

WELS Historical Institute

Journal

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The President's Report

WISCONSIN LUTHERAN SEMINARY in Mequon was the scene of the WELS Historical Institute spring meeting on May 7. It marked a special occasion not only for the institute but for the entire synod. The meeting included the dedication of the new synod archives located at the seminary. (See pages 42-44.)

Following the dedication Dr. August Suelflow, director of the Concordia Historical Institute in St. Louis, spoke on "The Church and Its Ministry of History." Suelflow emphasized the necessity of historical preservation in order not to lose sight of our heritage.

Pastor Alan Siggelkow reported for the committee on Salem Lutheran Landmark Church. His motion that the WELS Historical Institute Board be authorized to pursue the remodeling of the upper floor — nave, narthex and chancel — of the landmark church was seconded and approved. He called attention to drawings which have been prepared, as well as a "wish list" of furnishings. Estimated cost of restoration work is between \$100,000 and \$200,000.

Attendance at the meeting was 88.

With the archives now in place Prof. Martin Westerhaus, WELS archivist, says that the archives could use more shelving as well as microfilming records for long-term preservation. Special gifts for these projects will be welcome.

Although the institute has a balance of almost \$24,000, Treasurer Paul Nass points out one area of concern. Annual membership receipts have decreased at the rate of about \$1,000 a year, from \$12,050 in 1984-85 to \$9,045 in 1987-88. Please encourage others to join the institute and support its work. Remember that this important organization is not a part of the synod budget, but depends entirely on membership dues, individual gifts and grants.

Future meetings promise to offer more valuable insights into our synod's past. In the fall 1989 meeting Mr. Alfons Woltdt will speak on the history of WELS Special Ministries; Woltdt serves as administrator of that arm of the church. The spring 1990 meeting will help celebrate the synod's 140th anniversary. The fall 1990 meeting will be held at Northwestern College to commemorate that school's 125th. Watch for further notices concerning specific details.

Thank you for supporting the institute. And thanks be to God for his blessings on this vital agency!

In Christ, the Lord of history,
Roland Cap Ehlke

The Odyssey of Ruth Smith

Stephen C. Hintz

BURROWED DEEP INTO the Kentucky foothills of Appalachia is the small coal mining town of Pikeville. There on October 23, 1917, Ransom and Polly Ratliff were blessed with the birth of a daughter whom they named Ruth.¹ This child would one day become a Christian elementary teacher at Trinity Lutheran School in Neenah, Wisconsin, where, during a 34-year career, she would be instrumental in training nearly 1000 children in the truths of God's word and in the basic skills of literacy. How this came to be is a fascinating story, for the journey from Pikeville to Neenah was long and arduous, beset by many obstacles and difficulties.

I

The Ratliff family was no stranger to poverty and privation. Ruth's first home was a log cabin on the outskirts of Pikeville, devoid of such modern amenities as indoor plumbing, electricity, and window glass. Papa Ratliff worked long hours in the mines, yet was barely able to earn enough money to keep food on the family table.²

The Ratliff religious life also demands consideration. Ransom was a nominal Roman Catholic, his wife an ardent Pentecostal. This resulted in Ruth's being exposed to the tenets of backwoods Pentecostalism. Her ears became accustomed to the curious blend of sounds emitted by the glossolalist. Her eyes grew wide at the fearsome spectacle of rattlers and copperheads being handled by the ecstatic. Her reason was challenged by the proclamations of the faith healers.

Yet another element which played a lead role in Ruth's biography first surfaced when Ruth reached school age — her ancestry. Ruth's father was white, her mother was of mixed blood. Consequently Ruth was not allowed to attend the local public school which was only fifty yards from the Ratliff cabin. Instead, she and her brother had to trudge five miles over the blue-clay hills to the school for the colored. Much of the path was so heavily forested that they used a lantern to find their way in the early morning hours.³

The school was a two-room frame building encompassing K-12. The older children received instruction in one room, the younger in the other. A husband and wife were the teachers. Instructional aids were meager. The textbooks were outdated and worn. A library was nonexistent.

What is more, regular attendance at this school was always difficult for Ruth because of the long trek on foot and the frequent bad weather. It took Ruth three years to complete the third grade. She celebrated her seventeenth

birthday while in the sixth grade. With such an educational background Ruth might well have spent the rest of her years in the Appalachian foothills. However, Effie Waller Smith was to change all that.

II

Effie Waller was born in 1879 to parents who were former slaves.⁴ Though her parents were illiterate, they worked hard to have their children educated. As a result, all of their offspring eventually became teachers in colored schools.

Effie spent fifteen years teaching in the rural schools of Kentucky. One of her students was Ruth's mother Polly, whom Effie got to know very well since she roomed for a time at Polly's home. When Effie moved on, she continued to correspond with Polly and the two women remained very close friends.

In the years which followed Effie married Charles Smith. The couple had one child. Unfortunately, the youngster died at a tender age. Shortly thereafter Effie was widowed when her husband was shot while assisting the sheriff in the apprehension of a moonshiner. In the midst of these tragedies Effie, who was a devout Methodist, drew comfort from her Christian faith and determined to go on with her life.

Effie returned to her teaching career in the segregated schools of rural Kentucky. Instructing the backwoods colored in the rudiments of literacy brought great joy to her heart. The setting in which she worked also moved her. Effie began to put into words and song the natural beauty of the Kentucky hills. She soon became known as the "singing poet of the Cumberland."⁶ She probably would have lived out her life busily engaged in these pursuits in her beloved Kentucky if it hadn't been for some religionists from the north.

Sometime during 1918 the Metropolitan Holiness Church Association of Waukesha, Wisconsin, sent some canvassers into the hills of Kentucky to missionize and sell religious articles and literature.⁷ Effie came in contact with members from this group. She was impressed by their zeal and intrigued by their paradisiacal description of the commune maintained at their religious headquarters. The conviction began to develop in her that she must make this "northern Eden" her home.

A short time later Effie Smith converted all her earthly possessions into cash and, accompanied by her mother, Mrs. Sibbie Waller, traveled to Waukesha, Wisconsin. There she and her mother turned their resources over to the Metropolitan Holiness Church Association's treasury and took up lodging in its communal resident hall.⁸ Within a couple of years Effie and Sibbie's initial exuberance for this utopian enterprise changed into mounting disillusionment. They opted to move out, but had to resort to the courts to retrieve their funds from the common treasury. Finally, they were awarded their money and purchased a private dwelling in Waukesha. There the two women lived until Sibbie's death on May 17, 1927.

Meanwhile, back in Kentucky, Polly Ratliff's health was deteriorating because of a developing goiter. Unbeknown to Ruth, Polly had informed Effie that if she were to die, Effie should adopt Ruth and have her properly educated in the north. Polly's condition became more and more severe. Her Pentecostal faith forbade her from seeking medical treatment.⁹ On June 17, 1927, Polly Ratliff succumbed to her affliction at the age of thirty-six.

Upon her mother's death, Ruth and her brother went to live with their maternal grandparents and four single uncles in a two-room log cabin.¹⁰ There Ruth helped cook meals and wash heaps of dirty mining clothes. Ruth's father remarried in February of 1928, but Ruth, unlike her brother, never went back to live with her father, because she did not get along with her stepmother and her grandmother badly needed her assistance.

During the years which Ruth spent with her grandparents, Effie was facing some difficult times of her own in Waukesha. She had to rebound from the loss of her mother and the news of her best friend's demise. The economic chaos of the depression took its toll on her resources. Her brother came to live with her during his retirement years until he passed away in early 1934(?). Left all alone, Effie thought about her beloved home state, its people, and the daughter of her deceased friend. In November of 1934 she returned to Kentucky for a visit.

Once there Effie informed Ruth about what Polly had said many years before and invited Ruth to return with her to Wisconsin. Ruth's grandparents were dead set against Ruth's going up north. Ruth's father, however, thought it would be in the best interests of his daughter if she accompanied Effie. Sunday, March 10, 1935, found Ruth and Effie leaving Pikeville. Two days later they stepped off the train at Waukesha.¹¹

III

Once back in Wisconsin,¹² Effie immediately commenced the long process of legally adopting Ruth Ratliff. It was not until May 8, 1937, that Ruth officially acquired the last name "Smith." Effie also did not waste any time in seeing to it that Ruth's education was advanced. For the balance of the 1934-35 school year Ruth was enrolled at the seventh grade level of the Waukesha public school system to get a "feel" for what would be expected of her in the fall.

The next several years found Ruth making use of all the educational advantages available to her. Beginning with the seventh grade she steadily progressed through the educational system until she arrived at the goal of being graduated with the 1941 senior class of Waukesha High School. The final ranking listed her as finishing 143 out of a class of 313. During this same time period she also took some courses at a vocational school and was involved in summer school.

Ruth discovered success and received encouragement in other areas as well. Many students and faculty members at Waukesha High School befriended her.¹³ She sang with the school's a cappella choir. Piano playing became one of her skills. She worked as a salesclerk at the local Sears store.¹⁴ Several of her instructors recognized that she had the characteristics which would make her a good teacher and strongly urged her to pursue a career in education.

During these same first years in Wisconsin (1935-41) Ruth occupied her thoughts with still another matter — the quest for a suitable church. By this time Effie had severed all ties with the Metropolitan Holiness Church Association and had joined First Methodist Church in Waukesha. Naturally, Ruth attended services with Effie. However, she was displeased with the liberal theology promulgated there and the aloofness of the large congregation. She desired a small church which taught the fundamental doctrines that were so prominent in her Pentecostal background.

Ruth began to visit various Waukesha churches. One Sunday she attended services at the Plymouth Brethren Gospel Chapel, located at 900 South Grand Avenue.¹⁵ She liked what she heard and saw. Shortly thereafter, she applied for membership. On July 17, 1937 Ruth Smith was rebaptized in Pewaukee Lake in the name of the Triune God after it was pointed out to her that her Pentecostal baptism might not be valid because it had been performed only "in the name of Jesus."¹⁶ Ruth would have remained with the Brethren except for the fact that six months later the lay preacher, Dan Dunnet, left for California, and the worship services entered a period of abeyance since no immediate replacement for him could be secured.¹⁷

Upon Effie's insistence, Ruth again attended the Methodist church. However, William P. Hulan, a rank liberal, was still serving as one of the pastors of First Methodist. His pastorate kept Ruth from worshipping there with any regularity.

Instead, Ruth spent some Sunday mornings tuning the radio for religious broadcasts. A program to which she began to frequently listen was the one sponsored by the Moody Bible Institute of Chicago. In its broadcasts the institute proclaimed fundamental Christian doctrine and told of its mission of training men and women for service in the Christian ministry. This caught Ruth's interest for she was at the time a junior in high school who, on the one hand, was being encouraged by her teachers to seek a career in the field of education, and, on the other hand, was being urged by her foster mother to get involved in some sort of Christian service.

Ruth decided to wed both counsels by seeking admittance to Moody Bible Institute in an education track. Because she feared that she might not be accepted on account of her race, she made application in early 1940. Moody Institute wrote back that it was a Christian school and that race had no bearing on its admissions policy. The school then confirmed Ruth's pre-enrollment and stated that it looked forward to having her on campus following the completion of her senior year at high school. Ruth was satisfied that she had found a place where she could in good conscience attend and grow in Christian faith after her high school graduation, but she still did not have a local church for her immediate needs.

She continued her ritual of visiting various churches and monitoring the air waves for religious programs. In the fall of 1940 she tuned in the "Lutheran Hour" and heard Dr. Walter A. Maier preach on Jesus Christ being the church's foundation stone. Ruth wrote to Maier for more information. Dr. Maier replied with a personal letter directing her to Trinity Lutheran Church of Waukesha, a Wisconsin Synod affiliate.

At the time Trinity was served by Pastor Harry Shiley. Ruth began to attend services at Shiley's church and was pleased by what she heard. She talked Effie into going with her to the instruction class which started in November of 1940.¹⁸ During the course Ruth became convinced that the Lutheran church had what she was looking for — God's word in its truth and purity.

Consequently, Ruth Smith became a confirmed member of the Lutheran church on January 1, 1941. The church files record the names of five people who were confirmed that day: Ruth Smith and four other adults.¹⁹ Interestingly, behind Ruth's name Pastor Shiley added the parenthetical remark "colored."

In the weeks which ensued Pastor Shiley casually asked Ruth what her plans were for the future. She informed him that she wished to be active in Christian education and had already been accepted at Moody Bible Institute. Pastor Shiley then pointed out that Moody Institute was not a Lutheran school and did not maintain all the scriptural doctrines found in the Bible. Next, he stated that there was a Lutheran teacher training college in the Chicago area and suggested that Ruth apply there. She became convinced that the proper course of action was to withdraw from Moody Institute and transfer her enrollment to Concordia College, River Forest, Illinois. Moody Institute honored Ruth's request to be transferred and sent her application over to Concordia. Concordia College accepted her as a student.

IV

The Tuesday after Labor Day, September 2, 1941, found Ruth Smith at Concordia of River Forest. The morning of that day was a hectic one. Ruth wrote an entrance exam with the other members of the freshman class. She received her schedule, paid certain fees, and was assigned her dorm room. She even had a chance to chat a little with her two roommates before dinner.

After the noon meal she returned to her room to spend more time in getting settled. No sooner had she gotten in the door when she received a notice to go see the college president. When Ruth arrived at Dr. Arthur W. Klinck's office he had her student file in front of him, which included a picture which all new students had been requested to submit along with their application.

When Ruth sat down, President Klinck looked back and forth between her and her picture. After a few moments he asked Ruth, "Are you colored?" She replied, "Partly." Klinck then inquired, "Well, who sent you here anyway?" Ruth responded, "My pastor in Waukesha." President Klinck then declared, "You can't stay here. It just won't work out. In fact, you cannot spend the night here."²⁰

After this five minute episode²¹ Ruth returned dejectedly to her dormitory. Her roommates were aghast at what had happened and sympathized with her as she packed her things. Ruth didn't know what to do for the night until she recalled that the Henry Jorgensens, some family friends from Waukesha, now lived in Chicago. She called their home and they picked her up. After spending the night with the Jorgensens, Ruth took the early train back to Waukesha.

When Effie heard the news she was heartbroken. She could not understand how such a thing could happen. That very day Ruth went to Pastor Shiley. He was equally shocked when he learned what had transpired at Concordia. He then told Ruth that the Wisconsin Synod had its own teachers' college in New Ulm, Minnesota, and he would see if he could get her enrolled there.

V

Pastor Shiley wasted no time in contacting Dr. Martin Luther College. In Ruth's presence he telephoned President Carl Schweppe and informed him about her situation. Classes at DMLC had started that day, Wednesday, September 3, but Schweppe said he would see what he could do.

In one of the women's residences a girl had already become homesick and left the New Ulm campus. President Schweppe queried the girls in the room where the vacancy existed to discover if they would mind having a roommate who was partly colored.²² The girls raised no objections and stated that they could see no reason why they wouldn't be happy with such a new roommate.²³

President Schweppe then returned the call to Pastor Shiley and informed him that Ruth Smith would be welcome on the DMLC campus. Friday, September 5, Ruth boarded a train for New Ulm, Minnesota. By Saturday afternoon she was registered and settled in her new home.

The next three years were wonderful years. Ruth was well received by the faculty and her fellow students.²⁴ Her classmates remember her as being friendly and easy going.²⁵ The pigment of her skin caused no problems whatever. One classmate remarked that he didn't realize at first that she was partly black; instead, he just thought that she had a good suntan.²⁶ Even when Ruth's racial background became common knowledge, no negative reactions resulted. No one recalled any racial slurs ever being made about Ruth. In fact, when Ruth's unfortunate experience at Concordia, River Forest, became known, the collective response was one of disbelief.

By the time the 1943-44 school year rolled around, Ruth Smith's class had dwindled in size from thirty members to only nine. The two prominent reasons for this attrition were the siphoning off of some of the young men for the war effort and the placing of many emergency instructors to try to alleviate the crying shortage of teachers in the Wisconsin Synod.

In the spring of 1944 these nine people realized that their student days at DMLC were fast coming to a close. During the week of May 8 to 12 President Schweppe absented himself from his classroom duties in order to attend the General Synodical Committee meetings of the Wisconsin Synod in Milwaukee. The final day, Friday, May 12, the assignment committee was to meet at Thiensville in order to place the graduates of Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary and Dr. Martin Luther College.

When President Schweppe returned to New Ulm the following week he informed the class of '44 where each was assigned. A couple he told personally, some he phoned, and for the others he left messages.²⁷ Ruth was not notified of her assignment so she went to Schweppe's office to inquire. Schweppe told her that she had not been assigned. She wanted to know the reason. He replied that things were "touchy" and that matters might not "work out." Ruth felt shattered. Once again her ethnic origin stood in the way.

Where the responsibility specifically rests for the assignment committee's failure to assign Ruth Smith can no longer be ascertained. All of the men who comprised and advised the assignment committee of 1944 are now deceased. No minutes of the committee's meeting are extant.

The one available document which sheds light on the issue is the copy of the student profile sheet which President Schweppe took to the call meeting and on which he penciled some notes.²⁸ The document lists the nine members of the class of '44 together with an assessment of their various abilities. Ruth Smith's name is at the end of the roster, her last name being the final alphabetical listing for the nine-member class.

This profile sheet is comprised of nine categories which are rated behind each of the candidates' names. The categories included are as follows:

English, German, teaching ability, discipline, singing, organ, conducting, hymns, and grade level recommendation. The term "fair" (standing either by itself or coupled with a plus or minus) appeared behind Ruth's name in six of the above categories. The two areas where she did not receive a "fair" rating were "German" where a "no" appeared and "conducting" where the word "poor" was typed. In the final column for "grade level recommendation" were the words "lower grades." This assessment of Ruth's abilities did not differ greatly from many other candidates of that time.²⁹ In fact, the final column showed that the faculty of Dr. Martin Luther College had no reservations about her teaching ability or having her serve in one of the Christian day schools of the Wisconsin Synod.³⁰

Yet, Ruth was not assigned. This point President Schweppe's penciled notes on that student profile sheet make crystal clear. Schweppe noted that there were twenty-four calls which needed filling — seven for men and seventeen for women. As the members of the class of '44 were assigned by the committee, Schweppe wrote behind each name the candidate's assignment. Behind Ruth Smith's name there is no such notation.

The reason for Ruth's not being placed was certainly not because of a lack of vacancies which matched her "grade level recommendation" and other abilities. This is borne out by the fact that the call committee "drafted" eight women from the second normal students to fill vacancies in various schools³¹ (some of which were for the lower grades) and even then there remained some congregations which did not get a teacher for the primary grades.

Plainly, either President Schweppe suggested that Ruth Smith not be assigned or the committee itself proposed that idea. The person or persons responsible remain a mystery. The reason is not. Ruth Smith's skin color resulted in her not being assigned.

The call committee's action was in essence "covered up" in the public announcements of that day. The commencement issue of the DMLC *Messenger* and the *Northwestern Lutheran* article relating the closing exercises at DMLC both list Ruth Smith's call as being to the "Colored Mission(s)." Perhaps this is where the assignment committee thought Ruth should serve, and, in fact, she eventually did serve for a brief period of time; yet, Ruth was never given this assignment.³²

On Friday, June 9, the graduation service for the class of '44 was held. Twenty-eight seniors from the high school department and nine third-year normals from the college department received their diplomas that day. Effie Smith made the long journey to New Ulm to attend Ruth's graduation. She felt happy that Ruth had accomplished this milestone in her academic career but saddened by the fact that her Ruth had not received a call into a congregation. After the day's festivities the two women boarded the train and headed for Waukesha.

VI

Back in Waukesha well-meaning neighbors unwittingly added salt to Ruth and Effie's wounds. A "block party" was organized to celebrate Ruth's graduation from college and her entrance into her teaching career. When Ruth and Effie got home, they had to painfully explain that Ruth had not been assigned to a teaching position. The neighbors were dumbfounded.

Ruth returned to Sears to her clerking position. She had worked there for about six weeks when Pastor Immanuel F. Albrecht, one of the two Wisconsin Synod men on the Missionary Board of the Lutheran Synodical Conference, got in contact with her. He informed Ruth that the Missionary Board thought that it had a place where she could serve. St. Philip congregation in Cleveland, Ohio, was trying to start a school and needed a teacher to spearhead the project. Although Ruth never received a written diploma of vocation, she accepted this "call" and left for Cleveland at the end of August, 1944.

St. Philip was a Missouri Synod congregation located in the colored district of Cleveland. Ernst G. Mueller, a white, was the pastor; all the members were black or of mixed race. Ruth's duties included instructing Saturday morning pre-confirmation class, teaching Sunday school, making some sick calls, and visiting all the members of the congregation to encourage support for the founding of a parochial school.

The members of St. Philip were from all social strata, including a number of highly educated individuals — doctors, lawyers, etc. In general, these people were in favor of starting a school, but they did not want it to be a segregated institution.

For her work in the congregation's midst Ruth received \$75 per month. She had a difficult time making ends meet. As a result, Effie rented out her house in Waukesha and came to Cleveland. Once there, she and Ruth found an apartment in the Jewish section of town. (Today Ruth chuckles that is where she learned to eat lamb).

After seven months of service to St. Philip congregation, Ruth asked the Missionary Board to release her from her duties. She was convinced that the members of St. Philip did not want the kind of school which the Missionary Board envisioned.³³ The board granted her request and sent her a written notice of release. In April of 1945 Ruth and Effie returned to Waukesha.

VII

Once again Ruth reclaimed her old job at Sears. The manager, Mr. Goldhamer, encouraged Ruth to stay on as a permanent employee and work her way up. She stated that she still wished to be a teacher in a Christian school. Sometime during late spring of 1945 Ruth addressed a letter to Mr. F. W. Meyer, the executive secretary of the Board of Education of the Wisconsin Synod. In this letter she asked if her name might be placed on a call list with the notation "partly colored" appearing behind it.

At about the same time Miss Florence Witte informed Trinity Lutheran congregation of Neenah, Wisconsin, that she was going to resign from her call at the end of the school year in order to pursue marriage plans during the coming summer.³⁴

In view of Miss Witte's announced resignation, Gerhard Schaefer, Trinity's pastor, asked the district president, E. Behm, for a call list. The list which Behm supplied had Ruth Smith's name on it. Pastor Schaefer became interested in Ruth and sought to find out more about her. He discovered that Lillian Quandt, a daughter of Trinity congregation, had been a classmate of Ruth at DMLC. He also learned that Gertrude Stoekli, a sister to one of Trinity's teachers, knew Ruth. From these two women and other sources Pastor Schaefer received fine recommendations about R. Smith.

Pastor Schaefer then got in contact with President Behm and told him that he was planning to recommend to the congregation to call Ruth Smith. Behm strenuously advised Schaefer against doing such a thing. He told him that she'd be trouble and that the kids would run out on her. Pastor Schaefer then retorted, "I don't care if she's as black as the ace of spades. We need a teacher." Behm replied, "Well, if you get yourself into hot water, don't come crying to me."

On the night of June 25 Schaefer went to the meeting of Trinity's School Board with the call list provided by Behm.³⁶ He still planned to suggest to the board, which was vested with the right to call teachers for the congregation, that they extend a call to Ruth Smith. Upon making his proposal, some discussion naturally developed. It can be inferred that this discussion was quite lengthy from the fact that although the School Board was small and was meeting for a single purpose (to call a teacher), the board was not adjourned until 10:05. The minutes, however, make no direct reference to this long discussion.

Regardless of what was said that night, the outcome is known. The School Board unanimously resolved to extend a divine call to Miss Ruth Smith. Her remuneration was to be \$100 per month and she was to be credited with one year of teaching experience. On June 29, 1945, Ruth received a special delivery letter from Neenah — her call to Trinity Lutheran School.

VIII

Ruth relates that she did not hold the call to Trinity very long before deciding to accept it. The July quarterly meeting of Trinity's voters reiterates this fact. Amidst the various matters of congregational business, the assembly not only was asked to ratify the action of the School Board in calling Ruth Smith, but also was informed of the fact that Ruth had accepted the call extended to her.³⁷

Miss Smith arrived in Neenah in August of 1945. Her duties for the upcoming school year included teaching fourth and fifth grades (48 children), conducting Sunday school three Sundays per month, and belonging to the choir.

Ruth was well received by all the members of Trinity. The staff enjoyed working with her and had great respect for her teaching aptitude and outlook. The children loved and trusted her. The parents expressed admiration for her way with their offspring. Indeed, Ruth maintained an enviable record at Trinity.

One day about six years into her teaching career at Neenah there was a knock at Ruth's classroom door. She answered it and found that it was the former district president, Pastor Behm. He inquired if he might visit her classroom. Ruth said he was welcome. Pastor Behm sat down in the room and observed for about two hours. He then asked Ruth if he could see her out in the hall for a moment.

Behm proceeded to tell Miss Smith that he could see that she was a very capable teacher and that the children loved her. He confessed that he had been wrong about her and that he had been thoroughly mistaken in his advice to Pastor Schaefer at the time Ruth was under consideration for the call to Trinity.

In the early 1950's Ruth's foster mother Effie came to Neenah to live with her daughter. After receiving more instruction, she became convinced that



Ruth Smith with her second grade in 1959.

the Lutheran church did teach God's word correctly. She was confirmed in 1954 and six years later died in the Lutheran faith.

Through the mid '50s Trinity congregation grew by leaps and bounds. The number of school-aged children skyrocketed. It became necessary to provide a separate classroom and individual teacher for each of the grades. Miss Smith became the second grade teacher where she was instrumental in teaching hundreds of children God's word and the basic skills of reading, writing, and arithmetic. To this day the author has vivid memories from her classroom of Bible stories, phonics class, penmanship practice, and arithmetic flash cards.

As time marched on Miss Smith found her classroom peopled with children of her former students. She recalled hearing the comment more than once from a pupil, "My mom or dad said that they had you in second grade. You must be 100 years old."

Throughout her years at Trinity Ruth received a number of calls to teach at other schools, but she was led to decline them and remain in Neenah. In the late '70s Ruth was experiencing medical problems with her legs and her physician advised that she should no longer stand for extended periods of time. As a result, Ruth Smith retired from 34 years of teaching at Trinity at the conclusion of the 1978-79 school year.

Quite naturally a dinner party was thrown to honor Ruth at the time of her retirement. One of the remarks made by Pastor Schaefer at that event well sums up Ruth Smith's career as a Christian teacher at Trinity School: "The only trouble Ruth gave us was when she retired, and we had to go looking for another teacher."³⁸

ENDNOTES

¹Interview with Ruth Smith, Neenah, Wisconsin, February 6, 1981

²"Ruth's Story Retold in Her Hometown Paper," *The Twin City News-Record* (Appleton, Wisconsin), October 1, 1980, p. 4.

³Kathy W. Nufer, " 'Adoption' Launched a New Life," *The Twin City News-Record* (Appleton, Wisconsin), May 23, 1979, p. 4.

⁴Alice J. Kinder, "Effie Waller Smith: Singing Poet of the Cumberlands," *The Appalachian News-Express* (Pikeville, Kentucky), June 18, 1980, Sec. 3, pp. 1,4.

⁵Kinder, p. 1.

⁶Eventually Effie Smith authored two books of poetry: *Rhymes of the Cumberlands* and *Songs of the Months*. Kinder, p. 1.

⁷*Ibid.*, p. 1.

⁸The Metropolitan Holiness Church Association was an offshoot of the Methodist denomination. In 1906 the group acquired the former plush resort known as the Fountain Spring House, which was located at 200 South Grand Avenue in Waukesha, Wisconsin. At that location it conducted a Bible school, published books, printed a newspaper (*The Burning Bush*), ran an orphanage, and administered a commune which followed communistic principles. Because of the ecstatic acts of faith which some of the association's members exhibited, the local townspeople referred to the group as "the jumpers." Outbursts of such emotional displays became so frequent in Waukesha that the common council passed an ordinance in 1907 which forbade

"jumping" on the city streets under penalty of \$100 fine or 90 days in jail. The Metropolitan Association also faced internal legal problems. Over the years a number of its members filed suits against the common treasury in order to free their personal funds. The association's membership gradually declined so that all operations in Waukesha were phased out by 1957. The remnant of the organization now has its headquarters in Dundee, Illinois. The buildings left behind in Waukesha were razed and today apartment complexes occupy the site. (Old newspaper clippings, Metropolitan Holiness Church Association Folder, Vertical File, Waukesha County Historical Museum, Waukesha, Wisconsin.)

⁹Nufer, p. 4.

¹⁰Kinder, p. 1.

¹¹Ruth and Effie did not head directly to Wisconsin. They traveled to West Virginia for one day of visiting; then they boarded a northbound train.

¹²The two women resided at 124 Garfield Avenue, Waukesha. *Wright's Waukesha City Directory (1936)*, XX (Milwaukee: Wright Directory Company, 1936), p. 328.

¹³Nufer, p. 4.

¹⁴The wages which Ruth earned at her part-time job supplemented the income which Effie received from the college students she boarded and the dividends which Effie's church-related annuities bore. Ruth received no financial assistance from Kentucky.

¹⁵Information sheet, Plymouth Brethren Gospel Chapel Folder, Vertical File, Waukesha County Historical Museum, Waukesha, Wisconsin.

¹⁶Ruth had been previously baptized by immersion in a Pikeville river when she was about twelve.

¹⁷The Plymouth Brethren congregation was active in Waukesha from 1928 to 1955. In 1955 the church records were in the possession of a Philip J. Strong, whose whereabouts at that time were already unknown. Plymouth Brethren Folder, Waukesha County Historical Museum, Waukesha, Wis.

¹⁸Ruth and Effie never had an automobile. Because of that fact Ruth had confined her "church shopping" to those congregations which were within easy walking distance. Prior to Dr. Maier's letter she had never ventured as far as Trinity Church.

¹⁹Effie did not at this time join the Lutheran church. She remained a Methodist, although she did attend services with Ruth.

²⁰Further elucidation on this decision is not available because "Dr. Klinck has been dead for several years" and the records of that time suffer from "inadequacies."—Letter from President Paul A. Zimmerman, Concordia College, River Forest, Illinois, February 26, 1981.

²¹A few days after this incident Ruth Smith addressed a letter to Dr. Maier apprising him of Klinck's action. Maier responded by sending a note of apology to Ruth and a reprimand to Klinck.

²²Letter from Ione Brick, classmate, New Ulm, Minnesota, March 7, 1981.

²³Telephone interview with Lillian Quandt, classmate, Neenah, Wisconsin, February 7, 1981.

²⁴*Ibid.*

²⁵Telephone interview with Richard Grunze, classmate, Milwaukee, Wisconsin, March 12, 1981.

²⁶*Ibid.*

²⁷*Ibid.*

²⁸Carl L. Schweppe, "Student Profile Sheet," Dr. Martin Luther College, New Ulm, Minnesota, May, 1944.

²⁹"Folder of Assignments," John Brenner File, Wisconsin Synod Archives, Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary, Mequon, Wisconsin.

³⁰Research of faculty action at Dr. Martin Luther College prior to the mid '50s is difficult because there are no extant faculty meeting minutes. Prof. Palmbach was faculty secretary at the time and he never duplicated his notes. (Telephone interview with Arthur Schulz, Academic Dean, Dr. Martin Luther College, New Ulm, Minnesota, March 10, 1981.)

³¹Carl L. Schweppe, "Commencement," *Northwestern Lutheran*, XXXI, No. 14 (July 9, 1944), p. 142.

³²The only recollection Ruth has of anything vaguely connected to the above hypothesis is that one of her professors, E. R. Bliefernicht, told her sometime during her final year about the work which the Synodical Conference was doing among the colored people and about some fine Christian colored people like Rosa Young. Telephone interview with Ruth Smith, Neenah, Wisconsin, March 19, 1981.

³³Ruth recalled that she visited a number of Missouri Synod schools in Cleveland. She also attended one teachers' conference. All of the students and instructors were white. She concluded that the people who were members of St. Philip did have a point when they refused to support a day school which would be for "their" children.

³⁴School Board Minutes, Trinity Lutheran Church, Neenah, Wisconsin, June 25, 1945.

³⁵A couple of years later Pastor Schaefer told Ruth all the events which had surrounded her being called to Trinity.

³⁶School Board Minutes, June 25, 1945.

³⁷Congregation Minutes, July 16, 1945.

³⁸Letter from Ruth Smith, February 9, 1981.

Pastor Stephen C. Hintz is the athletic director at Shoreland Lutheran High School, Somers, Wisconsin. He originally wrote this article during his senior year at Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary. He dedicates this article to Miss Ruth Smith, who was his second grade teacher. Ruth Smith remains a member of Trinity, Neenah, Wisconsin. Among her activities she does part-time remedial teaching.

A WELS Historical Profile

Chronological Sketches of Our Synod's Past: 1920-1929

Arnold J. Koelpin

IN THE DECADE AFTER WORLD WAR I, the original Wisconsin Synod celebrated the 75th anniversary of its founding. Times had changed radically since the frontier days before the Civil War. The United States, now a world power, was adjusting to the post-war economy. In its midwestern states, the reorganized Joint Synod of Wisconsin likewise experienced new challenges. For the first time English predominated in printed synodical reports; peak enrollments in synodical schools necessitated major expansion of educational facilities; the synod was invited to open its first mission on foreign soil. These opportunities occurred at a time of record synodical indebtedness and in the face of a major internal controversy.

1920-1929

- 1920 A decision is made to relocate the Wauwatosa Seminary. The enrollment of 61 seminarians overcrowded the old building. Since the present property had been donated, there is a question of obtaining clear title to the land.
- 1920 Professors Hermann Meyer and John Schaller of the Wauwatosa Seminary die within a few weeks of each other, both victims of the flu epidemic.
Professor John Meyer, brother of Hermann, succeeds John Schaller in teaching dogmatics. Professor William Henkel replaces Hermann Meyer.
- 1920 Mr. Claus Gieschen begins work as school visitor to the Christian elementary schools of the Wisconsin Synod.
- 1920 The Wisconsin Synod joins the two Wisconsin districts of the Missouri Synod in conducting the Student Mission at the University of Wisconsin in Madison. There are over 300 Synodical Conference students attending the university.
- 1921 Professor Gerhardt Ruediger becomes the fifth member of the Wauwatosa Seminary faculty. He is assigned courses in New Testament and church history.
- 1921 The annual Professors' Conference debates the question whether accreditation of our schools is desirable and feasible.

- 1921 A report on Immanuel College, Greensboro, North Carolina, a Synodical Conference training school for African Americans, records an attendance of 180 students preparing for missionary work.
- 1921 The Northwestern Lutheran reports that the Joint Synod, meeting in Milwaukee, considered "almost every topic . . . from the point of view of economy."
- 1921 A synodical committee studies the question whether the president of the synod should have a full-time office and be relieved of parish work.
- 1922 The superintendant of the Fort Apache Indian Reservation persuades the Indian office to sell its plant at East Fork, Arizona, to the Wisconsin Synod. The plant includes 35 acres, a school house, residence, and pumping plant. Missionary H. C. Nitz becomes the principal at the East Fork boarding school. By autumn 1928, the high-school has enrolled 28 Apache students and 66 pupils attend the Christian day school. A girls' dormitory is built.
- 1922 The Wisconsin Synod opens an orphanage on the Apache Indian reservation, the first of its kind in the southwest United States. Three years later a set of buildings for the nursery and orphanage are added.
- 1922 Candidate Gerald Hoenecke becomes the first tutor to serve at Michigan Lutheran Seminary.
- 1923 The Van Dyke property of 32 acres, located between Vliet and State Streets, south of the old seminary property on 60th Street, is purchased for \$40,000.00. The plans are to relocate the seminary on this tract of land.
- 1923 The 17th convention of the Joint Synod of Wisconsin, meeting in Milwaukee, decides to carry its mission beyond the borders of the United States. The General Mission Board honors a request from confessional Lutherans in Poland for assistance in preaching the pure gospel. Pastor Otto Engel, an immigrant from Poland, is chief spokesperson for the synod's move into Poland.
- 1923 The synod authorizes building a combined refectory and hospital quarters at Michigan Lutheran Seminary at a cost not to exceed \$30,000.00.
- 1923 Subscriptions to the *Gemeindeblatt* ("Congregational News") reach an all-time high of 14,494.
- 1923 The deficit in the treasury of the Wisconsin Synod reaches a high of about \$290,000.00.
- 1924 The Wisconsin Synod opens its first mission on foreign soil by answering the call to serve German Lutherans in Poland. The new church body is called the Evangelical Lutheran Free Church of Poland.
- 1924 Northwestern College and Preparatory Department reaches a peak enrollment of 312 students. The number of students then declines until 1948, after World War II.

- 1924 Prof. A. F. Ernst, "Preceptor of the Lutheran Northwest," who served as professor at Northwestern College from 1869-1921 and as president from 1871-1919, dies after an extended illness.
- 1924 Prof. Koehler of the Wauwatosa seminary is granted a year's leave of absence to do research in Germany on the history of the Wisconsin Synod.
- 1924 The Northwestern College faculty disciplines a number of students caught stealing in the city of Watertown. The faculty action is overturned by the college board. Professors Karl Koehler and Herbert Parisius resign from the Northwestern faculty to protest the board's action. The Watertown case sets the stage for controversy in the synod.
- 1925 Over the biennium from 1923 to 1925, synodical income increases 20 percent to reduce substantially the synod's indebtedness. A jubilee collection is planned for later in the year to celebrate the 75th anniversary of the Wisconsin Synod's founding.
- 1925 The Northwestern Lutheran features a special jubilee edition in observance of the diamond anniversary of the original Wisconsin Synod. It contains a short popular history of the synod.
- 1925 By the time of its 75th anniversary in this year, the Wisconsin Synod has grown to include approximately:
- 213,120 Baptized members
 - 623 Congregations
 - 104 Home mission stations
 - 34 Professors
 - 485 Pastors (10 as missionaries)
 - 150 Christian day schools
 - 143 Male teachers
 - 111 Female teachers
 - 4 Synodical schools
 - 634 Students in synodical schools
- About 72 percent of the home mission work is done in the English language.
- 1926 Dr. Martin Luther College is authorized to construct an addition to the "boys' dormitory" at a cost of \$41,000.00.
- 1926 An essay on Galatians, presented by Pastor William Beitz, arouses strong, but mixed, reactions because of judgments made in the application of the text. The paper is submitted to the Wauwatosa Seminary for review.
- 1926 The classroom building at Michigan Lutheran Seminary is completely remodeled to accommodate larger classes.
- 1927 The majority of the faculty at the Wauwatosa seminary gives an unfavorable "Opinion" on the essay of Pastor Beitz.
- 1927 The West Wisconsin District of the Wisconsin Synod accepts the seminary's "Opinion" and requests that Pastor Beitz retract the offending expressions. After he refuses to alter his essay, the district declares that those who do not accept the district's judgment "have separated themselves from us."

- 1927 The first Protest'ant Conference of those suspended from the Wisconsin Synod for refusing to accept the seminary's "Opinion" and the West Wisconsin District's action meets at Marshfield, Wisconsin. They decide to publish a periodical, *Faith-Life*, to preserve the heritage of the "Wauwatosa Gospel."
- 1927 Prof. Ruediger is dismissed from the seminary faculty because of his part in publicly discussing the actions of Northwestern College Board.
- 1927 The Wisconsin Synod votes to participate in producing a Synodical Conference hymnal in the English language.
- 1927 The Wisconsin Synod sells the Van Dyke property at a profit of over \$67,000.00. In its place, it purchases the 80 acre Wille farm near the Village of Thiensville, as a new site for the seminary, at a cost of \$25,000.00.
- The Synod also appropriates a sum of \$328,000.00 to construct a 150' x 208' classroom/administration building at Dr. Martin Luther College in New Ulm, Minnesota. The new building is to contain 12 classrooms, a library, gymnasium, and auditorium. In addition, the monies are to be spent for a central heating plant and for remodeling existing buildings.
- 1927 A resolution to establish an academy in the Dakota-Montana District passes in the synod assembly. It is part of a synodical effort to establish "preparatory schools, or academies, in many different parts of its territory." The delegates set aside \$5,000.00 for the first year of the academy's operation.
- 1927 The Arizona Conference of the Wisconsin Synod petitions for status as a mission district, a request that is not honored until over a decade has passed.
- 1927 Dr. Martin Luther College enrolls 261 students. But by 1933, in the trough of the national depression, the enrollment drops to 127 before a gradual but steady rise occurs.
- 1928 The Dakota-Montana District, in a special meeting at Watertown, South Dakota, selects Mobridge, South Dakota, as the site for the new synodical academy. Professor K. G. Sievert is called as the school's first instructor. Ten boys and six girls from 14 different communities register for the first 9th grade.
- 1928 On May 24, ground is broken for the new seminary near Thiensville, and on July 22, the cornerstone for the new buildings is set in place.
- 1928 Representatives of the Intersynodical Committee, representing the Buffalo, Iowa, Missouri, Ohio, and Wisconsin synods, publish the "Chicago Theses" on conversion, predestination, and other doctrines. The presentation of this document finishes the committee's work.
- 1928 Building operations on the new seminary near Thiensville begin. Two spacious buildings, joined by a prominent tower, provide room for classrooms and a chapel, library and gymnasium, as well

- as dormitory space for 72 students. Included is a dining hall, kitchen, room for the steward's family, for the help, guest rooms, sick rooms, and an apartment for one professor.
- 1929 Dedication services for the new seminary near Thiensville are held on August 18, during the synod convention. Over 12,000 people attend. The celebration is marred by the death of Prof. Henkel a few months before, the vacant professorship once held by Prof. Ruediger, and by tensions between President Koehler and other faculty members over the handling of the Protest'ant issues.
- 1929 The Wisconsin Synod takes up appeals from protesting pastors and teachers and attempts a settlement. A special committee reports on the controversy raging within the synod. As a result, a "peace committee" of eight is authorized to mediate concerns of all parties.
- 1929 The seminary board calls Pastors M. Lehninger and F. Brenner to fill two vacancies on the faculty.
- 1929 Professor J. P. Koehler, president of the seminary, is dismissed from teaching, partly because of his public disagreement with the way in which the Beitz paper was handled. Four years later he is suspended from the Wisconsin Synod for practising fellowship with the Protest'ant Conference.
- 1929 The building of the Coolidge Dam in Arizona causes all mission buildings at the San Carlos Apache Station to be removed and demolished.
- 1929 The enrollment at Michigan Lutheran Seminary reaches a high of 75 students. During the depression of the 1930s, the enrollment drops.
- 1929 Pastor William Bodamer of Scio, Michigan, takes up duties in the Evangelical Lutheran Free Church of Poland. He serves this church body until 1939, when Hitler's invasion of Poland makes it impossible to continue his work.

The years of the national economic depression slowed down synodical outreach and expansion. During the next decade the Wisconsin Synod's indebtedness and internal strife caused the church body to become cautious in its dealings but vigorous in defense of doctrine. These attitudes marked its relations with other Lutheran bodies at a time when the pace of Lutheran unity was increasing in tempo.

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Reflections on the Inter-Relationship Between Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary and World Missions

Edgar H. Hoenecke

OUR WISCONSIN SYNOD has reason to thank God for more than a hundred years of sound guidance by our theological seminary. This is noteworthy indeed in the history of the modern church. The straying of formerly orthodox church bodies from sound teaching and practice is traceable in many instances to aberrations of members of their theological faculties.

The fear was expressed by some of our leaders that going into the world with the gospel would lead to a dilution or loss of pure teaching by our synod. This danger was not nearly as great as succumbing to new notions in theology at home.

From its beginnings in 1850 our synod had to contend with heterodox influences which stemmed from our heterogeneous origins. In these struggles God always awakened strong leaders who guided the synod on a sound confessional course and into orthodox intersynodical associations. In retrospect this development of the Wisconsin Synod into a leading orthodox Lutheran church which has not yielded to the allurements of popular doctrinal trends is nothing short of a miracle of the grace and patience of God.

Just as great a miracle of God's patience and grace is the fact that at the very time of the synod's valiant struggle to keep her orthodox Lutheran identity the Lord led the body in her 95th year to embark on a major world mission outreach. No longer would she have to suffer the slur that "the Wisconsin Synod has the pure gospel and is sitting on it." Within a span of only three decades the synod which ranked as a poor performer in per communicant support of world missions was at the top of the list of Lutheran synods.

During these decisive years of awakening it was largely the positive influence and incentive of our theological professors who steered the synod through the theological turbulence and at the same time promoted the burgeoning mission emphasis at home and abroad. We intend to demonstrate this in the following pages.

We offer no explanation for the fact that obedience to the word in matters of doctrine and practice did not always include compliance with the same word in its explicit injunctions to share the gospel with all the world. That this consistent obedience was not always practiced is a deplorable fact of our

history. We thank God that our synod, like 90 year-old Sarah, finally did achieve that consistency in obedience and has borne many children of promise.

The Struggle for Greater Mission Emphasis

There were times in our synod's history when other important undertakings repressed the zeal of the body to reach out beyond its districts or our nation's borders with its missionary activities. The small vocal group of pastors who persisted in holding the ascending Lord's Great Commission before the synod were dubbed "mission brethren" and were subjected to criticism. This is recorded by our synod's outstanding historian, Professor J. P. Koehler of the theological seminary.

He wrote, after reporting that the synod had resolved in 1883 to look for a suitable Indian mission field in response to President Johannes Bading's urging, "There was something not entirely sound about the synod's heathen mission endeavor, the idea that a church is not living up to its mission unless it engages in heathen mission work, according to the Lord's Great Commission: Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature. That idea is dogmatism with a streak of pietism and it provoked the criticism of Professor Hoenecke. . . .

"These mistakes, outside of being a part of the general slipshod management, also arose from the lukewarm attitude of the synod's leadership that dreaded the added cost to the budget. But the constituency showed enthusiasm for the undertaking and so the 'mission brethren' had to be given free rein." (J. P. Koehler's *History of the Wisconsin Synod*, p. 198.) Our first two Apache missionaries began in Arizona in 1893.

Not only the leadership of the synod was lukewarm; but it becomes evident from the venerable professor's writing that the influence of the seminary on the synod's mission enterprises was at times far from positive and in keeping with the clear mandate of the Lord. This is clear from another quotation from the same source, "In outward matters the church is subject to natural developments like the rest of the world under God. Not all groups or organizations have the same tasks. There are organizations, like peoples, that remain small in number and in that have a token of their mission to do intensive rather than extensive work by which the world may even profit more. The Wisconsin Synod had a college that was off to a good start along fundamental educational lines. To maintain and develop that was mission enough for a while." (*Ibid.* p. 196.)

The response of one of his former students to the worthy professor's reasoning takes care of the matter very effectively. "One can understand that our fathers placed emphasis on the strengthening of the stakes to the virtual exclusion of the lengthening of the cords. But *all* Scripture is written for our learning and guidance. The Isaiah passage (54:2) does not limit; it directs us to do both and neglect neither one, as the Germans are wont to put it: 'Das Eine tun und das Andere nicht lassen.'" (Karl F. Krauss, *Our World Missions*, WLQ, 72, #4, p. 275.)

Our first venture into heathen mission continued to be hampered by criticisms and attempts to abandon it at almost every convention of the synod largely because of the cost of its operation and its inability to report dramatic results. At the same time it afforded an excuse for not venturing

into other world mission fields and thus deprived the synod's membership of the great joy of helping to bring in the harvest of the Lord's elect. It is interesting to note that in the same year 1893 in which our synod began its first heathen mission among the Apache Indians of Arizona the Missouri Synod sent its first missionary to Japan. In the following decades this synod advanced into more than a dozen other foreign fields.

Heathen Mission Advocated by the Synod's Leaders

To set aside the impression that the leaders of the Wisconsin Synod were not concerned about carrying out the Great Commission we turn now to the record of several past presidents.

At the convention of 1883 the "mission brethren," referred to earlier, found an advocate of their position in none other than the president of the synod, Pastor Johannes Bading. Deviating from the former practice of advocating the "*Sammelarbeit*," that is, gathering already Lutheran, chiefly German, people into the synod, he urged the synod to appoint a commission to look for an opening to preach the gospel to people of another culture, then called heathen mission.

This commission briefly considered Japan as a possible choice, but soon concentrated on a search for an existing mission among the American Indians which the synod might support with another Lutheran body. When this was found to be impracticable for confessional reasons, the convention of 1884 concurred in the recommendation that the synod prepare to open its own Indian mission among the Apaches of Arizona. Two seminary graduates began work on the San Carlos reservation and one on the Fort Apache reservation in 1893.

It was exhilarating for me as a pastor out of the seminary just five years to attend my first synodical convention (1931) and to hear the stirring opening address of President Gustav E. Bergemann which was based on the ascending Lord's Great Commission and his word of assurance in Mark 16:15 and Matthew 28:20. It was a great act of faith and courage for the president in the depth of the great depression thus to exhort the synod to greater missionary activity in the full confidence of the Lord's presence and blessing.

He said, "The preaching of the gospel was and is and ever will be the one great and peculiar mission of the church. Not until the church has gone into all the world and has preached the gospel to all creatures has it performed its mission. It is indeed a great task. When we ponder the greatness and the difficulties of this task, our courage begins to wane and delight in his work becomes indifferent. We are in danger of doing the Lord's work slothfully. It may even come to pass that the blessing is turned into a curse.

"We are standing in this danger. In effect, Jesus Christ our Savior who was with our fathers has not deserted us. He has fulfilled his promise, 'I am with you always.' Even this day he is among us. He blessed our institutions and made them instrumental in giving us messengers of the gospel. Again and again he opened doors for us. . . . Every door opened, every blessing received, every victory won ought to give us new courage for our task and increase our joy and pleasure in the work of our God. Is this our attitude?

"We are in danger of losing both. We look upon our assigned task — it has increased; upon the field — it has expanded; upon the possibilities of other missions — they are at hand; upon our budget — it has grown and passed the

one million mark; upon our treasury — it is depleted, worse than that, there is a large deficit. More depressing is the fact that this deficit, keeping pace with the work and expenditures, has increased year by year. Our hearts are heavy and our vision is blurred. We have become weak. We have begun to do the Lord's work slothfully. We have said that the deficit must be wiped out. For this reason the budget must be reduced and correspondingly the extent of our work must be curtailed. We cannot undertake additional work in new fields. According to this program we worked during the past biennium.

"What has been the result? Through our institutions the Lord gave us a large number of laborers; he has not withheld blessing. But we were not in a position to make full use of this blessing for the building of the kingdom. To but one-half of the candidates for the ministry we could say, 'Go and preach the gospel!' To the others we were obliged to say, 'For the present you must go to seek labor elsewhere.' To this end our program has brought us.

"No, this condition cannot be explained as coming from the enduring depression. In the years of *prosperity* we embarked upon a course which led to this end. Our condition is indeed a precarious one. . . . Having not cherished the blessing we must suffer the curse. God keep us from such an end. . . .

"Let us then take him at his word, 'Lo, I am with you alway.' . . . Our heart must marvel and be enlarged until it breaks forth and courageously proclaims, 'With God we will perform our deeds.' We will cover the deficit and the necessary budget with commensurate contributions and sacrifices. We will miss no opportunity to expand our borders in the full confidence of his promise, 'Lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world,' and in obedience to his command, 'Go ye into all the world and preach the Gospel to every creature.' " (1931 *Proceedings*.)

During another time of national crisis, the Second World War, President John Brenner addressed the convention of 1943 with a similar strong appeal for reaching out with the gospel on the basis of Ephesians 5:15-17: "Wisdom demands that we hold fast to the gospel as our most precious possession and permit no one to take it from us. . . . But the Lord is also still continuing the existence of the world today only for the sake of the preaching of the gospel, which is therefore the most important thing for us to do in our life. If we ourselves employ our time in hearing and teaching the word at home we cannot be neglectful of the souls of others. This is still the time of *grace for the entire world* and God wants all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth." (1943 *Proceedings*.)

But these same presidents also turned to the theological seminary to request these leaders to present timely essays and Scriptural exhortations at synodical conventions to arouse the synod from its lethargy to an awareness of the Lord's will with regard to the unfinished task of calling the Lord's elect from the far corners of the earth into his kingdom. This we will trace in the next pages.

Heathen Mission Advocates at Our Theological Seminary

There must have been strong advocates of world missions at the theological seminary before my time at the seminary, 1923 to 1926, but my personal reflections reach back to only one of these. Just before I entered Northwest-

ern College in 1920 all of the Wisconsin Synod's congregations had been made aware of the essay which had been read at the convention of 1919 at New Ulm, Minnesota, by Professor August Pieper of the seminary on "The True Reconstruction of the Church."

President G. E. Bergemann had assigned this essay to Professor Pieper, and the delegates at the convention had resolved to make it available to the conferences and congregations to counteract the demoralizing effect of World War I. This had been a shattering experience for all of humanity. It had ended in November of 1918 after ten million young men had come to an untimely end, most of them on the bloody battlefields of Europe. Millions of others, combatants and noncombatants alike, men, women, and children, had been maimed, driven from their homes, deprived of all their possessions and of hope.

By far the most devastating aftermath of the first global war was the unleashing of hatred and brutality, a loss of decency and morality, and a deepest disillusionment and loosening of religious moorings.

Professor Pieper carried out his assignment in his masterful German prose, admonishing and encouraging the convention delegates in three morning sessions. In soul-searching rhetoric he exposed the ingrained insularity of our German Lutheran churches which blinded our spiritual vision until now and stifled any serious endeavor to share the gospel with those of other cultural origins with whom we lived in this country and in the world. True reconstruction in the church could only come with a repentant admission of our flagrant failings and a resolute determination with the Spirit's help to reach out to all the other lost souls whom Jesus had laid upon our hearts and consciences in our time. Even though it cannot do justice to Pieper's powerful German, a translation of some of his words will serve to illustrate:

"Our missionary activity, the Indian Mission, *Reisepredigt*, even our educational institutions, until now has been but a miserable, pitiful bungling, a botchery lacking both fire and force. At every convention we seem to be asking ourselves, Do we actually want to do this work or do we not? Half a heart, half a job, and half a result. We worked as though we were dreaming. Mary has become a poky dreamer sitting at the Lord's feet. She has developed the habit of only listening until her hearing has become dull, her heart languid, and her feet and hands leaden and lazy. Wake up! wake up, Mary! Rub the sleep out of your eyes and shake the lethargy from your limbs. It is time to get to work.

"Don't you see the vast throngs of English people milling about your house, crowding around your open door, . . . the unnumbered multitude of those who would like to hear something of the glorious good news which the Lord has poured into your heart? Don't you see the millions of children who are waiting for you to take them also on your lap in the Christian school to tell them, too, about this wonderful thing that has entranced and enraptured you? Oh, don't you see the shining eyes of the thousands of darkhaired lads and the shy, yearning glances of the blondhaired maidens, intrigued by your own beaming faces, who are eager to learn the good tidings of God's grace and also to place themselves into the Lord's service in church and school to shout it loudly to those others, the multitude who are even now crowding about your house?"

"It is high time! The sun is still shining and daylight is still with us; but it is already toward evening and the day is far spent!" (1919 *Proceedings*.)

The essay and the manner of its delivery had a profound effect on the convention delegates. They resolved to have it read, preferably by the author himself, to all the conferences and to have it distributed in print to all congregations. Its effect was felt long after we completed our training at the seminary and began our own work in the ministry, as we shall demonstrate.

Fourteen years after August Pieper had read his essay, President Bergemann again found reason to request a similar essay in English to be delivered by another seminary faculty member, Professor August Zich. This was in the dark days of the great depression in 1933. Two days after his first inauguration President Franklin Delano Roosevelt had declared a "bank holiday" to stem the tide of bank failures. But the economic depression raged on and it took years before the confidence of the American people was restored. This defeatist attitude was also sharply reflected in the financial condition of the synod.

Because recurring annual shortfalls in contributions had accrued over the years to a debt of \$752,649 on December 31, 1931, the banks began to call in their loans and our trustees were reluctantly compelled to apply the second 20 percent cut in all salaries paid by the synod. An every member canvass, begun in early 1932, failed to produce a significant return and at the same time had a negative impact on regular contributions.

President Bergemann sadly reported, "Under existing circumstances there has been no thought of expanding into new mission fields or parish schools. We have again not been in a position to issue calls to most of this year's graduates. . . . The harvest is so great, but it must go to waste because the workers whom the Lord has given to us, also some from last year, cannot be put to work." (1933 *Proceedings*.)

This was a sad finale indeed for the career, 1917 to 1933, of a conscientious Christian gentleman who had valiantly led the synod during the post-war period of turmoil with a firm, evangelical spirit.

Professor August Zich attacked his assignment with courage and faith, first showing the cause of defeatism, its devastating effect on the work of the church, and its only cure. The remedy could be found only by returning to the Holy Scripture, to the story of God's gracious intervention through the sacrifice of his Son for sin, also the sin of doubt, and the host of assurances and promises of his continued presence and help, especially when our own weakness and helplessness became as painfully apparent to us in times of great crisis.

The Zich essay was also distributed to all congregations, and special meetings were held to encourage our membership to greater confidence and response. The effect was good while it lasted, but the debt had not been materially reduced and the interest on it "continues to devour no small part of our receipts," as President John Brenner reluctantly had to state in his first biennial report. (1935 *Proceedings*.)

A Welcome Change of Direction

During the 1933-1935 biennium a new influence was being felt in the synod, beginning in southeastern Michigan. It was destined by God's grace,

finally, to lead the entire body in a new direction away from depression and defeatism over poor fiscal performance to the happy assumption of a work program, especially in missions at home and abroad, which was as unprecedented as it was unexpected in a church body now approaching its 85th anniversary without a single independently financed heathen mission program abroad.

The beginnings of this change must be traced back to the theological seminary, specifically to the fiery lectures on mission outreach by Professor August Pieper. This worthy professor had fired his students with the clear words of Holy Scripture to inspire them with a "first love" for the gospel and the sinner's joyous response to his Savior's exhortation to share the good news with all the world.

From my class note book of 1925/26 let me quote just one of Professor Pieper's memorable remarks to our class in Isaiah, "Above all else, the study of Holy Scripture demands a truly sanctified attitude of heart from you which is summarized in Luther's "*Oratio, Meditatio and Tentatio*," because it knows of nothing more urgent and sacred than to want to serve the Lord in his kingdom. If I knew that I had imbued you with this spirit, if it is indeed the only right one, then I would also rest assured that the cause of the Lord's kingdom is secure. To share the gospel of Christ is the one all-surpassing purpose of our being!"

Disturbed over the continuing financial shortages and inability of the synod to rid itself of its paralyzing debt and the resultant rejection of all proposals to move forward on especially the mission front, a small group of pastors in southeastern Michigan began to discuss ways and means to do something about the irritating impasse. One of the pastors began to circulate simple dittoed folders which contained cartoons and graphs of performance for the synodical budget and a few well-chosen tips and squibs for the conference pastors. This led to a one-page monthly bulletin which presented synod information and short articles based on Scriptural exhortations.

At the 1933 convention President John Brenner became aware of this informal effort in Michigan and authorized its publication upon request to any congregation in the synod. In his 1935 presidential report he attributed much of the 14 percent improvement in offerings to the "Michigan Plan" bulletins and encouraged its continuation. Professor John Meyer of the seminary wrote a pithy article for the "Michigan Plan" bulletin a month before the convention of 1935. His remarks deserve our serious consideration.

He wrote, "Until very recently there was always a shortage of men for our work. Why? Because many people withheld their sons because there was more material success luring them to other professions. What did God do? When we withheld our sons from his service he sent us the First World War and we had to let our sons go to the shambles of foreign battlefields! God showed us that he *can* — very painfully, too — take our sons if we refuse to give them to him willingly. . . . After the war we gradually got more men. Yet, although our country, our Christians with the rest, was practically wallowing in money, contributions toward missions were far from keeping step with the general prosperity. We withheld our money from God! He then sent us the great depression and many lost practically all that they had.

God can get at our money! — if we withhold it from him, get it so that it hurts, while we might have enjoyed the pleasure of giving it for his saving cause!" (*Bulletin* 20, July, 1935.)

The Synod Debt Must Be Retired

President John Brenner had stated in his report to the synod in 1935, "Although our debt has not increased (it still stood at \$638,067 on July 1st), the interest on it continues to devour no small part of our receipts." — "Our task as church demands that we restore the cuts in salaries and *expand our missionary endeavors.*"

This was the mood of the entire convention in 1935. With irritating regularity every proposal which involved any addition to the budget for institutions or missions was met with the sobering objection, "We cannot afford any increase in the new budget. Only once during the past biennium were we able to pay salaries on time. And to maintain our credit rating we must give priority to the interest payments on the debts which still amount to almost \$30,000 a year."

After six days of this frustrating activity it should have come as no surprise when, on the last morning of the convention, a young pastor submitted the motion from the floor, as follows: "Inasmuch as we have seen from the opening of this convention that our debt and its interest payment are standing in the way of progress in every area of our synod's work and, as our president stated in his opening report, we ought to expand our mission program to place the workers whom the Lord has given us, I submit the motion that we take steps to retire our debt without delay!"

The president smilingly said to the speaker, "I appreciate your spirit, but it is too late for this convention to take any action on your motion." Near the rear door of the large auditorium Mr. Frank Retzlaff, a respected New Ulm businessman and member of the Dr. Martin Luther College Board of Control, stood ready to leave for lunch with his hat in hand and asked for the floor. He said, "I like what that young man has proposed and I second the motion." When the motion was called it passed with a large majority and another debt retirement program was under way.

Man Proposes, but God Disposes

We all left New Ulm in 1935 with the determination to do our utmost to help retire the debt and to move our synod to undertake a greater mission outreach. We were deeply moved by President Brenner's opening address in which he had again voiced his concern about "so many candidates standing idle in the marketplace."

In the discussion following the debt retirement resolution there was an expressed consensus that a concerted effort with God's blessing could accomplish the job in two years. The debt retirement effort was placed into the able hands of a committee under the chairmanship of Professor E. E. Kowalke.

This committee went to work with a will. The "Michigan Plan" bulletins were used to disseminate the appeal to all congregations. Prompt action was taken by over one-half of the congregations and there was a steady flow of money for the debt retirement program. However, because a large number of

churches had not participated, this flow became only a trickle when some congregations held back what they had raised until all took part in the special offering.

At the 1937 convention the president registered his disappointment over the performance during the biennium, only \$98,000 of the \$249,000 subscribed having been actually remitted. He wrote, "Every congregation was left perfectly free as to the choice of a plan. And let us not say that this was not the right time for such an undertaking. This is refuted by the gratifying success they had who went to work wholeheartedly. No, we failed because there was a lack of brotherly cooperation! What lay behind that lack in the individual case only God can know. But he does know! Everyone will know that our synod has suffered hurt and harm through this failure of achievement." (1937 *Proceedings.*)

The committee recommended that "the effort to retire the synod's debt be continued for one more year." When this was discussed on the floor a resolution was submitted and passed that "the debt retirement program be continued until it has been brought to a successful conclusion." At the next convention all but 38 congregations were active in the program; \$249,000 had been received by the synod treasurer and the resolution of 1937 was reaffirmed by a large majority of the delegates who were eager to see their synod embarked on a positive program of gospel outreach. Fifty candidates were still reported to be without calls. (1939 *Proceedings.*)

The Second World War Intervenes

There had been rumblings and dire forebodings of evil days to come when the demented diatribes of "Der Führer" were heard on our radio sets. A month after our 1939 convention England and France declared war against Germany. Within less than a year the terrorizing German blitzkrieg had subdued Europe, including France, and in September of 1940 President Franklin Delano Roosevelt had persuaded congress to pass the Selective Service Act to draft our young men into military service. Just before Christmas of 1941 we were engaged in the war with Japan and Germany.

The effect of the imminent war was deeply felt at the 1941 convention. As President Brenner expressed it in his address, based on Isaiah 30:15 — "There was fear in the land. . . . A mighty upheaval in our days is shaking the world to its very foundations. . . . The future is dark and no one is able to foretell what the conditions will be like when this bloody conflict is ended. . . . The Lord has not lost his power; he still rules the nations! . . . God still governs the universe for the good of his church. . . . Then let us return to him and rest! . . . This is his promise, "In returning and rest shall ye be saved; in quietness and confidence shall be your strength."

Referring to our program of work and our contributions for it he said, "Let us repent and bring forth fruits of repentance. . . . We have closed our books with a balance for which we have reason to thank God. . . . It is a comparatively small sum that is still needed to wipe out all our debt; now is the time to do this" (1941 *Proceedings.*)

Two years later, in August 1943, the president reported that 15,000 of our members were absent from their homes and home churches, drawn into the great world war. He said, "It is not necessary to go into details picturing the

destruction and horrors of the war for there is no one on earth that is not affected and moved deeply by it." He based his opening address on Ephesians 5:15-17 — "See then that ye walk circumspectly, not as fools, but as wise, redeeming the time because the days are evil. Wherefore be ye not unwise, but understanding *what the will of the Lord is.*"

Those were sobering days indeed. The outcome of the horrible global bloodbath was still uncertain. Many of our members would lose precious brothers, sons, fathers on the high seas or foreign battlefields. Many would come home maimed and changed, possibly to spend their remaining years as government wards.

It was a time when people gave heed to the admonition, "See then that ye walk as wise people, understanding the will of the Lord and redeeming the time." The admonition took effect and people talked and walked more soberly in keeping with the Lord's word and will. We were all being conditioned for the fruits of true repentance with many a solemn prayer and vow to make up for lost time, if the horror of the war would only be brought to an end by almighty God.

But the war and slaughter were to rage on over two agonizing years longer until it was brought to a crashing conclusion by the dropping of the first atom bomb on Hiroshima, Japan, on the sixth of August, the closing day of the synod convention of 1945.

Precious young men, precious amounts of money and still more precious years had been squandered in senseless killing and destruction which should have been employed in saving lost souls for Christ and for eternal life. We were determined under God to do the will of the Lord at the 1945 convention at New Ulm.

President Brenner had chosen a fitting text for the wartime convention of 1943, "See then that ye walk as wise men, redeeming the time because the days are evil." We took to heart what he had said, "Wisdom demands that we hold fast the gospel as our most precious possession and permit no one to take it from us. But the Lord is also still continuing the existence of the world *only for the sake of the preaching of the gospel which is therefore the most important thing in our life. . . . If we ourselves employ our time in hearing and teaching the word at home, we cannot be neglectful of the souls of others. This is still the time of grace for the entire world and God wants all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth.*" (1943 *Proceedings.*)

The Happy Convention of 1945

With these encouraging words of our honored president in mind we went to work during the 1943-45 biennium. The Lord faithfully heard the prayers of his people for an end to the terrible war and also to the hampering synod indebtedness. In this happy frame of mind we prepared our various reports for the convention of 1945.

In May of 1945 these reports of the various divisions were submitted to the Synodical Committee for possible revision. The very optimistic report of the Board of Trustees was also heard. It projected a balance in the budget and the retirement of our entire debt by June 30th. This was good news indeed after ten years of struggle.

The report of the Indian mission executive committee was also heard, discussed, and approved for presentation to the convention in August. The General Mission Board had not only approved but urged its presentation with its hearty endorsement. We were all confident that the proposal which it contained to request the synod seriously to consider reaching out into the heathen world with the saving gospel would be welcomed enthusiastically. We felt that the prospect of war's end and the return of our American fighting forces to their homes, which was palpably in the air in the early summer of 1945, would lift all our hearts with an irrepressible desire to bring offerings of thanksgiving to the Lord which could finance a worthy mission outreach.

Listening to our president as he read his opening address, we were greatly encouraged in our mission outreach thinking: "During the past biennium the offerings of our Christians increased to such an extent that our books today show a sizeable surplus." He warned against improvident enthusiasm but added, "Yes, we should expand. God forbid that we deny our faith by becoming stagnant; but let our expansion be a quiet steady progress in which the available manpower and the means to employ it keep pace with each other." Referring to our missions he said, "Until now we have not been planning to enter into foreign fields, but the Lord may call us into such at any time. May we then be ready to respond to his call, willing to work and sacrifice." (1945 *Proceedings.*)

This was already reason enough to remember New Ulm 1945 as "the happy convention." Our trustees reported: "All accounts and requisitions could be paid as presented. The budget reserve fund now amounts to \$350,000. All professors and missionaries are now being paid 25% *above their base salary.* And the entire debt has been retired." (1945 *Proceedings.*)

The Mission Outreach Resolution of 1945

The stage was set for the supreme moment of this convention, the presentation, discussion, and adoption of the resolution, "that the president appoint a committee to gather information regarding foreign fields that might offer opportunity for mission work by our synod."

The same proposal of the Indian mission executive committee which had been heard with the approval of the General Mission Board at the May meeting of the Synodical Committee was presented before the convention as a part of the mission board report. Its scriptural basis was Isaiah 49:6: "I will also give thee for a light to the Gentiles, that thou mayest be my salvation unto the end of the earth."

The chair now declared, "You're out of order!" Now the convention became alive! Requests for the floor were so numerous that one man said later that he thought it had been staged. Actually, it was simply the spontaneous reaction of the delegates who were ready for some positive action after the many years of frustration and restraint. It was not, as someone said, "ill-advised enthusiasm so characteristic of our day." Rather, it was the proper, God-pleasing response, too long repressed, to the blessings of peace and fiscal solvency which our God showered on our synod for his saving purpose.

The fascinating story of the slow, but steady, progress of the synod from 1945 to the opening of our mission in central Africa in 1953 is well-known

and not germane to our present purpose. Our concern is the important inter-relationship between the theological seminary and our world missions.

In August of the same year, 1953, Pastor Oscar J. Naumann was elected to succeed President John Brenner. This was of significant importance for the cause of world missions. President Naumann was not only personally dedicated to the synod's new global outreach with the saving gospel, but he inspired and encouraged all of us, especially those who were entrusted with the administration of the world mission program. Many appeals reached his desk from all over the world for help in proclaiming the pure word. These appeals he not only forwarded to my desk but urged me to follow up on them and, whenever he could, personally accompanied me on visits to these new fields. He also gave his full approval and full support to our program to enlist the theological faculty in our program. This had the double purpose of encouraging a mission-oriented training program at the seminary as well as giving our mission fields the benefit of sound theological guidance in the important work of setting up theological training programs in our world mission fields.

Synod and Seminary Presidents for World Missions

President Oscar Naumann and President Carl Lawrenz of the seminary were good friends. This stemmed largely from sharing the same convictions. Both men were dedicated to the preservation of sound Lutheran teaching and practice. Both realized that obedience to the word of God in doctrine has as a God-given corollary also unquestioning compliance with its many explicit exhortations to share the saving gospel worldwide. Holy Scripture speaks not in a vague, general way about this seeking and saving will of God, but in most distinctly explicit statements.

Our Lord himself left his followers these final instructions at his ascension, "All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world" (Matthew 28:18-20).

The text, Isaiah 49:6, on which the 1945 mission exhortation was based, states clearly what St. John is shown in a vision: "I saw another angel fly in the midst of heaven having the everlasting gospel preach unto them on the earth, and to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people" (Revelation 14:6).

To think that obedience to such explicit commands of our Lord was ever described as being "dogmatism with a streak of pietism" is very difficult to understand. In any case Presidents Naumann and Lawrenz were agreed on the urgency of carrying out the synod's 1945 resolution for greater mission outreach. Out of their conviction came also their inclusion of an essay on *The Extension of the Mission Endeavor* in the agenda of the worldwide *Conclave of Lutheran Theologians* which they invited to be held at Mequon in July, 1960.

The reading of this essay by Pastor Edgar Hoenecke on a practical aspect of the program of the church was questioned by some who thought the

meeting ought to be restricted to a discussion of Scriptural doctrine. For this reason the following statement was presented in the mission essay. After its reading it found staunch support from the assembly.

"This essay," said the essayist, "is not merely an interesting digression from the chief topic of this conclave of Lutheran theologians. It is the very end-topic, the practical application to their God-given purpose of the Scriptural truths which are here being expounded. It is important that the learned leaders of the church recognize the full impact of this fact on their deliberations. Otherwise, the dispute over dogma may degenerate into the sterile discourse of a debating society and the church would merit the slur that her meticulous definition of doctrine is merely a quibbling over words and phrases."

In 1978 when this essay on *Mission Reflections* was read to the Mission Seminar just before my retirement, President Naumann and President Lawrenz observed anniversaries in office, Naumann his 25th as synod president and Lawrenz his 20th as president of the theological seminary. What a force for good these two men have been! Under God's grace this leadership also contributed immeasurably to the Wisconsin Synod's outreach with the pure word to the world.

Under this leadership the entire seminary faculty was ready and willing to share their expertise and experience with the new world mission administration. They cooperated with alacrity in providing for special emphasis on training men for service in foreign mission fields by surrendering precious scheduled time for programs which would help that cause.

Annual World Mission Seminars

Already in the first years of our expanded world mission activity, from 1955 to 1960, it became apparent to us that provision would have to be made for more orientation, information, and practical preparation of candidates for work in foreign mission fields. The very sketchy training we of the world board could give them and their wives was grossly inadequate. When we appealed to the seminary faculty for some time in the already crowded schedule, the faculty agreed to set aside a full week for a world mission seminar which would be a joint venture, the students and faculty taking part with the world board.

The first mission seminar featured a series of daily presentations by missionaries and members of the world board. The insights gained into the requirements for service and the activities of a foreign field made continuation of the program quite self-evident. The Epiphany season was chosen to avoid breaking into the seminary schedule too seriously because of the semester break. The practical suggestion was adopted to involve the students themselves much more actively in the various studies and presentations, such as in the preparation of statistical, historical, and geographical information with the help of graphs and maps. The students also gathered the material gleaned from the seminar into loose-leaf folders for later study and reference. A new feature, slide and film presentations, was made available to the seminary family and to interested visitors from the Milwaukee area.

The mission seminar produced such good results that in 1964 the Board for Home Missions was brought into the program. This reduced the time for

Seminary and Mission Conferences

concentrating on the unique problems involved in world missions, but it served to bring the two mission boards into closer contact with one another to share in consideration of matters shared by both in the training of theological candidates and in the conduct of missions, especially in cross-cultural situations such as the Hispanic work carried on by both boards.

Although the goal of both home and foreign missions is the winning of souls for Christ with the gospel, there is a vast difference between the programs at home and those in foreign lands. This fact made it necessary for the world board to provide for more careful screening and training of candidates for world mission service than was possible in the annual mission seminar. Unique gifts of adaptation to a strange culture and the ability to acquire fluency in a foreign language are requisite for effective work among the people of another race. These gifts are not per se associated with intellectual competence. It is, rather, a matter of warm personalities who are sincerely interested in the well-being of others, sensitive to and accepting of people of other races and social levels.

The one extreme of "going native" or "going bush" actually may be the height of offensive condescension which might repel, instead of attract, another person who is well aware of the cultural difference between himself and the American missionary. At the same time the opposite extreme must also be avoided, lest the missionary and his family give the appearance of belonging to a *Herrenvolk*, a superior people.

As much as possible these problems of understanding and adjustment must be dealt with during the screening and training period of both the mission candidate and his wife. For this reason the world board was concerned about having as much time as possible in the selection and preparation of missionaries for foreign service.

Chair of Missions at the Seminary

In suggesting that a professor might be called to the seminary who would make missions his discipline the world board sought to be able to carry out a more thorough screening and training of future missionaries. It was thought that this man might be called from a list of candidates who had served in one of our foreign fields.

After careful deliberation the seminary faculty pointed out a weakness in our proposal which we were happy to acknowledge. In the prevailing order of things, we were assured, each professor made it a point to integrate concerns about sharing the gospel worldwide in his lectures, whether they be exegesis, homiletics, church history, liturgics, catechetics or any other discipline.

The calling of a mission specialist thus might result in a net loss rather than a gain for our world mission program.

The faculty's counter proposal found ready acceptance with the world board. It encouraged a policy of including the names of experienced missionaries who were engaged in theological training in the mission fields on the roster of candidates for the next vacancy to be filled in the seminary faculty.

This has now been done with gratifying results.

As early as 1965 the possibility of conferences on some of our foreign mission fields which would be attended by members of our seminary faculty at Mequon had been discussed. This would afford our entire foreign mission personnel an opportunity to keep in closer touch with the theological leaders of the synod. Again we found the faculty receptive to the suggestion although it involved evening classes for the professor and students and considerable changes in the regular class schedules.

One of the chief concerns which motivated our request for these conferences on foreign soil was our memory of the dire predictions which had been made in the early '40s that we would lose sound teaching if we went out into the wide world with the gospel. We were keenly aware of this as we were bringing national churches into being on our mission fields with no possibility of regular contact and friendly surveillance.

It is one thing to keep our churches at home from straying into heretical doctrine and unionistic associations and quite another to expect the same religious awareness of new Christians who do not have the same background of orthodox identity. At the same time they feel a kinship with Christians of other denominations and the desire for extending the hand of fellowship. In some way it is incumbent upon us to provide a healthy outlet for this need.

Since my repeated urgings for some form of intersynodical association of orthodox Lutheran church bodies to replace the Lutheran Synodical Conference could not be acted upon without long negotiations, this proposed series of conferences on our mission fields with leaders from the home church could supply the need temporarily.

The ever present lack of the money to carry out the plan was providentially solved in several ways. When it was mentioned at a Coordinating Council meeting, a lay member of the Board of Trustees took note of it and offered to supply the necessary funds. Another conference was funded by the Lutheran Women's Missionary Society.

Before we were able to call the first missionary conference the two presidents, Naumann and Lawrenz, supplied the need by making a visit to our central African field en route to the Republic of South Africa for a meeting with the Lutherans in that country. The happy results of this visit for both our own mission personnel, the national pastors and evangelists as well as the church in Zambia and Malawi, encouraged us to continue with our plans.

The first formal seminary conference was held at Hong Kong in 1971, another at Lusaka, Zambia in 1972, in Mito, Japan in 1974, and, by far the largest, at our Mequon seminary in 1976. The first mission conference, devoted especially to administrative and church organization, was held at West Allis, Wisconsin, in 1975. Since then a number of seminary and mission conferences have been held, mostly at Leland in northern Michigan. All of them have been funded by money raised outside of the regular budget for missions.

During the Easter recess of 1978 the seminary conference was attended by three of our professors, all of whom presented valuable essays for the consideration of men from our theological faculties of the mission fields on five

continents. The benefits of the El Paso seminary conference were of enduring value to the teaching staffs on our mission fields. But this conference had also drawn together representatives of our worker-training division, the home mission board, and the executive committees in charge of our five world missions enterprises. This mutual understanding was of great importance to our expanding program.

The Faculty Exchange Program

As early as 1965 we had made another suggestion to the faculty of our theological seminary which had never been acted upon because of the lack of funds. It was our wish that professors from our seminary might spend a semester or part of a semester in rotation at our Bible institute and seminary ventures in foreign fields. While we hoped that these professors might teach a few classes at our schools, we were far more concerned about the value of enough time with our staff to discuss matters of attainable goals, the range of subjects, and the other practical things necessary for sound theological training schools. One must remember that many of our own teachers had been called without the benefit of extra courses in theological disciplines.

As always our primary interest was the concern that, despite the distance from our home base, our schools on the field would remain on target and on course doctrinally and that we would "all speak the same thing and that there be no divisions among us; but that we would be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment," 1 Corinthians 1:10 and Philippians 3:16.

Professor and Mrs. Carl Lawrenz accepted our invitation to spend three months on our African field over the long Christmas holiday in 1975. They would spend some time on both our fields, Zambia and Malawi, but Professor Lawrenz would also teach two short courses at our seminary and Bible Institute. This visit was of great value to all concerned. Whenever possible, our missionaries would join the seminary students for Professor Lawrenz's classes. The evenings were often spent in discussing mission matters in a more relaxed setting, the worthy professor admitting later that he and his wife received more than they gave when the missionaries related their experiences and shared their problems.

Our board had the intention of continuing this exchange program by asking our professors to visit our other worker-training schools on the other fields. It is deplorable that this plan was frustrated for lack of the necessary funds. What stands out in our minds is the attitude of readiness to make such exchanges possible on the part of our seminary faculty. It always involved changes in the seminary schedule and evening classes for both the professor and the students, a matter which was very difficult to arrange without sacrifice of precious time.

Only one similar exchange program was carried out. This came as the result of our negotiations with a group of conservative theologians and their lay adherents in Sweden. But we will do well to set aside a separate section for this report.

The Sweden Counsel and Aid Program

During the spring and summer of 1966 I had been asked by the Board for World Missions and the Commission on Interchurch Relations to take care

of problems which had arisen in the Church of the Lutheran Confession in Germany. Our synod had supported this free church since 1924 and we were very much interested in helping this church become an independent free church.

Our Wisconsin Synod was also concerned about a number of conservative Lutherans in Scandinavian countries and Finland and the possibility of establishing fellowship relations with them. I was instructed to visit these people with whom our leaders had been in correspondence. I visited Denmark, Norway, Sweden, and Finland after making appointments to confer with these theologians.

At Stockholm Dr. Tom Hardt suggested that I run up to Uppsala to pay a visit to Dr. David Hedegard, an outstanding Swedish Lutheran theologian who had just completed a translation of the New Testament into modern Swedish. He had retired from the theological faculty at Lund University and had come to Uppsala as a member of this very old university's theological faculty. This faculty ignored him, however, because, in the words of his friend and biographer, Dr. Seth Erlandsson, "he held a 'false' view of the Bible; he believed it!"

My visit with Dr. Hedegard was very enlightening. He told me there were thousands of Bible-loving leaders and people in Sweden who had encouraged him in his publications for a return to a truly confessional Lutheran position and had supported his Bible translation work. But he replied to my question about the formation of a Swedish Lutheran free church that this was most unlikely because for most Swedes membership in the state church was almost inseparable from citizenship.

Two years later, in 1968, a group of conservative Lutherans with Dr. Hedegard founded *Stiftelsen Biblicum*, a biblical research institute, at Uppsala near the university, supported by voluntary gifts from all over Sweden. Its objective was to foster conservative research, to publish Bible-believing books and articles, and to provide a center for Bible scholars at the Uppsala University. When Dr. Hedegard died a year later, his friend and colleague, Dr. Seth Erlandsson, pastor of a large congregation in Old Uppsala, was elected as his successor.

It was Dr. Erlandsson who received copies of our synod's doctrinal statement, *This We Believe*, and requested permission to translate it into Swedish for his correspondents. At the same time he asked Dr. Siegbert Becker, professor at our seminary, to come to Sweden for a series of lectures in several places, including Uppsala, where the conservative group had begun to conduct church services. Dr. Becker expressed his willingness to accede to this request and received permission and funds for the visit.

Before making the trip Dr. Becker took a course in Swedish to enable him to work without an interpreter. He and Mrs. Becker spent the month of August, 1972, at Uppsala. His report was entirely favorable and recommended our synod's continued contact with a view to establishing fellowship with the Swedish group. Hundreds of people in gatherings all over Sweden had listened for hours while he presented our doctrinal stance and matters concerning our synod. His doctrinal lectures were even covered by the newspapers in Sweden as refreshing signs of a revival of true Lutheran religion.

With synodical authorization the *Sweden Counsel and Aid Fund* was created to finance further negotiations and visits. The committee comprised

President Oscar Naumann, Professor Carl Lawrenz, the undersigned, and Professor Siegbert Becker as liaison and correspondent because of his fluency in Swedish.

Another visit to Uppsala was authorized during the Easter break. Dr. Becker and the undersigned made this visit. Several important things were accomplished on this 1973 visit. The meetings were held daily in the newly acquired *Biblicum Center* near the university. Dr. Erlandsson formally severed his membership in the state church, the group organized *The Confessional Lutheran Free Church in Sweden*, a monthly periodical, *Lutersk Sändebrev*, was founded and a bulletin, called *Upprop*, Challenge, was mailed to all persons known to be interested in a return to sound Lutheran teaching.

At the 1973 convention of our synod formal confessional fellowship was declared with the new Swedish free church and authorization was given to carry on the work of informal, nonbudgetary support. This support has always remained very modest because many of the Swedish pastors declined outside help, choosing rather to find jobs to support themselves.

This rather lengthy report has been made to demonstrate the extensive, time-consuming involvement of the seminary in this program. The dedicated services beyond the call of duty of Professor and Mrs. Siegbert Becker are especially noteworthy because most of the work and success in creating this promising free church in Sweden is the result of their dedication under God.

The Seminary and the Interim Committee

An almost direct result of the work of the seminary faculty in connection with the Swedish free church was the creation of the Interim Committee by the Board for World Missions.

Appeals which reached the synod president for counsel and assistance from isolated Lutherans or Lutheran groups were usually assigned to the world board for investigation and preliminary action. At first this could be handled by the officers of the board. But when several appeals were in the process of temporary action and support, it became necessary to assign a special committee to the matter. Because it was thought that such administration would be only for an interim until the appeal was either denied or the field could be assigned to a standing executive committee, the name Interim Committee was chosen.

Because such appeals always involved an examination of the confessional position of the applicants for help, the world board quite naturally turned to the seminary faculty and the Commission on Interchurch Relations for counsel. This led to the inclusion of a seminary professor on the committee.

The interim committee has been so successful in its work that it has now been given status as one of the committees which comprise our Board for World Missions. Most importantly, it has resulted in a closer relationship of the world board with the seminary than we had dared to hope back in 1955.

The Quarterly and World Missions

During the same years our seminary faculty has also become closely associated with world mission through a number of articles and studies on

mission matters which appear in the seminary's publication, the *Wisconsin Lutheran Quarterly*. Some of these articles have been written by faculty members. They show the keen interest which prevails in the faculty for the worldwide gospel outreach which has been given to his church by the Savior. Others were contributed by members of the world board upon request of the seminary faculty. They have been of immeasurable help in keeping this cause before our churches.

Several of these articles come to our mind: *Luther's Practical Mission-mindedness* by Prof. Dr. Paul Peters; *Missiology and the Two Billion* by Prof. Ernst H. Wendland; *The Great Commission* by Pastor Robert James Voss; *Our World Missions* by Pastor Karl F. Krauss; *Home Mission Moods and Modes* by Pastor Norman Berg; *Theological Education by Extension* by Prof. Ernst H. Wendland; *The Mission Mandate in Isaiah* by Pastor Edgar Hoenecke; *Mission in the 1980s* by Prof. Ernst H. Wendland.

Acknowledgment

With deep gratitude to our God we acknowledge the many years of faithful counsel and active cooperation of our theological seminary for the cause of missions. Humanly speaking, without it we could not have carried out our heavy responsibility. We recognize the fact that we have not been charged by the Lord and his church to proclaim the good news of Christ without also carrying out his earnest injunction to "teach them to observe all things, whatsoever I have commanded you." This involves that we also "Hold fast the form of sound words in faith and love which is in Christ Jesus" (2 Timothy 1:13).

For this especially we record our sincere thanks.

Edgar H. Hoenecke is a retired pastor living in San Diego, California. For 25 years he headed the WELS world mission program.

A Historical Sketch: Dr. John Henry Ott

DR. JOHN HENRY OTT was an 1885 graduate of Northwestern College, Watertown, Wisconsin, and because of his distinguished academic record was immediately called to serve on its faculty. In 1890 he took a leave of absence from the college to acquire a doctorate in Germany. He attended the University of Berlin and of Halle and received his doctorate in philology from the latter university in 1892. For the next 40 years he taught English, history, and science, retiring in 1939. In 1945 he died. Prof. E. E. Kowalke, president during many of the Ott years, wrote of Dr. Ott in the history of the college, "Of no one who ever served on Northwestern's faculty can it be said more truthfully that he gave himself completely and ungrudgingly to the school that had called him into its service."

About the Picture

Dr. Ott is shown in this photograph taken in 1941 by Pastor Waldemar Hoyer of Rochester, Minnesota, who at that time was pastor of Mt. Calvary, Waukesha, Wisconsin. Hoyer himself describes the setting:

"For this occasion Prof. Martin Franzmann and student assistant Rollin Reim had also brought their cameras. We moved Dr. Ott's podium and desk to the window of the library for natural lighting without a flash.

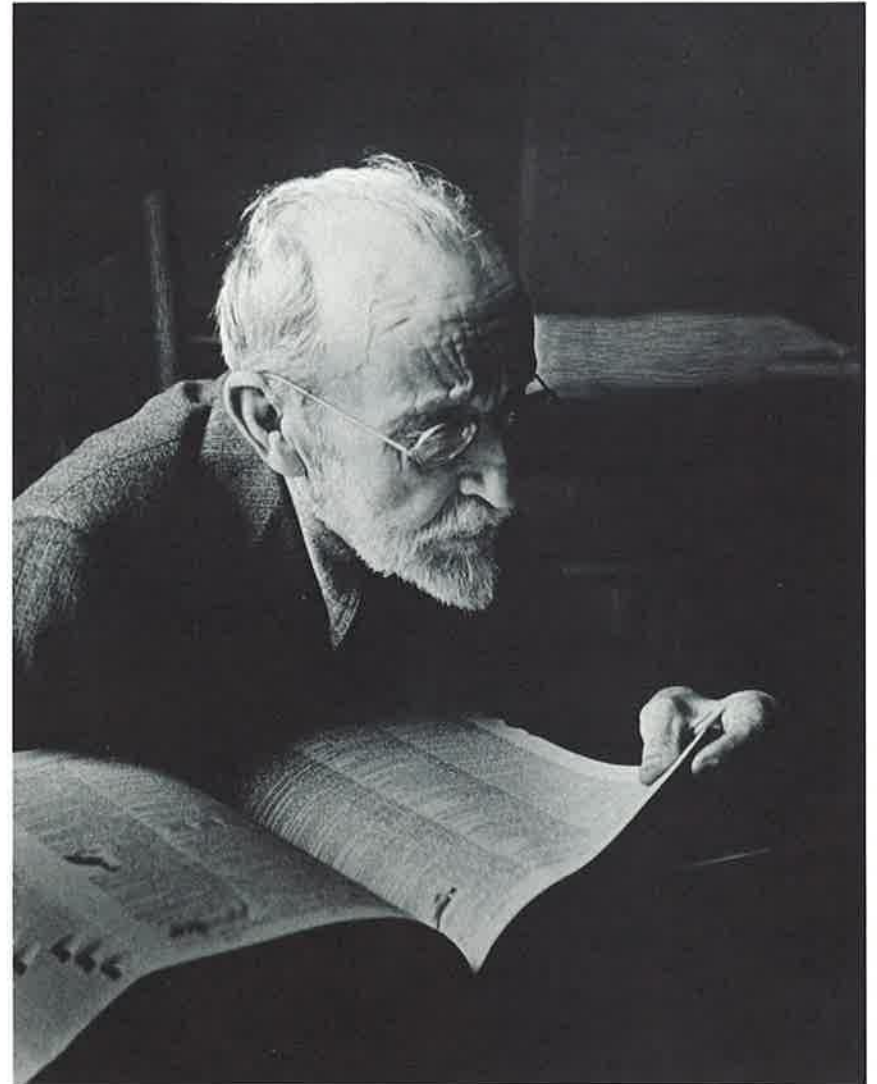
"Dr. Ott asked me, 'Na, na, Hoyer, what must I do now?' I replied, 'Dr. Ott, read to us the word you put into Webster's Unabridged Dictionary.'

"Dr. Ott struck that pose which his students knew so well: he embraced Big Webster, found his word, and read us, of course, the etymology and definition. The word was *longiloquence*, which means long-windedness.

"I was pleased with my picture showing Dr. Ott in a typical classroom pose. I called this portrait 'The Philologist,' and won several prizes with it.

"A Grand Island, Nebraska, photographer liked the portrait so much that he made several enlargements, one of which I appropriately donated to the Northwestern library which Dr. Ott so lovingly tended."

The negative of this portrait has been donated by Pastor Hoyer to the WELS Historical Institute.



Dedication of the WELS Archives

Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary
Mequon, Wisconsin
Sunday, May 7, 1989



Rev. Roland C. Ehlke (left) read the rite of dedication. Following the dedication Dr. August Sueflow (center) addressed the assembly and Prof. Martin Westerhaus (right) reviewed the history of the synodical archives.



Dr. August Sueflow addressing the assembly.



Mr. and Mrs. Herbert E. Blum, members of St. John, Neillsville WI, view some archival material.



Views of the new archives.



Materials Donated to the WELS Archives

December 1987 – May 1989

The individual, congregation or organization listed before each item is the donor.

1987

- December Rev. David Dolan, St. Paul, Algoma WI: 1987 church directory, 1987 church anniversary (125th) booklet, 1981 school anniversary (100th) booklet.
 Rev. Louis F. Rush, Seaside OR: 1812 *Gesangbuch*.
 Rev. Mark Jeske, Milwaukee WI: 1945 Lutheran hymnal, Chronicles of the Shoenberg-Cotta family, 2-1888 *Lutherisches Gesangbuch*.

1988

- January Mr. Martin William Johnson, Belvidere IL: Copies of the ships' register of the various vessels on which many of the old Lutherans came to America.
- February Mr. Herbert Blum, Neillsville WI: 1987 St. John annual report.
- April Mrs. Marvin Fritz, Spring Valley WI: Centennial booklet of St. John, Town Weston, Dunn County, WI.
 Mrs. Esther Stellwagen, Beverly Hills FL: 1988 St. Paul directory.
- May Mr. R. E. Sievert, Burnsville MN: Papers and documents of Rev. Prof. Karl Sievert.
- June Rev. Joel Leyrer, Indianapolis IN: Program for the 1929 LCMS Chicago celebration of the 400th anniversary of Luther's Small Catechism.
 Rev. Rich Lehmann, Muskego WI: Slides of 1971 convention at Northwestern College.
- July Christ Ev. Lutheran Church, Marshall MN: 1988 centennial booklet.
- August Mr. Ervin Ott, Bay City MI: St. Bartholomew 90th and 100th anniversary booklets.
 Mr. Carroll Dummann, Thiensville WI: Photo of the former Lutheran High School at 13th and Reservoir, Milwaukee.
 Mrs. Gloria Poertner, Milwaukee WI: Hymnal, picture, postcards from the estate of Pastor Walter Polacheck.
- September Rev. Michael Engel, Milwaukee WI: Box of church records, History of Emmaus, Milwaukee.
 Rev. Carl Voss, Green Bay WI: 11 tapes of Rev. Arthur Voss' sermons.
 Rev. Allen Schroeder, Mesa AZ: Prof. Koehler's *Das Gemeindelied fuer Gemischten Chor*.
 F. Uplegger Family, Phoenix AZ: 2 boxes of conference and synod papers, box of church anniversary booklets.
 Rev. Don Hochmuth, Woodbury MN: Booklets for Mt. Zion in St. Paul and Salem in Woodbury.

- October Rev. Dennis Valleau, St. John, Lake City MN: Centennial booklet and service bulletin.
Mr. Herbert Blum, Neillsville WI: Bulletins, newspaper clippings, and photos of St. John.
Mr. Gene Meier, Palatine IL: German photocopied essays of historical value.
Mr. Richard Sievert, West Bend WI: School records, 10 anniversary booklets from various congregations.
- November Rev. Mark Lindner, Beaver Dam WI: St. Stephen anniversary booklets.
Rev. Gerhard Schmeling, Milwaukee WI: Photos of 1925 Northwestern College graduation, 1926 church booklets.
Mrs. E. Pankow, Mequon WI: Congregational information Garden Homes, Milwaukee.
Prof. em. Oscar Siegler, Prairie du Chien WI: Records of the WELS Commission on Inter-Church Relations.
- December Mr. E. R. Gamm: 1865-1866 *Gemeindeblatt*.
Anonymous: Dedication booklets for Faith, Fond du Lac WI.

1989

- January Rev. Fred Kosanke, Elkhorn WI: Graduation picture of his father.
- February Rev. J. B. Erhart, Kirkwood MO: A history of his activities 1901-1973.
- March Rev. David Grundmeier, Mason OH: 2 dedication booklets of Abiding Word.
Rev. Stephen Korth, Mt. Olive, Bay City MI: 1954 church dedication folder, 1970 school dedication folder, 1967 25th anniversary booklet, 1988 church rededication booklet.
- May Anonymous: 50th anniversary booklet, St. Jacobi, Milwaukee; 50th anniversary booklet, Jerusalem, Milwaukee.
Mr. Herb Smith, Zebaoth, Milwaukee WI: 7 parochial reports, 50 WELS proceedings, 1 LCMS proceeding, 22 SE Wisconsin District reports, 9 Synodical Conference proceedings, 1959-1986 *The Northwestern Lutheran*.
Miss Betty Numrich, Eagle River WI: Record book, family picture, drawings of Pastor C. F. W. Allwardt.

If we have inadvertently neglected to list some donation you are aware of, please let us know.

Prof. Martin O. Westerhaus
WELS Archivist and Historian



The seal of the WELS Historical Institute depicts Salem Lutheran Landmark Church, built in 1863 on the site of the "birthplace of the Wisconsin Synod." (Salem now serves as the museum of the Wisconsin Synod.) In 1850 the Wisconsin Synod was born; in 1981 the WELS Historical Institute officially came into being. The German inscription is a reminder of the Synod's German roots. The words mean "Remember the former time." The cross reminds us of Jesus Christ, the Lord of all history.

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