czech, Polish, French and German. And both spoke a broken English. The unusual thing about our fellow passengers was the fact that many of them spoke German as their mother tongue. This was true of Waldemar Heintz although he was born in Russia. His parents were German Lutheran people who had to flee from their homeland on the steppe between the Dnieper and Dniester rivers because of communist oppression. It was also true of Kurt and Rose Stern. They had both been born in Germany. Mrs. Stern told us that she had always considered herself "just a German girl" until Hitler came to power and began to persecute the people of her Jewish faith. The Sterns had fled as children at first to England. Kurt here acquired a clipped Oxford English and Rose also spoke a good English. Their parents had eventually emigrated to the Union of South Africa, the Sterns directly and the Wolffs, Rose's parents, over Holland. They both spoke German perfectly, also English, Dutch, Afrikaans and Ovambo, the language of their servants at Windhoek.

Another elderly couple from Racine, Mr. and Mrs. John Oster, also spoke German, although they had been born in Czechoslovakia. He was on his way to open new markets for the *Osterizer*, a food blender which they had just developed. He demonstrated this one day in the ship's galley, casually tossing whole eggs, egg shells and all, to the consternation of all the women — into the blender for an eggnog.

We have already mentioned Mrs. Flora Peck whose father was a textile mill owner in Czechoslovakia and also had to flee with his family from the communists. She too spoke German well.

There were four passengers who spoke no German. Mr. and Mrs. Eric Eldridge were natives of Antigua in the Caribbean, but were with the British consulate at Beira, Mozambique. They were returning from "holiday." Two Catholic "white fathers," Joseph Kay and Octave Dien, completed the passenger list of those who spoke no German.

A Friendship Develops

From the moment we became acquainted with Waldemar Heintz and Kurt Stern we felt drawn to them. This may have been due to their friendly personalities. It was strengthened by their interest in us as Lutheran pastors. Heintz himself was Lutheran. Kurt Stern had a special interest in Lutheran mission work because of his friendly relationship with the German missionaries in Southwest Africa. He was also disturbed as a native German about the deterioration of the German Lutheran Church in his adopted country from the days when it was a German colony. During the nineteenth century impressive Lutheran churches had been built in the

major cities, and these were still in good condition. But both their pastors and their people showed indifference to their heritage. Kurt Stern, though a Jew, saw in our coming a new hope for a revival of activity in the Lutheran Church of Southwest Africa. He once told us, "My German heritage makes me ashamed of what is going on in our Lutheran churches today."

We found his concern wellfounded. On the festival of Pentecost the imposing Lutheran church at Windhoek was locked because Pastor Hoeflich had accepted an invitation to attend a baptism dinner celebration at one of his rancher members.

These two gentlemen, Heintz and Stern, were frequent visitors in our stateroom. Our discussions flowed freely from English to German and back again. We discussed matters of importance to us and, apparently, also to them: the opening of new missions in Africa by our church. The effect of these discussions on our assignment cannot be overstated. They simply affected the whole plan of our quest for a field. At the end of two weeks Wacker and I reviewed our whole earlier thinking, and we preserved on tape for our mission board a formal interview with Stern.

Change of Itinerary

It was Kurt Stern who convinced us of the folly of covering too much territory with no opportunity for a thorough exploration of any single promising area. In the short time at our disposal we could not possibly cover Africa south and north of the equator and visit the Rhodesias [Zambia and Zimbabwe] also. Our pitiful lack of information on road and climatic conditions had not taken into proper account the effect of rainy seasons in the areas covered by our original itinerary. So we changed our route of travel.

We planned now to begin at Capetown and to travel up the Atlantic coast instead of the inland trip through the eastern reaches of the untamed Kalahari Desert. Driving via Windhoek we would visit the work of the Rhenish Mission and the Finnish Lutheran Mission among the Ovambos. Thence we would drive into Angola to pick up the improved gravel road which ran parallel to the Lobito-Benguela Railroad right of way and the Belgian Congo (Zaire) to Northern Rhodesia. If time allowed, we would visit the work of the Bleckmar Mission by hugging the Indian Ocean coast along Mozambique into the Union of South Africa. We would return to Capetown via Johannesburg to meet our freighter *African Crescent* on the return passage to the United States.

Wacker and I discussed this itinerary at length between us and found that it offered several opportunities for discovering a field which our original route of travel missed. We liked especially the emphasis which it laid on our visit to the English-speaking colony of Great Britain, Northern Rhodesia (Zambia).

Crossing the Equator

When the freighter was being loaded on the Saturday of our sailing from Brooklyn we were surprised that the whole lower deck was tightly packed with oil drums rail to rail. Two days later the captain ordered the crew to secure them with rough pine planks and boards which had been taken on board. Being bored with nothing to do on our upper deck, we went down and

began to give the sailors a hand with the job. This was against insurance laws and we were politely invited to return to the passenger deck by Mr. Troonin.

Three long weeks at sea with no interruption of bad weather or an interesting port of call can be very wearisome. Captain Mortensen and his officers tried to arrange for some diversion by showing some old movies and making an occasion of "crossing the line," the equator. This proved to be a lot of fun for the "polliwogs," those who had never "crossed the line" and those who had done so previously.

Wacker and I were among the "polliwogs." We were warned to appear on deck in old clothes before noon on May 10th when the momentous crossing would take place. King Neptune, Alexander Emilianovich Troonin, appeared in a seaweed skirt, a fish-scale vest and a crown and scepter with his court, also dressed for the great occasion. The two women "polliwogs," Flora Peck and Mrs. John Oster, were given commuted sentences for having dared to invade King Neptune's domain.

But the male "polliwogs," Joseph Kay, John Oster, Wacker and I, were summoned before Neptune's throne, a stepladder, and subjected to a stiff interrogation. The questions were all highly technical, relating to marine life and navigation. The "polliwogs" all flunked the test and were sentenced to take their punishment. They were placed in turn against the wall of the wheelhouse to be initiated into "the deep secrets of Neptune's realm, the kingdom of the seven seas."

King Neptune ordered one of his minions to bring the big bucket of "sea foam," soap suds. He took a huge paint brush and liberally lathered one at a time. Then he opened up his large wooden straight razor and gave each one a shave. At a signal he then stepped back while two sailors doused the hapless "polliwogs" with two big buckets of sea water. Then each one received a duly signed certificate of having crossed "the line."

When Wacker's turn came for the dousing he quickly clung to King Neptune, stepped aside, and Neptune got the double charge of sea water. He took it in stride, but Captain Mortensen, watching the proceedings from the bridge, jokingly accused the culprit of mutiny. We, too, got our certificate with a beautiful etching of the *African Crescent* on it.

The day closed with a grand, six-course dinner for the passengers. But the "polliwogs" were all set at a separate table and were given what appeared to be the same menu. There were various choices of foods and entrees. But when we "polliwogs" ordered our selection, we all received for every course the very same cold food: plates and dessert bowls of cold baked beans. The drinks we ordered from the wine list all turned out to be glasses of salty warm water.

Chief Engineer, Mr. Martin J. McDonough, the six-foot tall, black-haired Irishman with the golden tenor voice, one evening invited the Sterns, Waldemar Heintz, Wacker and me to his quarters for a South African lobster feast and music. He sang for us after dinner and we recorded it. His voice was like that of Enrico Caruso, but instead of opera he sang Irish folk songs, like *Kathleen Mavourneen*, *My Wild Irish Rose*, and *Do Ye Ken John Peel*. And then we sang our old German folk songs and McDonough sang with us, although the words were unknown to him and the melody, too, until he

heard it once. It was our most wonderful evening at sea.

McDonough was always getting us to do something whenever he could leave his engine room. His sea chanteys were the signal that he was off duty. With his help we made a tape recording of all the officers and passengers against the background of the sounds of the sea and ship. Also of Captain Mortensen without his knowledge coming down from the bridge.

Then, on the evening of the formal "Captain's Dinner," a grand occasion indeed, we played it all back and everyone, including our captain, had a very good time listening to it.

Atlantic Lutheran Church Services

Inevitably, the conversations with Kurt and Waldemar in our stateroom developed into discussions of religious matters. Kurt Stern was very much interested and knowledgeable. From his *bar mizvah* instructions he had gained a good understanding of the Old Testament.

During our first week at sea he turned to us one day and said that he and his friend Waldemar had spoken to the other passengers and crew and he had been delegated to ask us to conduct a church service on the two Sundays still to be spent at sea. He and Rose and Waldemar would have preferred a German service because they knew some of our German chorales, but it would have to be English.

I was asked to preach the first sermon on May 8th for the service held in the ship's lounge. Wacker read the liturgy. We had no hymnals, so we picked well-known hymns and English translations of German hymns. Mrs. Stern practiced with us and led the singing with a lovely soprano voice. The melodies were known to her and Kurt and Waldemar Heintz.

The text of the sermon was John 17:17: "Thy Word is Truth." Jesus therewith bound himself to the Old Testament as God's inerrant word. Because he fulfilled its prophecy perfectly, he alone can claim to be the Messiah promised and the world Savior. We can rely on him as the way, the truth and the life.

Almost all the passengers, excepting the two white fathers, attended with many of the crew. On the next Sunday when Wacker preached on "The Son of Man is come to seek and to save that which was lost," the attendance was even larger and many expressed their appreciation for our services.

The further good effect of these church services was shown to us later in our visit to the home of the Kurt Sterns.

Almost Stranded at Walvis Bay

The name Walvis Bay is a corruption of the German "Walfisch Bai," or "Whale Bay." It is a day's run south of Windhoek by auto. Here the old German colonials sighted the whales on their annual calving routes toward the Antarctic.

Our freighter made a brief port call here to discharge much of its cargo of oil for shipment to Windhoek and other places inland. Since we had decided to drive up the Atlantic coast to Windhoek, we asked Captain Mortensen whether we could have our *caravan* put ashore to save us the thousand miles from Capetown. Kurt Stern was disembarking here and he could have gone with us to his home at Windhoek. Our request had to be denied because our

vehicle was stowed too tightly with the cargo. Furthermore, we did not have a visa for Southwest Africa and could not enter the country without it.

Wacker and I went ashore for a walk since the sailing was scheduled for 3:00 o'clock. We were still blithely out in the endless expanse of sand dunes, reminiscent of the desert of Baja California, when we heard a warning blast from the ship, the signal for departure. Assuming it to be the first, not the final call, we walked toward the harbor. Then we heard our names over the ship's loudspeaker, urging us to board for immediate sailing. The captain had decided to sail thirty minutes early because the loading was finished. We ran and rushed across the gangplank just as the crew was pulling it aboard.

It was our last night on the *Crescent* and we were all more than ready to end the long voyage. Sensing our impatience the captain ordered the steward to run another Western film out on the deck under the canopy of stars and the Southern Cross. It was a glorious evening.

Capetown is Sighted

Early the next morning we encountered the roughest waves of the entire voyage, although there was no wind to account for them. Mr. Troonin explained that the phenomenon was due to the meeting of the mighty Atlantic with the waters of the Indian Ocean just off the Cape of Good Hope.

At breakfast the captain took an almost emotional farewell from the passengers who would leave the ship at Capetown. He said in his gravelly voice, "I want to congratulate all of you for sailing with us on the calmest run I've ever made down the Atlantic. Thank you for your cooperation and pleasure. To those who are leaving us here, farewell and God go with you!" This sandy-haired Scandinavian of few words had seemed aloof and all business during our three weeks at sea. Perhaps we did not appreciate his real cordial personality.

On this morning, he told us, we would sight Capetown, so all the passengers lined the ship's rail to be the first to sight the Table Mountain behind the city. But we still saw nothing but water on the horizon, when a voice from the crow's nest atop the mast cried down to those on deck, "Land ahoy!" It was our wiry chief mate, Alexander Emilianovich Troonin, who had scrambled up the rope-ladder like an agile monkey and had spotted Table Mountain draped with a tablecloth of clouds obscuring its peak. Not much later we all saw it and the city spread at its base to the north. The ship had sailed around the shoals surrounding the cape, approaching from the south instead of the west.

We also incorrectly assumed that our freighter would proudly sail into the harbor to a berth at a pier and our feet would be on *terra firma* within no more than an hour. But the ship's engines were stopped a good half mile from shore in full sight of the city. Two great anchors rattled down the ship's side to hold the vessel against the flow of the current.

And then we waited until a launch flying the flag of South Africa came alongside our *Jacob's ladder* and three important-looking men in white uniforms came aboard. They were the customs, immigration and health officers who called us into the lounge one by one to check our documents and the ship's manifest.



First mate ("Chief") Alexander Emilianovich Troonin.



Mr. W. Heintz, fur buyer for the New York, London and Paris fur companies.

Mr. and Mrs. Kurt Stern and Carol, Windhoek, Southwest Africa.



It took all of four hours from the time of our anchoring to the coming of another lighter to carry the passengers and their hand luggage ashore.

Trouble with Customs

We landed at the Capetown pier at two o'clock and again had to submit to having our luggage checked. Our declaration had mentioned the vehicle and its contents which were still in the hold of the *Crescent*. We were told that it would be late on that Friday afternoon, May 20th, when the freight could be discharged from the ship and brought to the customs warehouse. We would have to wait or return from our hotel in the city to be present when it was opened and our bill of lading could be checked by a special officer, Mr. Murray.

As soon as he went through our list of goods casually, we could see that we were in trouble. He stated as an introduction to later assessment of the duty we owed, "You are aware of the fact that our government has changed since you began your journey. The United Party of Dr. Smuts has been replaced by the party of Dr. Malan and many of the items you are carrying are now on the list of contraband articles which may not be imported."

We took a cab and registered at the Mt. Nelson Hotel. A telephone call to Mr. Murray revealed that our big *caravan* would not be unloaded until later that evening and the customs office would be closed until Saturday morning. We were warned to come early because the customs department worked only until noon on Saturdays.

There was nothing to do but wait, so we settled down to read our mail from home and the evening newspaper. On the front page was an article announcing the visit of former prime minister of the Union of South Africa, General Jan Christian Smuts, to receive an accolade by the Legislative Assembly and to celebrate his 79th birthday with friends on Tuesday, May 24th. The article mentioned in passing that he would be staying at the Mt. Nelson Hotel and would later proceed to the place of his birth near Capetown.

Smuts to Our Rescue

We were in a real quandary. We were greatly concerned about having our camper and its contraband contents passed by customs and we could not possibly obtain a visa and travel permit to Southwest Africa during the weekend. Mr. Murray had made very clear to us that things had changed considerably since the National Party of Dr. Daniel Malan had come to power with his apartheid policy. The party had made clear that it would not welcome the American political and cultural policies which only served to stir up the black population.

We discussed our situation at dinner that evening. Almost in desperation and jest I suggested, "Art, Smuts is the answer to our problem. Let's send him a birthday greeting and ask him to look over our papers attesting to our good character and intentions. Perhaps he would give us the character reference we need." I thought Wacker would surely pooh-pooh the idea as just too wild. Not Art Wacker. He was always ready to grab for something even way-out to solve a pressing problem.

We did it, and it worked. We bought a friendly birthday card, enclosed a letter on our *Lutheran African Mission, Exploratory Commission* station-

ery which set forth our dilemma, added the letters of the British Consul at Detroit, President John Brenner's letter of introduction, Chief of Police Lee Sackett's letter from Plymouth and our calling card with the picture of our big *caravan*, and we sent it to his hotel room by special messenger. One can think of apt proverbs like the German "Not bricht Eisen," [necessity breaks iron] but the main thing is that this act of desperation worked.

We waited all of Sunday and Monday and, finally, thought we must have failed. "But," I said to Art, "a man of such high international acclaim cannot afford to throw our documents into his round file. He'll at least return them to us."

On Tuesday morning, his birthday, an envelope arrived by special messenger addressed, "The Rev. Hoenecke, Room 816." It contained all our letters of introduction, a note thanking us for our birthday wishes and, on a letterhead of the "House of Assembly, Cape Town," the brief letter addressed to "Dear Hoogenhaut, The Honourable The Administrator of Southwest Africa, Windhoek — The Pastors A. Wacker and E. Hoenecke, from Evangelical Lutheran Church, Michigan, U.S.A., come to visit South West Africa with high credentials from their community. They wish to investigate mission work extension in South West Africa, and as their mission may have a wholesome influence on public opinion in the United States of America, I hope you will give them such assistance and facilities as you can. Yours sincerely, Smuts."

This letter was an open sesame, we were to find, in moving our big camper through customs and in obtaining a visa for Southwest Africa most promptly on Tuesday.

Cornflakes and Firearms

Our dealings with Mr. Murray of the customs office had not been completed on Saturday morning. In this Reformed land no business was done on Sunday, so we resumed our negotiations on Monday early. We made little progress until Mr. Murray gave us an example of the new contraband list by pointing to our carton of single portion cornflakes. He explained that his wife was tired of hearing the children clamor for them and was constantly asking when the new government would be producing some breakfast cereal to take their place if American imports were no longer permitted. I assured Mr. Murray that we did not think it proper to destroy good food, that we could get along without the cornflakes very well since they were contraband, and we could not keep milk fresh in any case without our refrigerator. I suggested that, if he had no objections, we would be happy to drop the lot of them at his house. He saw the good sense of my proposal, gave us the address, and we drove out to the little suburb to deliver cornflakes and bran flakes, one carton of each, that very noon.

After the *siesta* break we returned, but he was too busy to spend much time with us about the other contraband articles on our declaration. Notable among these were our firearms. This is where we discontinued our negotiations on Monday afternoon, quite sure that the guns and ammunition would be confiscated. Art Wacker was the sportsman. I was totally ignorant of the use and the killing power of the weapons we carried into Africa. Art had bought them all with a special gift from some of his hunting buddies. They were:

- 1 — .375 Winchester Magnum rifle, an "elephant gun"
 - 1 — .270 Winchester rifle
 - 1 — Over/Under Kerkoff Waldschütz rifle/shotgun
 - 2 — Colt .38 police revolvers on .45 chasses
 - 1 — Daisy BB rifle from Pres. Cass Hough of the Daisy Air Rifle Co., Plymouth, to use as a gift
- 485 rounds of ammunition for the above and many Daisy BBs and pellets

It was quite understandable that Mr. Murray was reluctant to pass these munitions through customs. But when we came to his office on Tuesday morning and showed him the letter of Jan Christian Smuts to Administrator Hoogenhout, his whole manner changed.

He waived the duty on all of our items excepting the guns. He permitted us to keep them after he had charged us the equivalent of \$20 duty on them and had tied pretty pink ribbons on all their trigger guards and pressed his official seal into the sealing wax with which he fastened them. Then he warned us and attached a tag to each gun with the words "To be broken only in case of an emergency."

Having done this he dismissed us with a friendly handshake and wished us Godspeed on our long trek. We tanked up on petrol, butane and water and were merrily on our way by midafternoon. Four precious days had been spent clearing customs, but we had our visa and a precious letter from a revered South African hero to provide us an entree into Southwest Africa. We were never sure whether it had been the cornflakes or the Smuts letter which had solved our dilemma.

The Fertile Paarl District

Leaving the city proper one drives through neat suburbs and then through the miserable native *locations*, the shanty towns of the Africans which surrounded all African cities. The lot of these poor people was worsened when the apartheid policy became the law of the land with the election of Daniel Malan of the National Party. General Smuts told us that he deeply deplored this change. His United Party had tried for many years with some success to bring the black and colored population up to a higher living standard through education and a gradual assumption of greater self-reliance. This progress was now undone.

But we left the *locations* behind us and emerged on a good hardtop road into the flourishing Paarl District north of Capetown. Its well-kept fields and vineyards with their neat farmhouses and barns reminded us of our Wisconsin countryside. This area is internationally known for its fine vintage wines. At a little wayside village we bought some for our long trek through the Southwest African desert.

Even after the hardtop became a well-kept gravel road we drove on with light hearts. Apparently, the journey north to Windhoek was much better than we had been led to expect. We stopped and prepared a hot supper of good sausages, canned peas and potatoes and fresh fruit for our dessert with excellent wine and fresh-baked sweet rolls. What could be better?

On that evening before Ascension Day we reminded ourselves of the Lord's commission, of his claim to "all power in heaven and on earth" and of

his reassuring words, "Lo, I will be with you unto the end of the world!" We were now at the end of the world in time and also in space, so far removed from our homes, and everything was going better than expected. Our prayer thanked him for his faithful leading and for the confidence with which he had filled our hearts. He would see us through and give success to our mission.

Sleep came so easily that night almost before the bedtime prayer had been spoken, "Lord, I will both lay me down in peace and sleep, for thou, O Lord, only makest me dwell in safety."

"Nie Pas, Nie!"

The peaceful mood remained with us when we were awakened from a restful sleep. Ascension Day broke bright and clear upon a lovely countryside. Our breakfast was fresh rolls, fresh eggs, good farm butter and marmalade with oranges for a treat from the local orchards.

It was the last meal of this kind we would be able to enjoy for a full week. We always took turns doing dishes and "redding up" our mobile home. Thus the last chores could be done while one of us took the wheel for the day's drive.

The direction was always north. There were no road signs because they were no longer necessary. There just was no other road. The sun was always in our eyes. In the southern hemisphere it was low in the heavens, for this was the beginning of winter. The temperature inside the closed cab climbed higher as the day wore on. Add stale cigarette smoke to this heat and you have a scenario for an explosion on the part of the non-smoker. Smoking one of the cigars which we laid in at New York in self-defense did nothing but make matters worse. We became much less cheerful, and we hardly conversed. But we drove on even though hidden fires began to smolder.

Then, quite suddenly, it happened. We ran out of road. Without more warning than a sign which read "*Nie pas, nie!*" the road dead-ended in an orange grove. According to our book of foreign words and phrases the sign meant "Do not pass, never!"

But there was also a smaller sign at the head of a lane which read "Pont" with a crude arrow pointing down the lane. *Pont* is Afrikaans for ferry. So we must have arrived at the Orange River and we had that wide river to cross before we could proceed on to Windhoek. Our *National Geographic* map indicated a bridge over 200 miles to the east at Uppington, but the road looked uncertain and we were in a hurry to make up for the time lost at Capetown. We drove down the lane.

"Es Kippt Ueber!"

Art Wacker made a wry comment at this juncture. "Smuts," he said, "neglected to build a bridge across the Orange River and Kurt Stern forgot to mention it also."

A man who turned out to be the owner of the orange grove came from a farmhouse to our wagon and began to speak to us in Afrikaans. We replied in German. Then he motioned to us to drive on toward the river. He explained to a neatly dressed black man, who clearly was in charge, that we spoke German.

He smiled at us and in perfect German he said, "Ich heisse Petrus." [I am called Petrus.] Then, pointing to the ferry down the ramp and to our ungainly white vehicle, he said, "Es geht nicht; es kippt ueber." [It won't work; it will tip over.]

The owner held a short conference with his manager and Petrus came back and told us that he had been told to try the crossing if we would consent to unload all our movable articles from the camper. We agreed. But he also told us that they would have to dig a new ramp on the opposite shore because the normal approach was too steep and the water much too shallow to permit the ferry to approach the wooden incline up the bank. We agreed to this also, wondering how much that would cost us.

It was before noon when five men began to dig the new channel on the opposite shore, standing in the water all the while they worked. We felt sorry for them and thought to speed the project by sending over some mouth organs which we carried in our gift box. When they found how these made lovely music they stopped altogether and played their harmonicas, jumping up and down in the water. But then they fell to with a will.

Crossing the Wide Orange

At five o'clock Petrus brought them back and the precarious crossing could be undertaken.

Petrus explained to Wacker at the wheel that he should ease the truck ever so "carefully" ("sachte," he said) down the bank to the big four-inch planks which had been laid to the center of the ferry to keep it from tipping up on the forward end. He, Petrus, would stand at the side with his hand up to warn Art to ease off, if the load proved too heavy. Gradually, the front wheels came to rest on the ferry as the heavy rear of our truck held down the big planks until they could be removed and stowed on the ferry for the landing on the other shore.

Normally, the ferry is propelled across the river by means of a cable which allows the ferrymen to pull it hand over hand. But this cable was useless for our crossing, so the men took to long poles which they stuck into the bottom and pushed. Wacker was still at the wheel. I was on the near bank making a movie of the whole action. All went well until the big barge, clearly identified as the "Lutheran African Mission — Exploratory Expedition," entered the river's swift current. Then the whole ark began to wobble a bit. But the poles in the hands of five sturdy men held steady and the expedition neared the other shore.

Thanks to the new channel the ferry drew close to the bank and Wacker put the transmission into creeper gear, gunned the accelerator and the camper began to roll up the planks to the shore. But, as soon as the rear wheels left the wooden footing, they sank to the hubs in the sandy soil. But Petrus had prepared for this moment. Three of his men pushed and two worked furiously with their shovels in front of those rear wheels and ever so slowly but surely the Lutheran Exploratory Expedition crawled on all fours up on the soil of Southwest Africa.

The ferry returned for our goods. Seven willing hands made short work of the loading. When we went to pay the owner for the crossing he charged us all of twelve dollars for the use of his *pont* and the day's labor of six of his men!

We crossed over the Orange River with our belongings, stowed them into the wagon and drove to a quiet spot along the road to camp for the night.

Northward into the Sun

Wacker's description of our progress from Goodhouse to Windhoek is only slightly overdrawn, "The distance from Capetown to Windhoek led us over almost indescribably bad roads. We covered over 1,000 miles vertically and detoured another 500 horizontally."

The 350 miles from Capetown to Goodhouse on the Orange River took us a leisurely day and a half. The next 700 miles would consume another three and a half days of hard work from sunup to late evening every day.

This was almost uninhabited desert country. On the east are the eroded ridges of the high plateau and on the west the barren desert. The trail ran across the rough terrain formed by the runoff from occasional rains. The road itself was a series of confusing deep ruts made by the heavy government bus-truck which passes this way. It seemed that this road had never enjoyed the face-lifting of a heavy bulldozer blade, even after a rare rain. A road grader may have been passed over the dry road at one time, but its effect had only been to push the dust and silt into the deep ruts. The government bus-truck also had a six-inch wider wheelbase. It is not hard to imagine what this combination did when our five-ton load tried to follow the ruts. We were either constantly slipping off into a rut or one set of wheels was in the rut and the other rode on the high ridge.

The greatest damage, however, was done by the sudden drop of our wheels into transverse rills caused by erosion. The shattering force of this caused us a very tiresome repetition of cracked wheel rims. Why the tires held up, we will never know. On the very first day before we reached a small outlying hamlet called Keetmanshoop both rear wheel rims broke under the jarring impact. We carried only one spare, so we had to drive most warily until we came to the little garage at this place and had the rims welded.

While we waited we called Kurt Stern by telephone to tell him of our slow progress and that he should not expect us until the end of the week.

Smoke in the Cab and Under the Hood

The drive north under these conditions became a test of character for both of us. The progress was extremely slow and rough. The sun's slanting rays drove the temperature in the cab unbearably high and there was no breeze, only clouds of dust. My colleague was a chain-smoker and the stale smoke filled the cab.

We both sensed that the situation would lead to an open break between us. Actually, it would have been difficult to put together into one small space like our cab two personalities who were less compatible. One was a rugged outdoorsman who enjoyed roughing it on hunting and fishing trips. The other had great difficulty in adjusting to the unsettled life on the trail. It became increasingly more difficult to find either the time or the water to bathe. We even forgot to shave every day during this week. To apply the words of the song "Mighty like a rose" to the two travelers would have been most inaccurate.

Finally, we had it out and agreed to say with open candor what we found objectionable to one another. It cleared the air. Mutual criticism, a saving sense of humor over our situation and, above all, the daily reminder from God's word to acknowledge fault and to try to improve — these saved the day. And then we determined to place Christian restraint on our personal feelings so that the Lord's great purpose in sending us might be served. We found that it can be done. Wacker and I became and remained good friends until the Lord called him to his eternal reward on January 10, 1974, after he had seen the fruits of our labor.

Fortunately while this exchange was going on during the miserably slow progress to Windhoek, other smoke suddenly appeared from under our instrument panel. It smelled like burning insulation. Wacker was prompt about such things. He reached under the panel and grabbed a handful of wires and yanked them loose. This scientific approach to the problem stopped the smoke, but it also did something to our electrical system.

At another little place called Mariental a garageman found that the cigar lighter wire had broken loose, the wires had become bare from the bumping and rubbing and caused a short circuit. He made temporary repairs, but advised us to have all our wiring thoroughly checked at Windhoek. This meant another night on the road.

No Refrigerator

Our meals during this first leg of wilderness travel were nothing to brag about. The fond dream of having the luxury of refrigeration for our food en route was shattered by the fact that the Onan generator and its noise were foolishly located under the lower bunk. We could run it only when we needed light and power for our tape recorder. The refrigerator had been demoted to a storage cupboard.

This did something to our menu for those many days in the wilderness. Breakfasts were simple. They consisted of bread in various stages of drying out or becoming covered with mold which could be scraped off. There was also soft butter and jars of marmalade, jam and peanut butter. Canned fruit juice and a cup of coffee or tea were often followed by available local fruit such as oranges, bananas, papaya or melons. Our lunch was usually taken while driving. Chocolate bars, dates and nuts were the favorite foods, washed down with warm water or wine. After the day's run, sometimes as late as ten o'clock, we made dinner by opening and heating canned meats and vegetables or baked beans, spaghetti and meat balls. We survived, and we both lost weight.

Willkommen to Windhoek!

All along this stretch we dreamed and talked about the fleshpots of Windhoek. Kurt and Rose Stern had promised us a warm German meal when we arrived. We had asked him to make a reservation for us at a moderately priced hotel. We hoped to arrive by noon on Saturday, but our motor sputtered and coughed and balked at being pushed too hard. Wacker, the automotive expert of the expedition, was unable to diagnose or fix the trouble. Perhaps it was dirt or water in the petrol. We could never know with the primitive service stations where we had to gas up.

In any case, fifty miles from Windhoek at a village known as Rehoboth the local mechanic sadly shook his head and joined us in the pious hope that we would make it to Windhoek while he continued to pack away his tools for the weekend. He offered to remove our motor head for a thorough investigation of our problem — on Monday.

There was nothing for us to do but to drive on. The last lap before Windhoek was all uphill on an improved gravel road. Our vehicle was a pitiful mess with a broken spring blade, an improvised ignition system, one cracked wheel rim and a consumptive cough. But we were moving forward. We looked and felt worse than our vehicle, dirty, unbathed and unshaven. We planned to drive to the hotel to remove the dust and dirt and stubble with a shave and a hot bath before we presented ourselves to our hosts for dinner.

But there, at the crossroads near the top of the hill, stood our hosts, Kurt and Rose and their little Carol. As soon as we came near Kurt called, "Willkommen in Windhoek!" We excused our filthy appearance and asked him to direct us to our hotel. He replied that he had tried to get us a room, but at this time of lambing and fur-buying they were all taken. "But," he added, "we have it all fixed at our house. Just follow me." Their home was in a good area, neatly landscaped. Our rooms were ready, the towels were laid out for our shave and shower and clean sheets were on the beds. What a relief to get into decent clothes instead of our grimy khakis and to step out into a real living room and to sit down to a white tablecloth with napkins, china and silver and to have a succulent beef roast, potatoes, cooked vegetables and gravy with a schaumtorte for dessert served to us by Mrs. Stern's Ovambo girl. We felt very much at home.

We must have looked rather bedraggled still, because Kurt Stern urged us soon after dinner to go to bed and to get a good night's rest. He promised to take us to the big German Lutheran Church on the hill for the Sunday service the next morning.

An Inspiring Pentecost Festival

It was Pentecost Sunday. This was always observed as a high festival in Germany. We expected to attend a real German Pentecost service at the beautiful, twin-towered brick church up on the hill. But when Kurt drove up to it, we found it closed and locked. The sexton explained that Propst [Bishop] Hoeflich had been invited for a baptismal dinner to a distant ranch of one of the German families and had decided to drop the service.

This spoke volumes corroborating Mr. Stern's assessment on the ship of the sad condition of the German Lutheran church in Southwest Africa. The big churches which had been built during the German colonial days in the larger towns and cities were still standing as mute reminders of the past. But now they were poorly attended and even their pastors had lost interest.

But Kurt Stern knew a Lutheran church at Windhoek which would not be closed but would have an overflow crowd on this great festival Sunday. He took us to one of the native settlements, called *locations*, to the church of his friend, Pastor Werner. When we drove up we saw many blacks approaching the little frame church in their Sunday best, in beautiful colorful costumes, the heads of the women crowned with brilliant turbans.

Always more and more arrived. The church filled up and the people were

vying for places to stand at the open windows. And still they kept coming in groups. And these groups were singing gaily as they came.

Then Pastor Werner, a slight person wearing a funny hat and a big, happy smile, arrived from having served some other congregation of his large scattered parish (Parochie) earlier that morning. He was loudly greeted by his people, as he told us, in at least five different languages. On this high festival he had arranged a special song service with twelve church choirs from outlying congregations joining his Windhoek people in friendly competition to sing praise to the Holy Spirit.

I took down the names of the tribes represented. There were Ovambos, Hereroes, Kaffirs, Okavangos, Namas and even some Bushmen in the church. These choirs had been shown preference in being admitted and seated in the plain wooden pews. Pastor Werner sang the liturgy in some esperanto which, clearly, all present, excepting Wacker and myself, understood. They gave their all in their lusty responses. The creed was recited by each of the groups in their own vernacular, but even this rose as the voice of one body united in a common faith in the Holy Trinity. Pastor Werner preached his sermon, I know not in which tongue, but he had the rapt attention of all his people with many a spontaneous response spoken half-loud during his preaching.

Then it was the turn of the various choirs to present their praise in self-styled, but full-bodied, pleasing harmony — and much volume. Some numbers were accompanied by clapping of the hands at certain passages. It was a truly uplifting service of praise. We were inspired by the fervor of the worshipers.

After the blessing Pastor Werner invited us to speak a few words to the assembled Christian people. He translated what we said and we received a resounding applause.

The movies which I made after the service tell the story eloquently of this Rhenish Mission now celebrating one hundred years of work in Southwest Africa with a membership in 1949 of over 85,000 souls. Their first missionaries worked faithfully for twelve long years before they were able to baptize their first native convert, an African maid who worked for the wife of the missionary. "My word will not return unto me void."

Wacker and I were greatly encouraged by this demonstration of the power of the Holy Spirit in working through the word in gathering the congregation of the elect.

The Week at Windhoek

On Monday morning the garage informed us that the parts for our vehicle would have to be ordered from Johannesburg and could not be expected to arrive for several days. In the meantime they would repair what they could. The Southwest African trails had been just too much for even the rugged Dodge Power Wagon with a gross load of five tons.

We tried in vain to find some place to stay, but Kurt and Rose Stern said that they enjoyed our company and it was no work for them to have us. Mrs. Stern mentioned that she had three maids to work inside and a man to do the yard work, so, if we were comfortable with them, they would like to have us be their guests until the camper was repaired.

It was a pleasant week. The Sterns took us out to see the country around Windhoek and to visit their friends. Almost every evening we were invited for "sundowners" at different homes. One of these was a small castle which had been the home of a German administrator years earlier. It had a breathtaking view of the city and the mountains and on a very clear day one could also see the Atlantic.

At noon several fur-buyers, like Waldemar Heintz and Joseph Friedmann, were often invited for dinner. Mrs. Stern was an excellent cook and she took pleasure in teaching her girls the art. The conversation was always lively.

One day Kurt dropped us at the home of Propst Hoeflich next to the Lutheran church. Our conversation was somewhat stilted. He was obviously not at all interested in speaking about the condition of the white churches in Southwest, although he told us that the pastors were still being supported by the German population of the larger towns and cities, such as Swakopmund. I recall that the morning was quite chilly and that he had a wood fire burning in a large brass brazier which sat on a metal base in the center of the big room.

Kurt Stern's New Testament

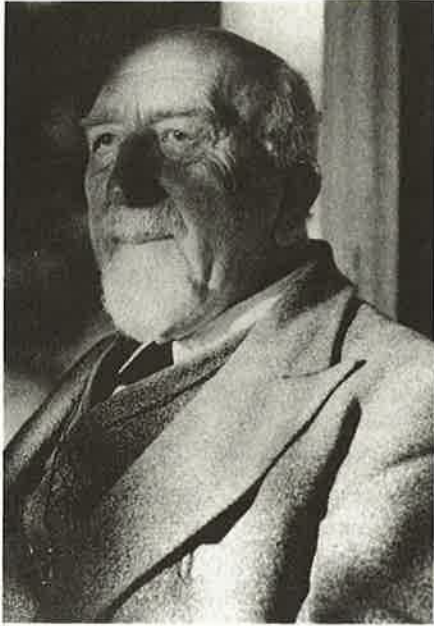
One late evening after we returned from a "sundowner" at some friends, Kurt and I sat alone in his living room. We talked about the topic which interested him very much, the hope of the Jews for a Messiah. I expressed my surprise at his knowledge of the Christian faith as the fulfillment of the Old Testament prophecies and types. Without a word he got up, went to his large bookcase and pulled out a copy of the German New Testament. I was still more surprised and delighted when he said, "I read from this book almost every evening before I go to bed. It has many wonderful things in it." During the discussion that followed he explained that he was ready to accept Christ, but his wife would not leave her Jewish faith.

He and his wife were most concerned about the success of our quest for a good mission site. They were both acquainted with missionaries of the Rhenish Mission and with many of the members who were all German immigrants. They invited the area representative of the Shell Oil Company to their home to become acquainted with us and to discuss the journey which lay before us up to Angola. His name was Piet Boetger. His territory included the Etosha Pan, a large dry lake bed and game preserve, which was on our way north. He also had some knowledge of the Ovambo preserve further north which was served by the Finnish Lutheran Mission for many years. Before we parted, we agreed to meet him at Outjo, a police outpost just outside of the Etosha Pan.

The Sterns also helped us rearrange our supplies, exchanging things that were more suitable for our safari than the things we were carrying. Before we left they bought a lot of good South African canned meats which proved most valuable to us later. And they bought us a precious large smoked ham!

Administrator Hoogenhaut

This strange name had been on the letter of introduction which General Smuts had given to us at Capetown as the man whom we would have to deal with at Windhoek.



Dr. Heinrich Vedder, "grand old man" of the Rheinische Mission, Okahandja, Southwest Africa.

Crossing the Orange River by ferry (p. 24).



Kurt Stern knew the man well, but expected little from him when he took us to the government building and introduced us to Administrator Hoogenhaut. This man knew the former Prime Minister Smuts of the Union of South Africa very well from official close contacts only a few months earlier. Nevertheless, when we presented the letter from Jan Christian Smuts, he looked at it casually, returned it to me and said, "This letter is not very impressive. After all, Mr. Smuts is only a private citizen."

This shocked us. All the world knew and respected Field Marshall Smuts as one of the great heroes of the war who had not only led the South African military forces but also sat in the highest councils of the Allies.

This proved to be just an introduction to the treatment which he accorded us after he called in his native administrator Mr. Nesor and proceeded to give us a lecture on the theme "Why Americans are not welcome in Southwest Africa." He told us that the Americans, including missionaries, merely disturbed his country's native population by upsetting the wage scale which was paid black workers.

He was referring, he said, to the fact that the manager of the Tsumeb coppermine insisted on paying twice the amount of about 32 cents for a day's work. This had caused Africans to stream toward Tsumeb, leaving other employment and causing the government much trouble and expense in restoring order. He went on to berate all Americans for revolutionary ideas regarding the treatment of Africans.

After two hours of this tirade we left his office quite certain that we would have problems working in Southwest Africa despite the encouragement of Kurt Stern and Pastor Werner.

Miss McMillan, Commissioner of Roads

An entirely opposite reception was given to us in the same building by the Commissioner of Roads, Miss McMillan. We had stopped at her office to see about the condition of the route up to Angola because of the lack of roads shown on our own map.

The specific area in question was the Etosha Pan and the Ovambo Reserve north to the border. We had been given two alternate trails and were undecided which one to take.

Miss McMillan was very friendly and openly admitted that her office had not received recent information which was reliable about the bush trails. She mentioned that often the less traveled trails were in better condition than those which had been churned up by lorries, like the government bus-truck used to transport supplies and machinery to the outposts.

The interview closed with our promise that we would report to her by letter on the trails which we traveled. Then we decided to take the advice of Piet Boetger to meet him at Outjo to let him guide us across the Etosha Pan to Okaukuejo or Namutoni where we would pick up the road to the border.

Dr. Heinrich Vedder

We left our good living with the Kurt Sterns on June 7th after the big motor home had been put in shape for travel. Our destination was Okahandja, fifty miles north of Windhoek. Here lived the grand old man of the Rhenish Mission, Dr. Heinrich Vedder. He was now retired, but was still active

writing and training younger missionaries at the *Augustineum*, the seminary of the mission. He was also serving as adviser to the legislative assembly because of his experience of over fifty years and his great knowledge of African tribal languages and cultures. He spoke five native vernaculars fluently, had written a vocabulary and grammar for each of these and was also writing his memoirs at 85!

He welcomed us with open arms to his home, saying, "Dies Zimmer is nun meine Heimat. Hier wohne und wirke ich bis der Herr mich abruft." (This room is my home. Here I live and work until the Lord calls me home.) We conversed in German. His mind was perfectly clear and his memory phenomenal.

When we asked him to have his words put on tape for our people at home, he was happy to comply so that our people would hear his plea for help in Africa firsthand. I taped his words for an hour. He spoke without notes, first on the interesting history of his mission, then on the peculiar difficulties which their missionaries faced in learning the strange native tongue. In the case of the Hereroes and Bushmen, especially, "Tongue" is an apt word to describe the language. Dr. Vedder gave us a demonstration of the unique prefix sounds that are used. He showed us with his fingers what he meant by "Schnalzlaute" (finger-snapping sounds), "Pfropfenziehen Laute" (the noise which is made in pulling a cork from a bottle), and "Kuss und Saug Laute" (the noises made while kissing or sucking). He had no explanation for the origin of this strange language, but he said that these prefixed sounds changed the meaning of words with the same basic stem radically and made the learning of the language most difficult to teach and to speak fluently.

He had come to this country, he said, as a young man. During his fifty-odd years he had worked among most of the tribes in the region, the proud Hereroes, the bartering Kaffirs, the Ovambos and Okavangos, the dark-skinned Namas and the Bushmen who still lived in stone age conditions.

He spoke about the difficult times when the mission was entirely cut off from outside support during the wars and the miracle performed by the Lord in keeping the missionaries faithful to their post, and bringing them all closer to their people. At times they had to accept handouts from the natives to survive. He also praised the Lord for having given the earliest missionaries from Germany the patience to work for twelve long, barren years, even enduring persecution from some tribes, until finally one person consented to be baptized, the Nama maid who worked in the house of the missionary.

His German plea for help from our synod was most eloquent when he mentioned that years earlier he had received a visit from an Ovambo chief up in the Kaokoveld, an area way up near the Angola border along the Atlantic Ocean, to preach the "happy news from God" to his people. The chief had explained to Doctor Vedder that he and his people had prayed to the gods to keep their cattle from dying, and it had not helped. Now he was willing to follow the great God of the white people.

In the evening his colleagues, Missionary Milk and Professor Esslinger of the *Augustineum* and their wives joined us in Dr. Vedder's room. They reported that their ten expatriate missionaries now had over 85,000 Africans under their spiritual care, and they were gradually training Africans to take over the work. The wonderful evening came to a fitting close with the

singing of the familiar evening hymns which Wacker and I had also sung from childhood.

Dr. Vedder Suggests Northern Rhodesia

Mindful of our mention of the fact that we would like to have our missionaries begin in an English-speaking country, Dr. Vedder in his taped words for our mission board referred to Northern Rhodesia as a land where we might find an unclaimed field. He had read about a native resettlement program which would open previously uninhabitable, tsetse fly infested areas.

We seriously considered his plea that we begin work in the Kaokoveld among the Ovambos. We were reluctant, however, to begin in a country where our missionaries would have to learn both Afrikaans and the native vernacular, possibly also German, if the work were to be done under their auspices. The latter suggestion would not be acceptable at all. But we promised that we would let our leaders hear his plea on the tape.

Upon Dr. Vedder's urging we decided to make a slight detour to visit a small band of Bushmen in the Etosha Pan so that we might see firsthand how primitively they lived. We were told that the trail through this region was good at this season. Perhaps it was compared to its condition during the rainy period, but to call it "good," we felt, was a rather free use of the adjective.

The Etosha Pan

After a brief farewell from Dr. Vedder we left Okahandja for Karibib to the east, where we would meet the northerly road to Otjiwarongo and Outjo at the edge of the Etosha Pan. Here we parked for a good lunch at a tiny German wayside eating place which had only one choice on the menu. If you didn't eat sauerkraut and pigs' knuckles, you had to eat bread. It was good and filling. While we were getting our hair cut at a little local barbershop, Piet Boetger came in. He had no trouble at all, he said, finding the big white "behemoth."

The trail was very dry when we entered the Etosha Pan at Okaukuejo. Piet Boetger called it "die Bratpfanne" (frying pan) because of the heat and the hard, dry crust which forms on this dry lake bed during the dry season. It attracts great flocks of birds and game which succeed in finding some residual pools not visible to the casual visitor.

It was quite important for us to have Boetger and his driver for our guides because there were many forks in the trail and we could have strayed off the Namutoni trail very easily. It was also valuable because we might have missed seeing the great herds of zebra, wildebeest, impala, gemsbok, springbok, kudu, gazelle, sable antelope, waterbuck, duiker, giraffe and last, but not least, lion. Piet Boetger and his driver knew which trails to take to photograph them.

For this purpose we made use of the escape hatch which had been cut into the roof of the *caravan*. As I stood on the roof a group of giraffe filed across our trail and my camera on its tripod was level with the head of the tallest male. Piet Boetger then led the way in his Chevrolet, while his man Assah drove our motor home with strict instructions from Piet to stop driving if he approached a thorn tree which could not be avoided.

Wacker and I were both on the roof. He was steadying the camera for me. A thorn tree hove in sight on our trail with its branches too low to miss us on the roof. We yelled down through the hatch as loudly as we could, "Assah, halt! Assah, halt, halt!" The camper rolled on. To save the camera Wacker got me to jump down onto the top bunk. Seeing that he could not make his escape in time, he laid himself face-down on the roof with his feet stretched out to fend off the thorny branches. He saved his face, but when he finally climbed down he was full of deep scratches from his legs to his shoulders and his trousers and blazer were badly torn. Assah sadly explained that he thought we would clear the branches, forgetting that he was not driving the Chevrolet.

"Will we see any lion?" we asked Piet. He assured us that we would. He spotted a pride of seven full-grown beasts behind some bushes off the road. They were lying down, perhaps after having eaten their fill on some young buck. Piet told Assah to stop. He and Art got out of the cab and threw some rocks at the lazy kings and queens of the beasts. They growled their displeasure, but then slowly slouched off so that I could take their picture.

Bushmen Visit Our Camp

Piet Boetger also knew where the little band of Bushmen could be found. He asked us to make camp near what turned out to be a shallow water hole. As my pictures show, this was only a large crack in the hard surface.

We decided to have our supper *alfresco* because it was such a beautiful, balmy evening and we wanted to attract the Bushmen to our fire. We fried the steak which Piet had brought, we opened a can of sweet potatoes and Windhoek corn, pickles and pumpernickel, topped off with warm Windhoek beer and canned apricots from America.

As we sat around our little campfire after dinner, Piet began what we thought a rather childish thing. He began to imitate a muted cornet on his cupped hands by blowing into them. He played several tunes before he got the result he was looking for. At first we saw only two older men in the shadow beyond the light from our fire. They appeared dressed only in skins, a large part of their bodies exposed. They just stood there and listened. Assah began to sing some of the hymns which Piet was playing on his hands. Then Assah called something to the Bushmen in their language, and they came nearer.

When he held the half-empty can of apricots out to them, they shyly approached and each one took an apricot into his hands until Assah showed them how to eat it. They held it in their mouths ever so long and didn't spit out the pit. Others must have been watching from the shadows, because they now approached. There were four men and three women, all scantily clad although the evening had turned very chilly.

Now we got the surprise of our lives. Piet told Assah to ask them to sing. Piet continued to play the melodies on his "horn" while they joined in singing in high falsettos the songs they must have picked up from individuals who had come in contact with the German missionaries. They sang "in the tongue wherein they were born" about the wonderful works of God. They sang "*Stille Nacht*," [Silent Night], "*Grosser Gott, Wir Loben Dich*," [Holy God, We Praise Thy Name], "*Ein' Feste Burg*," [A Mighty Fortress], and

several others.

While this was going on Wacker and I hooked up the tape recorder, started the generator and recorded the whole thing. We played it back to them. They had never heard their voices come back to them out of a box and they stood entranced. Then they danced for joy and motioned me to play it over and over until we were tired. To put an end to the evening we told Assah to ask them to come back the next morning.

Art Wacker's comments were apt. "Just think," he said, "here we've come halfway around the world to preach the gospel and these Bushmen a hundred or more miles from nowhere already know our Christian hymns. I think we have come to Africa very late." Piet Boetger was sure that these Bushmen were not under the care of missionaries. They very likely learned the songs from some member of their tribe who had gone to work in the mines at Tsumeb and brought them back to them.

On the next morning they returned with their children, poorly clothed and more poorly nourished, some with distended bellies and many symptoms of diseases that were untreated. The men performed a ritual wedding chant for our camera which the children tried to imitate. We filmed the women dipping water out of the unclean waterhole, smoking primitive pipes and taking care of their crying babies.

While this was going on Wacker remembered the Daisy air rifle which had been given to us for some African. He swapped it for a bow with a quiver full of arrows. It was high time for us to take off. Piet Boetger drove south and we continued on the trail to the northeast toward Namutoni.

Beautiful, Romantic Namutoni

We had announced our arrival at Namutoni to the police sergeant at Omaruru and now checked in at this next outpost. This is a precaution which is taken to alert the border outposts of possible accidents in the bush. If a traveler fails to appear at approximately the announced time, a patrol is sent out and the traveler must pay for the costs of the search.

The sun was just setting when we arrived. It cast its golden glow over the stucco walls of this old desert fort which looked like a setting of a Beau Geste movie, framed in feathery palms and bougainvillea vines. It had been built by a German garrison years ago and was still occupied by the desert patrol. The day had been very hot and we welcomed the invitation of the officer to take a dip in the old swimming pool.

We had planned to take the road north to Angola at this point. But when we checked our wheels in the morning we found another cracked rim. That and the strange list which had developed on the right rear convinced us not to try unknown border trails until these things were repaired.

First Attempt to Reach Angola Fails

We had to drive south to Tsumeb, a mining town sixty miles from Namutoni. We had driven about an hour when we came to an abrupt stop because the whole veldt was ablaze ahead of us. We had seen these fires set by the African farmers to burn off the tall elephant grass, but we had been able to avoid them. This fire was racing toward us on both sides of the trail. It was too late to turn around, so we decided to drive through it as rapidly as possible.

This proved to be a sensible decision. We came through unscathed. If the small leak which we had from the generator ignited or not, we never knew. In any case, nothing was afire when we stopped. We thanked God for protecting us from harm and drove on.

At the office of the Tsumeb mine we met a Texan, Mr. N. Pickard, who tried to help us but did not have the mechanics or the facilities for handling our vehicle. After advising us to drive back to Windhoek for the repairs, he invited us to stop on our way to Angola. He assured us that we would have no difficulty reaching the border from Tsumeb.

Return to Windhoek

We reached Windhoek just before the garage closed on June 13th. Leaving the *caravan* at the garage, we walked over to Kurt Stern's office to tell him about our trouble before checking in at the hotel which we had called. Kurt insisted that we cancel our room and come home with him. He called his wife and she was glad to have us back, saying that Carol had missed her "uncles."

At Kurt's office we met a sheep rancher from the area around Gobabis to the east of Windhoek. Thinking that we might be able to make up for lost time, we asked his advice about driving through Gobabis to enter Northern Rhodesia at Livingstone via the Kaprivi Strip, a long panhandle of South-west Africa which extends over two hundred miles eastward. As the crow flies this would have been a distance of less than 950 miles. The trip via Angola and the good east-west road through the Belgian Congo (Zaire) would be about 2,500 miles.

This man strongly advised us not to attempt crossing a part of the Kalahari Desert and the Okavango Swamps which lie beyond Gobabis. He said we would never make it with our heavy vehicle and there were no intermediate towns where we could find help if we failed.

We Visit the Tsumeb Copper Mine

The repairs took only two days. By Thursday afternoon we were rolling north again, parking for the night at Otjiwarongo. Another day and a half took us to Tsumeb.

We looked up Mr. Pickard, as he had asked us to do. We had dinner together and discussed the critical remarks of Mr. Hoogenhaut concerning the wages he was paying natives at his mine. He explained that the local scale was woefully inadequate and he was only providing a wage which would insure the health of his miners.

Then he invited us to go with him on his regular Saturday inspection trip at the mine. We did not realize that this involved a descent to the 2,000-foot level until he dug up some coveralls and a hard hat for us to wear down the shaft and in the tunnels. It was a breathtaking experience to be dropped in the elevator to the 2,000-foot level. Work was suspended Saturday afternoon, but Mr. Pickard explained that the red light and siren which came on was a warning that some blasting was going on at another level. He asked us to move close to the wall until the green light came on. Then we heard and felt a dull thud and a few loose rocks dropped from the ceiling. After a few minutes we walked back to the elevator shaft and were rather glad to see the blue sky again.

We left Tsumeb after lunch and reached Namutoni for another dip in the pool, "swim-bath," as it's called in Afrikaans.

Ovamboland

From Namutoni to Ondangua is 130 miles. We covered this distance from about nine in the morning to seven in the evening. Our problem was the same wide spoor, or track, which was made by the government lorry and — sand. Trying to escape from the constant jarring in the ruts we took to what we might call the shoulder of the road. Here we became stuck in sand as dry and unstable as talcum powder. The four-wheel drive in creeper gear failed us. Fortunately, there was a big tree near enough to tie on the cable from our power winch. With all the traction we had at our disposal thus engaged we inched our way out of the sand onto the gravel. We estimated that we averaged about twelve miles per hour on that 19th of June!

A number of people were on hand to welcome us to this government outpost Ondangua. The small community was in a state of great excitement, not because of our coming, but because of what had just happened. Mr. D. R. Rootman, Resident Director of Native Education, explained that a lion had carried off a calf belonging to an African farmer nearby that afternoon. Instead of reporting it to the local police officer, the farmer had gone out with a friend, armed only with heavy mattocks, to kill the lion. While they cornered the male in some brush, a lioness had attacked them from the rear, had killed one man and badly mauled the other. He had been taken to the hospital at Engela.

The police officer was trying to form a posse to destroy the two lions, since they now posed a greater danger, having overcome the inborn fear of human beings. They asked us to join in the posse. We had to decline, but we offered them the use of our firearms, especially the .375 magnum Winchester. We, especially I, were not qualified to stalk lions and we had given our word that we would not go hunting.

This brings to mind a droll incident which happened somewhere along the wearisome desert road. We stopped for noon lunch and rest, and Art suggested that I become acquainted with our armaments. He hauled out the big Winchester, loaded it and asked me to try it. There was a black hole in a dead tree a few hundred feet away and he asked me to try to hit it. I took aim, pulled the trigger and was thrown back by the gun's kick so badly that I lost my balance and had a sore shoulder for days. But my shot had blasted off the whole tree top! Art was impressed, but I never tried it again.

Mr. Rootman showed us a sheltered place to park and we cleaned up from the ten hours of driving. The posse returned after a successful hunt and we met the rest of the people at the post. Among them was a fine gentleman, a Dr. William Campbell, the medical and health officer. We were surprised to meet a man of his apparent stature here at an outpost. He must have sensed our surprise, because he explained later in his quarters that he had been chief of a surgical group at a hospital in Glasgow, Scotland. He became addicted to alcohol, lost his position and his family and wound up as a derelict in Africa. He responded to an advertisement for a medical officer and was now chiefly engaged in examining and treating young men for

work in the mines. Even now, he told us, he could not trust himself to use moderation, but kept a bottle in charge of Mrs. Rootman who dispensed it to him.

He was a fine Christian, deeply interested in our search for a mission field. When we left he presented Wacker with a book on Christian missions and me with a beautifully illustrated pocket New Testament which I still cherish very highly. These good people directed us to the Finnish Lutheran Mission among the Ovambos and spoke very highly especially of Dr. Anni Melander, a physician-surgeon who had spent her life among the Africans in this remote region near the Angola border.

The Finnish Lutheran Mission

The headquarters of this mission was a few miles inland from Ondangua at Onandjokwe. We stopped to pay our respects to Bishop Allhoe who had invited us to visit the mission. Outsiders are forbidden by the government to enter this area so that the work of the mission is not disturbed by traders or others.

Mrs. Allhoe spoke some English, explaining that her husband had been called to another station for some matter. But we could not wait for his return. We went on to visit the hospital station of the Finnish Mission, with Dr. Anni Melander in charge. She spoke a fluent English and explained that their mission had been working here since 1871, about thirty-five years after the Rhenish Mission had begun in the area around Windhoek. Like the Rhenish Mission it had taken them twelve years to make the first convert. But their work had also been blessed. They now numbered more than 100,000 souls in their mission.

She explained that they had from the beginning tried to make the Ovambos independent of outside help. During the war all of them had been called back to Finland to fight for their country's independence against the Russians, yet the work had gone on with an all-native staff. Their strong point, the reason for the government's protection, was the program of teaching arts and crafts, including weaving and woodworking, to the proud Ovambos in their schools.

When their poverty had prevented the missionaries from returning to Ovamboland after the war by commercial travel facilities, they had leased an old sailing vessel and hired its owner to sail them back, earning their passage by working the ship for the voyage. The work was now again in full sway and was growing.

Dr. Anni Melander

This dedicated Christian mission doctor is worthy of a special paragraph. In my opinion she compares more than favorably with Dr. Albert Schweitzer whom we visited in 1960. Hers was a total commitment without fanfare or worldwide acclaim. She had returned with the sailing vessel after the war, giving up a good practice in Helsinki. She was working alone under great privations. When we toured her bush hospital with her she showed us her "operating theatre," an adobe hut kept spotlessly clean. She was doing delicate eye surgery by the light of a discarded automobile headlight. Yet, like Schweitzer, she said there were few infections. Just outside the surgery

hut an old man was sitting on the ground with one eye covered with an eye patch. He reached for her and took her hand to express his thanks and devotion to her. She told us that she had removed a loa loa worm from his eye.

Her wards were large rondavels, round adobe huts covered with thatched roofs, housing no more than four bed patients each. She explained this had been done for the sake of economy and she had also found it to be very practical to avoid great confusion and contagion which resulted from the custom of family members being expected to take care of the feeding and bathing of patients. She approved of this custom because the patients seemed to respond better to treatment and had a more rapid recovery.

What we saw here at Onandjokwe influenced our executive committee when we felt constrained to open a bush dispensary at Mwembezi, Zambia in 1960.

We also were taken to the hut where the poor farmer who had been mauled by the lion was recovering after many sutures and healing ointments had been applied to his wounds by Dr. Anni Melander. She said her patients seemed highly resistant to post-operative infections and that she had found some of their own healing agencies very effective. These had been developed over many years from the plants which they had found to have curative properties.

She and the head nursing sister shared a simple thatched hut. As we sat by the open window in her room after dinner strains of beautiful, harmonious singing came from outside. Her native choir had come to serenade her guests with Christian hymns which she herself had taught them. I still listen enthralled to their closing Ovambo hymn sung in close harmony, "Praise to the Lord!" After 35 years these sounds are almost miraculously preserved on our tape.

They sang a tender farewell to us the next morning and the whole staff wished us Godspeed on our way.

Dr. Anni Melander died of cancer only two years after we had been at her wonderful bush hospital. Jesus' words have surely been fulfilled for her, "Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you. — I was sick, and ye visited me."

Finnish Sauna at Engela

With hearts full of admiration for these brave Christian pioneers who have given their all for the rescue of lost souls and the healing of their bodies, Wacker and I headed for another Finnish station among the Ovambos called Engela.

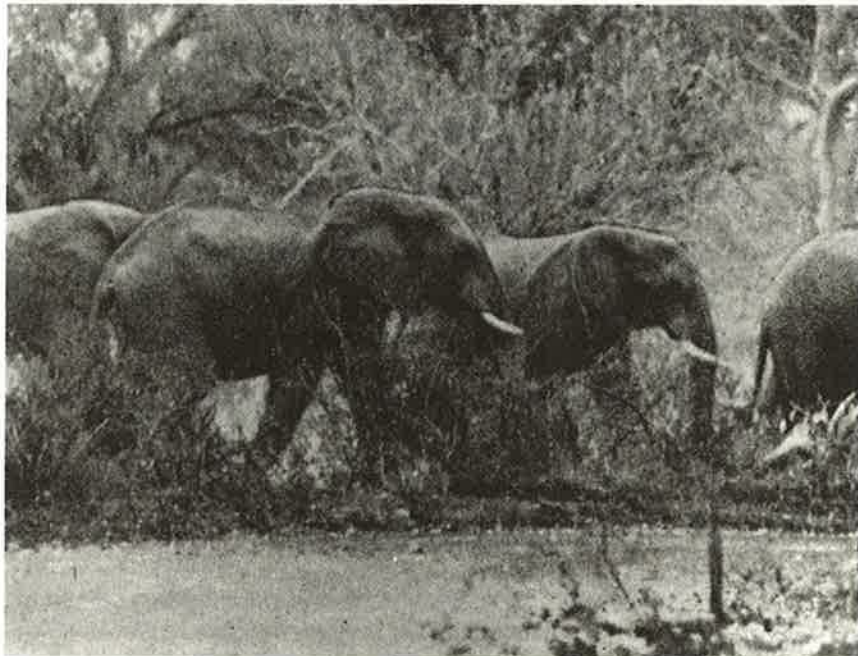
Pastor Jalmari Hopeasalmi was here in charge of a large boys' and girls' boarding school. Over a hundred healthy young adults are here taught farming, carpentry, tile-making, weaving in addition to a thorough course in Christian faith and living. This program has brought great returns to the Ovambos. They were self-supporting and also maintained the workers who have been trained as their evangelists and pastors from among their own tribe.

We watched as the boys were sawing large logs into planks and boards. One young man stands on top of the log and at the other end of the large



Dr. Anni Melander at her clinic among the Ovambos.

A passing herd of elephants on the trail near Vila de Ponte.



crosscut saw down in a pit was the other young fellow. Round about them, waiting their turns, stood the other youths, swinging and clapping their hands and singing. It was a happy scene. The same mood was shown by the young women who were sitting in a circle doing basket weaving under another Ovambo teacher.

Like Pastor Sam Coles a little later, Pastor Hopeasalmi explained that while they worked he taught and applied God's word to them in their lives. This was evident when we attended their evening chapel and heard them sing good Lutheran chorales with their strong, full voices in beautiful harmony. Is there any work more satisfying for the Christian pastor and teacher than to teach the happy, saving gospel of Christ to such unspoiled people? How gladly they respond in their "first love" to know that they have a loving, forgiving God who takes away their sin and fear.

It was still light enough to wind up the day, our host said, with a good bath. We had never had a Finnish sauna before. We found it awesomely cleansing and refreshing. Our host soon climbed up on the highest wooden bench in the sauna hut after he had dumped a pail of cold water on the hot rocks; we remained on a lower bench. Even then it seemed as though our eyes would pop out of their sockets. The strokes with the willow branches were hardly necessary to make us perspire profusely.

As we stepped into the anteroom of the hut Hopeasalmi doused a bucket of cold water on us. This torture is thought to be good for the health and happiness of the true Finn.

Did we ever drink tea and eat after this experience! Mrs. Hopeasalmi had outdone herself with the meal she served. But we were too tired to sit and talk very long that evening so we went to our bunks and slept like kittens.

We also slept long. The happy singing of the school at their morning chapel wakened us to another good day among these fine Christian folk, but we had to be on our way.

Into Angola at Namakunde

My note for June 22nd reads, "Leave Engela (had to have truck pushed to start). At 10:45 crossed over into Angola at Namakunde. Arrived at Vila Pereira d' Eca at noon. This is the first place in Angola where we could find *gasolina* and *angolaras* [Angola money]. The *chef de poste* was very friendly and we went through customs without trouble."

Our gospel wagon had developed new motor problems. Although Wacker diagnosed correctly that it was a faulty generator, there was no chance of finding someone to repair or replace it for many miles, not until we reached Nova Lisboa. This meant parking at night on an incline so that we could roll into a motor start. This worked fairly well.

The scene at Vila Pereira d' Eca is still very clear in my memory. After the long arid journey through Southwest Africa it was a distinct pleasure to drive through a land of fruiting trees. At the office home of the *chef de poste* we admired real ripe apples, pomegranates and other fruit. Also flowers in profusion. This customs officer admired our living facilities after he apologized for asking us to inspect them and our belongings. But he passed everything free because of the big "Mission" sign on our caravan. Wacker backed into the camper with the man following him, and he did not ask to see what we carried in the compartment above the cab. He even contributed

a bottle of red wine for our noon lunch.

Our *Book of Foreign Words and Phrases* was now in constant use to understand road signs and to make ourselves understood. It became more and more a country of large forest and beautiful hardwood trees. Some logging had been done in the way our early mills used to strip the forests, allowing big branches to rot on the forest floor. For someone who enjoyed working with wood it was sad to see. Great branches and tree tops of teak, rosewood, walnut and other woods could have been profitably salvaged.

A Voortrekker Family Helps Us

Somewhere in this vast forested region we were stranded and unable to start our motor. Although there was little traffic on the road, we noticed a camp of some kind just off the road in a small clearing. It was a family of Afrikaans Voortrekkers who were on their way north to find a new home in Angola. The father was a husky giant of a man in a khaki army overcoat and he had two lovely daughters and two fullgrown sons, one of whom understood English. They were happy to help us. The consensus was that we needed a new generator, but they were able to do something with our ignition to give us temporary relief, if we continued to park at night on an incline.

We left this Van der Merve family realizing that God must have sent them as angels for his wandering children groping their way through this land where we were strangers. But to make sure, we parked near at hand, just in case we would need further help.

We did need more help of an unusual kind. As we set out from Guvelai and the Voortrekkers we must have stopped long enough along the trail for a young boy of about eight to jump on our rear step to hitch a ride. We did not notice him until fifty miles later at Vila de Ponte. He could not understand us, so we stopped at the priest's home in this village and asked him to take care of returning him to his home.

As we prepared to stop for the night we encountered another wayfarer, a Mr. Tron, who also had trouble with his car and asked us for advice. Since we were now in elephant country Mr. Tron advised us to park our big white wagon against a huge boulder so that some rogue elephant would not push it over out of curiosity. This was not an idle precaution. On that same day we had found a row of mopani (elephant trees) at least a mile long uprooted in the forest. Mr. Tron explained that rogue elephants are known to do this out of sheer rascality. Elephants feed on the mopani trees. The elephants were there, but they avoided coming nearer than about a quarter of a mile in the forest where they were feeding.

Mr. Tron wanted to sleep in his stranded car, but we invited him to get a decent night's rest in the bunk above our cab. We helped him get underway the next morning and we rolled down the little incline where we had parked and our motor caught.

Unintentional Detour — 85 Miles!

We had gone about 200 miles when we came to an unmarked fork in the road. We opted for the right fork since both looked equally bad. Not until we came to a sign which read "To Galanque — Congregational Mission — Rev.

Sam Coles" did we realize that we had taken the wrong fork and that we were about 85 miles off course with a bad generator. But our heading was north, so we hoped that we could still find a trail to Nova Lisboa without retracing our steps.

The name Sam Coles sounded English, so we decided to follow the trail that led to his mission. It was about five miles from our trail. We came to a large compound. Near one of the outbuildings a group of young Africans were engrossed in the motor of a truck with its hood up. When we asked them where we might find Rev. Sam Coles, a friendly, middle-aged black man in coveralls raised his head from the motor and said in a soft, southern drawl, "Ah'm Sam Coles. Could I help you?"

We explained about the wrong fork and asked whether we could drive on to reach Nova Lisboa, adding that our generator was out of order. He assured us that all the trails were about the same and we could continue north to Nova Lisboa. Then he looked at our motor, found the ignition wiring burned out and the generator not working. He could not repair this.

But he invited us to his home for dinner and we enjoyed a wonderfully prepared southern-roasted chicken with all the trimmings. While we ate Mr. and Mrs. Coles explained that they had grown up in Mississippi and always had the urge to "help our brothers and sisters in Africa to find Christ." So they had signed up as missionaries. But first they had taken a number of courses, he in tile-making, mechanics and wagon-making and she in crafts which might help the Africans to better self-support. They had now achieved self-support after 25 years in Angola and their scattered members were sending their young people to them to learn skills and trades.

He explained his mission philosophy by saying, "Our Lord also learned a trade in Joseph's carpenter shop. Like our Lord I am teaching my people to help themselves while I teach them the word of God. We are a very happy people here in Angola."

Sam Coles Points out a Field

When their pastor told his students that we were looking for a place to start a Christian Lutheran mission, they clapped their hands and shouted for joy. He told us that there was a large virgin territory adjoining his mission area just to the south between the Kunene and Kubango rivers. There was no mission in this vast triangle of about 70,000 square miles with an estimated population of between 175,000 and 200,000 people, mostly Ovambos. The climate was favorable, although there was a problem with ever-present malaria.

We took note of this field and made further inquiries. This led to the discovery that our missionaries would have to spend a year in Portugal to learn the language, laws and cultures of Angola, the crown colony of Portugal, before they were permitted to work in the area. Even the Roman Catholic Church had not penetrated this whole forested region.

Filming the impressive tile-making and wagon-making industry of Sam Coles, we felt that we had learned a valuable lesson: "Make learners, not leaners, out of your people while you bring the light and life in Christ to the heathen."

Repairs and Jose Lazaro at Nova Lisboa

Finally at Nova Lisboa we reached the great West-East Road which would take us through Angola and the Belgian Congo (Zaire) to Northern Rhodesia (Zambia). We estimated it to be about 1,500 miles. We had to have a new generator and a good overhaul before we ventured on this long stretch. As we drove into the town we wondered about two things. Where could we find a garage and *gasolina* which was clean? And where would we find someone who spoke English?

With my meager knowledge of Spanish I called out to a group of young people, "Hablas Englees?" They must have understood my question, because they began to shout, "Jose Lazaro! Jose Lazaro!" and pointed ahead. We followed and stopped in front of a very neat bungalow. I went to the door and a man welcomed me in perfect English. He explained that he taught English at the local high school and would be happy to help us find a good garage and *gasolina*.

At the time we did not realize how fortunate we were to have found Jose Lazaro. He was a man of standing in the community. He called the garage at once, because it was Friday afternoon and the garages closed at noon on Saturdays. In this way we got an early appointment and took the wagon in without delay before closing time on Friday so that the man could order a generator from Lobito to be delivered by morning. We slept in our own bunks in the large yard of Sr. Lazaro and he made a bachelor dinner for us. It was as Abraham had assured Eliezer when he sent him to Haran to find a wife for Isaac, "The Lord shall send his angel before thee." We always found this to be true in our search for a field. There was always someone whom the Lord prepared to show us the way.

Jose Lazaro was greatly interested in our quest. As we sat with him that evening a thought came to him as to how he could help us. Besides teaching in the high school he was also the manager of a *rizinas*, a castor bean, operation. He had over 35,000 native pickers in his area who depended on this work for much of their livelihood.

He felt that the Roman Catholic church was doing very little for the young people whom he taught in high school. "A lively church interested in youth" he said, "is what we need in this country." Then he told us his idea about helping both the Angolese youth as well as ourselves in finding a field. With excited enthusiasm he said, "I can promise you 35,000 members, if you begin in our district." When we expressed our surprise he added, "I will tell my castor bean pickers to join your church and they will do it." It was not the way in which we would want to begin a mission, but it was clear that there was room for a Protestant mission in Angola, as Sam Coles had also told us.

Fiesta at Nova Lisboa

The repairs on our *caravan* took longer than we had anticipated. In fact, it was late afternoon before it was ready. We were well situated at Jose Lazaro's place and he insisted that we stay to meet two of his friends, also bachelors. They were going to the outdoor fiesta to say farewell to one of them, Enriques Martins, who was to be married within a week.

It was a beautiful Saturday evening. Many people were already at the plaza under the trees, sitting at small tables drinking red wine and eating

peanuts and exchanging happy words with one another, while children and dogs played nearby. A few people were dancing to some stringed instruments on a cement platform in the center. Everything was colorful and carefree under the colored lights strung across the plaza. By nine o'clock the whole plaza was empty, and we walked back to our wagon and our bunks. But not before Jose Lazaro's other friend, Arturo Duarte, had invited us to stop at his village for brunch the next morning.

This was not out of our way. Vila General Machado was about 50 miles east of Nova Lisboa on our road. Everything was ready when we arrived. The man's servant was frying kid steaks over an open grille and with it were served chunks of goat cheese and fresh white bread and a fruity red wine, called *Lacrima Christi*. As a parting gift each of us received bread and cheese and two bottles of the wine.

Good Progress

Our road was the gravel highway which paralleled the Lobito-Benguela railway line to Elizabethville and Northern Rhodesia. This line was used for transporting imports from the Atlantic into the inland rather than from Capetown.

The area was densely forested and also well supplied with missions, mostly Roman Catholic, so we did not loiter. As we drove through the native villages the people often lined the road and cried "*Viva la Mission!*"

Although we stopped in villages for bread and other food supplies, we found no eating places. Along most of these roads, we learned, there are places where one may eat very reasonably, taking potluck with farmers in their homes. We were unaware of this.

Gasolina became a problem. Just as before, one stops at private homes in the villages where one sees oil drums piled up near the road. The native in attendance siphons the fuel out of the drum and places the other end into one's fuel tank. The result is often dirty or watered fuel which does not ignite well in the engine. Every little while we had to stop and blow out the gas line and several times we had to have the tanks drained and cleaned of accumulated dirt. We paid up to \$1.70 per imperial gallon along this road and were happy to get it. Fortunately, we had the extra fuel tank for the generator.

Fuel from a Uranium Mine

On June 29th we crossed a branch of the Zambezi River at Dilolo and entered the Belgian Congo (Zaire). At this point we were rather depressed because of the interminable distances and our apparent failure to find a mission site which could be presented to our mission board as promising.

Thus far three fields had been offered. The one in the Kaokoveld of Southwest among the Ovambosa and Bushmen would involve us in work under the Rhenish Mission. Our missionaries would have to learn Afrikaans, possibly also German in addition to the native vernacular. The government was most unfriendly to Americans. It would be difficult to interest our synod in such a field.

The two which were pointed out to us in Angola seemed to offer similar problems of language in addition to the almost unacceptable requirement of a year in Portugal for future missionaries. This in itself would almost

certainly discourage the board and the synod from taking these fields seriously as first ventures in world missions.

The country through which we now traveled was much like Angola. The Roman Catholic Church had many missions in this populated area along the transcontinental road. Perhaps there were regions inland which were still without missions, but we were in no condition to venture into them to explore. It would require a knowledge of French at the least to investigate effectively, and we had neither that nor the time to undertake much more.

Our fuel tanks were almost empty and we had been unable to find a place to fill them. We arrived in a uranium mining town called Tenke. In desperation we stopped just after sundown at the offices of the mine. Fortunately, one of the Belgian scientists, a Dr. Gedonnet, was still in his laboratory and he answered our knock. He also understood English and our plight. Seeing our mission vehicle, he smilingly said that he was sure that ours was a good cause and that the company would be happy to help us out to the next place where we could buy more fuel. He pumped five gallons for us at the tank which was used by the employees and sent us on our way.

Jadotville — Brakes and Pygmies

Our fuel supply carried us as far as Jadotville, deep in the Belgian Congo. Stopping along the road before entering this town we were happily surprised to come upon a group of about twenty pygmies traveling southward through the forest. We were unable to converse with them and before I could get my camera they disappeared from view among the thick brush.

It was the last day of June. Again we had to have our brakes taken up and another broken rim welded. These repairs occurred now with depressing frequency. We had the gas lines properly blown out at the garage because our motor was sputtering again. To add to our woes we had to sleep that night in the cluttered yard of the garage because our motor was not working.

After a poor dinner at a Greek restaurant we engaged in a long discussion about our situation and what would happen to our mission prospects if we returned home with no better results than what we had achieved thus far after months of preparation and exploration.

But it is often darkest just before the dawn. We lost courage and did not know that our God was leading us slowly but surely to the right field which he had in mind for us. Today, 35 years later, it is clear that the end of our long wearisome search was, literally, just around the corner. As soon as we left Jadotville and headed southeast toward Elizabethville (Lubumbashi) we were within walking reach of Northern Rhodesia where our quest would end in success.

July First — a Day To Remember

July 1st was Independence Day in the Belgian Congo. It was a Friday. All the business places were closed when we went out to shop from our motel. We had arrived just before the post office closed on Thursday and had picked up our mail from home and from several African friends, the Sterns and Dr. Heinrich Vedder. The latter gave us the name of someone whom we could see in Northern Rhodesia about a mission field.

We were still in the Congo because there were no big bridges into Northern

Rhodesia at this point. There was no point in staying in Elizabethville, so we pushed on southward toward Sakania and its big bridge over the border to Ndola.

Parking on the roadside for lunch we set up our shaving utensils, as we usually had done, so that we might be more presentable when we arrived at Ndola. The front bumper was a convenient place to rest the washpan and to hang the mirror. We drew quite an audience from the bush that afternoon, the big white lorry being the main attraction.

We crossed the big bridge over what seemed to be a creek during this dry season and we were in Northern Rhodesia (Zambia). Almost magically everything seemed to change. Perhaps this was because we were now able to read the signs on the road which pointed to the customs and immigration offices and the signs on the shops in the town of Ndola. We were given only a cursory inspection by the authorities and passed on. We were certain that our identification as a Lutheran Mission Exploratory Expedition gave us an easy passage.

Ndola

The whole countryside seemed to welcome us. Great white fleecy clouds floated lazily over a clear-blue sky. The dense forest was gone. Instead, we were now in tropical savannah land at an altitude of two thousand feet above sea level. After the weeks in strange countries, we seemed to have arrived at home.

We put up at the Rutland Hotel so that we could bathe and clean up to call on Mr. and Mrs. Louis Serfontein. I had met him at Ann Arbor with his brother Barry who had married a good friend, Miss Shirley Hogan, a daughter of an Ann Arbor furrier. Louis Serfontein was a geologist for the copper-mining company at Ndola. He spoke a good English, although he and his wife were Afrikaans. It was relaxing to sit at their table and to enjoy a well-cooked meal and good conversation.

Now a truly remarkable chain of events began to unfold which all helped to lead us to our final objective, that is, to find the right site for our mission. At Serfonteins we were introduced to the mayor of Angola, Mr. Albertson. When he heard of our search for a mission field, he urged us to stop at the Salvation Army refuge of Major and Mrs. Williams on our way to Broken Hill. This refuge was out in the bush at Chondwe near the road to Lusaka. Major Williams was a member of the Christian Mission Council and would know all about mission openings in Northern Rhodesia.

Salvation and Salvage

Thus Major Williams became the next link in the chain that would lead us to our goal. This Salvation Army refuge was a truly laudable Christian operation. Major Williams and his wife had been in Africa many years and had come upon many human derelicts who, fleeing from Europe and elsewhere, had found a place in Africa to escape the consequences of misspent lives.

Inevitably, a problem arose for these people when they grew old and unable to fend for themselves. This is where the refuge stepped in and offered them a place where they could save their souls and also salvage what

was left of their lives in some useful pursuit. The Chondwe refuge was designed for this purpose.

Several plain dormitories had been built on a tract of land which had been developed into a flourishing farm. The products of the farm and gardens were used, first, to provide food for the refuge itself. But the surplus was sold in the cities to pay for maintenance and development of the enterprise. This developed self-esteem in those who had almost given up. Major Williams summarized what he was doing when he said, "These poor people need to find friends to help them, but especially to find their true best Friend and to prepare for a blessed end of their lives."

It gave Wacker and me something to think about. Again Wacker stated it in his direct way. "How much of this work of mercy to the unfortunate in this world," he asked, "can we simply evade by relegating it to the Salvation Army with a few coins thrown into the pot at Christmas? Are we really absolving ourselves of the Christian duty by saying that this smacks too much of the social gospel, when Jesus said very plainly, 'I was sick and a stranger, and ye took me in?'"

In any case, Major and Mrs. Williams also forged the next link in the chain which was slowly, but surely, drawing us ever nearer to our goal of finding a mission field. As we bade them goodbye and God's blessing on their work, Major Williams repeated what he had already advised us to do: to visit the father of Christian missions in this area, the Rev. Douglas Gray at Broken Hill, on our way to Lusaka.

Another Fourth of July Event

We had already had the happy visit with Major and Mrs. Williams as we took to the road for Broken Hill. Another meeting on this road was to show us the commitment of some people who felt constrained to dedicate themselves to the rescue of other lost souls after they themselves had come to faith in Jesus their Savior.

It was a battered, broken-down car of a very old vintage standing by the side of the road which first caught our attention. Then we saw an old man sitting on the running board with another person, a woman. We stopped and asked whether we could be of any help to them. The man introduced his wife and himself as Mr. and Mrs. George Sims, two missionaries of a faith mission in the United States. He said that they had run out of petrol and trusted that the Lord would send someone to help, as the Lord had always done.

We siphoned the petrol from our spare tank into theirs and they were delighted as little children that they could again be on their way. He then told us their story. Years ago they had come to faith in Christ and had resolved to take their life savings and their car to Africa to tell the Africans about Jesus. They had enjoyed a little training by their mission, but were on their own, trusting that the Lord would lead them and provide for them. They lived in their old Buick and went from place to place preaching as they went, chiefly in the cities where English was understood. They were now over eighty and did not know how many people the Lord had saved through them, but the Lord knew and he would give them the strength to go on, as he had promised.

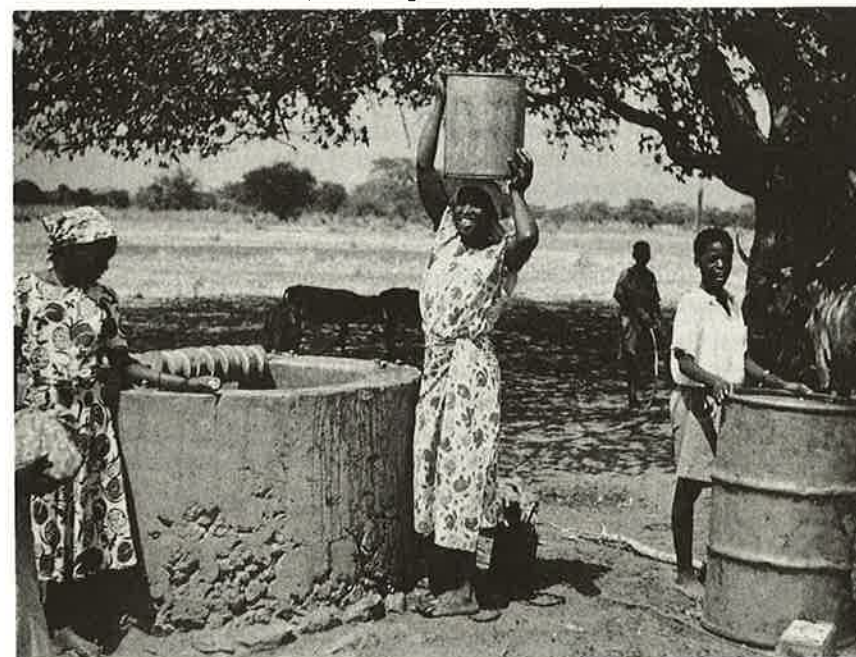


Rev. Douglas Gray, Broken Hill, Zambia, directed Hoenecke and Wacker to native Commissioner John Moffatt and the Hook of the Kafue field.



An African baobab tree.

Women at a well near Lusaka, Zambia, greet Hoenecke and Wacker.



This was our Fourth of July celebration in 1949, and we considered it to have been one of the best we ever observed.

The Reverend Douglas Gray

The fifth of July was just as exciting. We found another strong link in the chain leading us to our mission goal.

It was at Broken Hill, another mining town in the copper belt of Northern Rhodesia. This place is about two-thirds of the distance from Ndola to Lusaka. Today it is called Kabwe. To the west lies the Lukanga Swamp and a little southwest the big Hook of the Kafue River.

We arrived at the home of Reverend and Mrs. Douglas Gray at tea time and were given a very warm welcome. When Pastor Gray saw the big white van at his gate with the words "Lutheran African Mission" on its side, he called back into the house for his wife and children to come out and see it. Mrs. Gray and her daughter and son-in-law, Missionary and Mrs. Merfyn Temple, came out, and we had to show them the interior of our *caravan*.

We were invited in for tea and they wanted to hear all about our exploration for a mission site, wondering how far we had come and where we were planning to go. They were all very much interested, because they themselves were missionaries. The elder Grays had spent over fifty years in the British Methodist Mission work in Central Africa and were now in their retirement. When I asked him whether they planned to return home to England, he exclaimed, "Home? We are at home; our home is here with our people?"

The Temples had just arrived for a visit from their mission field near Namwala, southwest of Broken Hill and in the area where the Kafue River flows westward after it makes the big hook to the south and east to flow into the mighty Zambezi beyond the Kariba Dam. Mrs. Temple was a physician and surgeon who was in charge of several dispensaries in her husband's district. They were especially interested because the area just north of their stations was being cleared of tsetse flies and prepared for a major native resettlement scheme of the government. It would be an ideal field, they thought, for a mission to be planted with excellent prospects for the future as more people streamed into the new agricultural area.

Reverend Gray concurred in this opinion and added that he had spoken with Mr. John Moffatt, the Commissioner for Native Development, just recently about the need for a strong church at the place to give the uprooted Africans the stability they would need to take root in the area. He volunteered to telephone Mr. Moffatt to arrange for an interview with us.

Then Pastor Gray began to reminisce about the Hook of the Kafue district. His mission stations had been to the east of this area, but he knew it well. He told us that years earlier he had promised two chieftains, Kabulwebulwe and Kaindu, to begin schools and churches in their tribal reserves, but he had never been able to fulfill his promise to them. He would, therefore, be delighted to have a confessionally strong church like our Lutheran church bring them the gospel.

He also explained that the tsetse fly infestation had prevented successful cattle raising and farming until now and that the fly control program would induce many African farmers to move into the area. He and Mr. Temple said, "The whole area is still vacant; not even the Roman church has opened

missions in a region of 40,000 square miles. We have always been disturbed over the fact that we have not been able to reach the approximately 100,000 people now living in the general area, because it is a potentially fertile field both for agriculture and for missions. Our perpetual lack of men and means has prevented us from doing so."

Medical Missions

Mrs. Merfyn Temple, M.D., was fascinated with our visit to Dr. Anni Melander at Onandjokwe on the other side of Africa and her surgical successes despite the primitive facilities at her disposal. Her work near Namwala, Mrs. Temple said, was quite similar, but she had the advantage of referring patients in need of major surgery to the hospitals in the cities of Northern and Southern Rhodesia.

She thought that we would also come to the decision to open some kind of a medical mission program, if we opened our mission in a bush area like the Hook of the Kafue. At the time Wacker and I had not given much thought to a medical mission in connection with the mission we hoped to have our synod open in Africa. It was most instructive to hear what Dr. Temple had to tell us, and it played a part in later developments.

Mrs. Temple explained that it was very dangerous to leave medical advice and treatment in the hands of medically untrained mission personnel. The very nature of missions which supplanted the medicine men as the spiritual advisers of the African villages brought with it the need for supplying some kind of a healing activity. Even though the missionaries and their wives did not care to become involved as practitioners of some elementary form of counsel and medical treatment, the native Africans would seek them out for this very thing. Having taken the place of the medicine man as the spiritual counselor, the Africans would think it to be self-evident that they would also heal their bodies. We later found this to be entirely true and we had to come to the decision which she predicted.

She explained further what she meant when she spoke of the danger of leaving medical advice and treatment in the hands of untrained mission personnel. The danger existed, first, for the family of the missionary. The Africans would come to the mission house with all kinds of diseases against which the expatriate staff had no defenses. Some of these diseases might prove fatal for children especially.

The other danger, she said, lay in the area of responsibility if untrained persons applied incorrect counsel and treatment. With the very best of intentions this could result in the loss of confidence in the missionary and his message on the part of the ignorant Africans. The government was very much concerned about this phase of missionary activity, because it could delay or even prevent treatment at a proper medical center.

Much later, this led to our medical mission program, and in 30 years it has not shifted emphasis from our spiritual work.

Arrival at Lusaka

It is hard to exaggerate the feeling of relief and gratitude with which we prepared to leave Broken Hill for Lusaka after our conversation with the two missionaries. We were so happy at the prospect of finding a field that we set

to work to give our house on wheels a thorough housecleaning. We took out everything that was not fastened and got rid of clouds of sand and dust. For good measure we even scrubbed the floor and straightened out all our cupboards. After all, we wanted to make a good impression on the people in government whom we were scheduled to interview the next morning.

We arrived late that evening and pulled off the road across from a large vacant square of land around which on four sides we saw small shops of merchants and tradesmen. After a cold lunch we crawled into our bunks with our hearts full of thanksgiving for the Lord's wonderful leading.

In 1949 Lusaka was still a small frontier town surrounded by open bush country on every side. Early the next morning we shaved, took a quick, cold sponge bath and dressed in our best clothes which had not been worn for weeks. As we came out of the little frame post office we saw a large wagon drawn by three teams of oxen just starting out from town, loaded with bags of some kind of grain. At the same corner a modern ambulance drove by in the other direction. We had a good breakfast at the Lusaka Hotel and were ready to drive to the *Secretariat*, as the administration building was called, to see Mr. John Moffatt. At this time he had not as yet been knighted for his valuable services to the crown in establishing a sound policy for the education and development of the native Africans.

Mr. John Moffatt

We were first shown into the office of Mr. Bush, the Secretary for Native Affairs and his assistant, Mr. Price. At this office we learned what steps our church would have to take to be confirmed by the Colonial Secretary in London as a recognized mission agency. The requirements were enough assured financial backing and continuing support to maintain the staff of the proposed mission. We were also provided with accurate statistics of the field which was open at that time in the district of the Hook of the Kafue River:

<i>Areas</i>	<i>Square Miles</i>	<i>Present Population</i>
Mankeuya	15,000	38,872
Kasempa	17,020	37,448
Numbwe	8-10,000	25,977
Hook of the Kafue	40,000+	102,297 (1948)

Mr. John Moffatt came in briefly and invited us to go with him to a session of the Legislative Assembly which he had to attend. He introduced us to the assembly and the president of the body invited us to address a few words to the members, stating our purpose in coming to Northern Rhodesia. This body at that time represented the federation of Northern and Southern Rhodesia and Nyasaland (Malawi). Mr. Nightingale, the president, then invited questions from the body. When these had been answered, he invited us to remain as their guests and went on to other items of business.

We met briefly with Mr. Moffatt in his office and he invited us to take lunch with him at his home in the outskirts of Lusaka where he also granted our request for a taped recording of whatever remarks he would like to address to our mission board. It was a very relaxed luncheon. The fare was

as plain as this fine gentleman and his lady — without frills. He took the round loaf of home-baked bread into his hands and asked a blessing on the food and our mission. Then he proceeded to cut the bread as our mothers used to do, holding it against his chest to slice it. Some cold cuts and cheese were followed by a mixed fruit dessert.

Then we hooked up our tape recorder with power from our generator and asked him questions which we recorded together with his extemporaneous replies. It was remarkable to learn to what a great extent he was in agreement with our church on the matter of the relationship of church and government. "There is no thought of government interfering with the mission of the church. We expect the church to supply the message which it is called to teach and which government by the nature of things in this land cannot provide for the stability of character and morality which are, after all, most necessary ingredients for any program to succeed. On our part, government will provide protection and conditions for our citizens so engaged that both may work in peace and harmony in their several spheres."

Referring to our coming at just this time, he added, "Your coming to our country at this time is a veritable godsend. We are engaged in an experiment of resettlement of large native populations in newly cleared [of the tsetse fly] territories. Because these people will be uprooted from their ancient moorings, including whatever moral and ethical native religious principles which they follow, we are deeply concerned in government that they might find a new moral stability which a confessionally strong church like yours can provide them."

Wacker and I were delighted to hear this Christian descendant of the famous Bible translator enunciate principles which would afford protection without interference for our future mission program. The mission board was just as pleased as we were when we played the tape for them on our return. It will be placed into the archives of the synod.

Thanksgiving Under the Big Baobab Tree

Mr. Moffatt personally directed us to a place under a huge baobab tree behind the *Secretariat* where we could park our van for the duration of our stay at Lusaka. He exclaimed over the compact arrangement for all our needs in the camper and understood that we had almost unavoidable problems with the five-ton gross weight on single rear wheels. He himself had been on several safaris into wild animal parks in much lighter vehicles and knew the condition of the trails in the bush.

The large baobab has very likely gone the way of all trees after thirty-five years. It is not a beautiful tree. In fact, there is an African legend which says that the baobab was cursed to grow upside down with its roots in the air because it produced no edible fruit. But even this homely tree looked beautiful to us as we settled down that night under its great branches. They appeared to us as great hands which stretched toward heaven with us in thanks for God's faithfulness in having brought us to a land where our missionaries could feel at home under the protection of a benevolent government.

As we closed our eyes that night we felt like Samuel near Mizpah. Our memorial stone was an ugly tree, but we, too, could call it our *Ebenezer*,

saying "Hitherto hath the Lord helped us." We had found an English-speaking country where the government policy was designed to protect Christian missions, but in no way to interfere with them.

How quickly sleep came to us that night. The prayer of the Psalmist which I prayed had a new meaning for me, "I will both lay me down in peace and sleep, for thou, Lord, only makest me to dwell in safety. And thou has put gladness into my heart."

Time to Return Home

On the next day we wound up our affairs with the government officials with whom we would have to maintain contact to facilitate the entrance of our synod into this promising field. Mr. John Moffatt and his staff gave us their assurance that they stood ready to help in anything within their jurisdiction.

On our part we promised to do what we could to expedite the decision of our mission board and synod, so that we could take advantage of the opening in the Hook of the Kafue district. Little did we know at that time that we had a big battle before us to win the final resolution to open a mission in Africa because of the continuing delays which were imposed on our board and the difficulty in staffing the field with its first missionaries. By the time they arrived in 1953 the Hook of the Kafue field had been assigned to another agency.

But on the morning when we drove out of Lusaka on the "strip road," two narrow, parallel paved strips, to the south our hearts were light and happy. We knew that time was running out rapidly. Our freighter was scheduled to leave Capetown on July 31st for the return voyage to New York. If the road south proved to be as good as reported, we still planned to visit the Bleckmar Mission near Durban. This would involve heading east after we left Bulawayo to reach the southern road at Salisbury and skirting the Indian Ocean.

Our big gospel wagon was showing signs of hard wear. It now registered 5,000 miles on the odometer and we estimated that we had over 2,500 miles to travel. By this time the rear wheel rims had been replaced or welded at least seven times and the motor and brakes were in need of thorough attention.

The Great Victoria Falls

The prospect of driving through some of Africa's most spectacular scenery on our way to Johannesburg and Capetown suited perfectly our happy mood over finding a promising mission site. The tension and worry about finding a field was over and we were relaxed as we approached Livingstone and the Victoria Falls. It is awe-inspiring to approach the mighty Zambezi and, even before it becomes visible, to see, as David Livingstone described it, "five columns of vapour ascending from this strange abyss." The Africans call the Victoria Falls "the smoke that thunders."

It was breathtaking to walk to the eastern edge of the chasm, twice as deep as that of our Niagara, and to see over a solid mile of the southern shore of the Zambezi pour into this chasm. At its bottom it is only about a hundred feet wide. The result of this mass of water falling into such a narrow abyss is the tremendous plume of "smoke" that is said to rise five miles into the sky. It fills the whole chasm, making it very difficult to take a picture to do it justice.

We drove across the long suspension bridge across the gorge below the falls. Below us were the violently churning waters and all around us the vapor and the thundering noise of great masses of water falling and boiling over the black rocks and boulders. We thought we would get a better shot of the actual falls from the southern rim of the chasm. We parked our *caravan* near a huge baobab tree and walked into the wooded area which is known as the "rain forest" because the spume from the falls is causing a constant rain and mist. The vegetation is a lush tropical jungle. One must be very careful on the paths through this thicket. Only weeks before our visit a man and his son were attacked here by a bull elephant who stomped the boy to death. The father tried to drive him off, but not in time to save his son. These elephants are usually strays from the nearby game reserves.

We got some good film footage of the tons upon tons of water swirling over the northern rim of the chasm into the deep abyss. As we were leaving a family of baboons suddenly blocked our path, the mother with a baby baboon on her back baring her teeth for the attack. I fended her off with the sharp points of my camera tripod. We hurried on, soaking wet from perspiration, because we had worn slickers in the dripping forest.

As we approached our big camper a big baboon was just scrambling down from the roof onto the hood and a big male came out of the cab window clutching a corn cob which had been given to us by a farmer in Angola. Then the baboons surrounded us, begging for a handout.

Bulawayo — Salisbury — Kruger Park

After crossing the suspension bridge over the deep gorge we were in Southern Rhodesia (Zimbabwe). There was no time for us to loiter as we passed by the large game parks. We saw elephants and other game as we hurried down to Bulawayo.

As we passed through the town a reporter stopped us for an interview for his paper. The afternoon edition then carried a big picture of us and our *caravan* with the story of our expedition on the front page of the *Bulawayo Chronicle*. The papier maché matrices which the *Plymouth Mail* had supplied gave us good exposure in the towns and cities we visited.

At Salisbury we had the same experience. Central Africa knew that the Wisconsin Synod had arrived. We had come very late. Several of the missions had been established a hundred years earlier.

A well-dressed woman stopped us on the street in Salisbury and pressed a copy of the Gospel of St. Mark into our hands asking us to be sure to read it. She was clearly an American, so we stopped to talk with her. She was from Chicago. Having come to faith in Jesus and also having inherited a fair fortune, she decided to witness personally by traveling from one foreign city to another, passing out Scripture portions free to all comers. She assured us that she would pray for our "venture of faith."

Stranded

Since no decision had been reached about visiting the Bleckmar Mission near Durban enroute to Johannesburg, we headed south out of Salisbury near the Mozambique border, crossing it and recrossing it until we also



Mr. John Moffatt of Lusaka, Zambia, the Commissioner for Native Development.



A five-ton load on three wheels outside of Louis Trichardt.

The caravan parked in front of the Lusaka post office.



crossed into the Union of South Africa at Beit Bridge. The customs and immigration officers here gave us a bad time, charged us a large duty and demanded that we obtain a new visa for our travels through the Union.

With this taken care of after several hours delay, we again headed south to Durban via Kruger Park. Sixty-five miles out of Louis Trichardt our left rear wheel gave way again with at least the seventh cracked rim. We pulled off the narrow road and set our jack to remove the wheel, but the jack and piece of plank under it were both pressed so deeply into the soft shoulder that the wheel was not freed. We had to build up a stronger base with field stones before we could get at the wheel with our jack just raising it sufficiently from the ground. But, try as we might, we could not pull the wheel off the axle.

Then Wacker got the brainstorm to crawl under the truck and to kick the wheel loose. There was no help in sight. Not a single vehicle had passed while we were working. We were still thirty-five miles from the next village, Punda Maria. We had been there since mid-morning.

I argued with Art. We tried once more to pull the stubborn wheel with our combined strength. It would not yield. I argued with Art, warning him that the whole wagon might come down on him perched so precariously on unstable rocks and a thin jack. It was all to no avail. Finally I placed our spare wheel under the corner on some rocks, hoping it would prevent a total collapse, if the jack fell over. I prayed.

Wacker crawled under the big camper on his back and gave the wheel a hard kick with both feet. I sweat bullets. There was a light rocking movement. But God's angel again watched over us; with the second kick the wheel broke loose and Wacker lost no time crawling out from under and into the ditch, filthy but otherwise unscathed. We pulled the wheel off and placed the spare onto the axle. But when we let down the jack we found that the tire had not been pumped up at the last garage where we had stopped with tire trouble. We had only one spare.

A Good Samaritan

There we sat with our five-ton load on three wheels. To try to drive thirty-five miles on a soft tire would have been utter folly. The tire would have been in shreds in less than a mile on the stony road. There was no way to pump it up either. We tried our hand pump, but it leaked. The other pump which was supposed to work from the motor head also failed.

Many thoughts go through one's mind at such a time. The words of the Psalm came to my mind which my wife and I had engraved in our wedding bands, "Commit thy way unto the Lord, trust also in him; and he shall bring it to pass." Especially the next line seemed appropriate, "Rest in the Lord, wait patiently for him." It's hard to imagine that a situation like ours, two wheels out of order on an abandoned road, would be one for an angel to come and help. But one was mistaken!

An angel did come in the form of a rancher in a Chevy pickup and a great cloud of dust. It was the first and only one of two who came along that road on that day. And he stopped to see whether he could help. He was on his way to Louis Trichardt for supplies and would not return until the next day. This was a roundtrip of 130 miles. He volunteered to take our wheels to the garage to have them fixed for us. Some things in life cannot be demonstrated as safe and reliable; they must be taken on trust. Such as the honesty of this strange

rancher whose name we never learned to know. We simply trusted him to return.

Twenty Hours of Waiting

How would we spend the hours until our Good Samaritan returned with our wheels? At the time — with our vehicle on a weak jack and a pile of rock — it seemed that we might never be able to leave that desolate spot on the trail to Punda Maria or anywhere else. During the long afternoon only one car went by. I had a glimpse of the passenger and he looked very much like General Smuts. But I dismissed the thought because we thought of him at his estate down near Capetown. But it was he, as we learned later.

To make the hours pass more swiftly we gave that camper a thorough housecleaning from top to bottom. We piled all our gear out on the ground and before we realized it, several women and children had drifted out of the bush and were looking things over. We hurriedly put things back inside. When the women stayed and a few more came with their men, I began to take pictures of them because of the strange custom they had of placing many metal rings on their legs above their ankles. They must have been heavy and painful, but they seemed not to notice. When they saw that they were being photographed, they began to dance and those steel and copper rings bounced up and down on their ankles.

Wacker had another bad experience under the back of our truck while he was handing out trinkets, furnace chains and other junk jewelry. The women became so eager to get them that they crowded around and, actually, knocked him down and he fell under the back of the camper. Finally, after sundown they drifted back into the bush as quietly as they had come and we were alone for the night. Even the singing of the natives somewhere in the woods off the road did not keep us awake very long.

After our morning chores, including shaving on the road with a group of interested onlookers, we just sat and considered our new situation. It was another day later and at the entrance to Kruger Park. We did not know when our unknown friend would return with our wheels; it might mean another day's delay. So we decided not to take the time to visit the Bleckmar Mission but to hurry over to Pretoria, the capital, and Johannesburg and thence to Capetown. All we now needed was for our kind stranger to return with our wheels.

Our trust had not been misplaced. Our friend showed up just before noon with both wheels in good shape. He even helped the stranded Americans to mount them. And when it came to pay, he refused to accept any more than the actual cost of the repairs. That unknown rancher in the Chevy pickup still looked like one of God's "ministering spirits, sent forth to minister to them who shall be the heirs of salvation."

Second Meeting with Smuts

The thirty-five-mile run down to Punda Maria at the entrance to the Kruger Game Park took little more than an hour on the narrow road.

We registered at the park police office and noticed the name of General Jan Christian Smuts on the register the day before. So it was Mr. Smuts, after all, whom I had seen while we were hung up on the road. There was no

way of telling whether he was still at this rest camp. It must be understood that the game roams freely in the park, while the people are confined in rest camps for the night. No travel was permitted in the park after sundown.

Before we got underway the next morning General Smuts visited us at our parking place. He said he had seen our big white *caravan* on the road as he came to the park, but his driver thought we were just resting along the way. He was happy to see us, wondered how we had fared with Mr. Hoogenhaut at Windhoek, and was certain that we would fare better in Northern Rhodesia.

Then he introduced us to his political secretary with these strange words, "Henry, I want to make you acquainted with our new masters." When he saw our confusion he added, "After all, America's wealth and influence have placed your country into world leadership, whether you like it or not."

He asked politely whether he could see the interior of our *caravan*. He looked at all the furnishings and equipment, especially our electric refrigerator, and exclaimed, "These Americans! It's fantastic; they bring all the comforts of home into our African bush!" He wished us well and drove off to the elephant range.

We took off from the next exit to Pretoria. Without taking any side trails we saw many wild animals, although the herds were not as large as those in the Etosha Pan.

Sunday at Pretoria

Aside from a brake failure between Nelspruit and Belfast, while we were driving through the craggy Drakensberg Hills, we reached Pretoria without further incident on Sunday afternoon, July 17th. We had to stop here for a cleaning job on one of our movie cameras. It seems that the fine dust had caused the film advance mechanism to slow down and I was afraid of overexposures.

We would have to wait until morning to take care of the business we had with the immigration department concerning our temporary visa. In the meantime we admired the beautiful flower beds and fountains of this capital of the Union of South Africa and at an American hamburger stand somewhere in the heart of the city we ate a typical American supper, "burger and fries."

In the evening we went out to a ham shortwave operator in one of the suburbs and tried to reach home, as we had twice before. There was a short conversation with Larry Mueller at Plymouth and then the reception was too garbled to be intelligible. We still expected to return by sea about August 20th.

By noon of Monday we were supplied with a temporary visa for South Africa, extended to August 12th, and had our camera back in good condition. We were in Johannesburg by two.

Johannesburg

Johannesburg was already a very large, busy modern city in 1949. We had several addresses of people in this city whom we wanted to contact. Mr. Ernest Krieger, Aid Association for Lutherans representative at Saginaw, Michigan, had given us the names of two friends with whom he had fought in the Italian campaign of World War II, Mr. Vic Bester and Mr. Costa John,

who were officers of an American automobile sales company in downtown Johannesburg. They had arranged a room for us at the Carlton Hotel which was near the Farrell Lines office.

As soon as we had put our gospel wagon into a garage, we walked over to this office to confirm our return passage on the *African Crescent*. We were told that the ship had had delays and would not sail from Capetown until August 15th. This was disturbing news because we had neither the means nor the time to wait three and a half weeks. Adding the three weeks at sea it would bring us home no earlier than September 8th at best. My leave from the congregation was only until September 1st.

We deliberated on the matter in our room and wondered where we could possibly spend those weeks without funds. While we were discussing this the telephone rang and the Farrell Lines office advised us of a further delay in the sailing. The new estimated time of departure was now August 27th. Much later we learned that the *Crescent* actually left Capetown on September 19th!

Emergency plans had to be made, this was clear. We tried to get bookings on other shiplines with no success. We came to the decision that we would have to fly home even though we had promised our families not to do this. It would also involve an extra \$600 for air fare. More than this would be consumed by staying in Africa and we would be depriving our parishes and families of weeks at our posts of duty.

It required four days to make all the arrangements for air flights and for the shipment of our vehicle by rail to Capetown and on to Brooklyn. Our new friends, Vic Bester and Costa John, were most helpful in making these arrangements. The camper was driven down to the freight yards on July 21st. The freight agent insisted that we drive it onto the narrow flatcar and I saw the last of the big house on wheels in which we had lived since April 25th. Everything had been carefully packed and secured with lashings supplied by Bester.

Days of Waiting

We used most of our funds from the synod plus some of our own to pay for the return flight on K.L.M., the Royal Dutch Airlines. These were propeller-driven planes and their schedules involved many more hours than jet flights. They also entailed layovers at several points enroute. Still, the return trip was almost three weeks shorter than the journey to Capetown and the freighter's sea voyage to New York.

We spent a very pleasant evening with Mr. and Mrs. Walter Wolff, the parents of Mrs. Kurt Stern of Windhoek. Although we were strangers, they gave us the same warm hospitality that we had experienced with the Kurt Sterns. They described conditions which had driven them out of Germany over Holland and England to South Africa with very little but some jewelry and money which they had secreted on their persons. They had begun a new life at Johannesburg and were now in good circumstances. The plight of many of their relatives and friends who waited too long under Hitler, they told us, was horrible. A large number of them had perished in the Nazi holocaust.

We Report to the Mission Board

Since it was quite certain that we could not return to the United States in time for the August convention of the synod, for many weeks we had assembled data on our journey. While we waited at Johannesburg we assembled this material in a formal report to our General Mission Board, leaving it to the discretion of Pastor William Roepke, board chairman, whether he would submit it to the convention.

We reported on the various fields which were open to us as the result of our exploration. There were four fields to be considered:

1. The request of the Rhenish Mission in Southwest Africa to work with them among the Ovambos and Bushmen in the Kaokoveld.
2. The offer of Sr. Jose Lazaro of Angola to help us in opening a field among the Ovambos and Okavangos in his large district near Nova Lisboa.
3. The suggestion of Rev. Sam Coles of Galanque, Angola to open a mission in the populous triangle between the Cunene and Cubango rivers.
4. The invitation of the Department of Native Development, headed by Sir John Moffatt, to open a mission in the Hook of Kafue district of Northern Rhodesia.

We strongly advocated opening our African work in the Hook of the Kafue district. We also explained that a decision to do this would require urgent attention on the part of the synod, because the resettlement of 100,000 natives was already going on and no other mission agency would be licensed to enter the field if we acted promptly. The government was ready to facilitate our coming.

This report was mailed to the chairman on July 19th and received by him by air mail within a week. The executive committee of the mission board decided not to present it to the convention.

The Flight Home over the Length of Africa

It was a very long flight from Johannesburg by propeller-driven plane over Africa, Europe, the Atlantic Ocean and back to Detroit. There were fueling stops and layovers at Livingstone, Leopoldville (Kinshasa), Kano, Rome, Amsterdam, London, Glasgow, Reykjavik and New York. One redeeming feature of these flights was the fact that the planes flew at lower altitudes and one had a better view of the terrain over which they flew.

We saw the great Kalahari Desert which we had been warned to avoid crossing in our camper by the rancher from Gobabis. We saw herds of wild game as we began our descent to Livingstone and had a breathtaking view of the Victoria Falls and the "smoke that thunders." The unbroken forest expanse of the Belgian Congo (Zaire) assumed a new dimension from the air. Only a few of the towns and native villages were visible from our altitude. The immense area of Central Africa which is drained by the wide Congo and its many tributaries appeared incredibly vast when one thought of it in terms of the thousands of square miles it covered.

Leaving Leopoldville (Kinshasa), the flight over equatorial Africa and Nigeria convinced us of the folly of our original plan to negotiate the big rivers and thick jungles in our ungainly motor home.

Quite suddenly, as we flew over northern Nigeria, the jungle gave way to arid country as we approached the endless waste of the great Sahara Desert and prepared to land at the "mud city" of Kano. The adobe houses gave this isolated desert settlement its name. It was almost entirely devoid of any vegetation. The runway was hard to distinguish from the arid terrain around it.

While the plane was serviced and refueled, the passengers wandered over to the tent of Abdullah, a seller of primitive African carvings. He spoke English, he said, because he had worked as a stevedore in one of the Mediterranean ports which was frequented by American naval vessels during the war. During the bartering with the passengers the time came for one of his daily prayer periods. He left everything and rolled out his prayer rug on the sand, faced toward Mecca, took out a small pan of water, ceremoniously washed his feet and made his ritual prayers and obeisance to Allah. The little blue lizards crawled about and his customers waited until he had finished his prayers.

It merely served to remind us that Mohammedanism was also vying for the souls of the Africans and was gaining more and more devotees. This was being accelerated by means of the fund which had just been set aside by President Nasser of Egypt to make all of Africa one nation, one language and one — the Mohammedan — religion. In this way also, we felt, our synod ought to realize the urgency of responding to the call to reach out to Africa with the gospel before it was too late.

Singing While Winging over the Sahara

When we lifted off from Kano and flew for hours over the monotonous waste of sand, our stewardess felt that her passengers needed some diversion to relieve their boredom. So she organized a sing-along in the cabin. Some of the passengers knew German, others English folksongs. A friendly contest developed between them, and it did make the flight less tiresome.

At one place we were able to trace the slow progress of a caravan toward a green oasis. We could recognize the animals as camels. We marveled at the fact that from our elevated point of view we could see both the oasis from which they had set out as well as the oasis to which they were traveling in their slow progress over the sand and the rock-strewn terrain. Those dips and crags were still hiding the goal of their journey from their earthbound sight, while we could see both the beginning and end, as well as their arduous struggle, very clearly.

Thus in our earthbound lives we often fail to see the whole picture of God's dealing with us because we are blocked and blinded by our shortsighted vision and do not avail ourselves of the grand overview which God reveals to us in his word. It had happened to us on this trip. In our weariness and frustration we thought we would never find a truly promising field which our board and our synod would have the courage to enter. Even when we were almost within view of our goal at Elizabethville, just across the border from Northern Rhodesia, we still wondered whether the desired objective would elude our reach.



General John Christian Smuts at Punda Maria (p. 58).



Left to right: Costa John, Art Wacker and Vic Bester at Carlton Hotel, Johannesburg.



The KLM plane at Kano.

And all the while God not only saw the whole thing clearly, but he was leading us unerringly to the field which he had ready for us, a field which would flourish and prosper in the thing whereto he had sent us with the word of life. If only we could have trusted more implicitly!

Across the Alps to Amsterdam

Finally, the desert slipped under our spread wings and with the vision of an eagle we saw the brilliant blue waters of the Mediterranean spread out before us. In that clear light, as on a good map, we saw the boot of Italy kicking Sicily out of shape. A little later, as we descended for the landing, Rome on its even green hills appeared with its white buildings sharply defined.

As we again took to the air from Rome the Gulf of Genoa was below us and in the western distance we were told the Cote d' Azur was dimly visible. Out of the right window the menacing white peaks of the Italian Alps loomed into view. What an awesome adventure it is to challenge those towering icy pinnacles on the wings of a man-made machine — and to conquer them! How could those little propellers lift this heavy bus with its crew of ten and sixty passengers and their luggage high enough to clear those high crags and snowy glaciers? But they slipped harmlessly beneath our wings, even though we were near enough to make out all the details as we crossed over.

The tall Alps were now behind us and the lovely green countryside of France and Germany unrolled before us in a most orderly pattern. Distance lends enchantment to the view, also in seeing fields, woods and dwellings from the air. Our course followed the busy Rhine until it emptied into the North Sea. And there, interlaced with its many canals, was Holland and the old city of Amsterdam which defies the sea.

Here, after having been almost inseparable in the tight quarters of our *caravan* for over three months, Wacker and I went our separate ways. He waited for a flight to New York and I took advantage of the stop-over provisions of our tickets and visited England and Scotland for a few days.

A Polio Passenger Boards at Amsterdam

Boarding the flight which originated at Amsterdam, we noticed a patient on a stretcher which took up two seats in our section. Two nuns were in attendance of the man. No explanation was made about his disease at London. Our flight touched down at Reykjavik, Iceland, and later we flew over the southern tip of Greenland's "icy mountains," a limitless expanse of ice and snow. Then our view was almost totally obscured by clouds until we made our approach to New York.

Our plane was parked out on the landing field and health officers came aboard, took all our names and addresses and escorted us by bus to a special quarantine hall to claim our luggage and to pass through customs.

The doctor explained that the patient on our plane was a polio victim and they were taking every precaution to save us from possible infection. In those days polio was thought to be contagious in its earlier stages. We were asked to fill out a form and warned against mixing with crowds for four weeks. We would be sent notice via our own health department as to when it

would be safe to lift the quarantine. The form to the health department at Detroit read, "maintain him under observation and surveillance until September 1st."

This was disappointing news. I was not allowed to preach and mingle with my members for two weeks after my homecoming. Then Dr. Harold Brisbois, our family physician, examined me and lifted the quarantine, so that I could preach again on August 14th. The full schedule of calls, classes and meetings also began at once.

The writing of a full report, the organization of the thirty tapes taken enroute and the editing and splicing of thousands of feet of movie film had to be readied for the formal report in September. It was almost as hectic a period as that of the three months of preparation. And my congregation was impatient to resume work on the big relocation and building program. There was never a dull moment from then on.

Delay was Best

Wacker and I were also impatient to move our mission board and the synod to take up the invitation to occupy the Hook of the Kafue field with permanent missionaries.

The same delay was now experienced as after the 1945 convention which had authorized the exploration. Our report from Johannesburg had been brought to the attention of the Praesidium but was not read to the delegates in 1949. No action was taken. Instead, a new committee was appointed to consider our report, to view our film footage and to hear our tapes. Our thorough report to the General Synodical Committee in October was tabled and the matter was left in the hands of the committee. The chairman of the General Mission Board was not a member of the committee!

The committee came to the conclusion that the Hook of the Kafue district was the most promising field. The mission board had expressed itself in favor of taking action without delay. The committee ruled otherwise because "we do not have the men and the money to undertake this new work." The study was to continue. Finally, at the prodding of Pastor Wacker, a letter was sent to Sir John Moffatt regarding the Kafue field, as also to the British Colonial office as to the steps which had to be taken to open work in Northern Rhodesia (Zambia). Moffatt answered promptly. He deplored the long delay in our occupation of the Hook of the Kafue with missionaries from our church. But he also repeated his assurance that our synod would be most welcome to open work elsewhere in his country, since the Kafue field had now been given to another mission agency.

Two years after our exploration the opposition to the proposed mission expansion was overcome and the convention of 1951 resolved with a strong majority — "to enter into foreign heathen mission work in Northern Rhodesia and to call and send two missionaries into this field." (The same convention also authorized the opening of work in Tokyo, Japan.)

The mission board began calling men from the field. After nine calls had been declined, Pastor Albrecht Habben of Hastings, Nebraska, accepted the call. The second man, Otto Drevlow, was assigned for the work from the seminary and could not leave with Pastor and Mrs. Habben. Instead, Mr. Paul Ziegler of Habben's congregation was engaged to go out as a lay helper

to take care of establishing the physical plant in Africa. Pastor and Mrs. Habben and Mr. and Mrs. Ziegler sailed to Africa on the same *African Crescent* which had carried the two explorers there four years earlier. They arrived at Lusaka on June 15th, 1953.

Postscript

After 35 years it is possible to evaluate the importance of the 1949 African exploratory expedition. The two men who made the exploration set out with a dim view of the need for an exploration to determine the urgency of sending missionaries to Africa. They felt that two permanent missionaries could have been entrusted with this assignment.

But both men changed their minds about the value of an on-the-spot survey after they had made the long journey. Having been on the African continent they realized that much time was saved by the exploration in determining where to begin. This might have taken years to accomplish for missionaries on a permanent call, especially if the men called had been inexperienced in mission administration and the conservative requirements of the Wisconsin Synod. It was important that those who after due investigation recommended a certain field above others would be men who were personally well informed on mission policies of the synod.

Was the cost of the exploration a good investment as far as the synod's finances were concerned? The overall cost was about \$17,000. This was offset by the sale of the *caravan* after it had been brought back to the United States. This sale, plus the proceeds from equipment netted about \$3,000. The film which was produced and shown in the congregations after the safari brought in a conservative \$18,000 over the next three years. The interest and response for missions which were generated by the showing of this film, *Africa Still Calls*, are incalculable.

But what is most important is the fact that the actual exploration of a new world mission field brought about a happy new attitude toward the church in the synod. It was exactly at the time of the difficult struggle for the preservation of confessionally orthodox teaching and practice when this extensive mission outreach occurred. This was tremendously important.

It showed the members of the Wisconsin Synod that the synod to which they belonged was not concerned only about obeying the inspired Word of God in doctrine and practice, even though this meant termination of the precious relationship which had existed in the Synodical Conference since 1872. It clearly demonstrated to the membership and to the world that their synod was just as concerned about Jesus' plain injunction, "Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel to all nations."

The dire predictions that the synod would revert to the days of deficits and debts were not fulfilled. Instead, the Wisconsin Synod showed that it was willing and able under God to accept ever-increasing budgetary burdens. From 1951 to 1977 the conventions of the synod accepted the challenges of more and more mission openings as these were brought before them, until Wisconsin Synod world missions literally covered the globe.

The patient waiting of those who had worked tirelessly to move the Wisconsin Synod into the world mission arena was rewarded. Even the delay in responding to the cordial invitation of the government of Northern

Rhodesia, seen from the vantage point of all these years, turned out for good. Delay was best, even though some of us could not appreciate it at the time. The Hook of the Kafue project of the government did not work as well as planned in 1949.

When we finally moved into a field in 1953 it turned out to be a better field than the Kafue Hook, although it was nearby. Today its expansion in much of Zambia and Malawi numbers over 13,000 souls won for Christ our Savior!

The weak, bumbling efforts of the "WELS Forty-Niners," and their prayers have been more than richly rewarded. By sheer grace and God's guidance the "WELS Forty-Niners" struck rich "pay dirt" in the "mother lode" of Christian missions in Central Africa.

ENDNOTES

¹Among other things the 1945 report to the convention said: "As your committee in charge of the only heathen mission, and that within our own borders [the Apache Indian Mission], which our synod conducts independently, we earnestly urge this session of our Wisconsin Synod to take thought and action in the matter of mission work among those who have no opportunity to hear the sound of the saving gospel. Because there are still vast stretches in Asia, Africa, South America and in the islands of the seven seas where this sound has not been heard in our day, and because communication and transportation improvements will presumably bring them within our easier reach after the war, and because world time is becoming short (Matthew 24:22), may we plead that consideration of a wider mission program be undertaken with dispatch."

The convention took the following action: "Resolved that the President appoint a committee to gather information regarding foreign fields that might offer opportunity for mission work by our synod. When ready, this committee shall report the results of its study, first to the General Mission Board and then to the synod."

²The General Synodical Committee was composed of all the chairmen of the synod's boards, commissions and committees and met semi-annually to review the work program of the synod. It is no longer in existence.

³President John W. Brenner, president of the synod from 1933 to 1953.



Cameraman Edgar Hoenecke on 1949 African exploration.

Afterword

THIRTY-FIVE YEARS LATER in the mid-1980s the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod is actively carrying the message of the gospel through its overseas missionaries and sister church bodies in 16 countries. The Board for World Missions notes that 42 mission families are currently stationed in Puerto Rico (3), Colombia (5), Malawi (7), Zambia (9), Japan (7), Hong Kong (5), Indonesia (3), and Taiwan (3). In the United States the Mexican mission team (3) resides in El Paso and another group of world missionaries (6) serves Arizona's upper and lower Apache Indian reservations. Eighteen world mission teachers are at work in Apacheland. One mission teacher serves in Hong Kong and another in Japan. Young overseas confessional churches which receive some measure of support and guidance are the Lutheran Confessional Church in Sweden, Norway and Finland; the Lutheran Church of Cameroon; Christ the King Lutheran Synod in Nigeria; and the Orthodox Lutheran Church of Brazil.

Serving today in the Lutheran Church of Central Africa are also 5 national pastors, 2 vicars and 26 evangelists in the 105 congregations and 11 preaching stations of Zambia and Malawi. The 14,247 baptized member church is well organized and functions with its own constitution. For much of its history medical missions have operated within several areas of the LCCA. A recent report showed that 33,329 patients at Mwembeshi, Zambia and 16,998 patients in the Malawi Mobile Clinic were treated in a single year.

While statistics alone do not tell the story of a mission field, they do help us to see the Lord's mighty hand of blessing. This is particularly true in hindsight through several decades. Over these years many missionaries have served in Africa and returned. Their work lives after them usually to be revealed only in eternity. Younger workers take the places of veterans with the same message and the same zeal to proclaim the Savior to the nations.

Pioneers are still needed. People of vision moved by God's Spirit and God's promises will continue to press forward on new trails not unlike those WELS Forty-niners. The gospel will be preached in all the world. As the Lord supplies the opportunities and the resources, WELS Eighty-niners and Ninety-niners will take heart and continue to move on to new shores.

Duane K. Tomhave
Executive Secretary
WELS Board for World Missions

A History of Service

BUT THESE ARE WRITTEN that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name" (John 20:31). With these words the Apostle John reminds us that the written word has always been at the heart of Christian life and faith. Our entire faith rests upon the written word — the Holy Scriptures, the Bible.

It is not surprising, then, that a Bible-based church body such as the Wisconsin Synod should have a deep interest in the written word. Already in 1865 the synod began producing a periodical, the *Gemeindeblatt*.

In 1876 the first WELS bookstore was established, a part-time operation in a Milwaukee picture framing and art supply store. In 1891 the Northwestern Publishing House was incorporated. From that year until 1913 the synod rented three different buildings for use as its bookstore and publishing house. Each of these was in the 300 block of North Third Street in Milwaukee. During this period the synod's first English hymnal was published.

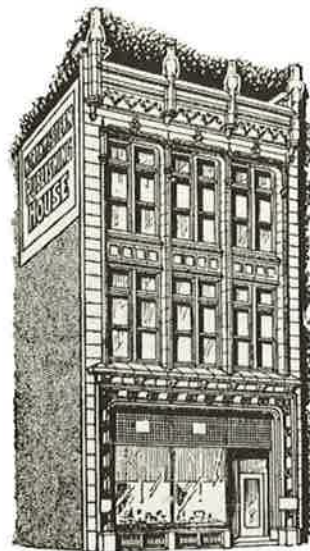
The year 1914 saw NPH move into the first home of its own, a sturdy building on North Fourth Street. In 1948 the city of Milwaukee bought the building to make room for a sports arena. The publishing house moved west, to the corner of North Thirty-seventh Street and North Avenue.

On August 1, 1985 Northwestern will move west once again. Its brand new offices, store and warehouse will be located at 1250 North 113th Street, one block north of Watertown Plank Road. The store will be open to the public August 6. With these new facilities we hope to serve you more efficiently and effectively. The store hours will be: Monday and Friday, 9:00 a.m. to 9:00 p.m. Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday and Saturday, 9:00 a.m. to 5:30 p.m.

Throughout the years and amid the many changes, some things have remained the same. The publishing house continues to expand its work; it keeps producing more materials for a larger audience. And NPH's commitment to scriptural, Christ-centered publications hasn't changed either. With God's help we strive to produce and offer the best in Christian literature.

This is the on-going mission of your Northwestern Publishing House.

 **Northwestern Publishing House**
1250 North 113th Street, P.O. Box 26975, Milwaukee, Wisconsin 53226-0975 414/475-6600



Fourth Street Bookstore

Fourth Street, 1914-1948



Thirty-seventh Street and North Avenue, 1948-1985



113th Street, 1985-