

Library

TAKING ADVANTAGE OF THE AIRWAVES

A Look at the Use of Radio for Broadcasting the Gospel Message

Kurt P. Ebert

THE SEMINARY LIBRARY
Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary
Mequon, Wisconsin

Church History
Professor Fredrich
1985

Handwritten text, possibly a signature or date, located in the lower right quadrant of the page.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Acknowledgments.....	i
Foreward	ii
Introduction	1
I. Brief History of Radio	3
II. The Lutheran Hour	7
III. Message from the Master	10
Lutheran Radio Service	13
Voice of Salvation	15
Telling the Truth	16
IV. WELS Congregational Efforts	19
V. WELS Synodical Investigations into Broadcasting	25
VI. Observations, Comments & Conclusions.....	28
Endnotes	36
Bibliography	37
Appendices	38

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

A number of men assisted me greatly in the research required for this study. I wish to thank Mr. John Barber of the WELS Mass Media Ministry, Mr. Tony Lusthoff who records for the "Music for the Master" program, Pastor James Schaefer, Pastor Paul Brinkman who coordinates "Message from the Master", Pastor Dennis Kleist of "The Lutheran Heritage Hour", Mr. Gary Greenfield, Pastor Fred Snyder of Elmbrook Church, Pastor Norman Berg, Mr. Craig Halverson, and all the pastors to took the time and effort to respond to a questionnaire. Without the help of these gentlemen this paper could not have been written.

FOREWARD

On a balmy July evening in the Pacific Northwest region of our Synod, two servants of the Gospel sat outside the meeting room of an accommodating bank which was nestled squarely in the middle of a developing and prosperous suburban area, asking each other, "What would the Apostle Paul have done?" The question arose out of discouragement that absolutely no one had heeded the invitation to a Bible Information Class at this bank room that night even after weeks of pavement pounding, door-knocking, survey work and distribution of information and an invitation to over 1,000 homes. It arose from a feeling of failure. It expressed the opinion that there must be a better, more productive way of sharing the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Surely if the Apostle Paul were to walk up the streets, he would have found a more "inspired" method of spreading the Word!

Thoughts like these must enter the mind of almost everyone who has attempted to band together a group of believers from scratch-- thoughts of frustration; thoughts of failure. Maybe Paul's method would have been more effective; but then again, perhaps not. What this discouragement did for me was to make me begin looking at alternative methods of spreading God's Word, both to believers and the unconverted alike. It brought to mind the many preachers who had inspired me without ever having seen me or bringing me into their churches. It made me wonder if the medium of radio, a tool so versatile that it can reach people while they are doing laundry, driving to work or lying on the beach, could ever be a viable means for the local church to use in its outreach to the community and

the world.

It is this question which serves as a kind of hub for the study which follows. The word "hub" suggests that this study somewhat resembles a bicycle wheel with the general theme of "radio outreach of the Gospel" in the middle and a variety of examples, broadcasts and programming ideas surrounding it. I am painfully aware of the weaknesses found in this study. In some places, historical information is sketchy or relies too heavily on either limited sources or personal opinion. In other areas, radio broadcasts are compared much like apples and oranges. And finally, after examining quite a few different possibilities in religious radio broadcasting, one finds that the question which initially prompted this paper is not at all answered satisfactorily.

What this paper does do is bring up a number of questions which must be considered as one contemplates a radio ministry. It also exposes the reader to a small sampling of the vast number of radio ministries which have been attempted or are currently being operated. I have chosen not to deal with the broadcasting of church services or WELS advertising spots; rather, the focus is on Gospel preaching which is specially designed and produced specifically for radio use in this country. Hopefully it will serve to broaden the reader's understanding of the terrific potential radio offers to the preacher of the Gospel, as it has mine.

MAKING THE MOST OF THE AIRWAVES

Introduction

The pragmatic question "How?" time and again has been found as a response to Christ's Great Commission, "Go and make disciples of all nations." Someone has calculated that it would be mathematically possible to evangelize the entire world of four billion souls in 16 years if there was only one devoted Christian who brought another person to Christ in six months; and then in another six months, those two brought two more to Christ; and so on, with every Christian bringing another to their Lord every half year. The numbers serve as an inspiration to all Christians to witness their faith, but realistically one sees the problems of human nature effectively blocking the road to fulfillment of this kind of vision. In quite a few instances we see the early Christian church approaching the Great Commission from a different angle: preaching God's Word, His power unto salvation, to large groups of people-- for instance to the thousands gathered in Jerusalem at Pentecost. Jesus Himself preached frequently to large masses of eager listeners, sometimes as many as 15,000 people or more in one sitting. Peter and John utilized the synagogues. Paul preached to a gathering of philosophers at Mars Hill in Athens.

For us 20th century disciples, some of the common meeting places of the first century are no longer accessible as means of outreach. Christians simply are not tolerated preaching in Jewish synagogues, and if someone were to place a bulletin in the local paper advertising "Milwaukee Christian to Speak about the Truths of Salvation at the Arena," the nature of the average unbelieving American would be to remain planted in front of his television set with peanuts

in hand, sitting comfortably in his recliner, quite reluctant to travel any distance to hear the Word. The American likes to have things brought to him. For that reason, we have an arena at our disposal which Paul and the other apostles might very well have envied. We have radio. The airwaves, in many ways, have become our marketplace, hillside and synogogue.

From the very outset, however, it needs to be emphasized that this medium is not meant to replace the local congregation, and certainly it could not. Ben Armstrong, executive director for the National Religious Broadcasters association (NRB), pointedly remarks,

Radio and TV have broken through the walls of tradition we have built up around the church and have restored conditions remarkably similar to the early church. We may not like to hear this, for we fear that the absence of koinonia, the gathering together in community of believers, will suffer. Central to our understanding of the church is the element of fellowship with one another. That must never be replaced by the electric church, but the electric church has been and is being used to draw people into that kind of local church worship... This electric church is not a replacement for the local assembly of believers, but a complement to it.¹

From this viewpoint, the study develops around the thesis: RADIO IS AN EFFECTIVE AND WORTHWHILE TOOL FOR THE CHURCH TO USE DIRECTLY IN SPREADING THE GOSPEL. This paper will examine a number of different approaches Christians, especially those of the WELS, have utilized to spread the Word and finally address the assertion that we as a church body could, and perhaps should, use radio to a greater extent in our outreach to the world.

A Brief History of Religious Radio in America

It didn't take long at all for some farsighted preachers to catch on to the development of radio as a tool for their trade. The very first radio station in America began operation on Nov. 2, 1920 in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. At that time fewer than 1,000 radio operators were able to pick up the broadcast, which initiated with the results of that day's national election. Only two months elapsed before the first Gospel was proclaimed through this same station, broadcasting a church service from Calvary Episcopal Church in Pittsburgh (with the radio technicians disguised in choir gowns so as not to disturb the worship). From that day on, interest in religious broadcasting caught on and began to accelerate, at first somewhat slowly and then by leaps and bounds.

In the summer of 1922, Paul Rader, formerly the pastor of the Moody Memorial Church in Chicago, set up his own once-a-week station in Chicago (WJBT: "Where Jesus Blesses Thousands"). It wasn't long before capacity audiences of five thousand people flocked to the church to see this preacher whose radio messages had thrilled them. When network broadcasting became an entity in the 1930's, Rader launched "Breakfast Brigade" on CBS, serving a nationwide audience with the Gospel message. Many others followed suit. In 1922 John Zoller was the first to broadcast sermons from Detroit. Other pioneers in such broadcasts of the '20's, whose names now appear in the NRB Hall of Fame, include Clarence W. Jones, Charles E. Fuller, Walter A. Maier, R.R. Brown ("The Billy Sunday of the Air"), Paul Myers, William Ward Ayer and Donald Grey Barnhouse.²

By 1927, so much radio programming was being aired with no governmental regulations that radio reception was becoming a near

impossibility. Individual stations were erecting transmitters capable of producing signals at 500,000 watts--five times the highest allowable output today. Reception became a torrent of squeals and howls with little chance of picking out one clear station. To put a lid on this mayhem the federal government established the Federal Radio Commission (FRC) in 1927. The commission instituted new technical standards of station operation in just a few months. Standards were set for regular broadcasting schedules, assigned frequencies and channels, and power modulation equipment. The FRC also began issuing licenses on the basis of "public interest, convenience, and necessity."³ The effect on religious broadcasters was initially disastrous; few could afford the personnel and sophisticated equipment the FRC required and of 60^{religious} stations in 1928 only twelve still existed by 1933. Yet the regulations eventually aided the Gospel in two ways: 1) the airwaves were "cleaned up" for audible listening, and 2) nationally syndicated radio soon came into being, allowing for prime-time, widespread outreach of the Gospel message. A number of big name religious broadcasts found their beginnings in the thirties; many are still being aired today. Here are a few of them:

- "Morning Cheer," a program begun by George Palmer in 1932 which has endured five decades

- "Radio Bible Class," founded by M.R. De Haan, who turned over the show to his son, Richard; he now sponsors "Day of Discovery".

- "Heaven and Home Hour," by Clarence Erickson

- "Haven of Rest" -- This popular show was founded by Paul "First Mate Bob" Myers, who reportedly reached his conversion on a foggy shipping warf. The program's sign-on was "First Mate Bob and the crew of the Good Ship Grace coming from the harbor called

Haven of Rest in Hollywood, California." Thirty days after his conversion from being a wandering drunk he began this program, soon to be heard 1,240 times each week on over 200 stations.

- "Back to God Hour," whose original speaker was Harry Schultze. The present speaker on this broadcast of the Christian Reformed Church is Joel Nederhood.

- "Back to the Bible" is still heard daily under the voice of Warren Wiersbe.

- "The Radio Revival Hour," later to become in 1937 the "Old Fashioned Revival Hour," was begun by Charles Fuller. He offered two programs on 1,000 stations to the tune of 1.5 million dollars in 1943, completely listener sponsored.⁴

Popular nation-wide Christian broadcasts today include "Insights for Living" by Charles Swindoll, "Old Time Gospel Hour" with Jerry Falwell, and "Focus on the Family" by Dr. James Dobson. This study can hardly begin to scratch the surface of the many hundreds of religious broadcasts being produced in the United States today. Radio has plainly become a preferred preaching tool.

Two broadcasting leaders in the development of religious radio deserve closer attention. One was Donald G. Barnhouse's "The Bible Study Hour." Its opening broadcast in 1949 began a verse by verse exposition of Paul's letter to the Romans, an approach communications theorists would reject as a medium nightmare; but the results told a different story. "Thrilled by the urgency of the message, eager listeners hung on every word. Contrary to the predictions of the leaders of the organized Church, the program was a greater success than its predecessor (Barnhouse's weekly radio messages) and, even more surprising, it appealed to college age adults."⁵ This one series on Romans produced a decade of 455 half-

hour broadcasts. Although the "Bible Study Hour" was designed particularly for teaching and not evangelism, it had an evangelistic impact on many listeners. Barnhouse could speak as though he were addressing one person rather than a lecture hall of hundreds, or a radio audience of thousands. Often he would challenge his listeners with penetrating, personal questions--much like the "Key Questions" of D. James Kennedy's Evangelism Explosion. His approach was to become a model to which a number of broadcasters have returned. Armstrong sees this format as a returning trend:

With all this diversity (children's programs, mission programs, sermons, evangelistic outreach, etc.) the newest trend in radio programs is most surprising. Academic theorists have been promoting more creativity, which is their code word for less Bible study and preaching. But Ed Steele, a leader in religious program syndication, reports, "The primary trend among stations today is for solid Bible-teaching programs. They're asking for no-frills formats, without music or personal chatter. They find that today's audience wants a full fifteen to thirty minutes of daily Bible study from a well-qualified teacher."⁶

A second and even more influential leader in early radio programming was Moody Bible Institute. By 1925 MBI was raising funds for a radio station whose purpose initially was to broadcast a Gospel music program on Sunday evenings. Soon, however, it was on radio six days a week with a two hour program of music and lectures every evening. Today the station (WBMI) presents daily instruction on "Radio School of the Bible," and the daily program "Bible College of the Air" even offers college credit. The station says that its pioneer series "Stories of Great Christians" is the longest running dramatic series on the air. The station's most prestigious radio program is "Moody Presents," a weekly half hour of music and biblically centered talk by the president of MBI. It is heard on hundreds of religious and secular stations all over the world.⁷

This brief history of Christian radio broadcasting is simply to set the stage for a closer look at several specific radio ministries. It is hoped that by examining the structure, content and effectiveness of past Christian broadcasts we may reach some conclusions about the advisability, or even necessity, of pursuing a radio ministry either as a congregation or a synod. To do this we will concentrate on a long-running synodical broadcast, "The Lutheran Hour"; a federation-level program, "Message From The Master" and the Lutheran Radio Ministry; the congregational level radio ministry of Elmbrook Church; and a number of WELS congregational efforts. Perhaps a synthesis of these varied ministries will highlight the pros and cons of religious radio use.

THE LUTHERAN HOUR

By every measure, Walter A. Maier (WAM) is renowned as a highly innovative, gifted and productive servant of the Lord; but perhaps in no other field did his gifts harvest results in such a large measure as they did in radio. His first thrust into the world of the airwaves began not with tubes and transistors but with an attitude which was to be his stay throughout almost thirty years of radio preaching. His son, Paul, remarks of his father's attitude, "And radio? It had to be a divine gift to the church, for what other means of communication could offer such enormous spread, penetration, and even economy considering its potential audience? Prof. Maier applied to broadcasting the Old Testament Scripture, 'Who knows but whether you have not come to the kingdom for such a time as this?'"⁸ Armed with an amazing sense of foresight and an indomitable desire to spread the Gospel far and wide, Maier ventured into Bible broadcasting on Sunday, Dec. 14, 1924, from an im-

provided transmitting room in the sprawling attic of Concordia Seminary, St. Louis. This was the first outreach of KFUD, "The Gospel Voice," in which WAM began to host two weekly programs: Sunday vesper services and Thursday evenings' "Views on the News," where he editorialized on major news stories of the week. In 1926 he started a lecture series on contemporary religious issues.⁹

Many great ventures grow from small beginnings, and this is especially true of the Lutheran Hour broadcast which was soon to become known as the most influential Christian radio program of all time. From the attic of Concordia, WAM eventually moved his messages to a corporation of 36 stations plus two short-wave outlets. The premier broadcast of this nation-wide event took place on October 2, 1930, a Thursday evening. A midweek evening was chosen because there was much concern that the broadcast might conflict with Sunday church services or be regarded as a substitute for them. It took a great deal of capital to maintain this service from CBS: \$4,500 per half hour broadcast, or over \$200,000 annually. To fund this, WAM approached the Lutheran Laymen's League, whose motto was "To Aid Synod with Word and Deed in Business and Financial Matters" as well as the Walther League, which he had served faithfully over the years in appearances and lectures. Between the two, he was able to gather the \$100,000 necessary to begin the first broadcasting season.¹⁰

WAM's messages were always Christ-centered and life-oriented; his style was inevitably captivating. Son Paul writes,

Convinced that the Spirit of God injected power into what he termed his "poor efforts," Walter Maier exerted the fibers of his body and his voice to send the message off as effectively as he could. Possibly "dynamic urgency" characterized the sounds which filled the studio and the air. Sometimes pleasing, sometimes not, his voice often reached considerable intensity early in the sermon, violating the usual rule that radio speakers should use the volume level of a living room conversation. The average rate of his

fairly rapid delivery was 130-170 words per minute, and at times he introduced variety by raising pitch and volume as a thought cycle progressed, hitting the climax with emphasis, then tapering off for the denouement.¹¹

Maier's appeal, though, did not consist solely in his style. He had a way of applying God's Word to the situation at hand so that both believer and unbeliever could share in the convicting law and comforting Gospel of God's Word. An apt example can be found in the conclusion to his first radio sermon, entitled "There Is A God," in which he addresses a nation wracked by the uncertainties of the depression:

But in the crises of life and the pivotal hours of existence, only the Christian--having God and with Him the assurance that no one can successfully prevail against him--is able to carry the pressing burdens of sickness, death, financial reverses, family troubles, misfortunes of innumerable kinds and degrees, and yet to bear all this with the undaunted faith and Christian confidence, that alone makes life worth living and death worth dying.¹²

The public response to "The Lutheran Hour" was phenomenal. Paul Maier reports, "After only half a year on the air, WAM received more mail than did all the programs sponsored by the Federal Council of Churches over the NBC network that entire year, even though these totaled nine times as much air time as TLH and featured such prominent preachers as Parkes Cadman, Harry Emerson Fosdick, Ralph W. Sockman and others."¹³ Even the fan mail of the popular show "Amos 'n Andy", which was aired just before the Lutheran Hour on Thursdays, was dwarfed by the flood of listener responses to Maier's urgent and inspirational messages. When the "Lutheran Hour" was forced off the air for three and a half years because of financial difficulties (June, 1931 to February, 1935) CBS was deluged with appeals for its return. And return it did, to be broadcast from 1935 until Maier's death in 1950, and from 1950 until the present under the able preaching of Oswald Hoffman. It is for a

good reason that the LC-MS has become known as "The Church of the Lutheran Hour." This radio program has produced an enduring legacy for a church body and the Kingdom at large.

The progression of this historical study goes from large scale to a smaller, if not congregational, scale of broadcasting. Somewhere in the middle lies broadcasting on a federation level as it is demonstrated in the Milwaukee Federation's "Music for the Master" and "Message from the Master."

MESSAGE FROM THE MASTER

There are many advantages for churches on a nation- or world-wide basis to band together as a synod to aid one another in joint ventures of support, missions, Christian education, worker training and so on. Congregations in a given locale, particularly in a large urban area, have found it advantageous to form "mini-synods" or federations, to further smaller scale projects for the church. The Milwaukee Federation of WELS Churches was formed for this very purpose and has taken upon itself a number of worthwhile efforts for the metropolitan Milwaukee area. They include the sponsorship of the Wisconsin Lutheran Adult Band, Camp Philip, some mission projects, bargain center retail shops, a food pantry at WLCFS, an occasional Youth Rally or Choral Festival, and an annual joint Reformation service.

The project which demands our attention in this connection is the production of the "Music" and "Message" programs by the Federation's Radio and TV Ministry. Unlike the "Lutheran Hour", these programs have fairly recent beginnings, being first aired in 1976. They began as a single local broadcast but as of 1985 have spread to

eight different outlets, including stations in Wisconsin, Minnesota, North Dakota, South Dakota, Illinois and Michigan; the introduction and sign-off of each broadcast is tailored for each church or group of churches sponsoring the program. The annual budget of this ministry is currently \$40,000. Half is met by listeners' gifts, the other half is funded by the federation.

"The Message from the Master" is a thirty minute weekly program developed around a single theme, usually part of a six week series, but also based on special themes for major festivals of the church year. The topical approach to these series has an appeal which reaches out to believer and unbeliever alike. Here is a sampling of various series the program as produced over the years:

Good Reasons For Not Going To Church

- I can get church at home
- It's the only time I can rest
- Someone offended me
- All the church wants is money
- I can live a good life without church
- Religion was forced on me as a child
- Real men don't need church

What Would Jesus Do If He Were In My Shoes?

- Rejection
- Temptation
- Grief
- When people get you down
- When run down
- Conflict
- Facing a decision

Can A Christian: Expect the government to create jobs?
Take a stand on nuclear disarmament?
Demand a Christian Public Policy or morality?
Expect the government to take care of the poor?
Strive to become rich?
Marry a non-Christian?

Six pastors take turns preaching on a rotation basis for these programs and are assigned the sermon topics three months in advance. Sometimes the sermon will focus on a particular Bible character or event; in other cases it will address a pressing question to the

radio audience ("Are you saved?"). But always, the intent of this broadcast is to grab the interest of the listener with a pertinent concern and reach him with the pure Gospel of Jesus Christ (a precious commodity on the air these days!). Music by WELS churches and schools is chosen to emphasize each theme. These half-hour programs are available to any church group for broadcasting at \$30 per week.

"The Music For The Master" is a sister program of "Message," a 15 minute program of selected sacred music by WELS colleges, seminaries, schools, churches and choirs. The format includes the Bible readings for each Sunday with commentary blending Word and song. This is also available to any church at \$15 per week. Mr. Tony Lusthoff of Milwaukee is presently the active coordinator and technician of "Music."

As an example of how this program can be utilized outside the Milwaukee area, consider the "Lutheran Heritage Hour" being aired in the Chicago area. Twelve churches form a federation which sponsors this broadcast every Sunday from a single station. Besides the \$30/week needed to obtain the taped product from the Radio/TV ministry, the station charges \$205/week for air time; publicity and mailed materials for this program amount to \$500/year. As with most religious radio programs it is difficult to determine just how effective this program is. Pastor Dennis Kleist of Morton Grove, who heads this function of the church group, lists reaching the unchurched as a primary goal of the broadcast. Yet he notes quickly that there are other ways of using it as a tool for Gospel outreach: shut-ins particularly appreciate this program; or parishioners can tell others about it; flyers or blurbs in the newspaper serve as ways to alert the community about this opportunity for hearing the

Word.

Long before there was a "Milwaukee Federation," the churches of the Synodical Conference in the Milwaukee area--those of the WELS, LC-MS and the Synod of Evangelical Lutheran Churches--banded together to sponsor the first Lutheran church broadcast in the area. This Lutheran Radio Conference began broadcasting "The Lutheran Radio Church Service in Milwaukee" in 1928 and the service is still going strong today. It was the brainstorm of a Milwaukee attorney, Mr. Adelbert Beyer, to bring the Gospel to his shut-in parents by means of this relatively new means of communication. After investigating the possibilities and gaining the support of the area pastors and congregations, he approached the Milwaukee Journal Radio Station (WTMJ), which had been in operation for only one year, and made arrangements with the station manager, Walter Damm, to get the program off the ground. The radio committee was immediately formed then in 1928 and the Radio Conference within a year. Mr. Beyer served as the chairman of the radio committee from its inception for over 40 year.

The purpose of this radio program was and continues to be to bring a church service-like broadcast into the homes of its listeners. Good preaching has always been important; but so is liturgy and hymnody. To provide a "church-like" backdrop for the sermon, various choirs have sung over the years. For the first eleven years, choirs from many congregations furnished the music for the Sunday morning broadcasts. Then in 1939 a group of singers, drawn largely from the Lutheran A Cappella Choir, organized to form a radio choir. Occasionally the radio choir would be relieved of its duties by the Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary Choir under the direction

of Prof. Martin Albrecht or the Concordia College Choir directed by Prof. James Engel.

This program has undergone a number of changes over the years. It was initiated as an AM broadcast; but in 1937 the Radio Committee began short wave broadcasting on W9XAZ, the Journal's own development. These short wave attempts ended after several months because of limited response. In 1941 the program expanded to FM services called "The Concordia Sunday Evening Hour" which originated in the chapel of Concordia College. Pastors of greater Milwaukee preached on these programs and choirs from various congregations furnished the singing. These broadcasts over WTMJ-FM were on the air for about three years but were discontinued because the response was rather meager and because FM broadcasting took a different form. When WTMJ-TV came into being in 1947, the Radio Committee was occasionally given free time for broadcasting live on special festivals, particularly Christmas and Easter.

An important change took place in 1961 when the severing of fellowship ties occurred between LC-MS and the Wisconsin Synod. Since then the Lutheran Radio Committee has made arrangements so that the two synods would alternate Sundays of programming, although the committee structure of the past and the cooperative working relationships in certain practical matters were maintained and the Committee dealt with WTMJ as representative of both synods.

Through the years the Radio Committee has had the policy of offering religious reading material and mementoes to interested listeners. One of the first items to be offered was a copy of the newly revised edition of Luther's Small Catechism. This gift was intended for listeners who wished to be informed of the Lutheran teachings; in all 2,867 copies of this book were mailed out. Other

printed materials were distributed as well: booklets of morning devotions, copies of radio sermons, meditations on Scripture and more.

Measuring effectiveness, again, is difficult. In the first 25 years the Radio Committee received over 100,000 pieces of mail, mainly from shut-ins expressing their appreciation. The very fact that this radio ministry has survived for 57 years speaks well for the "Lutheran Radio Church Service."¹⁴

Another example of a federation-style radio program is "Voice of Salvation." Pastor Gary Brown is the coordinator for this program which is sponsored by the Chippewa River Valley Councilmen's Conference of the Western Wisconsin District. Twenty eight congregations form this "federation" and sponsor the the program on three different stations: Eau Claire, Rice Lake and New Richmond. This is a Sunday morning 15-minute broadcast consisting of hymns and a sermon of 8 to 10 minutes. Its \$73 weekly budget is financed completely by freewill offerings from the Conference. Pastor Brown remarks of this program,

The "Voice of Salvation" was designed as a program for members in our area who would not be able to attend worship services regularly. Generally, the program has been well supported financially. There have been times even recently when it was wondered if the "Voice of Salvation" could continue. The answer has been dramatic. Our members have shown by very generous financial gifts that they want the program to continue on all three radio stations.

Pastor Brown continues by expressing his view on the effectiveness of religious radio broadcasting in general:

In regard to the radio ministry of which I am familiar, I know that it is worthwhile. You have to judge a radio broadcast by what you expect from it and by what your purpose is. A person should not have too high expectations. A person may have too high expectations

if he thinks that everyone in the community will know that the program is on the air, will listen to the program without turning the dial, that a non-churchgoer will listen to it and then will come to church, and that a person will see the results by the 3,000's. Such a person may be surprised at what he may think of as meager results.

A fair amount of money will be spent. The results may not be readily visible. Yet, the Gospel is being broadcasted. God gives the results. It is not wrong to want results and to judge a radio broadcast by the results. Maybe a radio program is not feasible for the expense involved. Maybe a radio program cannot meet the need. However, having patience with a radio program, there will usually be results. The Voice of Salvation meets our needs and the purpose for which it was intended.

"Telling The Truth" - A Congregational Broadcast

Cost factors play a determinative role in the decision of religious broadcasting. For this reason, there are many advantages for churches to band together as a group in producing a radio program. It is not out of the question, however, for a single congregation to sponsor its own broadcast, as many of the findings in this study will testify. To see how a single congregation might approach Gospel broadcasting on its own, we turn our attention to Elmbrook Community Church of Waukesha, WI.

Elmbrook is a special phenomenon of our times. It is a non-denominational church whose membership list numbers about 2,500, yet on any given Sunday morning one may expect to see upwards of 5,000 people filling the vast expanse of its auditorium-like sanctuary in three services. It was formerly a Baptist congregation until its current leading figure, Stuart Briscoe, pushed with some difficulty for the non-denominational stance. From every outward appraisal, this British preacher has achieved remarkable success in developing through the Word a very active, vital congregation.

It was first in 1972 that this congregation undertook a radio

ministry, directed by elder Walter Benady. It would take tapes of Briscoe's Sunday morning addresses (about 1,200 by now)--usually 50-55 minutes in length (since he preaches chapter by chapter homilies rather than pericopal sermons), divide each of them in half and play a half hour program Monday through Friday called "Telling the Truth." One might question the technical effectiveness of a broadcast like this; but the results were simply amazing. "Telling the Truth" was soon demanded and aired on 50 stations worldwide, on four different continents, and translated to be broadcast even in Liberia, Swaziland, Monte Carlo and Guam. It was tremendously popular, especially among churchgoers, in part because of Briscoe's magnetic personality and effective, pragmatic style in applying God's Word.

About 1980 the program took a dive, with the result that "Telling the Truth" is now broadcast only on three stations: Milwaukee, Neenah/Menasha and Chicago. The reason for this sudden demise is entirely financial. Unlike most air-wave preachers, Briscoe simply refuses to ask for money on these broadcasts, and admirably so. The former budget of \$160,000 has now dropped to \$70,000 and only about 1% of this comes from listeners. The rest is supported by a well developed "Telling the Truth" tape ministry among Elmbrook's members.

Pastor Fred Snyder, who coordinates the radio ministry at Elmbrook, shared several insights he feels are important in approaching a congregational radio ministry. 1) He feels that it is essential to be heard several times a week, perhaps daily, if the show is to gain a regular listening audience. Once-a-week broadcasts, he stated, are more likely to be ineffective. 2) He feels that a consistent morning time slot works best for these programs--when

wives are doing the wash or husbands are driving to work, or whatever. People get attached to "their" morning show. 3) A program like "Telling the Truth" is less effective for reaching the unchurched than it is the churched. It is a teaching tool, not evangelistic. TV, Snyder feels, is more beneficial as an evangelism tool because of its flash. 4) Radio seems to be opening up as a broadcast medium. There was a time when it was virtually impossible to buy air-time at an affordable price because the competition was so steep. But with all the attention now being directed towards TV and especially cable networks it is getting easier to find accessible radio time slots. (Elmbrook is currently utilizing ten cable stations for Sunday broadcasts.) 5) TV is phenomenally expensive. Unless a congregation is exceptionally large or has a good deal of financial backing from outside sources, radio is a much better buy. 6) Don't get attached to local Christian stations. Elmbrook went with WYLO instead of WVCY (Christian Radio) in Milwaukee in part because the listening audience is too narrow. Non-Christians are not likely to have a Christian station preset in their car stereos. (We might add another reason to avoid Christian stations: there's a great possibility of being lumped together with some pretty strange bedfellows!)

One may not admire Briscoe and Elmbrook church for its pale theological stance; but its experience in Gospel radio outreach are certainly admirable and may teach us confessional Lutherans a few lessons about approaching radio from novel angles. Success lies in spreading God's Word--whatever method is followed.

WELS CONGREGATIONAL EFFORTS

It is to the credit of our WELS churches that there have been quite a few congregational ventures in using radio as a means of spreading the Gospel. Some have met with little or no response; others have been highly appreciated and/or applauded in the community. Following are the synopses of programs uncovered by a survey for this report. It is by no means an exhaustive listing.

60 Second Spots

"Points to Ponder"

This program is the offspring of Pastor Robert Sawall, formerly the pastor of Shepherd of the Plains Lutheran Church of Lubbock, Texas. This is probably the most familiar of the congregational broadcasts because of its synod-wide promotion at the 1979 WELS convention by the Radio Research Committee. Pastor Sawall had a way of reaching the community with thought-provoking statements and questions from God's Word in a succinct, effective manner. The pastor now serving that congregation, Mark Wagner, looks back at "Points to Ponder" as one of the Synod's most effective radio programs. He writes,

My congregation did have a most productive run on the radio through the voice of Pastor Bob Sawall, my predecessor. He wrote and broadcast a 60 second spot every day right after Paul Harvey called "Points to Ponder." I don't think the WELS has found many more effective radio programs. In fact, Bob was mailing his messages out (just like Earl Nightengale) to many in our area and throughout our Synod (See appendix A). And he managed to bring in funds for this to make it self supporting...to the tune of a couple thousand dollars each year. There were a couple new converts who first heard of the WELS through this means and they were most positive about their impression as a result. But more than that I think Bob created a "positive" image with his witty style and fortunate time slot. Once he lost the position next to Paul Harvey, and the stations raised their rates, we lost the tool. I carried it on

for a few short months, but the funding network went with Bob, so we finally closed it out. For a beginning mission it was an excellent means for approaching the man on the street...like a name dropper, or a foot in the door. "Have you heard Points to Ponder?" Most everyone had at one point in time.... With the mailing and then bumper stickers, the members themselves really promoted Sawall's program.

When the program did die, it was because the rates doubled, tripled and quadrupled in a short time and it was no longer feasible to broadcast every day. It dropped to three times a week and then had to be stopped for lack of funding.

Wagner feels that this type of broadcast is worth digging into, provided the coverage area is not too large (like a metro city area) and the cost is not prohibitive. Occasionally stations will give churches Public Service time, or cheap time as a part of their "community service."

"Moment With The Lord"

Produced by Pastor Herbert Kuske of Trinity Lutheran Church, Abita Springs, Louisiana, this broadcast is aired on an AM Station at 8:15 a.m. three times a week. His approach is based on Sawall's "Points to Ponder." His congregation of 85 communicants is quite positive toward the broadcast. About 3.5% of the church's annual budget goes towards this broadcast which costs \$7.50 per one minute spot.

No name given

One pastor now serving in the Dallas/Ft. Worth area reports,

When I was assigned to an exploratory in Wichita Falls, Texas, in 1978, we tried a different approach for six months. We broadcast on KNIN AM a 60 second thought-for-the-day message five mornings a week immediately preceding Paul Harvey's commentary on the news. Each message was different. We had people who came and visited our church because they had enjoyed hearing the messages. After six months a good portion of the com-

munity would recognize my voice as being very familiar. But there we were in a city (with a population of 80,000) outside the broadcasting range of any larger city. We were very pleased with that exposure.

5 to 15 Minute Programs

"Come To The WELS"

This is the program which Pastor Mark Wagner of Lubbock, TX, now produces instead of "Points to Ponder." It is a 15 minute Sunday morning broadcast which varies its format every airing of the month. The first Sunday features a meditation/sermonette on a Biblical text; the second Sunday will discuss a popular topic; the third will provide a brief meditation followed by questions and answers; the fourth will return to a meditation/sermonette. Permit me to quote again his views on this broadcast:

I have been working with the radio in Lubbock (pop. 200,000) now for almost three years, and it has been both rewarding and frustrating. First off, I had to meet this pressure as a new grad, and somehow I didn't always get my sermon ready in time for the radio recording, which had to be in on Thursday. So... I began to work out a new approach which would give me some breathing room, and also let me work with some other texts. I began to combine, glean and then put together my messages based on Meditations/ articles, etc. And I am still doing that now. The challenge, as I see it, is to be an effective "voice" over the air that people will at least listen to for a few moments.

The best turn of events came when I asked the radio station to let me tape in their studio. They were very willing and helpful, so now every two weeks I go out on a Thursday afternoon and tape two programs... It surely enhanced the quality of the sound.

I carry an intro and tail done by Mike Froncek from MMM, which introduces my program as "Come to the WELS." Most comments I've had have been favorable, although that is my current weak spot...I don't have evaluation tools to tell who and how well I am reaching out. Few people who come to visit have ever mentioned that it was the radio that attracted them. I think this is more of an image builder...and as with printed materials, appearance, etc. if you can't keep up to the world's pro-

fessionalism (and it isn't always easy) you gain nothing but a "negative image." I would say this is the biggest hurdle. What you present has to have a professional touch to it or it will not be listened to or be effective.

Pastor Wagner feels that this program is supplementary at best and not a terrific PR tool. The cost is amazingly low: \$10 per airing of a 15 minute time slot ("Can't beat the price for the coverage!"). His congregation of 175 souls and 125 communicants is most positive about this program and will listen on Sundays when they are unable to come to church.

KROS

Pastor Hintz of Our Savior Lutheran Church, Clinton, Iowa, reports that at one time he had done daily 5-minute devotions because the time slot was offered at no charge on KROS radio. However, he discontinued doing these because of a lack of results and also the ecumenical confusion (a different minister was featured every week--Baptist, Catholic, Lutheran, etc.). He comments on Gospel broadcasting,

There are cases where the radio ministry as you describe it is very helpful (i.e., well-established church).... However, when reaching the unchurched as a mission congregation must do, people will not listen to a long 30 or 60 minute broadcast. They will turn it off. I'm sure John Barber has told you that the normal attention span of a person is about 30 seconds. In 30 seconds we must repeatedly impress the listeners with the Gospel. Thus, the 30 second and 60 second spot ads are effective in reaching out to the unchurched. I can't say that we ever gained a new member directly from these ads, but when used in combination with other follow-up it is effective... I don't think your theory is all wrong or all right--as is the case with most theories. It depends what you want to accomplish with radio... If you want to provide a radio ministry that will serve the shut-ins of the congregation and also provide a Gospel preaching that others will have the opportunity to hear who would not ordinarily attend the worship service, the theory is correct. But if you want to reach the unchurched in the community, the long broadcasts are ineffective.

"Lutheran Life Radio Service"

Pastor Ronald Zindler, who currently serves as pastor of Grace Ev. Lutheran Church, Columbia, Missouri, writes of a 15 minute broadcast with which he was involved in Manistee, Michigan. It was a Sunday morning broadcast aired at 8:45 which featured two verses of "A Mighty Fortress" as an opener, a sermonette, a short prayer, benediction and closing with the last two verses of "A Mighty Fortress," during which an invitation to worship was offered with the church location and time of services. His congregation of 120 communicants was very supportive of the program--in fact, it would support it at the expense of other congregational projects. Zindler writes,

A lot depends on the time, day and format of the service/broadcast, as well as the community in which the broadcast is made. Our early morning slot appeared to have its main audience made up of those going to church, i.e., already churched individuals. As an "evangelism invitation," the service was in essence a failure. However, as an "evangelism outreach" I would hope it plants a seed. We also had a large number of shut-ins who appreciated it.

"Lutheran Meditation"

Perhaps this program should be listed under "federation broadcasts," since 11 congregations contribute to its funding. Yet Pastor Alan Klessig of Calvary Ev. Lutheran Church, Abrams, Wisconsin is apparently primarily responsible for the broadcast. It is a ten minute slot aired at 9:05 a.m. Monday through Friday and is the oldest program on this local AM station (WOCO), with over 10,000 broadcasts accumulated over the years. Klessig varies his format regularly; sometimes he'll present a simple meditation, at

other times he'll deliver a Bible study with emphasis on Christian living and application of Biblical truths. He estimates a listening audience of about 15,000 people. (Years ago he offered a tract to all who wrote in, and 200 responded.) The annual cost for this daily broadcast is \$400.

Klessig sees this program as an effective tool for the benefit of his own members. He says, "Our area is saturated with churches. We have mission potential as people move, (but there's) not a lot of movement. Our radio work is not being used mainly as a mission tool but as a support tool for WELS members. It is a blessing to them. What fallout we get is not measurable yet."

Half Hour Program: "Life With God"

The only broadcast of this length which came to the attention of this writer was produced by Pastor Herbert Birner of Burton, Michigan. It was aired at 8:00 a.m. on Sundays and featured the WELS theme song and 23-24 minutes of instruction or a sermon. Pastor Birner was disappointed in the results--or lack of results--from this effort. No one besides his members ever mentioned hearing the program, and even after he spoke on controversial topics and invited response, he received none. As a result he became disillusioned with this effort, his congregation of 30 souls followed suit, and soon the program was dropped. Pastor Birner understandably feels that money should rather be spent preparing good pastors who do their work the old-fashioned way: one on one.

WELS Investigations into Radio Broadcasting

With such a variety of different formats and approaches to religious programming being attempted by our own pastors, someone may rightly ask, "Wouldn't it be possible for someone (i.e., Synod) to sponsor an effective broadcast which could be used nationwide by all our churches?"

It was this very request which finally resulted in the establishment of our present Mass Media Ministry (MMM). In 1977 this request, which originated from a report by the Milwaukee Federation's Radio & TV Ministry in 1974, was presented in the form of two memorials (77-2 and 77-3) to the Synod convention (see Appendix B). It suggested that a proposal be drafted for "developing a broadcasting policy...for use in our home mission fields as well as in our world mission fields...", and that the synod contact the radio communication media "with a view to nation-wide radio broadcast each week."¹⁵ In carrying out this resolution, the GBHM appointed a committee of eleven men to conduct a thorough investigation into the possibilities of synodical radio broadcasting. As a professional media consultant, Mr. Craig Halverson, Director of Communications for the Michigan Chamber of Commerce, was appointed to the committee for the purpose of carrying out Synod's guidelines. His specific task was to evaluate what was currently being aired in the WELS at that time and to establish directions, scope and working arrangements, and potential funding both for a radio ministry to be used in home mission congregations and in Synodical nationwide broadcasts. He was also to develop as many diverse pieces of broadcasts as possible, using in-house professional talent, and to create an awareness in the Synod and in the

congregations of the need for a radio ministry.¹⁶

To accomplish this difficult assignment the committee embarked on a three-phase program. The first was to send a questionnaire of radio potential and attitudes towards it among WELS congregations. Secondly, it developed or utilized five different types of sample broadcasts for experimentation:

- 1) "Message from the Master" broadcasts
- 2) One-minute spot announcements introducing the WELS and its basic confessional position to the listener
- 3) Sawall's "Points to Ponder" messages
- 4) One minute thought-provoking statements, aimed particularly to reach the unbeliever, the skeptic, and the searching ("Belief & Unbelief") -- See Appendix E
- 5) A series of 5 minute programs giving a fuller explanation of Biblical truths, applying them to youth, to daily life, and to current events ("Come to the WELS")

The third phase was a four-month field testing program in selected "mission" markets from April to August, 1979. In the 1979 BORAM, p. 71 (See Appendix C), the GBHM stated that the results of this entire investigation would be reflected in a supplementary report to the Synod in convention; but this report never materialized. It was here that the initial intent of forming a nationwide Synodical broadcast was pushed into the background. To be sure, a great deal of progress resulted from this study in that the Mass Media Ministry was instituted; the "Come to the WELS" musical theme evolved, thanks to Mr. John Meyer of Nashville, Tennessee; and the dedicated work of Mike and Dee Froncek has advanced the "radio awareness" of our home missions workers tremendously. But what happened to the idea of Synod-sponsored broadcasting? In its report to the Synod Convention in 1981 (see Appendix D), the GBHM simply stated, "The road the Lord has guided us onto is not entirely the course planned and foreseen at the beginning of the program."¹⁷ The shift went from one of possible Gospel broadcasting to one which

was essentially a PR tool for WELS mission congregations. The "Come to the WELS" radio spots featuring new church locations, door hanger bags, outreach brochures, logos, billboards and newspaper layouts all resulted from this emphasis on visibility.

One cannot but thank God for all the good He has done through our Mass Media Ministry, especially for our mission churches and exploratory workers. But the question still remains, "Whatever happened to the idea of Gospel broadcasting?" Some men who were involved somewhat in the project feel that, with all the emphasis on the "Come to the WELS" program of radio use, the effort towards radio preaching was simply dropped and forgotten. Mr. Craig Halverson saw two other reasons entering the scene: 1) There is a lack of stations existing which can easily reach large numbers of people, and a dropping number who will readily accept Christian programming. Therefore, a program will likely be relegated to Sunday morning when it would be highly ineffective as an outreach tool. And 2) Long ($\frac{1}{2}$ hour "Lutheran Hour" type formats) radio programs do not reach out to the unchurched.

It is the unenlightened opinion of this writer that our Synod could still delve into the arena of Gospel broadcasting without resorting to a long show of the "Lutheran Hour" variety, and benefit greatly. The samples which appear in Appendix E were Synodically produced and represent what can be done in terms of a sixty-second broadcast. With the professional sound of a musical lead-in and the voice of a polished speaker, these "Belief & Unbelief" messages could be highly effective in reaching out to both the churched and unchurched alike. And these are not the only style of broadcasting which could touch the hearts of a radio audience.

When one hears the encouraging responses from those who have found their home-spun messages being used to advantage in a given community, he must wonder if more couldn't be done to make this tool accessible even to those who are not so gifted to design one of their own. Perhaps in the coming years our Synod's MMM will be able to expand its efforts to provide for existing congregations a standardized radio broadcast.

VI. Observations, Comments & Conclusions

The final section of this paper seeks to analyze the wisdom of using radio as a means of fulfilling the Great Commission. To do this, we draw upon the comments and experiences of various pastors and observations from the above radio programs in answering three central questions:

1. What are the benefits and drawbacks of using radio?

BENEFITS:

On the side of benefits one could put at the head of the list Church identification. One pastor noted that by using any type of local, consistent congregational broadcast, it is simple to spread the word regarding location of the church, time of services, the pastor of the congregation and what the congregation teaches according to God's Word. Such an identification and such a proclamation of the Gospel will in most cases be very beneficial.

Another pastor listed as a benefit congregational pride (in a good sense)--pride which also gives members the confidence to go out and witness to others because they know that at least a few of the people will have heard something about their church. One pastor even reported that a man on one canvass call started to sing the "Come to the WELS" song when he saw a canvasser's button! A

number of the pastors who responded to this study's survey pointed out that their members strongly supported their radio program simply for that reason: it is theirs, and they're proud to be able to tell a neighbor about it.

A third benefit could be called a positive image. As one pastor responded, "Too often our members think of WELS congregations in negative terms: we are against this and that. The use of radio helps give them a positive self image. Especially here in Nampa (Idaho) the whole MMM campaign gave the impetus for an on-going, functioning evangelism effort."

A fourth (and seemingly universally acknowledged) benefit of radio broadcasting is that it readily provides a ministry to the shut-ins of any congregation. This, of course, will depend upon the type of broadcast a congregation sponsors. It is primarily true of worship service and special program broadcasts.

Fifthly, we see as a benefit large area coverage of the Gospel. Where a sermon might only reach those who eventually find their way into the church pews, radio--even on a smaller station--has the potential of reaching thousands who make a habit of listening to it regularly. For example, when the field testing was being conducted for WELS broadcasts in 1979, Mr. Craig Halverson estimated that these tests alone would reach about 10,000,000 "message impressions"--all on local stations. The potential is there.

Finally there is the consideration of cost effectiveness. As an investment with potential the cost of radio is hard to beat. Halverson addressed the pastors of our Synod in 1978 with a preliminary report in which he stated, "A successful radio ministry has the potential to carry the Gospel and expose WELS to hundreds of thousands of people...at costs ranging from \$2.00 to \$4.00 per

thousand." There is no other medium which can compare to this coverage at such a reasonable price. And since it is estimated that every home in the United States has an average of two radios, it is also among the most used media.

DRAWBACKS:

Although radio appears to be an ideal tool of the Gospel, there are admittedly some difficult obstacles facing the broadcaster. Chief among these is cost. As reasonable a medium as radio may be as far as coverage is concerned, it is by no means cheap. One pastor reports that in his region (Northeastern U.S.), rates for radio time run from \$14 to \$42 per minute; if he wished to try anything more than a one-minute spot, it simply would become unaffordable. Rates vary tremendously according to the size of the community, popularity of the station, and the time and length of the broadcast.

There's another problem broadcasting the Gospel when the station lies in a large metropolitan area: limited audience. A pastor who utilized radio spots in the Dallas/Ft. Worth metro area mentioned, "They were very ineffective in our area because we have so many radio stations in the Metroplex and nobody seems to listen to the same one. This medium would probably be most effective in smaller towns where there is one local station that everybody... listens to." An illustration of this point would be Lubbock, TX, which can't be called a small town (Pop. 200,000) yet seemed to make use of one central station. This proved valuable for Sawall's "Points to Ponder," which became common fare.

Finally, every broadcaster of the Gospel must ask himself if his use of radio is poor stewardship. A pastor who has had some exper-

ience in airing both MMM spots and a short congregational program makes a valid point when he writes,

When it comes to the use of radio I think the question is not so much if it works, because His Word will never return to Him empty, but rather is it good stewardship. On that basis radio, if used alone, I don't think is very good stewardship. The reason for this is really two-fold: 1) To have a decent effect a lot of air time has to be bought, a goal which is usually beyond the means of an average congregation. 2) More importantly, in our day and age religious terms have so many different definitions that it's hard to get out a message that won't be misunderstood. This holds true not only for religious terms but for the whole concept of religion. Therefore, personal feedback is becoming essential to see if your message is understood.

* * * * *

2. What makes a "successful" radio broadcast?

As we stand back and attempt to analyze the workings of these various broadcasts, one can begin to pick out patterns of common traits among those programs which met with at least visible success (that is, large and regular listening audience and measurable response). Here are some of those traits.

- Emphasis on the Word of God

As Ben Armstrong summarizes the effects of "The Lutheran Hour" he observes,

The phenomenal growth of "The Lutheran Hour," according to WAM, came as a blessing from God. By the standards of secular radio it was incredible for a program to succeed just by presenting a man preaching for 19 minutes, preceded only by a choral group singing classical church music... The vast mail from listeners indicated that it was the content of the messages that attracted people to "The Lutheran Hour" week after week... It is my opinion that Maier's faithfulness to the Word of God was the source of the program's power. This faithfulness was richly blessed by God. "The Lutheran Hour" became the most popular religious broadcast--religious or secular--in the history of radio, heard around the world by an estimated 20 million listeners.¹⁸

This opinion stands in stark contrast to the secular world's

standards for success. Professionalism seems to be the byword among producers today, and certainly a professionally made program will more readily be accepted by a station manager. But as the key for success, professionalism falls flat. Paul Maier states,

Had a professional consultant been brought in, his criticism would likely have been: too much sermon by a person who uses his voice too forcefully, stressing too much the same message of salvation in Christ. Even the name "Lutheran Hour" is wrong: too particularist, narrow, denominational. How can you expect a Methodist, or Catholic, or Quaker to listen to that?¹⁹

Yet they did, by the millions.

- Practical application of the Word

If theoretical Christianity sometimes falls upon deaf ears in a congregational setting, the effect is vastly multiplied if a radio preacher keeps his messages dry, lifeless and unapplied in a practical way to people's lives. This was one area in which Walter Maier excelled: his ability to make the Christian message come alive for a people in their time and in their situation. Paul Maier describes this gift:

He tried to relate all of Scripture to the whole political-social-intellectual milieu of his era. One result was that people found his articles and sermons, not dry as the dust of time, but vibrant with illustrations from, and relevance to, modern life.

Occasionally he was faulted for "bringing politics into religion," "using economic statistics," denouncing wrong and acclaiming right on any level of society, government or religion instead of limiting his scope to spiritual concerns. But he echoed his conscience in this matter: "You cannot divorce religion from the whole complex of life," or "You cannot compartmentalize Christ."²⁰

- Consistency: the same preacher

A common observation of popular religious radio broadcasts is that people like to hear the same preacher once they become a regular listener. Often it's because of a certain captivating

style as it was with Walter Maier. But even more importantly, in hearing the same preacher tends to lend an air of security and familiarity. A number of pastors who broadcast regularly noted that people in the community soon knew the preacher by his voice, and that recognition was a positive feature in evangelism calls and just plain public relations. Perhaps a broadcast like "Message from the Master" would be even better received if the program were put into the hands of one full-time preacher.

- Consistent, frequent broadcasting

It was noted under the "Telling the Truth" program that the coordinator of that ministry felt once-a-week broadcasting was not frequent enough to gain a solid listening audience. That may or may not be a valid observation. "The Lutheran Hour" obviously would contradict this observation; however, the growing number of daily radio spots among our pastors seems to indicate a trend which realizes the advantages of being heard--even for only sixty seconds--every day.

- Good informational program

A broadcast can only be effective when people know about it and listen to it. Sawall's practice of encouraging listeners to write for information, or soliciting bumper stickers among his members, seemed to be a terrific help for advertising the broadcast. The more people who are aware of a radio message, the more who will be listening for it.

3. What is the future for WELS in Radio Broadcasting?

In a report which summarizes the need for a Mass Media approach to the Great Commission, our MMM sees radio as a prime medium to

pursue for future preaching. The report states, "Radio will be an expanding message vehicle for the religious communicator. By the end of 1981 there were 9,092 radio stations operating in the U.S., AM and FM. By 1990 experts predict even more local radio stations, including AM stereo, FM quadraphonic stations and an expanded FM band. Across the world radio is the dominant message vehicle."²¹ This observation is no pious wish but a documented fact: radio is on an upswing now as somewhat of a backlash from the great stress upon television in the 60's and 70's. S.J. Paul, who is the publisher of Television/Radio Age analyzes the trend of the past quarter century and states, "With the advent of television, many visionaries relegated radio to a circumscribed local service. Its demise was not only exaggerated, but radio arose like a phoenix. It not only survived but prospered and continued to provide a communications service unmatched by any other medium."²² It is noted that, as attractive as a television broadcast may be, radio reaches far more people. The average weekly audience for religious television is in the neighborhood of 14 million men, women, teenagers and children, whereas the comparable figure for radio is eight times larger: 114 million Americans who listen to one or more religious radio programs in an average week.²³

With all these figures standing in favor of radio, WELS Christians must take seriously the option of using airwaves to speak God's Word to the world. To be sure, there are plenty of obstacles to face in planning a religious program; even WAM had his doubts about starting the "Lutheran Hour." He wondered if people would actually tune in to hear a preacher. He doubted they would continue to listen--it would be so easy to turn the radio dial! He dreaded the possibility that hearers should use radio as a substitute for wor-

ship in church. He wondered if anyone would contribute money to support the broadcast. Yet all his doubts faded when he saw the fantastic results of the Word.

In preparation for this assignment, one pastor reminded me what our goals should be in Gospel broadcasting. He writes, "The purpose of a radio broadcast is not just to have a radio broadcast, or to spend money, or to make sure the pastor will have a good sermon Sunday after Sunday because he will be on the radio. Rather, a true concern for proclaiming the Gospel message to church members, especially those who physically are not able to attend worship services regularly, and to the community (should be our goal)."

Being "successful" can not be measured in numbers or on graphs or by percentages. Where the Gospel is concerned, success is being able to proclaim the Gospel; for it is the Gospel, not a gimmick or a logo, which is the power of God unto salvation. It is because we have God's promise that His Word will not return to Him empty that we can be assured of success every time the Word is proclaimed from the pulpit, or in newsprint, or through the airwaves.

ENDNOTES

¹Ben Armstrong, The Electric Church (New York: Thomas Nelson Publishers, Inc., 1979), pp. 9-10.

²Ibid., p. 19f.

³Ibid., p. 25.

⁴Ibid., p. 32.

⁵Ibid., p. 60.

⁶Ibid., p. 129.

⁷Ibid., p. 25.

⁸Paul L. Maier, A Man Spoke, A World Listened (New York: McGraw Hill Book Co., Inc., 1963), p. 116.

⁹Ibid., p. 74.

¹⁰Ibid., p. 113f.

¹¹Ibid., p. 208.

¹²Ibid., p. 125.

¹³Armstrong, op. cit., p. 38.

¹⁴"Forty Blessed Years," Anniversary booklet published by the Radio Committee of the "Lutheran Radio Church Service in Milwaukee," 1968, passim.

¹⁵BORAM, 1977, pp. 171-2.

¹⁶Roger Drews, "Radio Research Project," Northwestern Lutheran, October 29, 1978, p. 351.

¹⁷BORAM, 1981, p. 66.

¹⁸Ben Armstrong, op. cit., pp. 38-9.

¹⁹Maier, op. cit., p. 193.

²⁰Ibid., p. 76.

²¹MMM Report, 1982, p. 13.

²²Armstrong, op. cit., pp. 122-3.

²³Ibid., p. 122.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Books

Armstrong, Ben. The Electric Church. New York: Thomas Nelson Publishers, Inc., 1979.

Maier, Paul L. A Man Spoke, A World Listened. New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, Inc., 1963.

Periodicals

Book of Reports and Memorials of the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod from the years 1977, 1979, & 1981.

Drews, Roger. "Radio Research Project," Northwestern Lutheran, (Oct 29, 1978), p. 351.

Radio Committee of the Lutheran Church Service of Milwaukee's Anniversary Booklet, "Forty Blessed Years", 1968.

Report of the Mass Media Ministry (WELS), 1982.

APPENDICES

- A. Samples of "Points to Ponder" broadcasts
- B. BORAM, 1977
- C. BORAM, 1979
- D. BORAM, 1981
- E. Samples of the "Belief - Unbelief" series
- F. Questionnaire for this study

Appendix A

73rd & Frankford 797-9203
R #4 Box 240
Lubbock, TX 79413

CHURCH OF THE PLAINS

THE GUILT OF OUR SIN

#294

Physical distress comes in many forms: broken bones, diseased and malfunctioning organs, chemical imbalances - all of which can change the course of one's life, and bring on severe disappointment and terrible suffering. Victims of physical distress are legion.

However, more agonizing than physical distress is the anguish of the soul when you're the one who has sinned and stands guilty before God Himself. The guilt of our sin burns like a hot iron upon our heart. When we awake the sin is still there, and as the day wears on the burden is ever more unbearable. Our soul's agony saps our strength, withers the body, and sleep evades us. It's then that the blackness of despair tends to sweep over us. We cry, "O Lord, how long?"

The only way we can survive is if God will turn from His anger and restore unto us the joy of His salvation.

Dear sinner, know this: Christ suffered and died for all sins. Trust Him, and God for Christ's sake will forgive you and gladden your heart again.

Psalms 6

3/14/79

GOD KNOWS OUR HEART

#295

The guilt of our sins can eat into our awakened conscience so that we can say with David, I AM WORN OUT FROM GROANING; ALL NIGHT LONG I FLOOD MY BED WITH WEeping AND DRENCH MY COUCH WITH TEARS. This is the true nature of a penitent heart, one that goes into the secrecy of his own room and weeps tears of sorrow.

To appreciate that God knows the sin in our heart is the heaviest of burdens to bear. To share this agony with another is only to aggravate our own misery. For the penitent sinner who knows that God is able to know the secret sins of our heart, then let him also know that God knows the secret sorrows of our heart. It is the humble and contrite heart that God will not despise.

Let us remember God's commanding invitation, CALL UPON ME IN THE DAY OF TROUBLE; I WILL DELIVER THEE, AND THOU SHALT GLORIFY ME. God you can trust. For even as He gave His one and only Son to be our Savior, so also through His blood we are washed clean. Believe it.

Psalms 6:6 and 50:6

3/16/79

What's the source of confusion? It's you and me, and all mankind. Our bodies have a real sense of order, even as this world, and every thing in it. But man's brain which is the most unique organ of all organs, wherein is the seat of emotion and intellect, it is confused. And it's confused for one reason only, namely, sin.

And as a result of man's sin confused mind, the whole world suffers. Man's confusion causes man to observe God's universe through confused eyes, so that man concludes that the world is in a state of confusion.

The truth is that God created the world in a state of order. And even today, in spite of man's sin under which this whole universe groans, God maintains His order. Einstein correctly concluded, "God does not play dice with the world."

Nothing happens by chance, not even our salvation. This world is in God's hands. Shouldn't we be in His hands, too? Then learn of Jesus Christ, God's Son, and trust Him.

POINTS TO PONDER

7:45 AM
KLBK
940 FM
1340 AM
MON - FRI



SHEPHERD OF THE PLAINS
EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH

() If you enjoy receiving POINTS TO PONDER, send us your new address when moving.
() To have a friend or relative receive POINTS TO PONDER, add their names below.

NAME

ADDRESS

PHONE

() If you have no church home in which you are presently active, may we serve you? () May we serve you with () Counseling? () Children or Adult Bible Classes? () May we give you a New International Version New Testament Bible FREE? We are here to serve you with the Gospel of Christ.

For additional information, call Pastor Robert L. Sawall at 797-9203.

WE THANK YOU ALL FOR YOUR CONTINUED SUPPORT WHICH MAKES THIS ALL POSSIBLE.

The other day I talked with a well-educated professional man in our community. He had a good opinion of himself, so much so that he considered himself decidedly more worthy than all others in the sight of God.

There is none who will claim to be without sin, but unfortunately most everyone thinks they have an edge on heaven because they are somewhat better than their neighbor. This does not take away from the truth, that THE BLOOD OF JESUS CHRIST, HIS SON, CLEANSETH US FROM ALL SIN.

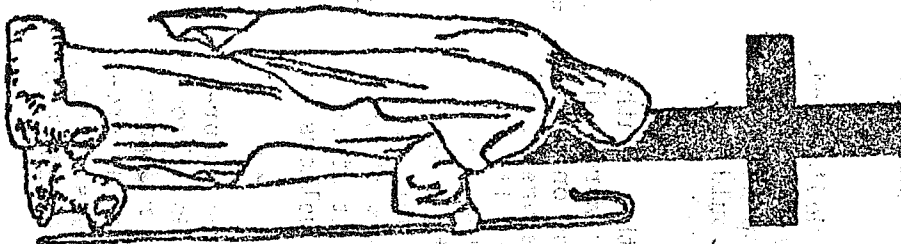
Whether you think you want Jesus or not, He did shed His blood for you. Through self-righteous attitudes, through unbelief, one can reject the blessings of Jesus' blood. That's sad! But the good news for an agonized conscience and for every humble, contrite sinner that confesses his sin, - such a one is assured that Jesus Christ fulfilled the Law for him, and with His blood, paid the price. God will have every penitent sinner know that for Jesus' sake, he is forgiven.

1 John 1:7

8/11/80

POINTS

TO PONDER



KTEZ 101 FM

SHEPHERD OF THE PLAINS
EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH

RADIO - REACHING LUBBOCK AND THE WORLD WITH THE GOSPEL

KSEL 9:30 AM "GOD'S WORD OUR HERITAGE" Sundays Only! 950-AM
KTEZ 11:45 AM "POINT TO PONDER" Broadcasted Daily! 101-FM

COST: KSEL \$10.00/15 minutes each Sunday; KTEZ \$11.00/60 seconds daily
Average cost per month is \$375.00; Average cost per week is \$87.21

RESPONSE: Positive, frequent, and well-received

PROJECTION: Congregational growth, good rapport with community, edification of many, will continue if the financial response is sufficient.

IF YOU'VE HEARD THESE MESSAGES - SUPPORT EHEM WITH A GIFT. WE TAKE TIME HERE TO SAY THANK YOU ALL FOR YOUR MANY AND SINCERE GIFTS IN SUPPORT OF THESE EFFORTS TO REACH THOSE PRECIOUS BLOOD-BOUGHT SOULS WHO HAVE NOT HEARD OF GOD'S LOVE FOR THEM IN JESUS CHRIST, THEIR ONE AND ONLY SAVIOR FROM SIN, DEATH, AND SATAN.

SHEPHERD OF THE PLAINS EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH
5812 73rd Street - Lubbock, Texas 79424
Telephone # (806) 794-4203

*NOW AVAILABLE - 14 Points
To Ponder - Radio Ready -
Without Music - \$15.00

HOW TO BE SUCCESSFUL

#474

Do what you want to do. Say what you want to say. You cannot change this truth: BLESSED ARE THEY THAT HEAR THE WORD OF GOD AND KEEP IT. The world rises up in anger against this truth. They want their reason to be supreme, not God's Word.

There are those who have God's Word, yet will live as it pleases them. To have the Word and not keep it rejects the blessings God would have them have.

There's another side to this truth. Christians who love God's Word and accept it as their one and only guide in life have the assurance of God's blessings. They find it a source of strength when they are weak and a comfort when they are sad. It gives them light unto their feet as they make their way through a world darkened by sin. It gives them hope when the world wallows in despair.

Above all it gives them the assurance that they belong to God through faith in Jesus Christ who redeemed them from all sin, and who has promised to be with them always. Truly, BLESSED ARE THEY THAT HEAR THE WORD OF GOD AND KEEP IT.

Luke 11:28

8/13/80

THE HOPE OF THE WORLD

#475

A sinful man cannot approach our holy God. God's holiness would consume him. For this reason we are glad that Jesus Christ, God's Son, is our Advocate who speaks for us. The Father will listen to Jesus because it was with His blood that we are redeemed from all sin.

In a world that is spinning into the black hole of despair, we need to get the Word out that we all have a Savior, Jesus Christ, the righteous. Not only has Christ commanded that we bear witness to Him and His love to the ends of the world, but He also promises us saying, "WHOSOEVER CONFESSES ME BEFORE MEN, HIM WILL I ALSO CONFESS BEFORE MY FATHER WHICH IS IN HEAVEN."

And how can we remain quiet about His forgiving love when we know that the majority of this world's children live without Christ, without hope, and without God?!

The greatest child abuse is to deprive them of Jesus Christ, our only hope for eternal life. Let's stop our silence and open our mouths with the sound of salvation in Jesus Christ.

Matthew 10:32

8/15/80

- () If you enjoy receiving POINTS TO PONDER, send us your new address when moving.
- () To have a friend or relative receive POINTS TO PONDER; add their names below.

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____

PHONE _____

FOR LUBBOCK & VICINITY: () If you have no church home in which you are presently active, may we serve you? May we serve you with () Counselling? () Children or () Adult Bible Classes? May we give you a New International Version (), New Testament Bible FREE? We are here to serve you with the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

For additional information, call Pastor Robert L. Sawall at 806/794-4203. SHEPHERD OF THE PLAINS EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH 5812 73rd St. Lubbock, Texas 79424

WE THANK YOU ALL AGAIN FOR YOUR CONTINUED SUPPORT WHICH MAKES THIS ALL POSSIBLE!!!

Resolved, b) That the objective of such a publishing program be to provide materials for worship, Bible study and Christian instruction using contemporary idiom and following contemporary Bible translation; and be it further

Resolved, c) That the Synod call men from the preaching and teaching ministry to provide the manpower for such a publishing program and that these men serve for the duration of the project and then be called back into the field, thus eliminating the creation of permanent new positions; and be it finally

Resolved, d) That the Synod raise the necessary funds for subsidizing such a publishing program by means of a special Synod-wide thankoffering to coincide with the 400th anniversary of the publication of the Formula of Concord.

South Atlantic District of the Wisconsin Ev. Lutheran Synod
Mark A. Goeglein, Secretary

Memorial
(77-2)

Subject: Radio Broadcasts
WHEREAS the Lord assigned His Church to preach the Gospel to every creature; and

WHEREAS our Synod is realizing this task is becoming ever more difficult to carry out through personal contact due to rapidly expanding population; and

WHEREAS our world missions in various areas have made very successful use of broadcasting systems of certain localities to cast forth the seed of God's Word to a far greater potential audience; and

WHEREAS such procedure appears commendable for carrying out our assignment from the Lord; therefore be it

Resolved, a) That we urge our Home and World Mission Boards to draft a proposal for developing a broadcasting policy, as uniform as possible, for use in our home mission fields as well as in our world mission fields; and be it further

Resolved, b) That this proposal include a guideline, first, in regard to individual messages, and second, for the financing of such ventures; and be it finally

Resolved, c) That such a proposal be put before our Synod in convention for consideration as soon as feasible.

Northern Wisconsin District
David Morgull, Secretary

Memorial
(77-3)

Subject: A Nationwide Weekly Radio Broadcast

WHEREAS we, as members of the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod are faced with the responsibility of teaching, preaching, and witnessing in our Christian faith; and the communications media in our time make it possible to reach millions of the unchurched and uninstructed in Christian doctrine; and

WHEREAS our Synod (WELS) is reaching out, in this ministry of teaching, preaching, and witnessing, and by the grace of God is doing so; and

WHEREAS we should constantly strive to find new avenues, within our means, to extend the reach of our ministries; therefore be it

Resolved, a) That this synodical convention of the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod use its efforts in contacting the radio communication media, with a view to a nation-wide radio broadcast each week; that various time limits and times be explored; costs evaluated; and other pertinent information gathered; and that all national radio broadcasting media be contacted; and be it finally

Resolved, b) That the Home Mission Board oversee this important project and study; and that a full report be made to the synodical convention two years hence, as to the feasibility of this suggested radio ministry.

Mr. Martin Vaaler
Elgin, North Dakota

Memorial
(77-4)

Subject: Lutheran Church -- Missouri Synod

WHEREAS the Lutheran Church -- Missouri Synod (LC-MS) has in recent years made a decided and definite decision to return to its former Scriptural-Confessional position (cf. Dr. J. A. O. Preus A Statement on Scriptural and Confessional Principles, the doctrinal resolutions of the New Orleans convention, 1973, especially resolution 3-09, "... that the attitude which reduces to theological opinion or exegetical questions matters which are in fact clearly taught in Scripture [e.g. historicity of Adam and Eve, Jonah, life of Christ and predictive Messianic prophecies, and the doctrine of Angels] cannot be tolerated in the Church of God, much less be excused and defended," and A Lutheran Stance Toward Ecumenism, Commission of Theology and Church Relations, and other documents); and

WHEREAS the Anaheim convention, 1975, reaffirmed A Statement on Scriptural and Confessional Principles and the resolution, 3-09, of the New Orleans convention; and

WHEREAS both seminaries of the LC-MS (St. Louis and Ft. Wayne) have given evidence of a return to their former Scriptural-Confessional position (cf. the positions taken towards the Inter Lutheran Commission on Worship, Concordia Journal, March 1976, p. 53f and Concordia Theological

HOME MISSIONS
REPORT OF THE GENERAL BOARD FOR HOME MISSIONS
May 1979

Surely, the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit have been with us as we went about our Lord's Kingdom work in the area of home missions. God has been over us, guiding us; His Son, Jesus Christ, has been with us; and God has been in us with His Holy Spirit. This is evident by the blessings He has put upon our efforts. The statistics in our report give evidence of God's abundant blessings.

The 44th biennial convention authorized the calling of an associate executive secretary. We are thankful that the Lord has led Pastor Larry Zweig to accept this call.

We are happy to report that the mission counselor program reported at the last convention has been well received by missionaries, mission congregations, and the district mission boards in the two districts where mission counselors have been called. Results can be seen in more systematic and thorough conducting of the survey and exploratory phases of our work. Mission counselors are able to conduct orientation sessions that give the new men practical advice and principles to follow. The mission counselor program also allows for more intensive field work and thorough attention to forestalling potential problems.

The last Synod convention regretted that we could honor only 33 out of more than 70 requests for missionary assistance. The needs and our ability to meet them are about the same this year. We pray that the Lord will show us the way out of our synodical budget difficulties in order that we do not have to cut back even farther on our mission openings.

The last convention requested the General Board for Home Missions to "make a feasibility study of radio as a mass communication medium including the possible establishment of a nation-wide Synod broadcast." (1977 Proceedings, pp 152-153, Committee 18, Resolution 8). Coincidentally the GBHM for a number of years had planned similar research relative to the possibility of a radio ministry. To give support to the outreach of its mission congregations particularly in areas where Lutheranism and the WELS were relatively unknown.

Radio Research Committee Report

The General Board for Home Missions (GBHM) was directed by the 1977 Synod convention to "make a feasibility study of radio as a mass communication medium, including the possible establishment of a nation-wide Synod broadcast." (1977 Proceedings, pp 152-153, Committee 18, Resolution 8). Coincidentally the GBHM for a number of years had planned similar research relative to the possibility of a radio ministry. To give support to the outreach of its mission congregations particularly in areas where Lutheranism and the WELS were relatively unknown.

In its initial meeting a committee appointed by the GBHM agreed that its primary objective would be to determine the feasibility of developing "an effective and continuing mass media ministry serving both the Synod and its congregations to communicate the Gospel in accord with our confessional principles on the basis of Scripture to reach as many people for Christ as possible, with emphasis on reaching the unchurched."

The committee also determined that the services of a highly qualified professional research-coordinator would be essential to an adequate feasibility study. In contrast to the expectations of many committee members the Lord directed not only a goodly number of qualified candidates to apply for the position but several WELS

Appendix C

HOME MISSIONS
members who were among the most qualified. The committee selected Mr. Craig Halverson of Emanuel First Church, Lansing, Michigan, as the project coordinator.

Extensive research was done by means of various surveys as to what is being done by our WELS congregations in a radio ministry as well as by other Christian groups and as to how effective the various efforts are in reaching the unchurched. Early in the research it was evident that the day of a "Lutheran Hour" format and distribution system is over as far as the state of the radio industry is concerned. In radio's current format, programming must be geared to the characteristics of the target audience.

Since "radio is music" the production of a distinctive musical statement or logo which would not "turn off" our target audience was considered essential to introduce our Gospel invitation and message. Again, in our search for a qualified musical producer, the Lord provided what we needed but did not expect to find. We engaged the service of a most qualified musician, not from the "outside," but from our own membership in the person of Mr. John C. Meyer, a member of our Rock of Ages church, Nashville, Tennessee. Mr. Meyer, a highly successful producer of commercial music, has written our theme song, "Come to the WELS," as a gift to his church and also arranged for its professional recording according to the highest music industry standards.

Another step in the project was the production of five non-traditional radio formats including:

1. a rather traditional half-hour program featuring traditional and contemporary church music integrated with messages tied to the church year (Music For the Master)
2. one-minute spot announcements introducing the WELS and its basic confessional position to the listener
3. one-minute "mini-sermons" delivering a practical high-impact Gospel truth (Points to Ponder)
4. one-minute thought-provoking statements, aimed particularly to reach the unbeliever, the skeptic, and the searching (Belief and Unbelief)
5. a series of five-minute programs giving a fuller explanation of biblical truths, applying them to youth, to daily life, and to current events (Come to the WELS).

Among producers of program materials were Pastors L. Zeslin, R. Stadler, R. Drews, Prof. J. Gerlach, and Mr. Craig Halverson. The Milwaukee Federation of WELS Churches graciously loaned the committee the use of its studio for production of the materials. Members of St. John's, Oak Creek, Wisconsin, also donated hours of volunteer labor in the shipping of sample cassettes.

The final step in the research project is the test-marketing of the programs, especially the four shorter formats, in selected "mission" markets, airing them during morning and evening "drive" times. In addition these formats are being tested on seven national clear channel stations mostly between midnight and 6 a.m. to provide nation-wide coverage. This test-marketing will occur April through August 1979.

HOME MISSIONS

Year "office" costs; \$15-20,000 per year program costs).

Option 3:

Adopt a systematic five-year plan for launching a mass media ministry with an office as described in Option #2, with synodical funding for new programming and synodical airing of programs, supplemented by non-budgetary offerings, with a budget fixed by synodical resolution to permit a national outreach (annual budget for the first year of about \$110,000, rising to about \$250,000 in the fifth year).

The results of the study and programming to date have moved the committee to offer the following proposal to the Synod:

PROPOSAL TO THE 45TH BIENNIAL CONVENTION OF THE WISCONSIN EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN SYNOD

Assembled at Northwestern College, Watertown, Wisconsin, August 1-8, 1979

Subject: Mass Media Ministry

WHEREAS a radio ministry would serve well the continuing purpose of our home mission program "to share the Gospel of Jesus Christ with all people within the limits of the domestic mission fields of the WELS"; and

WHEREAS such a ministry would assist effectively our self-supporting, as well as our mission congregations, in reaching the unchurched of their communities with the Gospel; and

WHEREAS the synodically requested radio research study has indicated that a radio ministry with programming along the lines of the pilot programs produced by the GBHM Radio Research Committee is feasible both as to production and nation-wide marketing; and

WHEREAS the initial response to the pilot programming has been positive; therefore be it

Resolved, a) That the Synod establish a mass media ministry, centering on a radio ministry which is to assist congregations and the Synod to reach primarily the unchurched of our land with the Gospel of Jesus Christ, and be it further

Resolved, b) That this mass media ministry be under the supervision of the General Board for Home Missions, and be it further

Resolved, c) That to the degree that budgetary funds are not available, this mass media ministry be funded by non-budgetary funds received through special gifts and offerings and purchase of program materials, and be it further

Resolved, d) That development, production, and airing of programs be implemented by the General Board for Home Missions, engaging the necessary professional assistance as program needs require and funding permits, and be it finally

HOME MISSIONS

It is the opinion of the committee that nation-wide coverage can most effectively be achieved in today's radio market by airing centrally produced broadcast-quality materials in areas throughout the country by locally identified congregations, with the possible addition of the night-time clear channel station programming. The committee is committed to using a radio ministry to advance our mission outreach primarily with and through the local congregations, self-supporting or mission, the "cutting edge" of mission work in our land.

Cassettes with sample programming have been sent to the pastors of the Synod so that all may be aware of and understand the direction the committee is proposing. Reaction to date has been positive, including much constructive criticism. We wish to express appreciation for this demonstration of concern for an effective, faithful, and quality radio ministry.

Please note that the song, "Come to the WELS," may be used by any individual or group within our Synod. Arrangements for broadcast use of the recording of the musical logo must be made through the General Board for Home Missions. The professional recording of the full-length song is not available for public broadcasting because of copyright restrictions and production regulations.

Funding for the research project has come from a budgetary allotment of \$18,000, plus grants of over \$11,000 from the Lutheran Women's Missionary Society given to the GBHM in earlier years for radio research, and a generous grant of \$37,684 from the Aid Association for Lutherans. In addition, a substantial amount has been received from many congregations, societies, and individuals within the Synod. Without this generous support an adequate study would have been impossible. We heartily thank all the donors!

The final results of the program test-marketing and the reaction of our pastors and congregations in areas where the programs are aired will be reflected in a supplementary report to be submitted to the Synod in convention. Our research and program production experiences and results to date, however, have already convinced us that a radio ministry is feasible and desirable as a mission arm of our Synod.

In the final stages of the research, serious consideration was given to the three following options for establishing a mass media ministry which could be adopted singly or successively:

Option 1:

Establish a radio ministry with volunteer staff, using current limited "borrowed" production facilities and program materials, serving local congregational needs, with funding coming from payment for program materials by congregations and/or mission boards and from non-budgetary contributions of individuals and organizations.

Option 2:

Develop a mass media ministry office with a professionally qualified director, using current production facilities and program materials, serving local congregations and airing limited nation-wide synodical radio programming, with new program development as funds permit, with funding of the office itself by budgetary funds and program development by non-budgetary offerings (budget or \$30,000 per

HOME MISSIONS

- 3. Publicity Committee
Personnel - Rev. Ernst Lehninger and Rev. James Witt
Area of concentration - the Synod constituency, area Lutheran high schools
Duties - Publicize campus ministry in WELS, especially on high school level. Assist in promotion and facilitation of name gathering.
- 4. Student Committee
Personnel - Dr. Glenn Brooks and Rev. Robert Diener
Area of concentration - college students, student organization
Duties - Ministry-by-mail (national newsletter). Preparation of posters, ads, cards, etc., for local ministries.
Oversight of national student program and organization (IC, etc.).

Mass Media Ministry

The Mass Media Ministry Program has moved steadily, in fact, rapidly forward. However, as the German expression states, "Der Mensch denkt, Gott lenkt" (Man proposes; God disposes). The road the Lord has guided us onto is not entirely the course planned and foreseen at the beginning of the program. The result of the altered course, as you might expect, appears to be a program that will better serve all the congregations of WELS, as well as our Home Mission effort.

The Mass Media Ministry in its beginnings concentrated on what its name suggests, the mass media. Since the research done showed that radio was both the most financially feasible medium to use and reached or touched the greatest mass of unchurched souls in our nation, radio became the heart of the program and still is. Mike and Dee Froncek were hired as full-time producer/coordinator/announcers and remain with the program to date. It soon became apparent that help for our congregations in the area of airtime buying was as important as providing professional quality materials. The Lord provided Mr. Eric Hansen, one of our WELS members in Milwaukee, whose training and employment qualified him to serve as our airtime buying consultant. His help has been invaluable to the congregations using the MM radio tapes and materials.

Very natural additions to the radio tapes and airtime buying recommendation were other media materials such as "Come to the WELS" brochures and door hanger bags, other outreach brochures, newspaper mats, and sample formats for house-to-house and/or telephone canvasses. These materials have been developed by pastors and District Mission Counselors in various parts of the Synod and field tested by these men and others throughout the United States and Canada. Their ingenuity, inventiveness, and experience and their willingness to share it with and for the Mass Media Ministry has made this a program truly representative of and usable for the entire Wisconsin Synod.

What began, then, as an idea of "going on the radio," with the Lord's blessing and surely through His guidance, has evolved into a mission outreach/evangelism outreach effort.

Our thanks to the many pastors and laymen who have shared their wisdom, experience and talents with us and had endless patience with our shortcomings. Through them the Lord has steered us on His course. "Der Mensch denkt, Gott lenkt!" At a time when other factors might cause us to cut back and regroup, use of the Mass Media Ministry materials and expertise can help the missions and missionaries we do support to reach out more effectively and to a much larger portion of those in their community who as yet do

HOME MISSIONS

not know Christ as their Savior.

Inner City Mission

The Inner City Vicar Program is completing its second year. Five senior seminary students serve congregations on a 20 hour per week schedule with emphasis on evangelism. In a pilot program during 1980-81, one full-time middle vicar was assigned to work with two inner city congregations and assist in the Milwaukee Campus Ministry. The Inner City Vicar Program will continue in 1981-82 on a more limited basis due to financial restrictions.

Beautiful Savior Lutheran School will complete its first full year of operation in June. The school is a joint venture between Jerusalem/St. Philip's congregations in Milwaukee and is partially subsidized by the Synod. Enrollment the first year is 118. The Inner City Mission Committee annually reviews the budgets of congregations receiving operating subsidy.

Four Milwaukee inner city congregations are planning a joint Vacation Bible school project. Students from our worker training schools have again volunteered to make canvass and follow-up calls and teach VBS classes. Last year's VBS program exceeded 400 pupils. In order to gain greater publicity, radio spots will be used in conjunction with the 1981 inner city VBS project.

A subcommittee of two men has been appointed to set up guidelines for inner city congregations regarding the projected use of part-time vicars as to objectives, programs, and schedules. It is hoped that this will aid the congregations, the Inner City Mission Committee, and the SEM District Mission Board in better supervision of the project.

- Rev. Daniel M. Gieschen, Chairman
- Rev. Herbert Kuske, Vice-Chairman
- Rev. Howard W. Kaiser, Secretary
- Rev. Henry E. Pautstian, Recording Secretary
- Rev. Norman W. Berg, Executive Secretary
- Rev. Larry Zwieg, Associate Executive Secretary

- Rev. A. H. Reaume
- Mr. Myron Nelson
- Rev. Robert Hochmuth
- Mr. Tom Schlittenhart
- Rev. Walter Beckmann
- Mr. Lyle Ernst
- Rev. Harold J. Hagedorn
- Mr. Harold Schmidt
- Rev. Edward J. Werner
- Mr. Kent Weiser
- Mr. Ernest L. Krieger
- Rev. Martin B. Petermann
- Mr. Kurt Hinnenthal
- Rev. Joel Frank
- Mr. Charles Caskey
- Rev. Joel Ph. Sauer
- Mr. Eugene Schroeder
- Rev. Ralph Baur
- Mr. David Voll
- Rev. John Guse
- Mr. Mark Meissner
- Mr. Richard Waldschmidt
- Rev. Walter A. Diehl
- Mr. Alfred Hildebrandt
- Rev. Ardin D. Laper
- Mr. Marshall Gruening
- Mr. John W. Jung

Sample of Synod-produced 60 second programs to awaken the interest of and speak the Gospel to the unchurched:

"If you mention heaven to some people, they'll simply shrug their shoulders. If you mention hell, they'll laugh in your face. But can such doubtssand derision so easily sweep away the teachings of the Bible? They shouldn't. For if you concede that the Scriptures may be true, then you must reckon with God's warning that He is to be feared as well as loved. Man wants the Almighty to be a doting grandfather figure; it's safer that way. But God says, "I am as I am," a description that includes both the desire to forgive as well as the willingness to condemn. The Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod urges you to focus on God's grace, not His anger. Don't be deceived; Christianity is not a public relations campaign that promotes the rosey side of the story and side-steps the unpleasanties."

"Of all the questions concerning existence the most fundamental question is, "How did it all begin?" If you think about it, it eventually comes down to an option between eternal matter or a creative God. If you select matter, then you must accept the idea that protons, neutrons and electrons always existed, and that reality is just the way they happen to be arranged at the moment. This is the basic assumption behind all purely physical explanations of existence. Now, take the case for God. By definition, God is all-powerful, all-being, all-intelligent. As such, he transcends the laws of nature and can exist without being materially measured. The Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod believes God, not matter, is the source of the universe. You must decide what you believe."

"A few years ago author Jim Bishop wrote a provocative essay on the astounding success of Jesus Christ. Bishop pointed out that Jesus never owned anything of value, never led an army, never held an important job, or established influential friends. His career lasted only three years. Yet today he dwarfs the likes of Alexander, Caesar and Napoleon. Given those facts, is it believable that Jesus was only a talented or inspired man? Can His life and the resurrection be dismissed when both have withstood twenty centuries of assault by empires, atheists and competing gurus? The Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod feels you must make your own assessment of Jesus. When you do, we hope it will be based on careful thought--not cynicism or fashionable opinion. "

6717 W. Wartburg Cr.
Mequon, WI 53092
January 21, 1985

Dear Pastor,

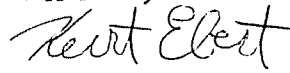
Greetings to you in our Epiphany Lord!

At the risk of being a bit of a nuisance I am contacting you with the hope, and request, for your help. I'm working on a paper for our church history course here at Sem that deals with congregational use of radio in its outreach to the world. If I were to put forward a thesis just based on a hunch, it would be: "Radio is an effective and worthwhile tool for congregations to use directly in spreading the Gospel." I am not so much interested in the use of radio spots and blurbs as I am in the broadcast of church services, messages, music, Bible instruction, and so on.

My request of you is that you either substantiate the truth of my thesis or shoot down its fallacies on the basis of your experiences using this media (I obtained your name from Mr. John Barber of the Mass Media Ministry). Would you be willing to help me? If so, please complete the questionnaire below and use the self-addressed stamped envelope to return it to me at your convenience.

Many thanks!

In Him,



Kurt Ebert

YOUR RADIO STATION

- 1) With what station are you working? _____ AM FM
 - 2) Any idea how powerful its transmitter is? _____ watts
 - 3) Is any "free" or "Public Service" air-time made available to your congregation? YES _____ NO _____
 - 4) How much is charged for your use of this station? _____
-
- 5) Was the station manager helpful in getting your program off the ground? Hostile? Indifferent? Accomodating? _____
-

YOUR PROGRAM: Its name? _____

- 6) Which of the following does your congregation use radio for?
 - _____ One minute spot ads produced by the M.M.M.
 - _____ Broadcast of church services
 - _____ Special program with a message

(over)

