

WELS Historical Institute

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Editor Arnold O. Lehmann

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The Cover
The seal of the WELS Historical Institute

**Proceedings
of the
Twenty-first Convention
of the
German Evangelical Lutheran Synod
of
Wisconsin and other States**

**held in the German Evangelical Lutheran Congregation
at Manitowoc, Wis.
June 8 to 13, 1871**

At the invitation sent to the praesidium by the Ev. Luth. Congregation of Manitowoc, to hold this year's synodical convention in its midst, the synod met on June 8 in the church of said congregation. All members of the convention experienced a cordial reception from Pastor Quehl and his dear congregation. It is evident that the proceedings received God's blessings. It was a unanimous opinion that we had one of the most satisfying of conventions. The convention was opened on the appointed day with a worship service in the morning, in which the local pastor was the liturgist and the Hon. vice-president of the synod, Pastor Jaekel, preached the sermon based on Heb. 13: 20 and 21, emphasizing the thought of a greeting of peace to the messengers of peace, which 1, proceeds from the God of peace, 2, is based on the blood of the eternal Testament, and through which 3, is promised the readiness to do the will of God, and the accomplishment of the same which would be pleasing to him.

On Saturday evening the confessional service took place in which Pastor Koehler preached the sermon based on Isaiah 55:1. On Sunday morning Pastor Streissguth preached on the Gospel of the Sunday. After the sermon the celebration of the holy Lord's supper took place. At the same time Pastor Schimpf preached to a large group in the congregation's schoolhouse. In the afternoon Pastor Dagefoerde conducted a children's service and in the evening Pastor Brenner preached on the Sunday's Epistle. At the invitation of the pastor of the Norwegian Lutheran Congregation in Manitowoc, Pastor Adelberg preached in the English language in his church in the morning and likewise Pastor Hoffmann in the evening. On Monday evening the mission sermon on Acts 4: 20 was preached by Pastor Huebner and on Tuesday evening the sermon by Prof. Ernst to see to it that faithful preachers of the Gospel be trained to carry out the command by God himself as recorded in Matt. 28: 19. The sessions of the convention, of which there were ten in all, were regularly opened with a liturgical worship service conducted by the elected chaplain, Pastor Quehl, and closed with prayer by the Hon. president. After the opening worship service the first session continued with the organization of the convention as follows.

A. Pastors

- | | |
|--------------------|------------|
| 1. C. F. Goldammer | Green Bay |
| 2. J. Conrad | Theresa |
| 3. J. Bading | Milwaukee |
| 4. Ph. Koehler | Hustisford |

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|----------------------|-----------------------|
| 5. W. Streissguth | Fond du Lac |
| 6. F. Waldt | Racine |
| 7. C. Gausewitz | West Bend |
| 8. Prof. Th. Meumann | Watertown |
| 9. H. Quehl | Manitowoc |
| 10. W. Dammann | Milwaukee |
| 11. E. Strube | Fountain City |
| 12. C. Wagner | Newton |
| 13. J. Kilian | Lomira |
| 14. A. Denninger | Herman, Dodge Co. |
| 15. A. Titze | Ahnepee |
| 16. C. G. Reim | La Crosse |
| 17. Ph. Brenner | Oshkosh |
| 18. A. Hoenecke | Milwaukee |
| 19. F. Hilpert | Addison |
| 20. J. Brockmann | Fort Atkinson |
| 21. A. Opitz | Farmington |
| 22. G. Thiele | Herman, Dodge Co. |
| 23. E. Mayerhoff | Ripon |
| 24. T. Gensike | Helenville |
| 25. F. Kleinert | Ozaukee |
| 26. Th. Jaekel | Milwaukee |
| 27. H. Hoffmann | Granville |
| 28. J. A. Hoyer | Princeton |
| 29. P. Lukas | Franklin |
| 30. A. Liefeld | Caledonia Center |
| 31. A. Kluge | Reedsville |
| 32. B. Ungrodt | Jefferson |
| 33. F. Schug | Burlington |
| 34. L. Junker | Forrest |
| 35. Ch. Dowidat | Centreville |
| 36. A. Siegler | Ridgeville |
| 37. C. Oppen | Columbus |
| 38. R. Adelberg | Watertown |
| 39. Prof. A. Ernst | Watertown |
| 40. A. Zuberbier | Two Rivers |
| 41. Ch. Dagefoerde | Leeds |
| 42. H. J. Haack | Wrightstown |
| 43. O. Spehr | Hortonville |
| 44. Ph. Kleinhans | Herman, Sheboygan Co. |
| 45. G. Denninger | Paynesville |
| 46. C. Jaeger | Mosel |
| 47. Reichenbecher | Platteville |

Accepted into synod membership during the convention:

- | | |
|-----------------|------------|
| 48. F. Guenther | Burr Oak |
| 49. Huebner | Peshtigo |
| 50. W. Schimpf | Woodland |
| 51. J. Meyer | Winchester |

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|--------------------|-----------------------|
| | Absent Pastors |
| 53. J. J. E. Sauer | Wheatland |
| 54. Ph. Sprengling | Beaver Dam |
| 55. F. Hass | La Crosse |
| 56. R. Baarts | Hamburg, Vernon Co. |

B. Congregational Delegates

- | | |
|--------------------|------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1. L. Mielke | Leeds |
| 2. F. Nagel | St. John Congregation, Sheboygan |
| 3. Chr. Woelz | Green Bay |
| 4. G. Brumder | Grace Congregation, Milwaukee |
| 5. J. Schmidt | St. John Congregation, Milwaukee |
| 6. J. Horwinski | St. Peter's Congregation, Milwaukee |
| 7. A. Hunsiker | St. Matthew Congregation, Milwaukee |
| 8. A Theilig | St. Peter's Congregation, Mosel |
| 9. A. Wahl | Manitowoc |
| 10. J. Kohl | St. Paul's Congregation, Town Herman, Sheboygan Co. |
| 11. F. Leistikow | Grace Congregation, Ripon |
| 12. H. Buck | St. John Congregation, Newton |
| 13. C. Tank | St. Paul's Congregation, Eldorado |
| 14. Chr. Reinemann | St. John Congregation, Centreville |
| 15. J. Maerz | St. John and Jacobi Congregation, Reedsville |
| 16. J. Voss | Watertown |
| 17. A. Habermann | St. Peter's Congregation, Fond du Lac |
| 18. J. Zirbel | Congregation zum Kripplein Christi, Town Herman, Dodge Co. |
| 19. M. Ebernau | Friedens Congregation, Oshkosh |
| 20. J. Brietz | West Granville |
| 21. W. Koch | Trinity Congregation, Town Herman, Dodge Co. |
| 22. J. E. Wilke | St. John Congregation, Two Rivers |
| 23. Chr. Thiese | Zion Congregation, Columbus |

Advisory Delegates

Pastors Kuechle and Wunder, of the Hon. Synod of Missouri, Pastor Doederlein of the same Synod and Pres. Sieker of the Hon. Synod of Minnesota were greeted by the assembly and accepted as advisory delegates; likewise Pastor Bjoern of the Norwegian Synod. Also accepted were Pastor Koehler, Mr. Esswein and the Teachers Grothner, Pauts, Brenner, Denninger and Meyer.

Annual Report of the President

Grace be to you and peace from God, our Father and from the Lord Jesus Christ. Amen. Honorable in Christ beloved fellow pastors and congregational delegates. God has overlooked the period of ignorance, but now he enjoins all people everywhere to repent because he has set a day on which he will judge all the earth with righteousness through one man, in whom he has resolved this, and every man demonstrates this faith after he had awakened him from the dead.

In these few words everything is contained which is concerned with the basis and completion of our salvation, and upon which the Christian sermon should be presented

to the world. This all is of greatest importance, for it concerns itself unconditionally with the question: How can a poor sinner be helped in the world so that he obtains everlasting life? How should a sermon be constructed according to content and manner of presentation for the purpose of receiving God's judgment as being a correct sermon and one which leads the sinner to the goal of salvation? Recently a quotation from a presentation about "the excellency of the Christian church" came to my attention in which the presenter stated: "In this church each one finds what he definitely needs. Whoever looks for doctrine finds it on the lips of Jesus of Nazareth; whoever has reached the highest moral step, and is looking for a model of true moral virtue can look likewise to this Jesus, and also whoever believes that he needs a savior, can find him here." That this type of nutrition is most acceptable to many Christians today, who will deny that? That hereby one can sail smoothly in the world is also true. But it is not the thought which Paul had in mind in Scripture about the Christian sermon and which he himself made use of in his sermons.

The Christian sermon, in addition to the wants and desires of those who are listeners, must only present God's word and anything else that agrees with God's word. If anyone teaches differently and does not remain with the wholesome words of our Lord Jesus Christ and the doctrine of salvation, he is in the dark and knows nothing. And our catechism says: Whoever teaches and lives otherwise than God's word teaches, profanes the name of God among us. As Ahab was undecided whether to go against Ramoth in Gilead or not, he asked advice from many prophets; all answered him with what he wanted to hear. Finally he also sent someone to Micaiah, the man of God, and it was said to him: "Observe that the words of the prophets are unanimously favorable for the king. Let your word agree with theirs, and speak favorably." He answered: "As surely as the Lord lives, I can tell him only what the Lord tells me." Thus all preachers should think likewise. Not according to the desires of mankind, but according to God's Word.

The doctrine of the word breaks down into Law and Gospel, both of which must be treated in the Christian sermon. Mankind are lost sinners, this must be shown by means of the Law; the people are sleeping in a spiritual death sleep, the Law must wake them up; they rely on their own righteousness, they must be torn away from their own concepts, their own dreams, and that their dress is filthy before God's eyes, so that they are alarmed and rush to the mercy seat and the perfect righteousness which is in Christ Jesus.

Whoever omits the Law from his sermon, or weakens its bite, he is not following God's word; you should not think that he is remaining with Luther's doctrine. Dr. Luther writes: "These antilaw persons and Law assailants desire to deceive and cajole the people who feel secure, and make them more righteous with the word, righteousness; even though it is such in this world and time that they cannot be frightened, humbled and broken up with the thunder bursts of the Law. One should now thunder and flash lightning with the Law for the sake of the great security in which the entire world and the greatest group are immersed." And in another place: "It is a great and dangerous error to cast away the Law and throw it out of the church; the Law must remain in the church and precede the Gospel in the sermon." Even though it is necessary because of sin and godlessness to have the Law in a sermon, we nevertheless with all our power have to see to it that its place in the sermon is not overvalued and misunderstood. The sermon on the Law is and remains basically a foreign work in the New Testament preaching office, and we must follow this in order to be able to carry on our work cor-

rectly. The Formula of Concord states: In that the Holy Spirit by means of the Law punishes the world because of sin, he must do the work of another (reprove), in order that he may (afterwards) do his own work which is to comfort and preach of grace. The real obligation of the servant of Christ is this, that he bring Christ into the hearts of poor sinners as their savior and redeemer, that he present the Gospel in its glorious and soul saving content and remind his hearers over and over again about righteousness brought about by faith as Jesus himself quotes from Isaiah 61 when he says: "The Spirit of the Sovereign Lord is on me, because the Lord has anointed me to preach good news to the poor. He has sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim freedom for the captives and release from darkness for the prisoners, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor." Also Paul, the preacher of all preachers, considered this as the chief purpose of his labors and life. He writes to the Corinthians: "When I came to you, brothers, I did not come with eloquence or superior wisdom as I proclaimed to you the testimony about God. For I resolved to know nothing while I was with you except Jesus Christ and him crucified." Indeed, no one among the Apostles has presented and practiced the special core of the Gospel, the doctrine of justification, more clearly than Paul has. Him, the spiritual father of Dr. Luther, has our church diligently endeavored to emulate. Where is there a church body here on earth where the doctrine of the Gospel, justification by faith, is so thoroughly and clearly presented as in ours? It is one of the principles by which our church is differentiated from other church bodies. With it as the center of biblical teachings Luther proceeded with his work of the reformation, while on the part of the Reformed secular knowledge and limited understanding were the basic reasons and driving force.

This Gospel must now be imposed upon our congregations in our sermons. Our church has laid it upon the hearts of its servants to present it, unmingled with the Law, and strictly differentiated from the doctrine of good works, as the chief requirement of the evangelical, that is, the Lutheran manner of preaching. For this reason it is stated in the Book of Concord: As the distinction between the Law and the Gospel is a special brilliant light, which serves to the end that God's Word may be rightly divided, and the Scriptures of the holy prophets and apostles be properly explained and understood, we must guard it with special care, in order that these two doctrines may not be mingled with one another, or a law be made out of the Gospel, whereby the merit of Christ is obscured and troubled consciences are robbed of their comfort, which they otherwise have in the holy Gospel when it is preached genuinely and in its purity, and by which they can support themselves in their most grievous trials against the terrors of the Law. This differentiation is a difficult task. Dr. Luther grants the doctor's degree to the one true theologian who has learned this art to separate Law and Gospel correctly and who understands how to present them in the correct manner in his sermons. However he admits at the same time that, even though he has a doctorate in Holy Scriptures and has diligently studied, taught, read and preached for more than twenty years, he himself is not confident in the matter. May God help us so that we may become diligent students in this.

The contents of an evangelical, that is a Lutheran sermon, isn't the only thing to be considered, but also the manner of presentation. The congregations to whom one preaches, consist of a great variety of persons. The relations of their members to things around them in the world, near or far, are subjected to manifold influences. Various different ideas could be brought up here. However it is self-evident that we could not deal with all the pressing questions here; only a few will be noted here.

Above all things the evangelical preacher will combine Christian freedom with his presentations. It's among the saddest and most corruptible facts of life in this world when the preacher of the Gospel lets himself be influenced by worldly opinions and the desire to please people, either by deviating from the very truths of Scripture or by dressing them up in such clothing that they no longer remain a two-edged sword. A preacher, as stated by an older man of God, is not a teacher of wisdom and character, or a professor of moral virtues, which are to be tolerated, while he with his presentations teaches obedience, but he is a sower who sows for eternity, a teacher of God's great doctrine of salvation, a father and consoler of his congregation, a weak, frail person, but with the power of lightning from God in his hands, which he received not from man but from God and which he should use for nothing less than for penetrating the bone and marrow of large and small, of high rank and low rank, for the purpose of driving into them the reception of the most glorious of all, salvation. Therefore, away with worldly opinions. Preach, whoever is a preacher, to the high ranking or low ranking sinners repentance to God and belief on the Lord Jesus Christ, even upon the danger of not being liked. It is truly not to be comprehended why, for the sake of self acceptance, the large number should remain excluded from the kingdom of heaven. If it becomes difficult for the preacher to disengage himself from the clamor of worldly opinions, he should simply hearken to the awe-inspiring words of his Lord: "You Child of the World, if I say to the unbeliever: You die condemned, and you do not admonish him, and say nothing to him, so that the unbeliever does not become concerned about his godless ways, in order that he may continue to live; in that manner the unbeliever will die because of his sins, but his blood I will demand from your hand." Such a word from Scripture is indeed able to drive off worldly opinions as well as the attempts to please people and is a mighty force for Christian freedom.

To accomplish this the sermon must flow from a warm heart and with ardent love. An established rule for a preacher in this case is: bring to the pulpit a heart full of warm love to your God and Savior, whose messenger and advocate you are. Also bring along a heart full of love for the souls to whom you are speaking. A preacher, who does not have love for the Lord and for souls, is like burned out coal which no longer can produce fire. Aaron had to carry the names of the Children of Israel on the official badge in his heart as often as he went into the holy place; therein lie hints for the preacher. And when Paul writes: "If I speak in the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love, I am only a resounding gong or a clanging cymbal." It is clear, how little a person as preacher affects the balancing weight in the sanctuary, whose talk is not filled with the holy breath of love. The sermon must make an impression upon the hearts of the hearers: he believes, therefore he speaks; and he loves us, therefore he has to speak. Whenever Paul stepped up, he could say: The love of Christ compels me. Blest is the preacher who carries on his duties in that manner and spirit; the more he is driven by love, the more will he as stated in the saying - what comes from the heart goes to the heart - have the inspiring and glorious experience that his word is finding a good reception and acceptance.

Finally he should preach God's truth with correct wisdom. Solomon says: "A word spoken at the proper time is like a golden apple on a silver tray," and the wise Sirach says: "Punishment and instruction should be practiced at the proper time." Use of both unwisely and with lack of understanding can do more tearing down in a congregation, than building up. This demanding wisdom is not freely in man's ability, but it is a gift of God, which can be learned and won only in the school of the Holy Spirit. Therefore it

says somewhere: "For whom wisdom is lacking, he should ask, so that it is given him very simply."

If the sermon as to its contents and art of presentation is approached thus, it will be for the welfare and blessing of both the pastor and the hearers. The pastor will be saved from two obvious dangers, from the danger to craft the sermon as a work of art, and to let understanding, talent and a good education shine forth; to flatter the older persons with vanity, or to treat them as an outside group. The congregation will be built up, will increase in faith and in knowledge. Nothing will thus be lacking for the souls that die which was to be told them while living, and thus the word of the Lord will be fulfilled: My word will not return to me empty, but will accomplish what I desire and achieve the purpose for which I sent it. May the Lord grant his grace so that we serve one another, each according to the gifts given him, as the good stewards of God's manifold grace. If someone speaks, let him speak it as God's word. If someone has a duty to perform, let him do it with the capability which God granted, so that in all things God receives the praise through Jesus Christ, to whom be glory and power in eternity. Amen.

I now take it upon myself to present to the Hon. synod my work report, in which I will first touch upon a subject which last year took up a great portion of our discussion time. It is this:

1) Our educational institution in Watertown

The existence and future development of the most important institution which provides the college education of our preachers was at the time of our last year's convention in a situation that could cause us to fear the worst. Another year has now passed, and we had to suffer new experiences and are in the position to inform the synod and our special friends and fellow believers about the present situation.

Because of the undeserved grace of our Lord, it happens that we this time do not appear before the synod with bitter complaints and gross fears. Our institution has not remained in last year's condition, but has made very happy advances. Even though our dear congregations have not contributed sufficiently for the subsistence of the institution, so that all claims could be satisfied, nevertheless it is worth acknowledging that its continuation does not have to be questioned any longer. While we bring honor and thanks to the Lord, to whom both silver and gold belong, we call upon our congregations: Continue, dear brothers, in the work of the Lord, for you know that your labor is not in vain in the Lord.

Whatever special arrangements, changes, continuations, necessities, etc. are to be mentioned for the institutions will be reported in depth to the Hon. synod by the Board of Control at the appropriate time. - Aligned with our institution is

2) the theological training of our students in St. Louis.

Although our synod up till now has not been in the position to fulfill the known stipulation on our part of supplying a theological professor in St. Louis, still the professors of the Hon. Synod of Missouri have taken as great an interest in letting our students be educated there in the same manner and with the same sincerity that they have for their own. A trip to St. Louis late last fall, authorized by the board, convinced me that our students in reference to this are in good, responsible hands. Their means of support were mostly borne by us, since they could not take care of their own supplies. This situation was a hindrance for us not to accept a larger number of students needing support, even though an increase in this small number would be desirable. It also would have been an advantageous opportunity for ten earlier Hermannsburg students.

3) Visitation and visits in the congregations

took place only in a limited manner. A regular schedule of this most important activity by persons appointed by the synod for this purpose has not as yet been set up. Confirmation instruction, festival times and other time consuming official duties have not allowed such visits this past winter where in congregations discord demanded the presence of one or more outside persons. In most cases it happened that the difficulties were settled and the correct mutual trust and relationship was restored.

4) Departures from the synod

were few in number. After Pastor Chr. Stark resigned from his congregation in Oshkosh, he declared his departure from our synod soon after last year's synodical convention. A few months later he sought re-acceptance or a scriptural release. I felt it to be best to grant him the latter.

In September I received a letter from the St. Matthew Congregation in Lebanon served by Pastor A. Lange that it by congregational resolution has ceased its membership with the Wisconsin Synod.

In the past late autumn Pastor Huber declared in an official letter that he no longer wanted to have any relationship with the synod. He took this step after an accusation about an unauthorized and unlawful intervention in the matters of the congregation in Fort Atkinson was charged against him, that the accusation would have to be discussed in his presence with a committee. He took this step also to prejudice his congregation against the synod and its confessional position. When in January a review committee met with the congregation, the congregation renounced their relationship with the synod in the special meeting under clamor and unchristian conduct.

5) Arrival of new workers and ordination

In August of last year Candidate Fr. Guenther from the Berlin Mission House, arrived here with recommendations. An examination held in my house led to the result that I recommended him for a call to our congregation in Burr Oak. He was called by it and at my request was ordained by Pastor C. G. Reim in front of the congregation and obligating himself to all of the confessional writings.

At the beginning of September Pastor Huebner from Pomerania arrived in Milwaukee with recommendations to serve a Lutheran congregation in Wisconsin. On my recommendation he began his work in a mission field in Peshtigo and surrounding area, which was without a pastor for several years. By God's grace it happened that he established several Lutheran congregations there and was then installed as pastor for them by Pastor Goldammer. About the same time Pastor V. Schlottheim, formerly a Hermannsburg missionary in Grussia, appeared in Wisconsin with a recommendation from Pastor Harms. After he had lived with Pastor Kleinhans, who befriended him for several weeks and then with Pastor Sprengling he then took over the congregation in Sheboygan, vacated by Pastor Sprengling's departure, as substitute pastor where he has served up till now in that position.

Since it became more and more evident that the substitute pastor, William Schimpf, be ordained to do his pastoral work in the St. Paul's Congregation in Woodland, the required examinations were given him in September of last year and the successful result was his ordination by Pastor Koehler at my request.

On Christmas Eve two Hermannsburg candidates, Joh. Meyer and Wilh. Hagedorn, arrived here in order to serve in our synod. With a proper call Mr. Hagedorn became the

pastor of the congregation in Neenah, and Mr. Meyer pastor of our parish in Winchester. Since both had been ordained by the consistory in Hannover, Pastor Hagedorn was installed at my request by Pastor Haack on Sexagesima Sunday and Pastor Meyer by Pastor Spehr.

6) Position changes and installation

After Pastor Reichenberger, as already announced at last year's convention, received and accepted the call to the congregation in Platteville, he was installed at my request by Pastor Adelberg on the fourth Sunday after Trinity; eight days later on the fifth Sunday after Trinity likewise Pastor Ungrodt in Jefferson by Pastor Brockmann.

St. Matthew Congregation in Milwaukee, vacated by the departure of Pastor Ungrodt, received Prof. A. Hoenecke as preacher and minister. His festive installation by me took place on the seventh Sunday after Trinity.

In October the Lutheran congregation in Beaver Dam resolved to turn again to the Wisconsin Synod for services. They called with my permission Pastor Sprengling of Sheboygan. After he, with the approval of his congregation, accepted the position, he was installed at my request by Prof. Ernst on the Reformation festival.

The Ev. Lutheran St. Jacobi Congregation in Town Theresa, which after the departure of the pastor from the sister congregation in Town Lomira desired to have its own pastor for various reasons, called Pastor Conrad from Racine. Since his congregation permitted him to leave in peace, and Pastor Kilian gave his approval to leave the St. Jacobi Congregation, Pastor Conrad moved there. On December 14 Pastor Jaekel conducted the installation service.

The now vacant congregation in Racine sent a call to Pastor Waldt. He, after serious consultation with his congregation in Neenah, accepted the call. He was installed on the third Sunday in Advent by Pastor A. Hoenecke.

After waiting patiently for some time the Lutheran congregation in Town Hamburg, Vernon Co., Wis., received a pastor and minister in the person of Pastor Baarts. Pastor Hass at my request performed the installation on Easter Monday.

During the course of last winter I received a notice from the Lutheran congregation in Ridgeville that its Pastor L. Ebert would no longer remain the pastor of the congregation after Easter. Upon urgent request, to again have a pastor serve the congregation, I recommended to them to call Pastor Siegler. The recommendation was adopted in a regular congregational meeting: Pastor Siegler is elected. Since he, with agreement of his congregation, accepted the call, I requested Pastor Reim in La Crosse to do the installation on Pentecost Monday.

7) A joint resolution of several synods for a new church body

The Joint Synod of Ohio and other States in its convention in Dayton, Ohio last fall authorized the president of the synod, Prof. Loy, along with four other members of the synod to confer with other correctly believing synods of this country about the possibility of working jointly in supporting the necessary educational institutions and to conceive of a plan on the basis of the same if such a joint effort could take place. Soon thereafter an official letter came to me from Ohio, with the request that if there was an agreement with these expressed thoughts, immediately to appoint a committee for such a conference. The administrative board of our synod to which I gave this letter for action believed this request should not be ignored and named such a committee. After the Hon. Synod of Ohio sent similar letters to the Synods of Missouri and the Norwegian, etc. the

representatives of the various synods met on January eleven of this year in Chicago. The result of the three day discussion at this conference is in my hands and it will be presented to the synod for discussion at the assigned time.

8) Implementation of last year's resolutions

The committee assigned last year to investigate the Pastor Titze situation in Ahneepe sought to resolve the matter. An examination of the matter took place there and had the result that a reconciliation between the two parties in the controversy was effected, yet the committee has its doubts that any further spiritual work by the pastor would have any good results for the welfare and growth of the congregation as things now stand. How things have progressed since then, about that I have received no official information during the course of the year.

In the hymnal matter the revision committee appointed by the synod has been working with the rejection [of certain hymns] and resolutions by the last year's convention, and the objectionable hymns have been replaced. The hymnal has been printed with these corrections for several months and is now on the market.

The pastoral widow's support fund has been disbursed as ordered by the synod. Mrs. Braun has received her promised two hundred dollars and feels greatly indebted with thanks to the synod for this help.

For Mrs. Muehlhaeuser I, as in the previous year, have paid from the widow's fund \$45.00 for the necessary upkeep of her son who is living in our institution.

Mrs. Bartelt has received \$50.00 and for Mrs. Wiese, who was receiving free housing and pastoral funds from the parish until the vacancy was filled with the arrival of Pastor Meyer, I allowed the sum of \$30.00 to be given. Since it turned out that the last two mentioned widows would need regular support, I would like to ask the synod not to let the amount up to the president as was the case up till now, but at this year's convention to determine the limit of the annual amount to be given.

9) In conclusion

I now would like to ask the synod

1) to give the proposed matter of forming an Evangelical Lutheran Synodical Conference full consideration and attention. As a result of this organization, it would be seen to the outside as a larger union of various synods, after they would have by God's grace entered a close inner relationship in spirit, beliefs and confessions. We know full well that the existence of the church of God on earth does not depend on this kind of synodical union; the church of our Lord will exist alone through God's word because of him who founded it, as Dr. Luther so eloquently said: "It is not us who can continue the existence of the church, it is not also our forebearers, neither will it be our offspring, but it was only he, it still is he, and it will be he who says: I will be with you until the end of the world," but unity offers strength inside in faith and outside in battle, and it makes it easier to carry out the expansion and the purposes of God's kingdom and to be able to work with strength in times of need and adversity.

2) I take the liberty to ask the Hon. synod if steps ought not to be taken to restore the earlier but then neglected institute of the *Reisepredigt* (traveling preacher). Hundreds of children of our church in the northwestern part of this state are scattered and lack the church's nourishment and offering of God's word and sacrament. If we do not serve them in their isolation then spiritual men will come and build altars among them about which their fathers knew nothing and our church will lose in groups what they in

the strange parts of the world seek arduously to attain.

And now, dear brothers and friends, let us move on in the name of our Lord to this year's work. His grace during the past year did not leave itself unnoticed; we must have the confidence and hope that it will remain with us also in the future. To him therefore by glory, honor, praise and adoration from now on into eternity, Amen.

Johannes Bading, president

After the presentation of the above report the Hon. president appointed the following committees:

1. To report on the president's report: Pastors Goldammer, Adelberg, Prof. Meumann; Delegates Mielke, Schmidt.
2. To report on the acceptance of new pastors: Pastors Streissguth, Hoenecke, Prof. Ernst; Delegates Theilig, Leistikow.
3. To audit the books of the various treasurers: Pastors Dammann, Mayerhoff, Brenner; Delegate Wahl.
4. To report on the excuses of absent pastors: Pastors Reim, Waldt, Hoffmann; Delegates Maerz, Hunsiker.
5. To report on the departure of Pastors Huber and Stark: Pastors Gausewitz, Schug, Reichenbecher; Delegates Tank, Buck.
6. To report on the proposed formation of a synodical conference: Pastors Jaekel, Koehler, Ungrodt; Delegates Reinemann, Voss.
7. To report on the annual report of the Board of Control: Pastors Brockmann, Spehr, Oppen; Delegates Habermann, Horwinski.
8. To report on the care of pastoral widows: Pastors Kluge, Gensike, Lukas; Delegates Zirbel, Ebernau.
9. To report on the acceptance of new congregations: Pastors Denninger Sr., Siegler, Dowidat; Delegates Brietz, Nagel.
10. To report on the possible reinstatement of the *Reisepredigt*: Pastors Strube, Wagner, Kilian; Delegate Thiese.
11. To report on the visitation matter: Prof. Ernst, Pastors Hoenecke, Jaekel; Delegate Woelz.

To the above reporting committees were still added the following matters on the daily schedule:

12. The right of vote by pastors who do not serve a synodical congregation.
 13. Continuation of the discussion of the synodical constitution.
 14. *Gemeindeblatt*.
 15. Acquiring confessionally loyal, capable parochial schoolteachers.
 16. Continuation of the discussion begun at last year's synodical convention concerning the transfer of membership of congregational members to other congregations.
- At the request of the secretary for an assistant, Pastor Mayerhoff was named assistant secretary.

(Continuation of these minutes will take place in the April 2006 edition of the *JOURNAL*.)

“If You Cannot Speak Like Angels ...”
A history of mission work done among the Cora Indians
by St. John Lutheran Church
of Montrose, Colorado.

by Stephen T. Mueller

It is Holy Week in Mesa del Nayar, a small village hidden in the Sierra Madre Occidental mountain range in the state of Nayarit, Mexico. This village is the ritual center for the Cora Indian tribe, numbering approximately eight thousand five hundred members who live scattered over an eighteen hundred square mile area.¹ As you approach, you see about twenty-five stone and adobe huts with thatch or clay tile roofs. Striking in its size stands a whitewashed church, which seems to be a center of activity. This village, which normally only two hundred people call home, is filled to capacity with about thirteen hundred visitors. They are pilgrims who come from remote areas, especially from the area around the city of Jesús Maria, once a year during Holy Week for ceremonies that have immense religious and social significance for the Cora tribe. The Coras are one of Mexico's most isolated and primitive indigenous tribes, and maintain their own distinct culture and religious system. After initial exposure to Christianity from the Jesuits between the fifteenth and eighteenth centuries, they were isolated from the outside world and from organized Christianity beginning in 1767, when the Jesuits were expelled, until 1969, when a Roman Catholic priest arrived. During those two hundred years of isolation they combined elements of their ancient tribal religion with those of Christianity. The village Catholic priest, Father Pascual, tells you that when he came, he found some Coras who could still recite the Latin mass!—certainly a graphic demonstration of the effect that Christianity has had on this tribe. However, although the form may be similar, the essence has been changed. He tells you that they have “come to identify our Lord Jesus Christ with their ancient deity, Tayau, the sun god. In their minds the two became interchangeable.”²

This week they celebrate the crucifixion and resurrection of Christ in a most unusual way. They have taken elements from Christ's Passion, death, and Resurrection and molded them into a ceremony that seems designed to ensure the renewal and continuity of their community life.³ “The arrest, persecution and Crucifixion of Christ came to represent the triumph of the powers of death and darkness; the Resurrection became the renewal of life and the victory of good over evil.” They are very secretive about their ceremonies and rarely let outsiders experience them or even inquire about them. In fact, for two years after he arrived, the Coras didn't even let Father Pascual out of his house during Holy Week, and even now they only permit him to participate in a few of the ceremonies!⁴

Suddenly you are startled by a large group of young men running wildly around the village wielding large bamboo spears and wooden sabers. Having removed their clothes, each is dressed only in a white loincloth, and they have darkened their bodies by smearing them with soot and mud from head to toe. They are *borrados*, or “the erased ones,” having “erased” their own personalities, and along with it, personal responsibility for their actions. In this passion play, they represent the Judeans, whom the Jesuit missionaries condemned as those responsible for Christ's death. The Coras identify the Judeans with the forces of evil in the world. For three days they run around the town day and

night, drunk on a mixture of Atolé and Peyote (a hallucinogenic cactus), proving their endurance and strength. Led by the “Captain of the Judeans” (to whom has passed all religious and civil authority in the village), they are in search of “Jesus.” You see them chase a little boy across the city square, knock him to the ground and tie his hands. Three times this boy, who represents Jesus, had fought them off with a wooden cross, and each time they fell to the ground, pretending to writhe in pain. But finally they have captured and “arrested” him. The *borrados* and a procession of pilgrims then parade “Jesus” around the village, making sure to pause at each of the stations of the cross. Now they will symbolically crucify him in the village church. Tomorrow—Holy Saturday—“Jesus” will defeat the *borrados* and rise from the dead, thus assuring the renewal of Cora tribal life.⁵

In Revelation 7:9-10, John wrote, “*After this I looked and there before me was a great multitude that no one could count, from every nation, tribe, people and language, standing before the throne and in front of the Lamb. They were wearing white robes and were holding palm branches in their hands. And they cried out in a loud voice. ‘Salvation belongs to our God, who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb’*” (NIV). This is the Church, the Communion of Saints, which will inherit the glories of everlasting life on the Last Great Day. How will they be able to stand before the Lamb's throne on that day? How will they avoid being the recipients of the horrifying decree, “*Depart from me, you who are cursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels*” (Matthew 25:41b NIV)? Only by faith in the Son of God, who gave his life for them; only by the righteousness that comes through faith in him. The Cora Indians are a tribe that have a Christian church in their main village. They celebrate many Christian church festivals, use many Christian symbols and rites, and call themselves Christians—but are really not. Just as most of the Israelites of the divided kingdom, they are pagans; they are idolaters who worship the sun, while giving lip service to the True God. How will they hear the true good news? Most Christians might, after reading the above description of the Cora Holy Week festivities (which still take place today), conclude that bringing the gospel to these people would be not impossible, but difficult. It would certainly be the work of experts—trained missionaries who have dealt with paganism before. What if your congregation were faced with this very task—bringing the water of life to a pagan tribe of Indians? What if your congregation didn't even have a full time pastor, let alone a trained missionary? This is the story of one such congregation and the lay people who have played a crucial role in its mission to the Cora Indians. They show by their faith and dedication that one does not have to be a veteran missionary to tell of the love of Jesus.

An Unexpected Opportunity

It was kindergarten orientation day in September of 1987 in Montrose, Colorado. Gary and Nicki Parsons had come to enroll their second son, Mark, in kindergarten—certainly an important and exciting day for both parents and children. Among the many parents and children who were there, one family in particular stood out. It was a family of four, obviously fresh from Mexico that had come to enroll their son. None of them spoke English, and Nicki noticed that the wife seemed to shuffle along behind her husband, all the time looking at the ground. One can just imagine how anxious and apprehensive they must have felt, being in a new country. Little did she know that through this ragged looking family, many people would hear the gospel. Orientation seemed to be going along smoothly, when suddenly it hit a snag—the kindergarten teacher did not

speak Spanish. Then the inevitable happened: the teacher requested help in testing the little Mexican boy. Nicki had some interest in Spanish things and even spoke some Spanish, but something kept her from raising her hand and volunteering.

That interest in Spanish things began when her parents gave her a Spanish name—Anita, thinking that she would be dark-skinned like her sister (which she is not). Through many experiences in her life, her interest in Hispanic culture grew. She wonders now if these were casual experiences or the Holy Spirit preparing her for the work she would eventually be called to do at St. John. She says, “Even as a teenager I ignored my mother’s advice to take French because it was obvious to me that Spanish was a more practical language in California where we lived at the time.”⁶ Although born in Provo, Utah, she and her family eventually lived in Hispanic areas of Colorado and California because her father, a Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod pastor, served congregations in these areas. It was during that time in California that she came in contact with some excellent high school instructors of Spanish and Hispanic culture, who encouraged her to take four years of Spanish instead of the customary two. She was also fortunate enough to have three friends—two from Mexico and one exchange student from Argentina—who helped her polish her conversational Spanish. That interest in foreign culture and language may also have been a product of the stories her father told her of the twenty-one years he spent in China as a missionary. However, they also began in her a desire to do mission work herself.⁷

When she graduated from the Lutheran School of Nursing in St. Louis, she wanted to do some type of mission work or work with children with psychiatric or behavioral problems.⁸ Deciding to work in the psychiatric field, she moved to Denver, where she became a psychiatric nurse, a job that lasted almost ten years. It was during that time that she joined a Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod congregation. One of her first pastors at St. John, Harold Hagedorn, influenced her and motivated her to work in the church more than she had in the past (she had taught Sunday School). He asked her to work with a thirteen year old severely mentally retarded boy in the congregation who had the mental capacity of a two or three-year-old. Later on, Nicki decided that nursing was not taking her where she wanted to go—childhood education.

For a time, she worked for some pre-schools in order to see if she really wanted to be a teacher. Eventually she moved to Fort Collins, Colorado to attend the University of Northern Colorado, where she received a bachelor’s degree in educably mentally retarded education and a master’s degree in learning disabilities. It was also while attending UNC that she met her husband to be—Gary Parsons.⁹ Upon graduation, she chose to accept her first job offer, which was in Montrose, Colorado, because it was a good position, because the name of the city sounded Spanish (which it isn’t), and because of the presence of Hispanic and Indian peoples. Soon after accepting the job, she and Gary were married at St. John Lutheran Church, where Gary was baptized and confirmed as an adult. She recalls that her experience working as a medical and psychiatric nurse and a special education teacher prepared her for the future. Through these experiences, she saw people at the highest and lowest points of their lives, and learned that people are more similar than dissimilar. She liked people and liked to help them even when they were in deep trouble. She even had opportunities to use her “fast deteriorating Spanish” by translating for doctors, patients, parents and pre-school students, and by being an assistant teacher under a young Hispanic teacher, with whom she became good friends. As a special education teacher in Montrose, half of her students were Hispanic, whose parents spoke a hard-to-understand local dialect. However, this didn’t stop her from

visiting the homes of those students and getting to know them and their parents and trying to understand their culture.¹⁰

Then why was she so reluctant to raise her hand and volunteer to translate for the helpless teacher that day? For a while, she thought she was “off the hook,” because the Mexican man’s boss was there. “Surely he could translate for the teacher” she reasoned. However, her husband Gary kept jabbing her in the ribs, whispering to her, “This is the chance you’ve been waiting for. Tell her you’ll help.”¹¹ Ever since the summer of 1986, Nicki had been looking for a way to use the “friendship evangelism” that she had learned about in Bible class. That summer, Pastor Thomas Spiegelberg, who served a dual parish in Grand Junction and Montrose Colorado, encouraged the ladies in Bible class to use the “friendship evangelism” information they had learned during their Bible study.¹² At the end of the class he asked who in the community was not being served with the gospel. By then, Nicki had taught for two years in the public school system and most of her students were Hispanic children. She remarks that some of them seemed depressed. Upon asking them why, they said that they had tried going to several churches, but that the churches had rejected them. These families seemed to be drifting from church to church, so she suggested that the Hispanics might not be receiving spiritual care, although she did not know of the presence of the Coras at that time. She remarks, “Pastor Spiegelberg really picked up on that, and said, ‘Yeah, let’s do that.’”¹³ He promised to take a conversational Spanish course, and told her to look among some of her former students for prospects. “He bugged us,” Nicki remembers. He lived in Grand Junction (sixty-five miles away), but called regularly, “bugging” her by asking if they had found anyone yet. Nicki prayed about it, and the ladies in the Bible class did too. The seed was planted, but there were concerns about the expertise and talents needed to reach out to these people. Nicki had limited contact with the culture, and yet a certain leaning toward it. “Our original idea was to reach out to Americans of Hispanic background [who spoke mostly English]. None of us had ever heard of the Cora Indians.”¹⁴ She began to see that if a Hispanic outreach was to begin, she would probably have to begin it, since she was the only person in the congregation that spoke some Spanish, but feelings of inadequacy and doubt about the congregation’s readiness to undertake a mission caused her to have misgivings about the whole idea. Pastor Spiegelberg pricked her conscience by actually taking that course in conversational Spanish himself, yet she still “dragged her feet.” She prayed that if God wanted the church to start a Hispanic outreach, he would show them how, but deep inside, she wished he would give the responsibility to someone else. After all, she had many responsibilities already, with four young sons and other church work—but the Lord of the Church had different plans. “Watch out for what you pray,” Nicki says, “As a five-year-old I had prayed with child-like faith that I would someday be a missionary like my own parents who had filled me since infancy with stories of God’s word spreading in China ... God had not forgotten my childhood prayers or my prayers for the beginning of a Spanish mission.”¹⁵ The opportunity had finally arrived.

A Significant Decision

The entire time she had been sitting there in the school, not raising her hand, she was thinking about how much time this work would take. She thought “this is not something I really want to do. Maybe some other nice Hispanic family that already speaks English.” She remembers that the Mexican family came across to her as “extremely needy, not just spiritually, but in every way.” In her mind she thought, “Don’t look so poor... don’t look so needy!”¹⁶ It was clear right away that one plea of “won’t you

please come to church" wouldn't work. They were poor, and the United States was overwhelming to them, not knowing how they were going to function here. They would need continual help, which would mean, "work, time, energy, and sleepless nights," but by the grace of God Nicki gave in. She recalls, "I probably gave him (Gary) dirty looks at the time but afterward, to prevent damaged ribs I did go up and offer to help find someone who could help to test Jonas."¹⁷ Reflecting on this pivotal decision, Nicki says she believes that no one who gets involved in mission work is different than anyone else. They "have the same misgivings, the same doubts, the same sinfulness ... we're just the same ... the Holy Spirit takes us and batters us until we work."¹⁸ And work she did!

Indians!

After finding a friend to help her test the boy, whose name was Jonas, they soon realized that he spoke "a very strange Spanish dialect which appeared to be some kind of Indian dialect."¹⁹ It was only gradually that they began to realize that there was an ethnic group living in Montrose that was not Mexican, but Mexican Indian, and this boy was a part of that group. "Already the miracle was beginning," Nicki marvels. "Their son Jonas, who was being enrolled in kindergarten with our son Mark, should not have been there. He was barely four years old, and not the required five. Someone had misread his birth certificate." However, "when the school found out months later, it allowed Jonas to 'audit' kindergarten."²⁰ If Jonas hadn't come to school on the same day as Mark Parsons, the gospel may not have reached them until much later or maybe never! "*La edad equivocada ha sido solamente uno de los pequeños milagros que han dado a St. John la oportunidad para trabajar con los cora y otros hispanos en el área de Montrose.*" ("*This mistake was only one of the small miracles that have given St. John the opportunity to work with the Coras and other Hispanics in the Montrose area*").²¹ Looking back on her initial misgivings, Nicki believes that God gave the Coras to St. John. She says, "I do believe that when you pray for something, and then suddenly these people are in front of you ... if that's not an answer to prayer, what is? You can't say, That's not the family. I'm supposed to wait [for someone else]!"²² How did these people from a primitive tribe in Mexico come to, of all places, Montrose, Colorado? Much of it has to do with the economic hardships they faced in their homeland, and the new economic opportunities available in the United States.

A Better Life

During a 1993 diagnostic study of their congregation, St. John interviewed several Coras and found at least one single man who had lived in the Montrose area since 1980, but not continuously.²³ In the 1950s, Coras began immigrating to the Montrose and Delta areas, and by the 1970s, large numbers of them had begun to arrive.²⁴ Yet whole families did not begin to settle in the Montrose area until 1987 or 1988, says Moses Martinez, House Service Coordinator of Colorado Migrant Health in Delta, Colorado in a 1993 interview. As of 1993, the number of "intact families" in the Montrose area numbered sixteen. "Eight of these families have had regular recent Bible study contact with the church over the 1993 summer. All but one of the other families has had some contact with St. John."²⁵ Estimates put the number of Coras in the Montrose area at two thousand, and eight hundred in the nearby Olathe area.²⁶ Martinez adds that "The Cora are a mountain people," and Montrose is in a mountainous area that reminds them of

their homeland of Nayarit, Mexico.²⁷ Their tribal orientation may also explain why so many Coras have settled in Colorado: Cora Indians are very tribal. "If one family moves somewhere, they want to be surrounded by others in their tribe. In fact we have found there are only two places in the United States where Coras have settled. Here and in Idaho."²⁸ Many Coras come to Colorado to find work, because they can make much more money working here than is possible in Mexico, where the economy is poor.²⁹ Many of them "often travel back and forth between their new Montrose area homes and Nayarit, bringing needed cash home to their relatives in Mexico."³⁰ Tim Poetter, pastor of St. John Lutheran Church in Montrose, says that it is difficult for Cora Indians to obtain a green card when they arrive in the United States.³¹ However that doesn't stop them from finding jobs in and around Montrose.

The Montrose economy is quite diversified, providing jobs in the following fields: construction, manufacturing, agriculture, public administration, services, finance, retail trade, wholesale trade, mining and transportation/utilities. Most of the Coras seek jobs in the agricultural sector, especially in seasonal migrant farm work but some also in construction and manufacturing.³² Pastor Poetter says that sometimes men, especially single men, are hired as shepherds who work in the mountains, and are not seen for several months, making it difficult for the church to maintain contact with them. He also added that in general, the community has accepted the arrival of these immigrants, saying that some people are glad that there are hard workers like the Coras to work in agriculture, because many Anglos are unwilling to put in time at such back-breaking labor. They are reliable, hard workers, according to Pastor Poetter and many area employers.³³ "Employers like most of them and often go out of their way to keep these men working. For instance, one patron has allowed a family to live in housing he provides even during the off onion [picking] season."³⁴ Although the Coras seem to be generally hard-working by nature, they must work even harder in this area of Colorado, as is demonstrated by the policy of the Montrose Chamber of Commerce: "A Montrose Chamber of Commerce representative says that they send out lots of relocation packets especially to interested people from California but warn them that housing is almost impossible to obtain and that there are very few career employment opportunities which would support a family in our area."³⁵ This fact, combined with the Coras' general lack of career skills, makes their lives in this country difficult, but yet much better than the lives that they had in Mexico. All but one of the Cora Indians interviewed by St. John for their diagnostic study in 1993 said that they would not want to go back to Mexico, because it is so much better in the United States.³⁶ Nicki was about to find out just what kind of life the Coras had led in Mexico and were leading at that time in Colorado.

In her dealings with Jonas, Nicki found him to be an "endearing young boy" and a quick learner. Her son Mark became friends with his kindergarten classmate and began to help him with his school work. Nicki soon became a liaison between the kindergarten teacher and Jonas' father, Guadalupe Molina, who brought him to school every day, speaking with him almost on a daily basis for several months. She remembers that they "hit it off" quite well and would "chit-chat" often, but it became more than that. In all this, Nicki gives credit to God for putting this opportunity for outreach in front of her, being confident that it was God's plan that she meet Guadalupe first and get to know him. She feels this way because over the years she has found that if she was able to make friends with the father of a family, the children would most likely be allowed to come to Sunday school and church.³⁷ This would be true in almost any culture, but especially in a male-dominated society like that of the Coras. Yet at this point she had not

met Jonas' mother. However, by using some Spanish and body language to communicate, Nicki found out that she had recently had surgery. For a time, whenever she talked to Guadalupe, she continued to inquire about the mother. Finally Jonas was able to come over to the Parsons' house to play. When Nicki took him home, she met his mother, Eudolia for the first time. Nicki recalls that she seemed shy "from a distance," but invited Nicki into her home. She describes it this way:

The home was furnished with two mattresses in the living room put up on cinder blocks with several sleeping bags for covers. There was a table with turned over five-gallon buckets for chairs, a table with a new looking small television, a stove where only the range part worked, a chilly back porch for the only refrigeration, and a bathtub full of laundry.³⁸

This level of housing seems to be quite normal for Cora families that have just moved to the United States. They usually live in the lowest income housing that is available when they first arrive either in mobile trailers or apartments. The best apartment complex is seven to eight miles out of town, which makes it difficult for the women who are home alone to shop or do laundry, since very few can drive. Some live on the ranches where they are sheep herders and hired hands. It is not unusual for several families to live together, along with as many as four or five single men who have wives or girlfriends back in Mexico. In fact, one family had twenty one people living in a three bedroom trailer! Nicki says, "They are needy people and their first line of defense is each other. They don't come to the church first. Instead, they borrow from each other; they help each other and sometimes move in with each other. They are very sharing—more than most Americans."³⁹ Sometimes, those who do the best are able to buy their own trailer.

As frugal as this life looked, it was an improvement over the life in the Mexican village of Jesús Maria in the state of Nayarit, Mexico where they had lived. There they had hauled water from a river about six miles round trip, and had no electricity. In pictures Eudolia would show me of her family later, it appeared that clothing was also scarce. Children under about age ten were wearing nothing at all.⁴⁰ "To reach the nearest phone in Tepic takes several days by horse, and, in their own areas some walked barefoot for as much as four hours to reach work."⁴¹

The Cora tribe was among the "last indigenous peoples of Mexico to be conquered by the Spanish, in 1737. In the 1870s, a revolt against the Mexican government took place in Nayarit by people wanting to re-establish the Aztec empire. The Mexican government cracked down in force and has held a strong presence in the Cora homeland ever since They still remember in the 1870s when the government became a dominant presence."⁴² Coras don't call themselves "Mexicans" and don't seem to have much of an understanding of citizenship. Perhaps this is because of the status they are accorded in Mexico, where they are at the bottom of the social ladder—second class citizens. When asked, they say that they feel they were treated differently by Mexicans in Mexico, and that Mexican immigrants in America have treated them the same way. However, those Mexicans who have lived in the United States for several generations seem to treat them as equals. In Mexico, many Coras still live in caves and primitive huts. "Many of our parents and grandparents still live in caves," says Ricardo, a sheep

herder. "They don't have an economic way of making money. They have only maybe a dog and a chicken. Other Coras who are still in the mountains live in grass and mud huts—and they like it that way."⁴³ Although jobs tend to be scarce and temporary in Nayarit, and many Coras work in other parts of Mexico, most of them engage in subsistence farming of beans and corn. Some raise cattle, pigs and goats.⁴⁴ "The economy of the area is based on barter. Rarely do the people have enough extra from their crops to sell at the market in Tepic [the nearest large city]. One of the main reasons these people left Mexico was to come where money is paid for work, and they have come to Colorado."⁴⁵ Eudolia had never attended school, which is normal for Cora women, but was skilled in backstrap weaving (a common craft among Cora women), weaving purses with intricate designs. Eudolia told Nicki that she had not known Spanish, but only the Cora language before coming to the United States. In fact, she and her husband did not even speak exactly the same dialect of Cora!

The Cora language is the primary language of the Cora tribe, Spanish being the secondary. It belongs to the "Uto-Aztec linguistic family which also includes Ute, Hopi and Shoshone."⁴⁶ It is a beautiful language that borrows many Spanish words, especially pronouns, interrogative words and basic words like "table." Until very recently, Cora was not a written language, and therefore very few can read it. Those who didn't go to school don't know much Spanish either. In fact, most, if they know any Spanish, read at about a third grade level. The reality is that most Cora adults will never learn English, but their children quickly become trilingual.⁴⁷ The fact that few Coras speak Spanish and even fewer speak English, helps make them reclusive and almost invisible to many residents.⁴⁸

As Nicki was leaving after that first visit, Eudolia told her to wait, and returned soon with a bag full of apples, insisting that Nicki take them. "I was touched to tears by her generous gesture. That was the beginning of our friendship and the amazing missionary zeal of this warm, kind, fun woman."⁴⁹ Yet it would be another six months until the Molinas finally stepped into St. John Lutheran Church.⁵⁰

Six Long Months

During those six months, however, seeds were planted by Nicki and her little son, Mark. Mark spent a lot of time with Jonas, who was over at the Parsons' house constantly. Even today Guadalupe Molina reminds them how well the kids got along, even though they didn't speak each other's language. Nicki also is amazed at how Mark and Jonas were able to play together—with Mark speaking English and Jonas speaking Cora! Somehow they communicated, and within six months, Jonas had learned English.⁵¹ During those six months, it seemed that from a human standpoint, nothing was really happening, although Nicki was meeting the family and some of their relatives and learning to appreciate the Coras as people. "These are kind of neat people," she observes. She was getting to know a little bit about Cora culture—which is largely a typical Hispanic culture. More importantly, her love for Jesus motivated her to get to know them as friends, which is the basis of the "friendship evangelism" that she had learned about in Pastor Spiegelberg's Bible class. Yet Nicki admits that at first it was Eudolia who pursued the friendship while Nicki dragged her feet. Then an opportunity came for furthering her relationship with Eudolia.

One day after Christmas that year, Eudolia invited herself to the Parsons' home for the first time. Nicki remembers that "Eudolia's eyes were wide with child-like wonder as she saw our small Christmas tree. She had never had one and seemed to know little

about Christmas.”⁵² After a long conversation, Nicki got the courage to ask Eudolia if she would like help in learning English, to which she agreed. She helped both Eudolia and her husband, Guadalupe, get started in English by helping them enroll in a free community English class, and would later study with Eudolia privately. However only Guadalupe continued in the community class, she adds, perhaps because “many of the Cora and other Hispanic men seem reluctant for their women to learn English, although some have been very supportive.”⁵³ This is an indication of the type of family structure that exists in most Cora households.

Cora Family Life

The Cora family, which may be quite extended, is generally dominated by the father.⁵⁴ Nicki has been frustrated at times by the domineering nature of some Cora husbands. For example, if the husband wants his tortillas served at 7:00 P.M., the wife will not be able to go to Bible class under any circumstances, although thankfully there are exceptions.⁵⁵ Cora boys are sometimes treated with great leniency by their fathers, while the girls are protected.⁵⁶ Unfortunately, women do not often receive such protection, and spousal abuse is commonplace and accepted. Alcohol abuse is also socially and culturally accepted in Mexico, and can also be a problem once the Coras arrive in the United States. The breakdown of their traditional culture because of separation from Mexico has caused problems and turned “normally diligent and hard-working people to alcohol or drugs.” The Coras’ lightly organized culture and value structure appears to be suffering. New technology and ideas, as well as the separation from their homes in Mexico, create difficult problems. It seems the longer these groups acculturate (or adapt to new social norms), the more stress comes upon these families such as substance abuse and drinking.⁵⁷ However, Nicki has found that some men give it up when they come here. “They will binge once in a while, and not drink every day,” but probably more for pragmatic reasons than any other: if you’re drunk, you can’t work. Also, if you drink and then drive a car and are pulled over by a state trooper, you could find yourself in jail and out of work.⁵⁸ Not being able to work would be a terrible burden on any Cora family. They don’t earn much to begin with and want the best for their children, so they work hard for their families. This work ethic and the importance of work is often impressed upon the children to the point that education is given little importance. Nicki says that the adults have the children work with them in the fields and consider that more important than school. For example, Jonas said his father was encouraging him to go to college, but then his mother, who objected, said to Nicki, “He’s Mexican. He needs to work.” However Eudolia has never been to school, and doesn’t understand the importance, while the father understands better.⁵⁹ One man said in an ethnographic interview that his father had told him not to go to school but to learn to use a machete well! “His father was afraid education would make him not want to work.”⁶⁰

Pastor Poetter remarks that they have often found out unintentionally about unscriptural Cora social customs like fornication, drinking and domestic abuse, and have tried to create Bible classes that are applicable to the problem. Since the church now knows what it is up against, it offers classes on marriage and other topics every year, so that the Coras have the opportunity to hear the truth from God’s Word.⁶¹ They have heard that Cora men practice polygamy in Nayarit, but the pastor says that it does not seem to happen in the United States, unless they are hiding it well. He has never found out even accidentally that a Cora man had more than one wife in the United States.⁶² There have been some divorces among the Coras, but most of the Cora couples with

which St. John has come into contact are not legally married. Pastor Poetter humorously remarks that the typical Cora “marriage” seems to consist of “running off with someone and coming back with a baby.”⁶³ Nevertheless, more of them are getting legally married here because they realize the legal benefits in regard to immigration—it gives them advantages.⁶⁴ The church is struggling with this issue currently, and some families have asked about having a ceremony in the church, but none have followed through. To date, no Cora couples have been married at St. John. They have even considered having a “marriage day,” where all the couples would be married simultaneously, but this has not materialized either.⁶⁵ Nicki emphasizes that Cora parents are just like Anglo parents in that they worry about their teenage daughters getting pregnant and marrying at too young an age. Often they, like Anglo parents, are at a loss as to what course of action they should take when something like this happens, and often speak to someone from the church about it.⁶⁶ Overall the Coras seem to be very adaptable people (perhaps by necessity), coping well with modern life and unfamiliar things like appliances, disposable diapers, and using government agencies like Social Services and Migrant Health.⁶⁷ They also seem willing to change their social practices somewhat in order to conform to American social norms—for example in the area of marriage. However, there have been problems.

Cultural Clashes

Unfortunately, at least at the beginning, many Coras do not know the laws of the State of Colorado.⁶⁸ When a Cora is arrested, it is often for something that either he did not know was a crime, or was not a crime in Mexico. Some examples are: driving without insurance or a license, and carrying concealed weapons, like knives. Pastor Poetter says that when they are arrested for such a crime, they usually don’t get violent. They don’t want trouble, and once they experience it, they usually don’t repeat the offense. They are willing to be corrected and pay the sentence because of their desire to settle here, and they don’t want that put in jeopardy.⁶⁹ However, sometimes a catch-22 results. They may have enough money to get a cheap car, but not enough to buy insurance at first. Also, they cannot get a license if they are illegal, but they need to drive to work, so they have a problem—go to work and possibly get arrested for driving without insurance, or stay home and starve and have to return to Mexico. In fact, much of the legal trouble that Coras get into is over cars: insurance, speeding and drunken driving.⁷⁰ Another legal problem which Coras face—which can force them to return to Mexico—is immigration law.

Although most of the Coras who have settled in Colorado have green cards, which allow them to live and work in the United States, sometimes the church finds out—usually by accident that someone is an illegal alien. The pastor and lay workers are not “detectives” who go about trying to catch illegals. However, if they find out that someone is in Colorado illegally, they are honest and tell them that it is best for them and their family that they get a green card. While the Coras know that crossing the border without a green card is illegal, they are in great need of a steady job in order to support their families.⁷¹ However, they need spiritual support even more. Even if a Cora is an illegal alien he or she still needs to hear the gospel, and this fact impels St. John to proclaim that message to all Coras whom they meet.

In the winter of 1988 Nicki began to do occasional paperwork translating for the Molina family while they learned English better. This would later become a regular part of her mission work with the Coras. She kept inviting the Molinas to church, but they

would always have an excuse when she arrived to pick them up—frustration! The early work among the Coras was limited to inviting them to English worship and to participate in church activities conducted in English because there was no Spanish worship or activities.⁷² Meanwhile, Guadalupe Molina had returned to Mexico to visit relatives and bring them much needed clothes that St. John had collected for them, and Nicki offered to drive Jonas to school while Guadalupe was away. Unknowingly, this gesture of kindness resulted in an encounter that would allow Nicki to speak with Eudolia about spiritual things.

Emergency!

One day in February she arrived to find that the Molinas' baby girl Juanita had overdosed on aspirin and had been rushed—near death—to the hospital by Guadalupe's boss. Although Nicki had spoken of "religious things" with Eudolia before, and had invited the family to church, they had never come. Since she was not sure if Juanita had been baptized, having been born in the United States (all the adults had been baptized by a priest in Mexico), she asked Eudolia about this. After struggling to find the right Spanish word, Eudolia understood and expressed her desire that Juanita be baptized, so Nicki called Pastor Spiegelberg to do an emergency baptism. At that time he was probably relying on only a six-week course in conversational Spanish,⁷³ but after contacting a pastor in California for information about conducting a baptism in Spanish, he performed the baptism and little Juanita was made a child of the true God. Although Juanita had taken much more than the lethal dose of aspirin, by God's grace she recovered. The very next Sunday, Eudolia, Jonas and Juanita came to church with the Parsons family, although Guadalupe was not with them because he was still in Mexico. Eudolia and the children kept coming regularly even after Guadalupe returned from Mexico, which may have required a certain amount of courage because of the woman's place in Cora society.

As was previously mentioned, males dominate Cora society, and Nicki describes the "typical" Cora woman as "browbeaten," with no power in the family. Actually the opposite is true—in regard to the children. As is typical in Mexican culture as well, the wife exerts tremendous influence over the husband in matters pertaining to the children. She recalls that in one family several years ago, when the father wanted to take the son back to Mexico to visit, the mother, who looked outwardly browbeaten and powerless, refused to allow the boy to go, since he was illegal, and the father wouldn't have been able to get him back into the United States. Eudolia did the same thing once, insisting that Jonas go to church rather than go fishing with his father on Sunday morning. She says that overall, the women have been fairly supportive of getting their kids to church⁷⁴ and admires them for their ability to overcome adversity. For these uneducated women, even shopping can be a troubling experience. However, Nicki has gone shopping with some of them and is amazed at how they have adapted. They can't count, but they will rarely put more groceries in their cart than they have money for, and often the register total is almost exact—usually within a dollar of their limit. She does not understand how they know, but they do! Even the storekeepers remark that they rarely go over their limit.⁷⁵ However, it has been more difficult for Cora adults, especially men, to adapt to the United States, in the area of religion.

When Guadalupe Molina—who considers himself a Catholic—returned from Mexico, he found out that his daughter had been baptized by an American Lutheran pastor! He expressed his concern that the baptism was invalid and would have to be "redone" in

Mexico some day.⁷⁶ This is an example of the tendency of the Coras to hold on to their religious beliefs to a great extent even in America.⁷⁷ The type of religion that the Coras practice has been termed "Christo-paganism" by Dr. Eugene Nida. He writes that "Christo-paganism [consists in] neither pure animism (or "primitivism") nor classic Roman Catholic beliefs and practices. Rather, there are subtle combinations of beliefs, often viewed by outsiders merely as a series of incredible superstitions containing self-evident contradictions." However, the beliefs of individual tribes may differ.⁷⁸ He cites three different levels of religious syncretism, of which the so-called "middle level" seems to characterize the Cora religion. He describes the "middle level" as a two-headed system: "The person looks to the God of heaven, the priest, and the Church, and is quite a good Roman Catholic. He also looks to *Dios Mundo* "the god of the World" (owner of the mountains, valleys, rivers, and springs), the sorcerer, and the *ermita*, or "local shrine".⁷⁹ This two-headed system exists because of the Spanish conquest, which was religious as well as territorial. Unfortunately, their method of conversion was very often physical force, which produced converts in name only. Nida cites a Roman Catholic taxi driver in Mexico City, who summed up the results of this religious "conquest" by saying, "What the [Roman Catholic] Church did was to break the ugly stone images and give us pretty wooden ones," referring to the images of the saints that came to be identified with the peoples' pre-Columbian idols.⁸⁰ The result is that most Coras are baptized Catholic and believe themselves to be Catholic, but worship the same idols their ancestors worshiped under the guise of Christianity. These tendencies are echoed in their religious beliefs, many of which remain secret.

The Cora Religion

Jonas once told Nicki that according to his grandmother, the Coras believe that human beings were created from sticks. They believe that God came down from heaven and gave the Spanish-speaking people of Mexico the Bible but gave the Coras a feather. Nicki does not know the significance of the feather, but the Coras may consider it an honor to have received it and not the Bible, or they may consider it an insult. Because of this legend they have developed the belief that the Bible is not important for them, since it was not given to them. This obviously makes it difficult to convince them that God's Word is important for all! Since their religion is not based on the Bible, but on tradition, they have found it convenient to deny the reality of hell, and to believe that the devil is their friend.⁸¹ Yet while on their way to summer camp one year, a Cora boy, Anastacio, was afraid of the clouds in the mountains. He said, "In Mexico, we don't do that, because the devils are up there, and they will get us." Nicki recalls that he was quite frightened at the thought of entering the clouds. Although it seems that the parents do not teach many of their religious beliefs to their children, Anastacio's fears indicate that his parents (or perhaps his grandparents or Cora elders in Mexico) have practiced at least some traditional religious instruction. On the whole, though, they seem to leave most of their practices in Mexico, and resume them again when they visit. They have Americanized to a great extent.⁸² Although it is not a result of their Americanization, the Coras have the same ecumenical beliefs that many Americans do, which creates difficulties for confessional Lutherans who are trying to teach and work among them. Nicki reveals her frustration by lamenting that a Cora may give a beautiful Christian confession, but upon talking more with him, it becomes obvious that he really thinks all religions are the same. "Whatever my great, great, great, great grandmother believed, it's the same stuff you guys believe," is how Nicki characterizes their attitude.⁸³ Yet sometimes

the children, who are taken back to Nayarit when their parents visit, see the religious ceremonies and compare them to what they are learning in St. John's Sunday School. Apparently they see that there is a difference between the religion that their parents practice and the teachings of the Bible. For example, one time a little Cora boy, who had gone down to Mexico with his parents, asked Nicki if the things they were doing in Mexico, such as ceremonies and dances, were good or bad.⁸⁴ The men especially are still very much influenced by their pagan religious beliefs. It seems to have a power over them, and they will return sometimes twice a year to take part in these religious ceremonies and rituals. One of their favorite ones being Holy week festival in the town of Jesús Maria (described in introduction to paper). They must participate in these gatherings so that they can become an elder or retain their status as an elder. This is very important to them, although what an elder does, or what privileges it gives him, are unknown. Some even maintain two homes—one in Colorado and one in Jesús Maria—so that when they come for the festivals they have a place to stay. The home in Jesús Maria seems to serve some religious function.⁸⁵ Pastor Poetter says that they have had discussions in Bible class about topics like saint worship, which is a part of their religion. When something like this comes up, they try to stay on the topic for the day, mostly in order to proclaim the truth, but partly because they need more time to prepare themselves in order to present it in a meaningful way later. Some Coras are willing to be corrected and listen to the truth, and some have abandoned some of their old beliefs.⁸⁶

Although it seemed that Eudolia might be one who would be willing to be corrected from the Scriptures, since she and the children had been attending English services, they suddenly stopped attending. For some reason many Coras believe that if they go to church they won't earn money,⁸⁷ and besides that, most did not feel welcome in the Christian churches either in Mexico or in the United States. Later, Nicki found out that Eudolia was not coming because she thought that church was only for those who could read. She said, "God doesn't like me because I don't know how to read." It may have had something to do with the legend about God giving the Cora people a feather, but she also must have seen people in the English service reading out of the hymnals, and assumed that she was not meant to be there. Other Coras have also had to be convinced that it was not necessary to be literate in order to participate.⁸⁸ Yet in a sense, participation was the main concern of Nicki at this point, since the only service available was in English. Even if they did come to church regularly, how would they be able to receive any spiritual benefit if they could not understand what was being said? She found a temporary solution in offering "whispered translations" during the English service. Sometimes she would give the Coras a preview of the service in Spanish and then translate the service into Spanish as it progressed. While this method may have been less than desirable, it served its purpose, because they actually began to understand what was being said by Pastor Spiegelberg.⁸⁹ This method, however, was not effective for a larger group, so the St. John Sunday school staff began teaching children with limited English skills, and even adult Coras sometimes participated in the classes. For a while, Nicki, and sometimes a helper, would have a "pre-Sunday School" class with the Cora kids who couldn't speak English very well. They were all in the process of learning English, so she would preview in Spanish the lesson they were going to be taught in English during Sunday school that day. In this way they would be more prepared and learn more from the English lesson. She believes that this was one of the best educational methods they ever attempted, because it really helped the children to be integrated into the regular Sunday school, since all the teachers were English-speaking.⁹⁰ This was a new ex-

perience for St. John, and it took a while for the members to become accustomed to the integration of these new visitors.

St. John Lutheran Church was formally organized on February 4, 1940 and was formed as the result of mission work by the Reverends A. C. Baumann and Walter Krenke in the late 1930s. This work was initiated after it was discovered that a group of German-Russian Lutherans were residing in the Montrose area. In the summer of 1939 the Nebraska District Mission Board called Reverend William F. Wietzke to work in this area, and he became the church's first pastor. From the very beginning, the parish area of St. John was extended to the area surrounding Montrose, making it a regional church, which it remains to this day. The purchase of the current church building was made soon after—a former Evangelical Reformed church built in 1913. For a mere five hundred dollars, this new Lutheran congregation acquired a worship facility. Having a facility that was completely paid for has been a blessing over the years, but the lack of space has been somewhat of a problem, especially since the Cora mission work began. Although many improvements have been made over the years, the only space available for Sunday school and Bible class in the church itself is found in the sanctuary or in a very small partial basement that was hand-excavated by the members. In early 1971, the District Mission Board decided to move the current pastor, Reverend Gerald Differ, to Grand Junction, feeling that the Grand Junction area had greater mission potential. St. John congregation was then served as a dual parish with St. Paul's of Grand Junction, Colorado from 1971 to 1988. During the period from the late 1970s to the late 1980s the number of members ranged from between forty to fifty communicants and fifty to sixty souls.⁹¹ Up until this time, there had been neither an Indian nor Hispanic presence in the church.

Although at this time there were not many Coras attending English services,⁹² Nicki recalls that some members were in favor of integrating the Coras and other Hispanics into the English speaking congregation, but others were unsure. This may have been, according to Nicki, because many of the Coras who were coming to the services were unaccompanied children who did not know how to behave in church at first. She says that she struggled to be patient with those members who had not yet jumped on the bandwagon. Her opinion is that perhaps when the Cora children misbehaved, some people assumed that it was because they were of a different culture, and not because they were sinful, like any other child. Asking for patience, she tried to remind the other members that these children had never been to church before in their lives, and needed to be taught how to act. "Some people totally understood that and were extremely helpful, and would sit with them in church," she remembers; others voiced their feelings. She heard such things as "that kid shouldn't be acting that way," or "He's too big to act that way." Yet, if the children came regularly, and Anglo members were able to work with them and show them what proper church behavior was, they did fine, but the first time, it generally didn't go well.⁹³ Some in the congregation responded positively to this work almost immediately, while others remained reluctant. Yet Nicki marvels that even those who may not have liked the idea and may not have been completely committed, still offered their assistance. In all this, she gives the credit to the Holy Spirit, praising him for using reluctant people to do wonderful things over the many years this mission has existed.⁹⁴ Pastor Poetter emphasizes that over the years, the relationship between the members of St. John and the Cora prospects has been constantly improving, and that if there were some who were reluctant at first, they were very few in number.⁹⁵

Love In Action

When they saw the poverty in which the Molina family was living, some church members got involved right away by supplying some basic needs for them like clothing, a washer, furniture, a refrigerator and even Easter baskets. This "mercy ministry" would become an ongoing project of the congregation.⁹⁶ Nicki remembers that Pastor Spiegelberg helped as well. If he had something to give the Molinas like old furniture, he would bring it in his truck to their house—with or without Nicki. He was never afraid to go there alone even though he couldn't speak to them much, although he was taking a conversational Spanish course at the time.⁹⁷

In the months that followed, Nicki met Guadalupe's half-sister, who had three children. A few months later, her husband was gored by a bull at Cedaredge Dairy (approximately forty miles from Montrose) where he was working. The Molinas moved to be with the half-sister, so that Guadalupe could help out at the dairy. He had been very dissatisfied with his job at a sheep farm, where the boss made him work fifteen hours a day without a day off, so he took the job at Cedaredge Dairy. This is a wonderful example of how the Coras are willing to come to the aid of a distressed family member or friend—it is one of their strengths. However, it was at times frustrating for Nicki and St. John because, as in this case, a family might move far enough away so as to be difficult to reach. Nicki recalls that the Molinas may have moved as many as eight times during their first year in Colorado! This was true of other Cora families also, and sometimes just relocating them was a struggle. Most of them did not have telephones, and the directions Nicki was given were often sketchy.⁹⁸ When Cora families move, they sometimes inform the church, but other times they do not, which means that St. John may lose track of them for as much as a year. They may be "rediscovered" while shopping at the supermarket, but rarely do they lose track of a family completely. "Because they are all related or good friends, the news of their whereabouts eventually gets back to us."⁹⁹ While the Molinas were living in Cedaredge, Pastor Spiegelberg and Nicki visited them and the family of Guadalupe's half-sister several times to give them tapes and books of Spanish Vacation Bible School materials, and at times both families would bring them paperwork to fill out. Then in the Fall of 1988 St. John received a special blessing from God—their own pastor.

A New Pastor

"In the summer of 1988, St. John and St. Paul's received permission from the Mission Board to extend a call to a second pastor who would work with Pastor Spiegelberg in a shared-time ministry. Pastor Timothy Poetter accepted the call and was installed in November of 1988." He served St. John through the aforementioned shared-time ministry in 1988 and 1989 until the congregation extended him a permanent call in late 1989, which he accepted.¹⁰⁰ His father was a Wisconsin Synod missionary to Japan, which is where Tim was born and raised. He attended Northwestern Preparatory School and Northwestern College (both in Watertown, Wisconsin) and Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary in Mequon, Wisconsin, graduating in 1988.¹⁰¹ The Parsons were bringing Coras to church and Sunday school, and when Pastor Poetter arrived in 1988, they approached him about what to do. In order to familiarize him with the work she had already been doing, Nicki brought him to the home of the Molinas to introduce him, although she had to serve as an interpreter, since he did not speak Spanish at the time. The Molinas had just moved back to Montrose and were living in the Alvarado Apartments with three

young men and a family with a newborn—cousins of Eudolia. On one such home visit, someone asked Pastor Poetter—whose mother is Japanese—where he was from. When he told them that he was from Japan, they asked what tribe he belonged to, because they did not know where Japan was! He feels that Nicki, who got him involved with the Coras, was instrumental in the early formation and development of the mission.¹⁰²

A division of duties was in order, so Pastor Poetter asked Nicki to take care of the social needs of the Coras as was necessary, and he would take care of their spiritual needs. Over the years the congregation has received money from the WELS Committee on Relief to help families with rent and utilities. The committee, headed by Rev. Kenneth Strack, allocates a lump sum of money to the congregation, which it distributes to those who are in need.¹⁰³ They also eventually created a congregational food bank, which is still being used as a means to serve the physical needs of the Coras with whom they are working. The Coras seem not to be ashamed to take food from the church, but will only do it as a last resort, when none of their family or friends are able to help them.¹⁰⁴ In order to stock the food bank, Nicki would ask the congregation members to buy one or two extra cans of food for the food bank every time they went grocery shopping, and also to donate old clothing, which they were faithful in doing. Because of the dearth of storage space at the church, there was no place to store the donated items, so if an item was deemed useful, Nicki would take it directly to a family or child whom she thought would need or like it.¹⁰⁵ However, at times she had difficulty in passing the items on to needy families because the parents would not tell her that they were in need of food or clothes. In fact sometimes she had to "drag it out" of the parents, or convince the children to tell her, although sometimes needy Coras did come and ask for help. If possible, St. John tries to send them to some public agency where they can receive assistance, so that before they ask the church for assistance, all other possibilities have been exhausted.¹⁰⁶ In the early years of this mission effort it was necessary to offer more social help to the Coras, but over the years, the City of Montrose has upgraded its social services administration, which has made the church's assistance somewhat less necessary.¹⁰⁷

Even WELS congregations outside of Montrose were willing to directly help the Coras in different ways, for which Pastor Poetter highly praises them.¹⁰⁸ One of the Cora families—the Rosas—spent a week with Pastor Mark Birkholz in Thornton, Colorado when their baby needed to be airlifted to Children's Hospital in Denver. The older Rosas boy stayed with the Parsons while the parents were in Denver—surely an indication of the level of trust Nicki and Gary had been given by this Cora family!¹⁰⁹ As important as physical needs are, spiritual needs and the sharing of the gospel are always St. John's first priority.

Initial Attempts

After he was introduced to the Molinas, Pastor Poetter started to get involved with in-home Bible study. From the beginning, he remarks that the Coras knew what a "pastor" was, and that they were generally not afraid to talk to him. He would teach the class or give a devotion in English and Nicki would act as interpreter, translating his words into Spanish.¹¹⁰ Regarding Pastor Poetter's willingness to reach out to these people despite the language barrier, Nicki wrote in a *Northwestern Lutheran* article, "Our pastor, Timothy Poetter, speaks only a few words of Spanish, but he doesn't need an interpreter to show his friendliness and concern."¹¹¹ Another opportunity for ministry came when they were able to baptize Eudolia's cousin's baby girl. Nicki resumed Eng-

lish classes with these two women (Eudolia and her cousin), who also would come to church with their four children.¹¹² Sometimes the women would also go to Nicki's house for English Bible Study, studying simple Bible stories. At that time the average attendance was seven women and four children, but Nicki laments that the group disappeared when volleyball in a local park lured them away.¹¹³ This park seemed to be a popular meeting place for Coras and many Hispanics on Sundays to play volleyball and baseball. Later, in 1997 or 1998 Pastor Ahlswede, the District Mission Counselor, suggested having classes or worship in these parks where the Coras were gathering. Nicki had been visiting the parks for years. She would sometimes go there to meet people and practice friendship evangelism, and had also wanted to conduct Bible classes there, but had never actually done it. She got this idea from her father, who, as a missionary in China, who would go down to the street corner and start talking to people. She did meet people in the park who eventually did come to class or worship, but regrets that they did not take advantage of this opportunity more. Perhaps this was not pursued more because some in the church were "putting the brakes" on the idea, reasoning that if they invited so many people, the church might not be able to handle it if they were to come, because of the size of the building. She knew that one must listen to practical people, but on the other hand, believed that if a lot of people came, "God will help us figure out how to handle it. It's hard when you see the opportunity and you want to go for it."¹¹⁴

At that time, some of the Cora men, including Guadalupe Molina, were having a hard time finding jobs for more than two or three days at a time, and had to move to the low-rent Cascade Apartments, which Nicki describes as tiny—with barely room for a double bed and small kitchen.¹¹⁵ Unemployment among the Coras may be as high as fifty percent when seasonal employment is not available, and stable families earn an average of nine hundred to one thousand dollars a month. Single men average less because their work is more seasonal. (Sheep herders earn about five hundred dollars a month with room and board included).¹¹⁶ Because of the work shortage, Nicki gave help to Guadalupe and several of the other men by getting them jobs on a chicken farm.¹¹⁷ Soon the Molinas moved to Colona, which is fifteen miles away, to take a cattle ranch job.

The "Jail Factor"

In the Fall of 1988, Nicki met a Cora woman named Luisa through her neighbor, Eudolia Molina. Luisa's husband was very hostile toward Nicki and the church and Luisa feared retaliation if she would attend the Bible class Nicki was conducting at Eudolia's home. When her husband was not around, Luisa talked with Nicki, but contact was limited because of the husband's hostility. Nicki describes him as "probably the most hostile of the Cora men that I've ever been around." In spite of this, their son Anastacio, age four, was allowed to attend Sunday school. Every time she went to pick up Anastacio, Nicki was fearful. "It's the only time I've ever really been afraid to go into anybody's house," she recalls. He "exuded hostility ... what are you here for? Why are you doing this?" she felt he was thinking. But somehow his wife had "put in a good word," because he was letting Anastacio come to Sunday School. One day, however, he assaulted Luisa and was arrested and held in jail.

After her husband was thrown into jail, Luisa was very upset and talked to Nicki. She came to church that Sunday, since her husband was in jail and could not prevent her. The family had another child, whom Luisa wanted to be baptized, so Nicki and

pastor went to the jail on the same Sunday Luisa attended church, to visit the father and to ask if the baby could be baptized. They were told that he could be in jail for some time, but they visited and spoke to him anyway. He was released soon after and came to the very next Bible study! To everyone's amazement, he had completely changed and was even helping to set up tables for the Bible study. She now says that he is "like a brother," one of the nicest people she knows. The Holy Spirit truly can work the miracle of faith in even the most hostile person! Over the years, this family—the Rosas—has been one of the only families in which the father himself has brought his children to Sunday school and Bible classes. Mr. Rosas has invited many family members and friends and has been one of the only Cora men who has attended regularly with his whole family—"on their own, without us having to go get them." Nicki says that from this experience she learned not to "write anybody off." You cannot say, "that person would not be interested in what we're doing. That isn't up to us."¹¹⁸ Even little Anastacio was, as she describes him, "the most aggressive little kid I've ever known in my life." She half jokingly adds that at first they needed three or four adults to "guard" him, so he would not get into trouble during church and Sunday school. He is now, at age fourteen, like a part of the Parsons family—"the most laid back, wonderful child. He's just a joy."¹¹⁹ Nicki calls it the "jail factor," referring to the many witnessing opportunities given to them when Cora men have been arrested and put in jail. Many of these and other "crisis situations" have provided opportunities to turn the thoughts of the Coras to spiritual things.¹²⁰

Although the level of hostility of Mr. Rosas is rarely encountered, yet there seems to be a general resistance, especially on the part of the men, to attend church. Fortunately, the mission workers were looking beyond the behavior to the ultimate cause, and were willing to be patient in letting the Holy Spirit break down the barriers that existed. Yet this lack of church attendance would continue to be a problem area for them, and Pastor Poetter admits that St. John has had little success in bringing adult Coras into the church.¹²¹ This fact might discourage some, but Nicki and St. John continued their efforts, despite some doubts. They finally began to see the results of their efforts as an increasing number of Coras became involved in church activities.

Full Speed Ahead!

In the Fall of 1989, Nicki recalls some of the thoughts that were going through their minds at the time: "It might seem best to wait for a skilled interpreter before we teach these people about their Savior. But God keeps putting these people in front of us... God seems to expect us to tell these people about their Savior now, not later."¹²² Doubts and questions such as these are a part of every missionary's life. Whether to proceed with the mission work and even expand it was a legitimate question at that time, given the language barrier that the pastor faced and the lack of theological training that Nicki had received. It could have been easy to rationalize keeping things at the status quo for lack of a trained cross-cultural worker. Nevertheless, by God's grace they were able to see through their own doubts, questions and feelings of inadequacy to the larger picture. That larger picture was the prospect of Cora souls perishing forever while they waited for God to send someone their way. This they could not in good conscience do, so they forged ahead with a strong faith in their Savior and his ability and willingness to help them.

Around this time they attempted Bible classes based on a simplified English ver-

sion of the Catechism with almost the entire Molina family (excluding Guadalupe). In this arrangement Pastor Poetter and Nicki would teach the adults and Gary Parsons would teach the children. This was the same Bible class which Mr. Rosas, mentioned above, first attended after being released from jail. At the same time, Cora involvement in Sunday school continued to rise as the children of a cousin of the Molinas began to attend. Jonas Molina had an English speaking part in the 1989 Christmas Eve service, and did it "perfectly"! In spite of the fact that the service was in English, some Cora visitors came, and the mission workers were able to meet two new families on that Christmas Eve.¹²³ A good example of a cultural tradition that may have played too big of a role in church attendance is the Coras' belief about Christmas Eve. They believe that Jesus was born at midnight, and so a Cora man once asked Nicki why St. John did not have a worship service at midnight, claiming that it "isn't really Christmas if you don't do it that way." She recalls them trying to explain to them what the real meaning of Christmas was, but remembers that the man "didn't buy it." This may have kept him from attending a Christmas Eve church service, but he still let his children come, even though it wasn't at midnight.¹²⁴ One is reminded of the comments of Anglo members in American churches such as, "It's just not Christmas without snow." However, in spite of this potential roadblock, many Coras came on Christmas Eve, yet Nicki felt that the church was not serving the Coras because the service was in English. In order to remedy this situation somewhat, they planned and held the "first Christmas party/service just for our Spanish speaking friends."¹²⁵

It was a mini worship service and party held on the day after Christmas, which in time, would become a tradition at St. John. They ingeniously decided to use an English video about the Christmas story with the volume turned completely down. Pastor Poetter did not yet speak Spanish, so Nicki would narrate the video in Spanish as it presented the birth of the Savior. While Nicki narrated, the church organist played some background Christmas music on a piano. Nicki remembers that Pastor Poetter was learning how to pronounce and read Spanish, and may have read some portions of Scripture at that first Christmas gathering.¹²⁶ This was an important step in bringing Coras together for some form of worship, however untraditional it was, and the same arrangement was also attempted at Easter. However, Nicki now regrets that not as many Coras came for the Spanish party/service as came to the English service on Christmas Day and Easter Sunday, when they received less benefit because of the language barrier. Pastor Poetter feels that, given the early stage of the mission work, they were doing the best they could under the circumstances.¹²⁷ However, Nicki sees it as a missed opportunity, realizing that the mission needed to adapt to the situation better to serve the increasing numbers of Coras that were becoming involved.¹²⁸

In fact, very quickly there were more Cora prospects than Anglo members at St. John. That may have been frightening to some Anglo members, who, Nicki surmises, in a sense missed the point of Matthew chapter twenty-eight (the Great Commission). However, she believes that this unawareness was not confined to St. John, but that it needs to improve Synod-wide.

People just aren't quite ready to realize that the mission field might be at your back door. You can send money to Japan; you can send it to Africa. You don't have to touch those people or watch their little kids. But suddenly all these immigrants—and it's not just Hispanics—are here. What are we going to do with you? It's something that's going to have to be addressed. To this day, if you count souls on both sides—Cora and Anglo—the numbers are about even.¹²⁹

From time to time she remembers hearing comments like, "Why can't they learn English?", or, "Why can't they get jobs?" from a few people who may not have realized the extent of the poverty and lack of educational background from which these people came. Sometimes Nicki felt sorry for those congregation members who didn't speak Spanish, because they couldn't get to know the Coras well on a personal level. Perhaps the uneasiness between some Anglo members and Cora prospects was amplified because of the general inability of the two groups to communicate normally with each other. The Coras may have been seen—not intentionally—as nameless, faceless immigrants from the "huddled masses" that did not have the same feelings and needs as everyone else. Perhaps some of the Anglo members wanted to communicate with the Coras, but did not know how to do it since they did not speak their language. Perhaps they did not realize that there were other ways to communicate with these people of different culture. Yet there were members who, although they could not speak Spanish or Cora, were able to communicate Christ's love by their actions and body language. Nicki remembers that her husband and one woman in particular, would attempt this type of non-verbal communication. She says that this woman "exuded enthusiasm and love with her body language," and the Coras really appreciated it. So that the other members of the church could try to see the Coras as people and not just faces, Nicki would sometimes try to describe some of the Coras by comparing them to Anglo congregation members. For example, she might say, "Flavia would be like so-and-so if she spoke English," or, "This Cora lady is like Mrs. Jones in our congregation."¹³⁰

In the winter of 1990 adult classes based on the simplified Catechism continued,¹³¹ and about five Cora children began participating in Lutheran Pioneer activities offered at St. John. Picking up these children and taking them to church required a fifty mile car trip for the Parsons each time—a task that had become and would remain a time-consuming part of their work for years to come. That summer the Molinas and their cousins moved one hundred miles away, to Rifle, Colorado to work on a hydroponic tomato farm, although they sometimes visited the Parsons' house and the English church services at St. John. Although the mission's primary family had moved away and there was now limited contact with them, another family with three children began to attend, and Vacation Bible School attracted all the Cora children they had met in the community so far. One Cora boy—Inés Medina—eventually invited nine of his friends, all of whom were Hispanics!¹³² This is a quality of the Coras which Nicki praises.

Friendship Evangelism

She admires the Hispanics and Coras, because they seem not to have any fear of inviting their friends and relatives to Bible class, as Americans often do.¹³³ Eudolia has been a notable evangelist, as Nicki relates in an incident that has happened often: "One night as we were picking Eudolia and her children up in Colona, she mentioned another family, that of Reynaldo and Angelina Lopez, right on the way, that might like to come to the special Bible classes we were running at the time. We stopped and loaded a mom and two kids plus a teenage girl who was living with them, into my six passenger station wagon."¹³⁴ Nicki was incredulous, and remembers that they "just kept coming out of the trailer!" This is the way they met most of the Coras prospects through the years—through the Molina family and friendship evangelism.¹³⁵ The Coras even seem to be pushy in trying to get the Parsons to pick up someone for Bible class. For example, another time, a woman named Flavia convinced Nicki, whose car was already overloaded, and who was already running late for Christmas Eve, to go out of the way to pick up

someone "who lives a little out of the way." It turned out to be quite a few miles "out of the way"! They arrived at the trailer, and there was a mother, father and a daughter. That family and the previously mentioned family, eventually became some of the most active families they had.¹³⁶

In the Fall of 1990, most of the children who had attended Vacation Bible School also began attending Sunday School. Due to the growth in attendance, management of the nine to twelve extra children became difficult even with several adult volunteers. As a result, Nicki was very busy every Sunday, and her children started to feel a bit neglected during the services. A special Bible class was offered at Advent for the Cora Sunday school students and Cora adults, the number of which changed each time. During these classes, Gary Parsons and some older children helped with the Sunday school children. As Christmas approached, even the regular congregational events included Cora adults and children, although another Christmas service/party in Spanish was held especially for them, and was attended by both new and old prospects. With an ever-growing number of Cora souls being placed into their care, St. John was in need of more Spanish speakers who could assist with the work. In the Summer of 1991, this became a reality.

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A TALE OF TWO SEMINARIES?

by Mark Braun

Thank you to Prof. Daniel Balge of Martin Luther College for his interesting, well-researched article describing the development of Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary, how it almost remained in Wauwatosa, and how it ultimately moved to Mequon.¹

The Wisconsin Synod was not the only midwestern Lutheran church body erecting a new seminary during the opening decades of the 20th century. Wartburg Seminary in Dubuque, Iowa, built an impressive complex overlooking the rolling hills along the western bank of the Mississippi River. Augustana Seminary moved to a new home in the early 1920s, and the seminary at Capital University took up residence in its new Divinity Hall. But "dwarfing all the others in beauty, excellence, and cost," wrote Fred Meuser, "was the new Concordia Seminary in St. Louis." Meuser called the new seminary "a monument to the Missouri Synod's reaffirmation of its heritage and confidence for its future." Its completion "marked a new stage in Missouri's sense of permanence and mission. Missouri had built the best and was determined to remain the best as far as strict Lutheranism was concerned."²

By the 1920s the flow of German Lutheran immigrants to the midwest had subsided. The language transition from German to English had been happening already and would have happened anyway, but anti-German sentiments during and after World War I hastened its occurrence. Many in both synods were now second and third generation Americans. Finer homes and more impressive church buildings offered physical evidence of their increased prosperity, as would the construction of grander seminaries to prepare pastors to bring the Lutheran gospel to the "English" around them.

More than 90 percent of Lutheran clergymen in the United States received either college or seminary training, compared to an average of 51 percent among Protestant clergy of all denominations.³ Virtually the only pathway to the Lutheran ministry ran through college and seminary, and so the completion of these seminaries was of particular importance for Lutheran bodies.⁴

Meuser's description of the new Concordia sounds no more grandiloquent than the portrayal Missourians themselves gave of their synod, its seminary, and the role both were expected to play in the advancement of conservative, confessional, Missouri-style Lutheranism. In *Alma Mater*, Concordia's student magazine, Synod founder C.F.W. Walther was still being hailed as "America's foremost theologian and religious leader" more than thirty years after his death. The magazine featured comparative enrollments at various Lutheran seminaries in the United States, noting that Concordia had already grown to become the largest Protestant seminary in America.⁵ The sturdiest followers of Luther anywhere in the world, it insisted, were to be found in Missouri.⁶ Alan Graebner has concluded that this new seminary "reflected in microcosm the aims and aspirations of the Missouri Synod."⁷

The Wisconsin and Missouri Synods planned their new seminaries in response to the needs of their respective church bodies. It was no doubt only a coincidence that these sister synods dedicated their new seminaries 79 years after their synods' foundings, Missouri three years ahead of Wisconsin. There seems to have been little if any direct competition between the synods regarding size, style, or cost of their buildings. Yet each synod was aware of the other's efforts. Further, though the synods frequently expressed their appreciation for each other, enjoyed doctrinal harmony and conducted

joint ministry endeavors, each retained a sense of its uniqueness and separateness from the other.⁸

August Pieper characterized the personality differences of the synods in his "Anniversary Reflections," published in Wisconsin's *Quartalschrift* in 1923. Missouri was characterized by "a remarkable, intense *esprit de corps*, a strongly pronounced synodical patriotism," and "a strong tendency to stick together," even over against synods with whom they maintained friendly relations. The "similar schooling" and the "intensive, standardized drill" Missouri's pastors received "led to the same way of looking at things, the same way of thinking and performing the duties of the ministry," serving to make Missouri, in Pieper's words, "an ecclesiastical Prussian army."⁹ By contrast, Wisconsin was "not born of one united, strong, clear Lutheran spirit," and it possessed "no outstanding or even authoritative leader and no strong unifying force." Wisconsin "did not really know who they were, what they wanted to be, or how to go about doing something useful."¹⁰ Decades after its founding, Wisconsin had little reason to be proud of its founding and had not entirely rid itself of its "lack of unity and purpose" or its "synodical intrigues and feebleness."¹¹ Wisconsin Pastor Hans Moussa shared Pieper's view of Wisconsin's differentness from Missouri: "Synodical consciousness was never strong in Wisconsin."¹²

The thesis of this article is that these differences of personality in the two synods were also evident in the planning, construction, financing, and celebration of their new seminaries.

Growing pains, but on different scales

Each synod had already had its own seminary for decades. Walther established Missouri's original log cabin seminary in 1839 in Perry County. In 1849 it was transferred to St. Louis; a new building was dedicated in 1850, with additional wings constructed in 1857-58. In 1883, Concordia Seminary moved once more to South Jefferson Street, and that building was expanded in 1906-07.¹³ Wisconsin's first seminary was opened in a house on North Fourth Street in Watertown in 1863, then moved to Northwestern College, also in Watertown, in the year of the founding of the college, 1865. From 1870 to 1878, Wisconsin closed its seminary in partial compliance with the ill-fated state synod plan, but reopened on 13th and Vine Streets in Milwaukee in 1878. In 1893, Wisconsin moved its seminary again to 60th and Lloyd Streets, in what was then the still quite rural suburb of Wauwatosa on the very western edge of Milwaukee.¹⁴

Both seminaries' neighborhoods had become crowded and urbanized by the end of World War I. In 1917, Wisconsin Seminary Professor J.P. Koehler urged the Synod to secure additional land immediately west of the Wauwatosa property,¹⁵ but his effort "did not gain traction."¹⁶ More interest in a new seminary was spurred in 1919.¹⁷ During the early 1920s, numerous sites were investigated, not only in or near Milwaukee but also in Oconomowoc and in St. Paul and Mankato, Minnesota.¹⁸ The Synod ultimately settled on the Edgar Wille farm in Thiensville, a dozen miles north of Milwaukee, in 1928.¹⁹

Though the Wauwatosa building was less than three decades old in 1919, Koehler judged it never to have been satisfactory. Building standards had improved markedly since the 1890s; previously there had been "little understanding of what [was] required in a building to be used for such purposes."²⁰ The Wauwatosa seminary apparently had been of wood frame construction covered with an exterior brick veneer. The Wisconsin State Industrial Commission no longer regarded such school construction adequate. The

Seminary Board requested in 1919 that the campus be allowed to connect to the city gas lines, not for cooking or heating purposes but for use in gas lighting, to eliminate the fire hazard presented by students' use of gas lamps for studying.²¹

Further, the Wauwatosa seminary could no longer house its student body. Director John Schaller reported an enrollment of 62 students for the 1919–20 school year, 57 of whom boarded in the seminary building. While sufficient study space was available, a previously unused hall space had to be converted to additional living area.²² Prof. Schaller acknowledged that the crowding caused "some slight discomforts" but said that such discomforts had to be "borne with equanimity."²³

Missouri's South Jefferson Street seminary, a decade older than Wisconsin's, had also become outdated and overcrowded. A large private dwelling near the seminary had been employed to accommodate the overflow of students. Instead of 64 square feet of floor space for each student, room sizes were reduced to 46 square feet per student. Six students were being squeezed into rooms designed for four, and an enrollment of 300 students lived in buildings designed for 200. The campus contained only three large lecture halls, all of which were overcrowded. There was inadequate space for a library, equipment was antiquated, and light and ventilation were poor. The chapel had grown too small to accommodate the many activities conducted in it. Long corridors connecting all the rooms on each floor created continuous and unavoidable disturbances. Maintenance and improvement costs had become prohibitive.²⁴

While both seminaries were operating in outdated buildings and overcrowded conditions, the growing pains of the two were on different scales. The Missouri Synod by 1897 had already grown to a size half again as large as the Wisconsin Synod is today, and the comparative sizes of the two seminaries reflected the disparity in synodical memberships. Concordia's student enrollment in the 1919–20 school year included 293 students on campus, with another 76 living off campus.²⁵ In addition, 83 students were excused for the entire school year in an effort to alleviate overcrowding.²⁶ Two hundred students were typically crowded into a lecture hall designed for a class half that size.²⁷

Enrollment figures at Wauwatosa were considerably smaller. Between 1919 and 1929, student enrollment at Wisconsin's seminary ranged from a low of 40 in 1926–27 to a high of 61 in 1919–20. Enrollment during that decade averaged slightly over 50.²⁸

While comments focused on crowded campus conditions, writers in both synods also expressed the desire to relocate their seminaries in less urban locations. They believed pastoral settings (no pun intended) would prove more conducive to theological study. Ludwig Fuerbringer wrote that the St. Louis seminary had become "surrounded by many buildings in the midst of the city." Four separate street car lines ran within three blocks of the seminary, the closest of which passed directly in front it. "The din and the noise of the large city," Fuerbringer complained, "and the continuous heavy traffic on the city streets very much interfere with the work of the professors and the students" in their classrooms, offices, and study rooms. There was "no free space upon which the students can take bodily exercise."²⁹ Students working and living under the same roof tended to remain indoors during free periods as well "if no inducements are offered to take them out for some exercise in the open air." The campus offered no open space, and there was not even a city park nearby.³⁰

A 1923 *Northwestern Lutheran* writer urged that Wisconsin's new seminary contain "adequate facilities for bodily exercise" but added that there were "things to be rated higher than sports. Among these a sense of nature is by no means the least." Such interaction with nature "serves to recreation of the mind no less than do the sports,

though in a different manner." During "the great transitional periods of the history of the world," the writer continued, "an awakening of the joy in nature has again and again by Divine Providence become the means to restore the enervated mind to health for a time, at least, and thus to prosper also the preaching of the Gospel." The seminary should have sufficiently large grounds to "give students pleasure" so that they would not be "compelled to rely on walking the streets of a large city or on systematic physical exercise for their recreation."³¹ Koehler considered such a site "necessary for mental repose." He hoped to see the seminary "in a desirable rural environment, where nature has not been disguised by the horticultural absurdities of civilization."³²

Promotion

In his celebratory account of the new Concordia, Theodore Graebner reviewed the glum history of confessional Lutheranism in America prior to the appearance of Walther and the Missouri Synod.

Though "conservative Lutheranism—Synodical Conference, 'Missouri' Lutheranism" was by the mid 1920s "a mighty stream which touches the shores of three continents and Australia," it might well have been only "a shallow stream, ankle-deep" and Missouri "a small, insignificant body of believers" with "a few tens of thousands instead of a million." Missouri "stood isolated among the denominations" as "travelers in a foreign land." Nineteenth century culture, secular and anti-Christian, opposed everything for which Missouri stood. Yet even "the smallest body, loyal to the Lutheran Confessions, would still be the visible Church of Christ on earth." Its work would be glorious regardless of numerical success. Yet Missouri rejoiced as it observed "the phenomenal growth, the inner harmony, the vast expansion of territory which are so evident as we survey the organization of which we are members."³³

By the 1920s, Missouri not only enjoyed unity of faith but had "extended her tent-ropes and set far the bounds of her domicile" until (with overtones of the British Empire) "the sun never sets on the territory in which her Gospel is proclaimed." Such unity and growth were rooted in the "power-houses" of Missouri's Concordia colleges throughout the country. "For who shall calculate the influence upon the life of a Church exerted by those thousands of faithful workers in pulpit and school who have come forth from the halls of our Concordias in the past eighty-seven years?"³⁴

This extended rhapsody was consistent with previous Missouri pronouncements. In 1871, Walther defended his thesis that the Evangelical Lutheran Church was "the true visible church on earth." While Missouri's opponents [which was how the Synod typically referred to heterodox Christian churches] would disagree with such a claim, their very objections "openly testify of themselves that they are a sect and not the church of Christ."³⁵ At Walther's funeral in 1887, George Stoeckhardt claimed that the Synod was "in possession of the truth—the entire, undiminished truth—because we know Christ crucified, and desire to know nothing beside Him."³⁶ Franz Pieper insisted in 1905 that "as certainly as Holy Scripture is God's Word—which it is—so certain is it that our doctrine is correct." Therefore, "whoever contests our doctrinal position contends against the divine truth."³⁷

With its new seminary, Missouri would be poised to preserve and expand its tradition of doctrinal orthodoxy and extraordinary congregational growth even more.

The Wisconsin Synod praised Missouri's orthodoxy and counted it a blessing to be in partnership with its big sister. In honor of Missouri's 75th anniversary, *Northwestern Lutheran* editorialist John Jenny wrote in May 1922, "For a Synod to have remained

true to the teachings of Holy Writ both in faith and practice" during "these perilous years—is due only to the grace of God. And this our sister synod has experienced to a wonderful extent."³⁸ A month later, marking the 50th anniversary of the Synodical Conference, Jenny considered the real cause for rejoicing "that there has been revealed in all its fullness to all Synods comprising the Synodical Conference the same Gospel." The synods' shared adherence to scriptural teachings, resistance against theological liberalism, refusal to fraternize with those who disagreed with their confession, and maintenance of Christian schools and missions at home and abroad were nothing less than "a wonder of God before our eyes!"³⁹

Yet as it began to promote its own new seminary building project, Wisconsin did not trumpet its history as vigorously as Missouri. In a series of pamphlets distributed to all congregations in the mid 1920s, the Synod's Seminary Building Committee explained the need for a new seminary, reported progress toward the goal, and offered encouragement for the collection of funds.⁴⁰ The Committee drew on the example of faithful German Christians of the 12th and 13th centuries, who weathered war, plague, and bitter need to band together to construct houses of worship. Those churches still stood to "preach the Word from the cross." With little triumphalism, the Synod was urged to learn the lesson of those medieval churches, that "through their sheer existence" one "cannot and should not despair in need, but rather can and should apply himself to work that serves also to strengthen the inner mind, so that one can pull himself from faintheartedness and idleness to bold, courageous action."⁴¹

Site

The neighborhood around Concordia had grown so busy and the seminary itself so crowded that "it was taken for granted that the [new] Seminary would not remain on South Jefferson Avenue." St. Louis laymen and pastors raised \$75,000 by June 1920 toward purchase of a site in the St. Louis area to guarantee that the new seminary would remain there.⁴² Supporting this effort was a contingent of energetic laymen belonging to the American Lutheran Publicity Bureau, as well as aggressive pastors like John H.C. Fritz, Richard Kretschmar, and Albert Doeffler. Though some wished to see the new seminary built in Chicago, no funds were raised for a Chicago site. Missouri's 1920 convention resolved that the seminary should remain in St. Louis "in its historical environment."⁴³

The Synod settled on the "so-called De Mun tract" just west of the St. Louis city limits in suburban Clayton, described as "undoubtedly one of the finest pieces of ground near the city"⁴⁴ and "the wealthiest suburb of the city."⁴⁵ A single St. Louis family had retained the parcel of land for more than two hundred years since receiving it as a grant from the King of Spain. To the north was the campus of Washington University; Theodore Graebner was quick to point out, "Our grounds are much higher than the grounds of the university."⁴⁶ To the east lay the great green expanse of Forest Park, impressive site of the 1904 St. Louis World's Fair,⁴⁷ and beyond that "the great city stretching eastward." To the west of the De Mun parcel were "great private parks, with fine residences scattered between." Missouri's site selection committee apparently agreed on the De Mun tract quite readily and purchased the 71-acre plot for \$2,600 per acre,⁴⁸ a total cost of \$185,387.31.⁴⁹

Descriptions of the Clayton site picture it as well-developed and well-to-do. Comprising an area of only 2.5 square miles, it had grown more than 6,000 percent in the 1910s, then tripled in size during the 1920s to a population of 9,613 in 1930.⁵⁰ The sur-

rounding residential districts were "of a character that, humanly speaking, the quality of the neighborhood [will be] assured for all time to come."⁵¹ Nearby subdivisions of Hillcrest, Hi Pointe, and Brentmoor comprised "the finest residence section in Greater St. Louis."⁵² As the project progressed, "many of our Lutherans" acquired or built homes in the surrounding neighborhoods. Tracts adjoining the seminary soon sold for twice the per acre price the Synod paid. "Our Board of Directors picked the choicest parcel in the lot or, for that matter, in St. Louis County."⁵³

By contrast, Mequon was less affluent, more rural. Thiensville, "a pretty little village on the Milwaukee River, about fifteen miles from the Milwaukee City Hall," was surrounded by undeveloped farmland. The Wille farm was chosen over "a purely rural site" a dozen miles farther north.⁵⁴ The Synod sold the Van Dyke property in Wauwatosa because its value had grown to represent "too large an investment for the purpose for which we intended to use it" and because transportation improvements in the Milwaukee area would soon make a location outside the city just as accessible as in Wauwatosa. The selling price of \$107,500 brought a profit of more than 150 percent over the price paid for the land just four years earlier.⁵⁵ Wille sold his 80 acre farm to the Synod for \$25,000—just over \$300.00 an acre. All of Ozaukee county, including the villages of Mequon, Thiensville, Freistadt, Cedarburg, Grafton, Saukville, Fredonia, and Port Washington, had a combined population of only 17,394 in 1930.⁵⁶

Funding and support

The impetus for a new Concordia arose at Missouri's 1920 convention in Detroit. As Theodore Graebner recounted, no one who attended that convention would "ever forget the thrill of that moment when Synod unanimously voted one million dollars" for the project. That figure may be viewed in better perspective when it is noted that less than one-third of that amount—\$300,000—had been budgeted by the Synod for new college buildings *throughout the synod*, and even that amount *had not been raised*.⁵⁷

Graebner insisted, however, that the convention "was never carried away with unthinking enthusiasm" and that there was "no railroading through of pet schemes." Delegates deliberated extensively over the advisability of other expenditures. One small item of about \$3,000 was debated for an hour, only to be stricken.⁵⁸

Like other features of Concordia's history, the million dollar proposal contained "a certain element of allegory."⁵⁹ No one knew what it would cost to relocate the current seminary, nor had any plans been presented for the new buildings. The million-dollar amount was instead a mystical, even mythical figure, proposed as mere guess, "the largest figure that occurred to an old German lay delegate" tired of hearing "I'll give five dollars" whenever a synodical collection was proposed.⁶⁰ After only about a five minute discussion,⁶¹ delegates approved the proposal and the amount, leaving it for later architects, accountants, and the building committee itself to work out the details.⁶²

When bids were let, it was determined that an additional \$1,500,000 would be needed. Brief opposition to the high cost was expressed but soon quashed, in part because of news that the Wisconsin Synod, though much smaller, had voted half a million dollars for its new seminary.⁶³ The 1923 convention approved the additional appropriation, and between 1923 and 1926 Missouri mounted a synod-wide effort to raise \$5,000,000 for the new seminary and other building projects. According to Alan Graebner, these financial steps were "of prime importance in the history of the Missouri Synod, for this was one of the first major fund-raising efforts in the Synod for which a 'campaign' was waged and for which the laymen were marshaled."⁶⁴

"Can our congregations raise the amount required for the new seminary," Fuerbringer asked, "and at the same time also contribute the moneys necessary for other purposes?" Yes, he answered, "if they make up their minds to do it, if every congregation and communicant member in our congregations will help." But *would* they do it? Yes again, he answered, "when they remember what great blessings they have received from our theological seminary in the past years" for themselves and their children.⁶⁵ It would be difficult to raise such a large amount if the wrong persons were asked. "Without using force you could not collect it from the enemies of the Church," nor would it be possible to gather it "from inmates of our orphan asylums," wrote Martin Sommer. But it could be collected "from those who *have it to give*, and who *are glad to give it*." All they need is "the right kind of information and opportunity to give their gift cheerfully for the object of their devotion."⁶⁶

In Wisconsin, delegates at the 1921 synod convention approved the recommendations of its Committee of Seven to build a new seminary plant on a new site and to select an architect and have plans drawn. But delegates also resolved to delay actual construction until two-thirds of the necessary funding was raised. The committee, chaired by John Brenner and including J.P. Koehler, organized a fund drive that it hoped would raise \$750,000 in the near future. This figure was anticipated both to meet the cost of the new seminary and to pay off synodical debts. By July 1, 1923, \$19,000 had been gathered, and from that date on, *Northwestern Lutheran* readers saw regular contribution updates, featuring lists naming individual and congregational contributors, as well as admonitions to pastors and their members to complete the offering. "If every member of our Synod would show the interest some have shown," John Brenner urged, "and a little consideration also for the brethren who have worked, our task could be speedily accomplished."⁶⁷ Again: "Get to work and gather your full quota, and more, if the Lord has so blessed you. Do it now!"⁶⁸

The 1923 convention raised the ante by requiring that *all* old debts and new building costs be raised before construction could commence, and the 1925 convention maintained that position. By 1927, however, either fiscal conservatives lost influence or delegates had a change of heart. Construction was authorized to commence whenever the Building Committee considered it prudent to do so. The 1927 convention also authorized a \$330,000 building project at New Ulm. Though collections by 1929 totaled \$563,000 and would continue until 1933, funds raised never matched expenditures. The final cost of the Thiensville seminary was \$388,000, and all but \$35,000 of the "old debt" was also paid off. Yet additional costs of the New Ulm project plus other building programs in the 1920s cost an additional \$200,000.

Also, while the synodical budget more than doubled during the 1920s, contributions did not keep pace, and the Synod experienced a growing deficit in its operating budget.⁶⁹ Between 1919 and 1923 alone the synodical debt more than tripled, from \$90,000 to \$300,000. Koehler charged that this occurred "in spite of all the financial committees, or most likely on account of their lack of ability." Synod President G.E. Bergemann frequently complained that he was unable to obtain from Graebner [apparently the synodical treasurer] any information regarding cash on hand.⁷⁰

The synods conducted separate fund raising efforts, yet each watched the other's progress and compared figures. "It will be readily seen," wrote John Brenner at one point, "that our cash collections can bear comparison with our sister synod."⁷¹ Again: "The average [contribution] of \$5.40 per communicant member is not high. We are told that the Missouri Synod expects over \$6.00 a year from every communicant member for

the next three years for running expenses and the liquidation of debts. We know it can be done."⁷² At another point, however, Brenner was disappointed.

We did a little rough figuring. The congregations of our Synod in Milwaukee number at least a thousand communicants more than those congregations in St. Louis. They would, accordingly, be able to shoulder the costs of the seminary buildings proper without aid from the other churches of our Synod. Or, has the Lord blessed those St. Louis Christians more abundantly with material wealth? We have no reason to assume that this is the case. Then let us ask ourselves: Why has our entire Synod so far not been able to raise a sum as large as that contributed by these congregations? What is lacking among us? Careful and prayerful self-scrutiny will reveal the cause to us. As earnest Christians we will want to know the cause in order to remove from our hearts the obstacles that hinder us for serving our God with joy.⁷³

Plans and architectural statements

Most obvious is a comparison of the two physical plants themselves.

Koehler drew up the plans and was responsible for much of the spirit of Wisconsin's new seminary. It was likely he who wrote, "If all the work that will be done in these buildings by our professors and our students will correspond with the principles we have set forth, cultivating and preserving the priceless treasure of our Lutheran doctrine and conception of all things, we will have a truly great work of Lutheran art, in which the external form expresses the inner life."⁷⁴ Designed originally for the more crowded Wauwatosa site, classrooms were to face the city streets, "thus presenting the seminary before the outside world. By the doctrines taught here we approach the world to draw it to Christ or to witness against it, as the case may be."⁷⁵

Koehler rejected ancient Greek and Roman architectural styles as too pagan, and Renaissance and Baroque as too worldly. Tudor would have been a good choice, but Koehler considered it a "corruption of [the] original sublime gothic architecture" and because he felt it reflected "the luxurious and often bizarre court life of Henry VIII, one of the chief opponents of Luther." Koehler thought it natural for Lutheran builders to design a seminary that would recall Luther and the Reformation, buildings such as the Wartburg and Coburg Castles. The architectural style common to them was 12th and 13th century Romanesque Gothic, which Koehler embraced as "churchly, simple, popular in character, free from superfluous pomp, sane, serious" yet more artistic in spirit, like "the Lutheran hymn of the 16th century."⁷⁶

Some changes in the plan were implemented due to the move to Thiensville. One was a switch from undressed white Lannon stone to salmon-colored brick in the buildings; the other, the change from only red slate to slate of varying hues for the roofs. Both adaptations were compatible with a stylistic nuance that the architectural firm of Clas and Clas introduced to the Thiensville plans—Tudor Revival. Though the Romanesque-Gothic features are apparent in the Thiensville buildings, there is less Gothic in Thiensville than there would have been in Wauwatosa.⁷⁷

The architects "attempted to express a feeling of sturdy construction, faithfulness, economy, and sympathetic adaptation to the site and rural locality." The choice of inexpensive but quality building materials "would be in keeping with Lutheran principles and the use for which the seminary is intended."⁷⁸ A 1936 article from a local Mequon

newspaper offered a similar assessment. Both Koehler and the architect sought "to imbue the buildings with a spirit which would exemplify the tenets of the Lutheran creed, simple, of solid appearing materials, quiet, and restrained," applying the "sturdiness of the German Romanesque style" to the "picturesque quality of the buildings of the German middle ages." Salmon-colored brick burned in rural localities of Wisconsin offered "that simplicity and charm together with economy and permanence."⁷⁹

Five decades later, Prof. Martin Westerhaus concluded that the architects "effectively [suggested] a German castle such as the Wartburg" through the massive tower, timbering, and arrangements of the buildings in an enclosure. "There is no English Gothic here or a copying of an Oxford college," Westerhaus added—a not-so-subtle comparison to the new Concordia? All the elements of the Thiensville seminary were "practical, functioning parts of a contemporary school," and the entire complex is characterized by "truthfulness, economy, and adaptation to the site and rural locality," showing "permanence in the best sense" and "a certain timelessness." Yet good proportions, interesting combinations of symmetry and variety, differing masses and planes, varied textures of slate, stone, brick, and timber all combined to make the seminary buildings visually attractive.⁸⁰

In his history of Concordia Seminary, *Log Cabin to Luther Tower*, Carl S. Meyer entitled his chapter on the building of the Clayton campus "Gothic Grandeur," yet nowhere in his chapter did Meyer discuss the architectural style of the Clayton campus or its significance.⁸¹

Missouri's building committee sought inspiration not in Germany but on the east coast, at Princeton, Yale, Harvard, Johns Hopkins, and Washington Universities; Wellesley College; West Point Military Academy; as well as Augustana and Wartburg Seminaries and Loyola University in Chicago. The committee was received "with utmost kindness" and granted "every opportunity for intelligent inspection." All these "courtesies" were occasioned by "the simple mention of 'Concordia Seminary, St. Louis'" and reference to the building program. "No other introduction proved necessary."⁸² Instead of a local architect, the committee chose a Philadelphia firm, East, Day and Klauder. The subcommittee "was informed on good authority" that this firm was "the greatest college architect in the United States."⁸³ The style the committee selected was not the "brick horrors" typical of Missouri's synodical schools but Gothic.⁸⁴ A thousand-dollar gift came from one Indiana layman who was "tired of seeing only Methodist and Presbyterian colleges make a fine showing and ours look like barracks."⁸⁵

This architectural firm had gained a national reputation for its designs of American modifications of the late Gothic style. Called Tudor after the name of the royal house in England during the Reformation, it also came to be called Perpendicular because of the vertical lines which marked its designs, or Collegiate Gothic because famous English colleges such as Oxford and Cambridge were built in that style.⁸⁶

An Oxford expert enlisted as a consultant to the committee designing the University of Chicago remarked, "We have not used that style of architecture for some 600 years," yet the new Concordia also chose this "architectural anachronism." Concern was expressed that such a building design would make students "too dainty, comfort-conscious, and hard to please when they left."⁸⁷ The design was planned to accommodate 400 students but could be expanded to serve twice that number.⁸⁸

The exterior walls of the buildings were faced with variegated stone, 45 per cent from Boulder, Colorado, in four shades of red; 45 per cent from Ste. Genevieve, Mis-

souri, in gray; 5 per cent from Perry County, Missouri, in yellow; and 5 per cent St. Louis white limestone. Decades earlier, the Perry County quarry had provided the stone used for the first Lutheran church at Altenburg, Missouri.⁸⁹ The 8.75 million pounds of stone used for the facings of the buildings was the largest amount devoted to a single contract in United States history up to that time.⁹⁰

Many of Concordia's buildings were named for key figures in the Synod's history: Wyneken Hall, Craemer Tower, Fuerbringer Dormitory, Buenger Hall, Brohm Hall, E.A. Brauer Dormitory, A.L. Graebner Dormitory, Rudolph Lange Dormitory, Guenther Dormitory, and Georg Stoeckhardt Graduate Hall. Archways on the complex were named after Gustavus Adolphus and William Tyndale.

Plans were also drawn for an impressive tower to be erected overlooking the campus and surrounding neighborhoods. It was designed to be 120 feet high and to be named after the Great Reformer. Theodore Graebner envisioned this tower dominating the entire west end of St. Louis. "No one," he concluded, "can fail to be impressed with the distinction and charm that the design radiates."⁹¹ It took almost four decades, however, for Luther Tower to be completed.

For more than 55 pages of his history and description of the new Concordia, Graebner detailed the symbolism contained in stone emblems and stained glass around the campus. Included were shields honoring Tyndale, Wyclif, John Hus, Savanrola; and the "Olbers"; the ship on which the Saxon founders departed Germany, and representations of other ships on which German and Norwegian Lutheran immigrants sailed for America; seals of the 19 other colleges and seminaries of the Missouri Synod and sister churches in the Synodical Conference (including the Theological Seminary of the Wisconsin Synod in Wauwatosa); emblems of the coats of arms of the signers of the Augsburg Confession; emblems of the coats of arms of the German cities Schmalkalden, Speier, Nuernberg, Reutlingen, Augsburg, Jena, Eisleben, Magdeburg, Eisenach, Braunschweig, Marburg, Koenigsburg, Heilbronn, Leipzig, Lindau, Kostnitz, Frankfurt-on-the-Main, Strassburg, Hamburg, Ulm, Memmingen, Riga, Wittenberg, Luebeck, Noerdlingen, Erfurt, Schwaebisch-Hall, Bremen, and Emden; emblems of the coats of arms of John the Constant Elector of Saxony; John Frederick Elector of Saxony, Philip Landgrave of Hesse, Wolfgang of Anhalt, George Margrave of Brandenburg, Ernest the Confessor Duke of Brunswick and Lueneburg; seals of Brazil, Argentina, Sweden, Norway, Denmark, Slovakia, China, India, Alberta, British Columbia, Manitoba, Saskatchewan, Ontario, Australia; the great seal of the United States, the state of Missouri, Perry County, and the Log Cabin Seminary; a commemoration of the 400th anniversary of the Reformation; the coats of arms of Oglethorpe, New Sweden, Concordia Seminary Tower, the 50th anniversary of the Missouri Synod, the 300th anniversary of the Formula of Concord, Justus Falckner, Henry Muehlenberg, St. Matthew's Lutheran Church in New York, Trinity Lutheran Church in Wilmington, Delaware; all the Missouri Synod Districts, the American Lutheran Publicity Bureau, the Lutheran School Emblem, the Lutheran Laymen's League, and the Walther League; memorial panels devoted to famous theologians from Germany and America, including Charles Porterfield Krauth, Adolf Hoenecke, and Ulrik Koren; artistic windows dedicated to Bach, Mendelssohn, Gerhardt, Heermann, Kranach, Duerer, Luther and Walther.⁹²

Graebner concluded that the "union of practical arrangement, noble architecture, and permanency" brought about through the cooperation of the architects, building committee, and contractors yielded "a college group so impressive" that it has "rarely been achieved, and never, if the word of experts may be trusted, in the history of Ameri-

can college building.”⁹³

Celebration

The cornerstone of the new Concordia was laid on Sunday, October 26, 1924, a “perfect Indian-summer day, with light mists hovering in the quiet air.” Trains from Indiana, Illinois, and Missouri brought a crowd estimated at between 12,000 and 20,000 people.⁹⁴ At the old Concordia, the synod’s new radio station KFUE broadcast the cornerstone-laying service live to many other thousands who could not attend.⁹⁵ “All remark on the clearness with which the speaking and singing as well as the music of the Concordia-Emmaus Band came through.” Even the creaking of the derrick lifting stone into place and the scraping of the trowel spreading mortar “was audible a thousand miles.”⁹⁶

The size of the cornerstone laying crowd was dwarfed by the throngs 20 months later that attended new Concordia’s dedication services. Trains originating from more distant locales— Indianapolis, Fort Wayne, Chicago, and Detroit— brought an estimated 75,000 visitors to gather for worship and to hear congratulatory messages from public officials and speeches by Missouri Synod dignitaries. What had been referred to as “the Kaiser’s church” less than a decade before now received positive news coverage,⁹⁷ including extensive pictorial coverage from the *Architectural Record*.⁹⁸ A headline in the June 14, 1926, *St. Louis Daily Globe-Democrat* described the crowd as a “sea of humanity.” As loudspeakers conveyed the messages of Synodical officials— in German and English— KFUE carried the service across the country. President Calvin Coolidge, the governor of Missouri, and the mayor of St. Louis brought radio greetings.⁹⁹

That day, wrote Carl Meyer, “must be regarded as a landmark in the annals of the Missouri Synod.” Beyond the huge crowds, grateful sermons, and laudatory messages, the chief significance of the day was to be found “in the culmination and manifestation of Missouri’s unity, loyalty, devotion, and sacrifice.” The new Concordia was “the embodiment of what the Missouri Synod had stood for and struggled for during almost 80 years.”¹⁰⁰

The Wisconsin Synod held its celebratory cornerstone laying in Thiensville two summers later, on Sunday, July 22, 1928. An estimated 5,000 church members and guests and a mass choir of almost 300 voices marked the day.¹⁰¹ The dedication day, 13 months later on August 18, 1929, was “truly a festive day” and a similarly significant day in Wisconsin Synod history, marked by “almost ideal” summer weather, a crowd of more than 15,000 visitors (including a “number of young people who had motored over from Ohio to join the happy throng”), and a mass choir of over 500 voices.¹⁰² Martin Westerhaus called the dedication day attendance “One of the largest if not the largest gathering of Wisconsin Synod Lutherans in our history.”¹⁰³

The texts for the two German and two English sermons on dedication day were Romans 3:28; Jeremiah 23:6; 1 Corinthians 1:30; and John 5:39. John Brenner commented:

Those who will look up these texts to read them carefully will not be in doubt as to the service to which the new buildings were dedicated. Our seminary serves the King who has redeemed us. . . . In it the Revealed Word of God rules supreme, the Word that is a power of God unto salvation. Salvation by grace through faith is its message to the students. It knows nothing and teaches nothing, save Jesus Christ, and Him crucified, as He is revealed by the Holy Scriptures. There is no room for

human merit nor for the effusiveness of sin-corrupted reason. It does not join the world in glorifying man, but gives all praise and honor to God.¹⁰⁴

Conclusion

In 1928, a group of architects meeting in St. Louis came to Clayton to inspect and praise the new campus. Theodore Graebner wrote to the other members of the building committee that when they see the new Luther Tower and statue “they will all conclude that the Lutheran church is here for good and must be reckoned with. Am I right?”¹⁰⁵ A couple years earlier, Walter A. Maier wrote an article for the *Walther League Messenger* blasting synodical pessimists. The article’s title, “We Can,” was superimposed on an aerial photograph of the seminary campus.¹⁰⁶ They and many other Missouri Synod clergy and laity saw the new Concordia as final and incontrovertible proof that “the Missouri Synod was taking its place in America.”¹⁰⁷

The great affection that third and fourth generation Wisconsin Synod graduates feel for their seminary in Mequon will remain undiminished, despite the gloomy assessment of Kurt Koehler, who criticized “the plebeian conception” of the seminary as “a monument to the small potato psychology” of most of the Synod’s pastors.¹⁰⁸ Neither will their affection be diminished by this brief comparison with Missouri’s Concordia Seminary. Maybe the differences in style and cost between the Clayton and Mequon campuses are just that—differences in style and cost—and should not be mustered to yield any deeper meaning.

Yet it does seem undeniable that in the decades following the completion of the two seminaries, Missouri and Wisconsin traveled increasingly divergent paths. Veteran Wisconsin Synod pastors familiar with Missouri and Missourians believed they saw in their sister synod “a growing dissatisfaction with the status quo” and “a desire to become ‘big’ like the other Lutheran churches.” Missouri “seemed embarrassed by its immigrant, parochial status,” feeling it was entitled to “a larger role on the Lutheran stage.” It seemed Missourians “wanted to stop being ‘immigrants,’ ‘different,’ ‘strict,’ and start being ‘American,’ ‘Protestants,’ ‘accepted.’”¹⁰⁹ Elmer Kiessling described it as a Lutheran version of “*aggiornamento* or accommodation to the needs of the modern era.”¹¹⁰

For its part, Missouri Synod observers have at times questioned whether the Wisconsin Synod has been too comfortable with its own status quo, content to be small (“small potatoes”?), unembarrassed at its immigrant, parochial status. When a Wisconsin writer in the late 1940s seemed to disdain the benefits of good publicity, an *American Lutheran* columnist charged that such disdain may explain why Wisconsin had grown much more slowly than Missouri. “There is no virtue in size,” he wrote, “nor is there a particular virtue in smallness. There certainly is no virtue in smallness if we put a halo around that concept, and even, God forbid, point the finger at others not so virtuously small.”¹¹¹

A half century later, similar Missouri views of Wisconsin persist. Timothy Dost of Concordia Seminary wrote recently, “Theology can be used as a means of self-justification, or condemnation of those who hold differing philosophical, political, or social views.” One must still be in the world, and that world “brings pressure to bear on even theological and historical issues.” Dost charges that the Wisconsin Synod seems to regard its “purity and smallness” as “preferable to the breadth and scope of Missouri.”¹¹²

Such differences in synodical outlooks are less attributable to the size and style of their two seminaries, and more to be explained by what has gone on inside them.

ENDNOTES

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from the editor ...

by Arnold O. Lehmann

A word of thanks and appreciation to Stephen Mueller for the well researched paper on what an individual congregation can accomplish in the mission work of the church. This editor had planned to publish it soon after it was written several years ago, but because of the length of the paper was hesitant on how it could be done. It was finally decided to publish it in two successive issues of the *Journal*. The conclusion will appear in the April 2006 issue. Also, a thank you to Mark Braun for the well researched follow up article on our seminary.

Finally, please excuse the delay in the publication of this issue. The concluding work could not be completed because the editor spent some time in the hospital after suffering a mild heart attack. With the Lord's help all is progressing well and a continued normal life is in prospect.

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

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