

Life is a Book:
A Brief History of the Life and Ministry of
Pastor Henry Carl Nitz

Aaron A. Nitz
Senior Church History 3031
12/7/2010



*Life is a book—so say the sages,
As many days, so many pages,
Dealt by the hand of a loving God,
With daily strength for the daily load.*

*Some pages are red, and some are blue,
(Sometimes the color is made by you).
Some are golden and some are gray,
But Christ has said, "I am with you always."*

*There are pages moist with tears of pain,
And pages that say, "Till we meet again."
There are pages filled with laughter gay
And some that whisper, "Just pray and pray."*

*There are pages that speak of a hospital cot,
Of hours that seem as if God forgot,
There are pages reserved for a babe's first cry,
When father and nurses and doctor stand by.*

*So pages are added to our volume of life
Until we quit this world of strife,
And the tattered volume rests under a mound
Awaiting the Easter to be rebound.*

H.C. Nitz¹

The Front Cover

What does the "book" of the life and ministry of Henry Carl Nitz look like? A loving husband and father? A pastor with a pastoral heart? A missionary with a mission zeal? A staunch confessional Lutheran pastor? A writer? A reader? A leader? A linguist? A gardener? A friend with a sense of humor? Yes, all of these could properly describe his "book." Yet, above all, the "book" of his life is saturated with the blood of his Savior, Jesus. Not only did the blood of Jesus cover him but it so filled his heart that it overflowed in sharing his Savior's love to ^{with} ~~to~~

¹ This was a typed poem found in a box of Henry Nitz's writings

others. And that is something for every minister of the Gospel to imitate. “May the remembrance of his zeal to share the Gospel with others encourage his brethren!”²

The writer to the Hebrews encourages, “Remember your leaders, who spoke the word of God to you. Consider the outcome of their way of life and imitate their faith” (Hebrews 13:7). God doesn’t want his servants to be worshipped nor does he want them to be forgotten. Rather, God wants his faithful servants to be remembered, honored, and their faith imitated. While the focus of this paper will give a brief synopsis of the life and ministry of Pastor Henry Nitz, it will also serve as an encouragement for any Gospel minister.

The Preface

Herman Nitz, Henry’s father, before having to enlist in the German army came to America in 1885. He was very poor but because he was a blacksmith he was able to get a job. Later his father, Ludwig, also immigrated to America and homesteaded a farm three miles west of Dallas, Wisconsin. Ludwig dreamt that one day he would fall from the hayloft and die. One day his dream was fulfilled when he fell from a barn, broke his back, and died. His untimely death forced his oldest son, Herman, to take over the farm. Herman enjoyed doing blacksmith work so much that he built a blacksmith shop on the farm and did work for himself and others there. These were days of hard work and little time for fun. The fun that they did have was usually at the yearly church picnic.

One Sunday morning, January 29, 1893, Henry Carl Nitz was born. He was the first child of Herman and his wife Augusta (nee Radtke). He was born prematurely and not expected to live. He was so small that it was said Augusta could fit him into a cigar box. It happened that

² Wicke, Harold. “Obituary of Pastor Henry C. Nitz.” [The Northwestern Lutheran](#). 17 March 1968.

services were being held at the nearby Pine Creek Lutheran Church and Pastor John Freund baptized Henry the same day of his birth.

At the time of Henry's birth, his mother, Augusta, who was a very pious woman, prayed the prayer of Hannah. If the Lord should permit her son to live, she would "give him to the Lord." However, she kept her prayer to herself and didn't tell Henry or his father. Herman insisted that later on Henry, as the oldest son, should stay on the farm and take it over when he was no longer able.

Growing up he learned Low German because that is what his parents spoke around the house. However, his grandmother, who was living with them, insisted that he learn the "purer" High German. In her conversations with him she would always use High German to speak to him. In his one-room school Henry was a minority knowing only German while his classmates knew only English. Henry's linguistic ability was soon evident as he quickly learned English.

Pastor Henry Abelmann was the family's pastor and he confirmed Henry on May 20, 1906 at St. Paul's near Prairie Farm, Wisconsin. He recognized Henry's abilities and encouraged Henry to pursue the ministry. After 8th grade Henry had that very desire. He couldn't understand why he had that desire. Henry's son, Frederic, explained,

His [Henry's] father was violently opposed to the idea. His mother, as a dutiful wife, never said anything. My father therefore stayed home and worked on the farm. He also was able to work on neighboring farms and earn a little money. This money he saved with the idea of later going on to school. He constantly hounded my grandfather with his desire. Finally, in the fall of 1908, my grandfather grudgingly gave in to my father's wishes to go to school. He, however, stated that my father would have to pay for his own schooling and furthermore he could not leave for school until the potatoes were all harvested.³

³ Nitz, Frederic. A Brief Biography of H.C. Nitz. 9 February 1968.

Therefore in November Henry began school in New Ulm at the prep school located at Dr. Martin Luther College. After just one week his Latin instructor, Professor John Meyer, gave a cumulative examination to the students. Henry scored somewhere around a 40% but was praised by Professor Meyer who expected him to get nothing correct.

Whenever Henry would return home for holiday breaks his father would hope he had had changed his mind and would stay home. In his third year his father convinced him to switch to the shorter teacher's course. However, Prof. Meyer and Prof. Ackermann wrote to Henry's parents convincing them to allow him to continue in the ministerial course. In 1912 Henry graduated from the prep school and entered Northwestern College. However, soon after school began he was called to DMLC to be an inspector and instructor until that position was filled around Christmas time. Henry graduated from Northwestern in 1915, the 50th anniversary of the college, and that year he gave the German oration. The Synod convention was also held in Watertown at that time. Frederic wrote, "My grandfather [Herman] was present at this graduation both as the father of a graduate and as a delegate to Synod. It was not until then that my grandfather relented and gave his blessing to my father's desire to become a pastor. It was not until then that my grandmother revealed what her prayer had been at the time of my father's birth."

In the fall of 1915 Henry enrolled at the Seminary in Wauwatosa. However, after Christmas the following year he was called to Globe, Arizona where he helped Pastor Gustav Harders in the Indian Mission. He reentered the Seminary in the fall of 1916, but was then called back to the Indian Mission to serve as teacher and missionary at Peridot. He finally graduated from the Seminary in 1919. Since Pastor Harders had passed away the Synod was

inclined to close the mission in Globe. Before the decision was made the officials heard a first-hand report from Henry who pleaded with them not to close it. Subsequently, in 1919, Henry was sent to the Apache mission; first to Lower Cibecue and after a few months to Globe.

The Apache Mission Chapter (1919-1929)⁴

Ministry Pages

East Fork mission was located on the edge of a government school and compound. In 1921 the government decided to close their school. They gave the option to buy the school, teacherage, barn and 60-acre compound to the Wisconsin Synod for \$3,000. The Synod took that option and in March of 1922 they rushed Pastor Nitz to take it over since the government pulled out immediately. Later he returned to his work in Globe, but in the fall of 1922 he received a permanent call to be principal of the school at East Fork. The school opened in the fall as a boarding school. At first students stayed in Pastor Nitz's home and later a chicken coop was converted into a boys' dormitory. Also in 1922 Henry started the East Fork Orphanage which later developed into a nursery. Henry's son, Mark, related in a letter, "Apache culture was such that they believed certain children were to be abandoned (not killed) such as those with obvious defects, and those of multiple births. Apparently, the parents would choose one of twins and abandon the other. Our missionaries wanted to save these abandoned babies and this led to starting an orphanage."⁵

Home Life Pages

⁴ Since this paper focuses more on Henry's ministry after his time in Apacheland this is only a brief synopsis. For a more detailed account of this time period of his life one is encouraged to read "H.C. Nitz and the Apache Mission" by Michael H. Nitz, March 26, 1986.

⁵ Nitz, Marcus. Letter to the author. 25 September 2010.

After graduating from the Seminary, Henry became engaged to Alma Pingel. Alma was teaching at First German Lutheran School in Manitowoc, Wisconsin at the time. Alma was the oldest child of Louis Pingel, the director of Bethesda Lutheran Home in Watertown, Wisconsin. The two had been classmates at Northwestern College in Watertown in 1912 and following. Henry went to Globe alone in 1919 but traveled back to Watertown during the summer of 1920 and was married at St. Mark's Lutheran Church on June 22nd by Pastor J. Klingmann.

In the spring of 1922, as Henry was taking over at the recently purchased school at East Fork, Alma was sent back to Watertown. Since conditions were quite primitive they thought it wise for Alma to have their first child in a hospital in Watertown. One can only imagine the anxiety of the young couple being so far apart at such an exciting and unsure time! On May 12, 1922 Frederic was born. Pastor Nitz received the telegram of the birth while cutting wood and Pastor Wehausen, another pastor at East Fork, recounted in a letter over 20 years later how he remembered how quickly Henry dropped the axe when hearing the news! On August 10, 1923, their first daughter, Ramona, was born at the U.S. Indian Hospital in Whiteriver, Arizona. A second son, Joel, was born in the parsonage at East Fork on March 19, 1925. A third son, Paul, was also born at the parsonage on November 19, 1926.

Alma served as a tremendous aid to Pastor Nitz because of the scarcity of help there. However, after several years she developed a heart condition that was aggravated by the high altitude at East Fork (about one mile above sea level). In May 1928 the family drove to Wisconsin for the first time in a seven- passenger Studebaker touring car. Henry traveled throughout the Midwest giving lectures on the Apache Mission for the following three months.

While in Wisconsin the doctors advised that the family should move to a lower elevation. In August 1928 they arrived back in Arizona after traveling some 8,000 miles. Upon returning to East Fork it became even more evident that a move was necessary. A second opinion from the doctors in Phoenix confirmed the diagnosis and gave the same advice. Reluctantly, Pastor Nitz resigned his call to East Fork.

The Rockford Chapter (1929-1937)

Ministry Pages

After resigning in Arizona the first call Pastor Nitz received was to Cross Lutheran Church in Rockford, Minnesota. The family moved by train to Minnesota in January of 1929. He was installed on January 13, 1929 by Pastor G.C. Haase. The very next year, on July 13, 1930, the last service was conducted in Cross Lutheran's old church, and within the next few days work was started on the new church.⁶ Cornerstone-laying services were conducted on August 17, 1930, and on Nov. 23, 1930 the new building was dedicated. On February 16, 1930 a young people's society was organized and on May 3, 1931 the silver jubilee of the congregation was celebrated. Pastor Nitz left Rockford on April 4, 1937 having accepted a call to Waterloo, WI.

While he was in Rockford Henry served the Minnesota District in various offices. In 1932 he was elected second vice-president of the district. He was also appointed as secretary for the conference of presidents in January of 1934. Frederic wrote, "I can recall the frequent trips to Milwaukee for this purpose. (It seems that the Conference of Presidents at that time had an "outsider" acting as their secretary)." In a diary in 1939 Pastor Nitz recounted the importance of this organization, "I believe this conference is a valuable factor in keeping up the

⁶ Pictured in the Appendix

unity of spirit and practice in our Synod, besides being a valuable cleaning house for parochial problems.”

From June 27 to July 1, 1932 Pastor Nitz attended the Minnesota District convention held at DMLC in New Ulm. He delivered the school sermon in the Thursday evening service held in the college auditorium on 2 Cor 5:20b. It was at this convention that he was elected second vice-president. At this convention it was reported that the East Fork orphanage had an enrollment of 29 and could be more if they had more room- what a blessing of his labors! During this convention he served on the Indian Mission Committee where they urged the Joint Synod no “retrenchment in the activities of our Indian Mission” –which was obviously dear to his heart. However, the convention as a whole memorialized that the “Joint Synod economize even in this activity.”⁷

Not only did the Great Depression bring physical hardship but there was also a sad chapter in our Synod’s history at this time. For a number of intertwined and involved reasons a number of pastors, congregations, and professors left the Wisconsin Synod to form the Protes’tant group. Among those who left was Prof. J.P. Koehler whom H.C. had in schooling at the Seminary in Wauwatosa, Wisconsin. In 1934 he attended the Minnesota District convention where he served on a committee dealing with how to proceed with three pastors who had severed their relationships with Wisconsin Synod pastors and affiliated themselves

⁷ Proceedings of the Minnesota District of the Ev. Luth. Joint Synod of Wisconsin and other states. Milwaukee: Northwestern Publishing House, 1932., 28-29

with the "Protes'tant" group, "which is openly and persistently against our synod."⁸ Their committee recommended that since they had not openly tendered their resignations a committee would look into giving the pastors a hearing. At the 1936 convention Henry was elected as secretary of the district, but was not present at the convention due to an ailment that will be discussed later.

In March of 1937 Pastor Nitz accepted a call to St. John's Lutheran Church in Waterloo, Wisconsin. On April 3rd, 1937 Pastor Nitz conducted a funeral, on April 4th he preached his farewell sermon, and on April 5th he conducted another funeral. A busy time indeed for Pastor Nitz! However, the conclusion to his farewell sermon sums up his service in Rockford: The sermon was based on the "golden clasp that closes Holy Writ," Revelation 22:21,

I again thank you for the many kindnesses you have shown to my family and me during these eight years. I thank you all, but especially the officers, for the hearty cooperation always shown, and for the patient forbearance you granted me in view of the fact that I had practically no experience in organized congregational work when you chose me – a total stranger- as your pastor. And, begging your forgiveness of the many shortcomings in my pastorate- of which I am particularly conscious at this time- my prayer for you all will be: 'The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all.' Amen."

Home Life Pages

In January of 1929 the family moved to Rockford by train leaving all of their furniture and car behind. Henry then bought a 1929 Ford and started purchasing used furniture to fill their parsonage. In the meantime the family stayed with a couple of different families until enough second-hand furniture was bought.

⁸ Proceedings of the Tenth Biennial Meeting of the Minnesota District of the Ev. Luth. Joint Synod of Wisconsin and other States. Milwaukee: Northwestern Publishing House, 1936., 14

Bitter drought and depression can adequately describe the 1930s in America. Hence, the congregation could not afford to pay Henry's monthly salary of \$100, but the farmers shared their produce with him. Those who lived in those rough times learned the art of living sparingly. A brief browse through letters and notes written by H.C. will reveal how he carefully reused every letter that was sent to him for his whole life. Frederic once wrote, "Even though the family had to undergo many hardships during these years, the time will always be remembered as happy years for us."⁹ Marcus was born in the Rockford parsonage on Aug 10, 1931. Naomi was also born there on November 12, 1932.

One can only imagine how difficult it was for the small family to adjust from the dry, hot climate of Arizona to the cold Minnesota climate. Henry's son, Joel, would later write, "Daddy used to say that we had 9 months of winter and 3 months of tough sledding." During the "3 months of tough sledding" there were periods of terrible drought. Often fires would break out. On one occasion a grass fire broke out near the Nitz home. Joel wrote, "As the fire spread up the hill and toward the woods beyond, the men used anything at hand to beat out the blazes. Mamma directed us to pump water into pails in which gunny sacks were soaked. We then ran with them to the men, including Daddy, who used them to flap out the flames."¹⁰

Another consequence of these droughts was terrible dust. County trucks would spread calcium on the roads to attract moisture from the air in order to keep the dust down. Joel wrote, "One day it began to rain. We were delighted and the folks let us run around outside in

⁹ Nitz, Frederic. A Brief Review of the Married Life of Pastor and Mrs. H.C. Nitz for the past Thirty-Five Years.

¹⁰ Nitz, Joel. Rockford- 1929-1937 As We Remembered It. 1 September 1986.

our bathing suits. Even Daddy came out to join us. Some shocked parishioners, however, protested to Daddy that it was not befitting for him to frolic in the rain with his children!"¹¹

Pastor Nitz was certainly not afraid to have fun!

On April 1, 1936 while attending a Young People's Society meeting Henry went out to check on the church's wood supply and fell and broke his hip. He was taken to Fairview Hospital in Minneapolis¹² where he spent almost two months in a full body cast. Throughout his ministry H.C. kept outlines of his sermons written in notebooks. To explain the gap between April 2nd and June 21st he gave this explanation:

On the evening of April 1, 1936, I slipped on a patch of ice back of the church- in the course of a y.p.s. meeting- sustaining a complete, comminuted, intertrochanteric fracture of the right hip. A group of young men took me to Dr. Greenfield in Delano, who, after taking X-rays, took me to Fairview Hospital, Minneapolis, where Dr. John Moe, orthopedist, reduced the fracture at about 3:30am Apr. 2. After one day in Ward 326 I was transferred to Room 305, where I remained till the evening of May 29, when J. Kettenacker got me home in his new Buick. Pastor E.H. Brunns of Delano conducted the service on the evening of Apr. 2. All other services till June 14, incl., were conducted by Pastor E.A. Schmidt, C.R.M., 523 Lexington Ave. N. St. Paul. On June 8 I began to teach Summer Bible School, and on June 21 I again entered the pulpit.

This event had a lasting impression on him and he would later recount in his journals the anniversary of that fateful day. However, this incident also gave him great empathy for those to whom he ministered in the hospital for the rest of his ministry. His daughter, Ramona,

¹¹ Ibid

¹² Pictured in the appendix

wrote, "Minneapolis was 25 miles away. Our mother was given rides to visit him during the week. But, we children, only visited him on Sunday afternoon."¹³

Although the times in Rockford were hard for the family they were still filled with lots of treasured memories. Alma wrote in a letter to a friend dated December 3, 1953, "We so often talk about the days, when the children were small, and Grandma and I talk about Rockford friends, when we do dishes together, sometimes. I've never again had such a good neighbor as you were to us, and I cannot help wishing we could turn the clock back, just for a day. But they were hard times, too, so a person shouldn't wish them back."¹⁴

The Waterloo Chapter (1937-1965)

Ministry Pages

By far, the most extensive duration of H.C. Nitz's ministry was spent in Waterloo, Wisconsin. He was installed at St. John's Lutheran Church by Professor E. A. Wendland, assisted by Pastor J. Klingmann on April 11, 1937. He preached his first sermon on April 18th on 2 John 3 with the theme "Grace be With You!"

Many changes occurred at the church during his pastorate. In 1938 a bequest of \$200 from the estate of Frank Fraderich was used to install a hearing assistance device. In 1940 the church was given a \$1000 memorial from the Vick estate. This sum was invested in a brass lectern and altar desk, a baptismal font, sacristy furniture, sets of altar covers, three book racks for the pews, and about 200 copies of The Lutheran Hymnal. In 1942 the congregation marked

¹³ Nitz, Ramona. Letter to the author. 4 October 2010.

¹⁴ Nitz, Alma. Letter to a friend. 3 December 1953.

its seventy-fifth anniversary by having all of its debts paid. The interior of the church was improved by moving the organ console to the balcony.

On June 15-18, 1942 the congregation hosted the 13th biennial convention of the Western Wisconsin District. Pastor Nitz had to find quarters for all the attendants (c. 100 pastors, 60 laymen, 20 teachers); some did not attend and did not give an excuse. Women served a dinner at the Fireman's park in Waterloo. From his journal on June 17, 1942, Pastor Nitz related, "Our women are doing a fine job of serving meals. The cooperation is outstanding." After the convention was over he wrote, "I am tired, sad, happy. Glad it's over, happy that everything worked out so well, sad to have to part with the brethren whose presence I so enjoyed. The strengthening of the bonds of brotherhood and mutual understanding is perhaps the greatest and most lasting benefit of a convention such as ours, a blessing that outweighs the time killed by needless debates and futile reports."

The hospitality of the ^{congregation} convention was well received. The convention offered this gratitude in their minutes:

The members of St. John's Lutheran congregation entertained our District gladly and liberally with true Christian hospitality. It was a memorable occasion, and a fine gesture on the part of St. John's to extend an invitation to our District in the year of its Diamond Jubilee. The days of fellowship enjoyed here will long be remembered. Dinners and suppers were served in the pavilion of the Fireman's Park by the active and generous ladies of the congregation. The District extended its felicitations and heartiest congratulations to the St. John's congregation.

May God be your rich reward for all that was done for the Church during the days from June 15-18 in your midst.¹⁵

World War II brought about new ministry opportunities for Henry Nitz. Pastor Nitz continued to preach German services even after many congregations had stopped offering them. It happened during the war that a prisoner of war camp was set up at the outskirts of Waterloo. Pastor Nitz asked if he could conduct services there for the prisoners and was given approval. In these services he preached with such fluency in the German language that many of the soldiers were surprised that ^{he} had not come from Germany.

Since many members were farmers they had little formal education and did not have the aptitude to keep in contact with their sons overseas during the war. To fill that gap, Henry corresponded with sons of the congregation, including his own son, Joel, who served in the Philippines near the end of the war and served in the army of occupation of Japan in Tokyo as interpreter after the war. Pastor Nitz wrote hundreds and hundreds of letters to help them stay in touch with their families and home congregation. Mark related, "I remember seeing some of these men in full uniform coming to the parsonage to thank him for what he was doing. In one instance he said the soldier came to the parsonage first before he even went home."¹⁶ In a journal entry on September 26, 1942 Pastor Nitz related, "Pfc. Geo. H. Peik, paratrooper, Ft. Bragg, N.C., stops in on furlough and dines with us." Pastor Nitz had a sincere and pastoral care for all his members no matter where they were.

¹⁵ Proceedings of the Thirteenth Biennial Convention of the Western Wisconsin District of the Ev. Luth. Joint Synod of Wisconsin and other States. Milwaukee: Northwestern Publishing House, 1942., 5-6

¹⁶ Nitz, Marcus. Letter to the author. 30 October 2010.

In 1946 the church was redecorated right after Easter at a cost of about \$2,000. In 1950 three services were inaugurated, two in English and one in German. A parcel of land was purchased from Mrs. Clara Michel in 1951, and in the same year it was voted to build a school addition consisting of a gymnasium and classroom which cost \$48,000. The cost was held to this amount because of donations of labor and materials. In 1957 the 90th anniversary of St. John's was observed and for this occasion the floor of the church was renovated and new carpeting installed. In 1959 it was decided to call a second male teacher and by 1960 there were six teachers serving on the staff of St. John's School. In 1960 it was decided to build a four-classroom addition to the school. The cost was \$130,000. On September 11, 1960, the cornerstone was laid and on April 30, 1961, the new school addition was dedicated.

During his ministry Pastor Nitz faithfully visited the sick members in area hospitals (Columbus, Watertown, Beaver Dam, Jefferson, Madison). During this time he was issued two gas ration books (one for home use and one for car expense). He never took advantage of the added gas rations. From his wide reading in newspapers, periodicals and books he would clip jokes, sayings, pictures and paste them into booklets that he gave to shut-ins. "I believe it can be said that he regularly showed himself to be a man of great understanding with a good, rich sense of humor."¹⁷

Various other aspects of his ministry are worthy of note. His sermons sparkled with the Gospel and reflected sincere mission zeal. He would also include many illustrations from his days in Apacheland. His son, Mark, wrote, "It was obvious that Henry was greatly influenced by his experiences among the Apaches. One had the feeling he never would have left this work

¹⁷ Nitz, Marcus. Letter to the author. 30 October 2010.

had there not been the need to do so.”¹⁸ Throughout his ministry he had “communion registration,” a practice very typical of his time. Members who wished to partake of communion on the coming Sunday would stop in at the pastor’s office to announce their intention. This gave an opportunity for Pastor Nitz to meet regularly with many of his parishioners. For some time Pastor Nitz also conducted services in Spanish for the Hispanic workers employed by the Waterloo Canning Factory.

On May 25, 1964 it was proposed in a council meeting that a special meeting of the congregation be called in the fall of 1964 to consider the possibility of calling an associate pastor. His son, Mark, recounted that he took this as a sign that he should be willing to step aside. Aware of this the district president used his name on a call list for Zion, Eitzen, Minnesota. He eagerly accepted the call as a sort of “retirement call.” A generous farewell was given for Pastor Nitz on October 31, 1964. The congregation’s centennial history recounted the congregation’s love for their pastor:

“The spontaneous outpouring of affection and gratitude at the farewell reception given in the honor of Pastor Nitz and his family on October 31, was evidence of the esteem in which they were held. As is often the case with us humans, we withhold our love and esteem for our pastors and teachers until they are called elsewhere. Pastor Nitz was recognized locally and in church circles as an avid reader and his writings appear in church papers. Missions were his “special love,” and his two-month assignment to Puerto Rico, as well as his serving on the Executive Committee for Latin American missions and on the board for World Missions of the Wisconsin Synod, is recognition of this special devotion”¹⁹

Home Life Pages

¹⁸ Nitz, Marcus. Letter to the author. 25 September 2010.

¹⁹ Centennial Booklet: St. John Evangelical Lutheran Congregation 1867-1967, 11

On April 8, 1937 the Nitz family moved into the parsonage in Waterloo. Waterloo was located in the heart of America's dairy land and hence very many of the parishioners (like in Rockford) were farmers. Henry certainly felt at home having grown up on a farm himself.

One of Henry's favorite past-times was gardening. The church was located on the bank of a creek which made a peculiar bend that created a rather large plot of ground that could be used for gardening. Since that plot stood idle, the owner, a member of the congregation, allowed Henry to plant a garden on it. Henry then hired a member to bring his horse and plow in order to plow the plot which was about one acre. Henry's diaries are peppered with the different sorts of berries and vegetables that he grew in this garden. He once noted in a letter to his son, "I celebrated Independence Day by working in the garden nearly all forenoon. I staged a terrific fight with the weeds."²⁰ Alma also spent considerable time canning and preparing this garden produce.

In today's society it is hard to appreciate both the hardships and joys of the days in the mid-Twentieth Century. Henry related in his diary on April 8, 1939, "We moved into our present home two years ago today. Then also began our cooking with electricity!" These were also often rough times financially. In November of 1939 Henry related in his journal, "This month's check will not cover all the bills for the month, and there are unpaid bills from the past. But, coal, Joel's insurance, gas, and car repairs (\$24.00 this month) soon eat up the \$135.00 I get monthly." However, the congregation continued to provide for the family. Henry noted in his journal on December 31, 1939, "A member brought us a bushel of apples 'which would have spoiled anyhow,' and a duck 'because of the warm weather.' Elijah's ravens are not dead yet!"

²⁰ Nitz, Henry. Letter to Marcus Nitz. 5 July 1949.

In summer of 1943 his son, Joel, entered the army and served in the Pacific Theater during World War II. He was discharged in 1946 and later that year the family made the trip to Arizona to visit his son, Frederic, who was vicaring at East Fork at the time. "One of the family stories from the trek was the fruit which was confiscated at the AZ border. They had to give up their precious oranges which they had brought along from home. Grandpa said if he had thought of it, he would have parked there and had the family eat the fruit before entering AZ. Transporting produce across the state line was verboten."²¹ This was their first trip back to Arizona in 17 years. In 1950 Henry and Alma had the privilege of traveling to Arizona once again where he preached for the dedication of the new high school building at East Fork. With or without fruit, these opportunities certainly filled him with joy to see the "fruit of his labors."

In 1946 Henry began serving as the District President of the Western Wisconsin District. This, added with all of his other responsibilities, made him very busy. In October of 1951 Henry's father passed away. In December Henry's mother moved into their home since she could no longer live well on her own. In a Christmas letter dated December 3, 1953 Henry wrote, "Our life is frequently punctuated by board meetings, committee sessions, and conventions, during which time the two grandmas 'enjoy' keeping the home fires burning without a man in the house." Although his life was very busy during these years he continued to find time to spend with his family. Henry and Alma would often be together reading, gardening, making calls, or attending special services throughout the district. All of his children, including those with young families, would often stop by for visits and meals.

²¹ Nitz, Irene. "Grandfather Henry Nitz." Email to the author. 27 Oct. 2010.

Although Henry did not follow sports much he had many other hobbies. As mentioned earlier, he loved to spend time in his garden. He also enjoyed crossword puzzles. Henry was a linguist as well. He knew about ten languages including Latin, German, Dutch, Hebrew, Italian, Spanish, French, Greek, Apache, and later some Russian. He also learned Scandinavian languages and took a special interest in Finnish since his son-in-law, Wallace Heikkinen, was of Finnish descent. He also enjoyed reading. A short perusal of his writings will demonstrate this fact immediately. His diaries record the names of hundreds of books that he read over his lifetime. He also read many periodicals and newspapers (some in different languages) about various topics other than theology. He would then save different articles of interest to him. Mark wrote in a letter, "They truly are scrap-books because Daddy made them using papers/pages that were written on one side and blank on the other. These pages were placed into folders that use metal fasteners to attach them. On the blank side Daddy pasted clippings from magazines/papers he had read."²² His reading certainly "made him full" and he was able to connect secular things that he had read to his ministry and in his sermons.

District and Synod Service Pages

Already at the district convention in 1942 he received 27 votes to serve as president of the district. Although he was not elected at that time it shows the interest some had for him to serve in that capacity. It was not until the district convention on June 17-20, 1946 that he was elected president to replace the retiring Pastor Herbert Kirchner. He sounded the keynote for his presidency with his concluding words at the convention, "It is our earnest prayer that He who is the head of the Church will give to us who are His servants love and devotion, courage,

²² Nitz, Marcus. Letter to the author. 30 October, 2010.

ability, and zeal to preach His saving Gospel to all who have been redeemed by the blood of Jesus.”²³

As president of one of the largest districts in the Wisconsin Synod at the time he would inevitably face numerous challenges. Alma once wrote in a personal letter about some of her concerns of the added work load. Not only does the devil love to incite turmoil within congregations, but also the strife between the Missouri Synod and the Wisconsin Synod was becoming increasingly heated. In his president’s report to the district convention in 1948 Pastor Nitz said, “No other country offers such peace, protection, prosperity to the Church as does America. For this let us be thankful with heart and hands and voices. But there are other perils much more vicious than an unfriendly government or a wrecked economy. The mania for church union, for instance, without doctrinal unity, means surrender of the Truth.”²⁴

The years of Pastor Nitz’s district presidency were quite typical. He wrote thousands of letters to congregations and pastors concerning various issues. He would recommend individuals for service at different schools and congregations and submit call lists. He had oversight over congregations to ensure doctrinal integrity in teaching and practice. He was also involved in settling strife among congregations and pastors. As president he also served as spokesman, preacher, and synod representative at various occasions in various places.

After some time Pastor Nitz developed a “thorn in his flesh.” He started losing his hearing. Not only did this make it difficult to perform his pastoral duties, it also made it difficult

²³ Proceedings of the Fifteenth Biennial Convention of the Western Wisconsin District of the Ev. Luth. Joint Synod of Wisconsin and Other States. Milwaukee: Northwestern Publishing House, 1946., 110.

²⁴ Proceedings of the Sixteenth Biennial Convention of the Western Wisconsin District of the Ev. Luth. Joint Synod of Wisconsin and Other States. Milwaukee: Northwestern Publishing House, 1948., 18

for him to serve as district president. In September of 1954 he met with some doctors at the Mayo Clinic in Rochester in order to get help. However, a few days after the meeting he wrote to the University of Wisconsin in Madison, "I should like to know whether the U offers a course in lip reading for people whose hearing is defective but cannot be corrected with a hearing aid." He eventually abandoned this because he was already busy with his many synodical duties. He eventually did wear a hearing aid but still had difficulty hearing speakers from the back of the room. In a personal letter in 1954 he wrote to his long time friend, Pastor Arnold Sitz,

I am hoping to be relieved of my work as District President in June. My hearing is giving me trouble, but it is a border-line case and not ready for a hearing aid. But my main reason for wanting to be relieved is because of the spiritual peril involved in the office of DP, the most powerful position in our synodical set-up. It is not good for a man to wield that power long. 'Die Schwingen wachsen mit dem Flug.'²⁵

However, it wasn't until the district convention held July 16-19, 1956 that he asked to be relieved. "Because of my defective hearing, for which I have sought relief in vain, I can no longer function efficiently as your president. I ask you to place the office into abler hands."²⁶

During his years at Waterloo Pastor Nitz also served on the Synod's doctrinal commission. This was a particularly crucial time because of the union trend among Lutheran churches in America. Pastor Nitz stated the struggle well,

Unions and mergers are the order of the day. A unionistic ecumenicity is reaching flood stage. The impact of its propaganda does not leave us unscathed. It tempts us to be either hypercritical or indifferent. We may

²⁵ (tr. "the wings awake with the flight") Nitz, Henry. Letter to Arnold Sitz. 18 February 1954.

²⁶ Proceedings of the Twentieth Biennial Convention of the Western Wisconsin District of the Ev. Luth. Joint Synod of Wisconsin and Other States. Milwaukee: Northwestern Publishing House, 1956., 10

easily slip into separatism or unionism. May our sober-minded testimony ever be clear, courageous, and charitable. May there be a tear in our eye and a sob in our voice when we find it imperative to separate from those who have 'another gospel' or 'a different spirit.'²⁷

In the early 1950s Pastor Nitz traveled with other Wisconsin Synod theologians to discuss the Common Confession. The Common Confession was a document that the Missouri Synod had published in order to achieve union with other church bodies. This document, however, left many things unstated which would allow two parties to agree without having full doctrinal agreement. The Wisconsin Synod objected to this unscriptural practice of union and fellowship. In love the Wisconsin Synod continued to try to bring its "big sister" back to the truth. One may gain a few insights about these meetings from Pastor Nitz's diary:

January 16, 1951 in Chicago: "Continue discussion of Common Confession. No bitterness. The unity of faith evident on every point. Wis. Strong on exegesis, Norw. Stress history of union movements, Mo. Strongly dogmatic, the Slovaks interested by-standers. But Mo. defends every point of the C.C. and does not admit the justice of any criticism. Adj. at 4:00. Meet again April 9 and 10. Brenner, Lawrenz, Reim, Lehninger, and I sup in Union Sta. Harvey (sic?) House. (Meyer on a fast.)"

April 9, 1951: "Joh. Meyer, Lawrenz and I drive to Milwaukee with Reim. Take train to Chicago for meeting of ch. Union comm. with Mo. Comm. on doctrinal unity and the respective comm. of the Norw. and Slovak synods. Meeting is pleasant, but Mo. does not budge from its position. Seems all our misgiving about the Common Confession do not bother them seriously."

Pastor Nitz also served the Wisconsin Synod in many other capacities. He was elected to the board of control of Northwestern College in Watertown in 1947. He also served on the board of control for Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary. In this capacity he

²⁷ 1956 Proceedings, 8

served as a liaison between WLS and Wisconsin Synod students attending the Missouri Synod's Concordia Seminary in Springfield, Illinois. In addition he served as the Wisconsin Synod representative on the mission board of the Synodical Conference and on the World Mission board for the Wisconsin Synod.

Up until his death he also served on the Executive Committee for Latin American Missions. Since he knew Spanish he was chosen to conduct a survey of a new mission field in Puerto Rico in January and February of 1963.²⁸ He received a leave of absence from his congregation in Waterloo for this time. The result of his findings led to two men receiving calls to the island in accord with the Missioner Corps program.

Writer Pages

Pastor Nitz also served the Church through his writings. In 1957 he became a contributing editor of the *Northwestern Lutheran* and until 1959 submitted numerous articles for the Editorial page. From 1959 until his death in 1968 he became the author of his own column called "By the Way" and contributed over 100 articles. Harold Wicke wrote about this column, "The Lord also gave our brother a facile pen to write Gospel commentary on current trends in the church."²⁹ As a whole he made spiritual applications to various points he read in books, magazines, or newspapers. Some prevalent themes in these articles include: Mission work, stewardship, Lutheran education, and church union. One example of his writing artistry is found in an article entitled, "Peddlers of Discontent," where he discusses the futility in finding

²⁸ A report of this trip which was printed in the *Northwestern Lutheran* is included in the appendix

²⁹ Wicke, Harold. Obituary of Pastor Henry C. Nitz. *The Northwestern Lutheran* 17 March 1968: 91

one's security in perishable, earthly things: "The siren song of the peddlers of discontent will fall on deaf ears on the part of a consecrated Christian who in holy zeal dedicates his time and talent and money to Him after whose name he is called. He is interested in investments of unspeakably greater importance."³⁰

After serving in the Apache mission field Pastor Nitz developed a sincere respect for Pastor Gustav Harders. Throughout his ministry he kept a picture of Pastor Harders on the wall in his study. Frederic commented, "He always regarded Pastor Harders as one of the greatest men he had ever met."³¹ This honor for Pastor Harders led him to translate Harders' novels about mission work among the Apaches into English. Northwestern Publishing House published all three novels: Yaalahn (which means "till we meet again," published in 1953), La Paloma (published in 1968), and Dohashtida ("I will not" - this one was translated by Alma Nitz and published in 1958).

His love for mission work and especially mission work among the Apaches led Pastor Nitz to write a small book himself. In 1962 Northwestern Publishing House published his book called "Trophies of Grace: Echoes from Apacheland." This short book contains several short stories from his eyewitness experience about the power of the Gospel in this mission field. His desire was to incite support for the mission work among the Apache people.

Finally one is amazed at the thousands of letters he wrote over the years of his life. The majority of his correspondence was written with a typewriter and they contain rather few

³⁰ Editorial. The Northwestern Lutheran 25 May 1958: 170

³¹ Nitz, Frederic. A Brief Biography of H.C. Nitz. 9 February 1968.

mistakes. Naturally his service as district president required a lot of his work to be done through the mail. He also kept regular correspondence with all of his children after they moved out of the house. Beginning in 1936 until three days before his death 1968 he kept a regular diary of each day's happenings.³² He was also a regular contributor to the Wisconsin Synod's devotional periodical, *Meditations*.

The Eitzen and Union Township Chapter (1965-1968)

The Final Pages

On August 26, 1965 Pastor Nitz received a special delivery letter containing a call to Zion Lutheran Church in Eitzen, Minnesota and St. Peter's Lutheran Church, Union Township, Minnesota. On that same day he noted in his diary, "I feel like accepting." He did accept the call and viewed this call as an "active retirement" call. So on November 7, 1965 at the age of 72 he was installed at Zion. His acceptance ended a 13 month vacancy in which the congregation wondered if it would ever receive a pastor from the Lord. "But the Lord finally sent them the beloved and well-known Pastor Henry C. Nitz. It's true that Pastor Nitz lived only two and one-half years after his arrival, but he left a marked impression upon the hearts and souls of the members as well as the people of the community."³³

Pastor Nitz loved the work of the ministry. He frequently said that he would like to die "with his boots on." He did not want to retire. Mark related, "Since the Apaches lived in camps scattered here and there, the missionaries used horses to get from one place to another. Living

³² A few of these diaries are still available and make an interesting read

³³ Golden Jubilee Convention of the Minnesota District. *Golden Jubilee History of the Minnesota District of the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod and its Member Congregations 1918-1968*. Minneapolis: Ad Art Advertising Co., 1969., 87

as a kind of cowboy, one can understand Henry's mindset when he said he wanted to die with his boots on; he never wanted to retire."³⁴

His ministry in these two smaller churches provided him with a lesser load than his ministry in Waterloo. He carried out the normal duties of a pastorate, calls, funerals, sermons, and confirmation classes. Although short, the congregations enjoyed the time of Pastor Nitz's ministry in their midst. "During his short stay of 2 ½ years peace and tranquility reigned in the congregation and in the town of Eitzen itself. Pastor Nitz was a Christian man from whom love oozed and it was most noticeable by all. He is the one who did all the translating of the German histories and minutes which made this booklet possible."³⁵ He also continued to serve on various boards and committees of the synod including the World Mission Board and the Executive Committee for Latin American Missions.

The Last Page

In August of 1967 Henry underwent treatment for malignant tumors. The doctors administered deep X-ray therapy which appeared to work a cure and allowed him to resume his full duties in the fall of that same year. On January 16, 1968 he conducted a funeral on a bitter cold day and subsequently became ill with the flu. On January 21st he was taken to the local hospital in Caledonia, Minnesota where he began to recover. However, on January 29th, his 75th birthday, he became seriously ill with a high fever. On February 3, 1968 at 5:25 a.m. the Lord received his child into his heavenly kingdom.

³⁴ Nitz, Marcus. Letter to the author. 25 September 2010.

³⁵ Centennial History of Zion Lutheran Church, Eitzen, MN

According to Pastor Nitz's wishes Pastor Reuben Kettenacker conducted a funeral service at Zion in Eitzen on February 6, 1968. A second service was held in St. Mark's Lutheran Church, Watertown, Wisconsin on February 7th with Pastor Carl Mischke conducting the service. Finally the committal service was conducted by Professor E.E. Kowalke. His remains now rest at the Lutheran Cemetery in Watertown, Wisconsin "awaiting the Easter to be rebound."

The Epilogue

A Lasting Impression

What advice might Pastor Nitz give to a young pastor? What guidance might he offer? What encouragements might he suggest? Although Pastor H.C. Nitz has long been enjoying the eternal marriage feast of the Lamb, his work remains in the memories of those who knew him and in the writings he left behind. This section of the paper will explore different pastoral encouragements H.C. may have given based on a selection of his writings.

Every ministry is glorious and is a blessing from the Lord. In a letter written to his son, Frederic, while Frederic was serving at East Fork, Henry wrote,

Ramona writes that she thinks you are now in your glory. Glory, indeed. The glory of living amid scenery furnished with breath-taking beauty by the Creator. The glory of seeing heathendom emerge into "His marvelous light". The glory of stooping low, very low, to bring enlightenment to little pagans. The glory of making every little task, preaching, teaching, plumbing, irrigating, milking, sawing wood count as precious pieces in that glorious mosaic called mission work. The glory of learning that every scrap of experience and school training is useful in this work, and still feeling woefully inadequately equipped. The glory of

feeling that you are but a channel thru which God is bringing the Gospel to Apacheland.³⁶

It is of utmost importance for a pastor to stay connected with God's Word both privately and corporately. Personal devotion life is a must if someone wants to remain a faithful Lutheran pastor. The devil's attacks are constant and the mutual encouragement of fellow brothers in the ministry is of utmost importance. Pastor Nitz's words are reminiscent of Psalm 133, "How good and pleasant it is when brothers live together in unity!"

To avoid the dangers of both indifference and intolerance we need to study God's Word diligently in private, and jointly in pastoral and delegate conferences. It must be a real emergency indeed that keeps a pastor from a conference or keeps a congregation from being represented by a delegate at a delegate conference or a district synod in these days when brotherly admonition and encouragement are sorely needed.³⁷

And in a journal entry he remarks at the indispensable benefit of brotherly encouragement:

August 16, 1939, "Pastor's picnic at Columbus. A goodly number present and a good time was had by all. At such informal occasions one learns to know one's brethren more truly than at professional gatherings"

A pastor must also realize the eternal consequence of his work. With eternity at stake his work will never be meaningless or inconsequential. With eternity at stake every person is a soul in urgent need of the clear and unaltered Gospel. Henry noted,

There is a judgment seat before which we must all appear. Then the stubble and hay of manmade church politics will be burned away. The

³⁶ Nitz, Henry. Letter to Frederic. 21 January 1946.

³⁷ 1948 Proceedings, 19

sober-minded believer ever keeps the eternal goal in sight. He strives to be faithful, so that he may receive the crown of life. He does not blindly follow any leader or synod. He does not compromise the Gospel in order to prevent a statistical loss. He will practice forbearance and patience with weak brethren, but not merely for sentimental reasons. But above all he will covet the grace to remain faithful to Him with whom he hopes to spend eternity.³⁸

In realizing the eternal importance of his work a pastor will gladly see all people as souls for whom Christ died. In this respect the pastor will certainly “let his light shine” and be ready to welcome the first-time visitor in and to his church: Pastor Nitz wrote in his journal on August 28, 1939, “A parishioner, commenting on my sermon of yesterday (which had some pointed remarks on welcoming strangers to church and on rejoicing over non-member children attending our school) remarked, ‘Give them more of that kind of talk.’ Why, them, not us?”

It can be a temptation for a pastor to lose sight of the purpose of worship and get hung up with the externals. Pastor Nitz consistently followed the lectionary and used liturgies, but at the same time he realized the essence of worship is the Word. His experience in the primitive mission field in Arizona no doubt influenced his view: “The incidentals connected with public worship are not unimportant, and especially gifted preachers are not to be depreciated. But the hungry hearer comes to *hear the word*.”³⁹ “Liturgy, pulpit gowns, crosses, candles and the like are not essential to worshipping God ‘in spirit and in truth’...Corporate worship demands forms. And these forms should be dignified and in good taste. But when forms become

³⁸ 1956 Proceedings, 8

³⁹ Editorial. The Northwestern Lutheran. 2 February 1958: 35

needlessly elaborate, when they ape denominations that have 'another gospel,' they are a nuisance and an offense to the spiritually minded worshipper."⁴⁰

By both his example and his writing Pastor Nitz witnessed the importance for a pastor to be well read. Reading increases learning. Being well read enables a pastor to answer objections and questions about theology adequately. It is also sound advice for a pastor to read material about various topics that do not pertain to theology. This added knowledge improves a pastor's ability to carry on conversations with members and prospects. Pastor Nitz wrote, "Reading maketh a full man,' says Francis Bacon. But only 'reading for life' will fill heart, mind, and soul with edifying knowledge...A bookless house is indeed a bare home no matter how richly furnished. But even a small shelf of choice books which give evidence of being read testify, 'Here live literate Christians.'"⁴¹

Pastor Nitz had a continual and ever-increasing love for mission work. Not only did he serve as a missionary and serve on various mission boards, but he also promoted mission work in his writings. Every pastor who ponders the indescribable treasure of the Gospel of Jesus cannot help but share it. However, the devil loves complacency.

"There are words that stab into the conscience and leave a barb that smarts and stings and moves to action. But the conscience can also become seared and callous. Such a word is the parting command of our ascended Lord: 'Go into all the world and make disciples of all nations.' It should stab a Christian wide awake every time he reads and hears it. But the very frequency with which we hear it may dull our sensitivity. Yet our complacency may benefit from a kind of shock treatment given by the

⁴⁰ Editorial. The Northwestern Lutheran. 13 September 1959: 291

⁴¹ Editorial. The Northwestern Lutheran. 16 February 1958: 62

words of a missionary in Africa... 'Be on fire for God. There is no such thing as lukewarm fire. If it is fire, it is burning and red hot, or it is out!' ... 'We know that Christ alone is the hope of Africa.'"⁴²

"One of the indirect results of mission work is the reciprocal, fructifying effect of young churches on the mother church. The first love of recent converts from paganism often puts to shame the indifference of the church through whose mission program the gospel is preached in heathen lands."⁴³

Bible class is considered by some to be the heartbeat of the church. The congregation whose members are actively growing in the Word is a healthy congregation. Therefore it is important for a pastor to remove simple barriers that seem to prevent members from regularly attending Bible classes. In a diary entry for January 26, 1940 Pastor Nitz remarked, "Judging from the expressions of the newly started Bible Class, it appears it is meeting with more favor than I had dared to hope. Some people were afraid to come, fearing they might be asked questions, or be called on to read."

It is also important for a pastor to maintain good records for his church. A pastor's record of baptisms may also serve as a reminder of what a blessed and awesome gift baptism is for the Lord's Church. The blessings of baptism are certainly worth reminding one's sheep about again and again. Pastor Nitz observed this in his journal on February 2, 1939,

An old couple from Johnson Creek calls to get a transcript of baptismal records in order to get an old age pension. These frequent requests have impressed upon me the need of complete and carefully kept records. But it is also a saddening observation that some of the old folks are not interested in their baptism beyond the fact that it will prove their right to

⁴² Editorial. The Northwestern Lutheran. 2 August 1959: 243

⁴³ Nitz, Henry. "By the Way." The Northwestern Lutheran. 14 January 1962: 9

material benefits. Perhaps the pulpit should more often point to the benefit of baptism as a Means of Grace.

In the course of his ministry a pastor will certainly experience numerous trials that test his faith. Although the devil may use these times to drive a person into despair, God uses them for faith building. Martin Luther even remarked that *tentatio* is a mark of a theologian. Pastor Nitz was no exception. The jewel offered here is certainly from one who felt the bitterness of pain but also the sweet balm of forgiveness in Christ: from a journal entry on January 25, 1939, "We never perhaps know the weakness of our faith until we are placed in the furnace of trials and anxiety. Blessed and happy is that person who finds by experience that his faith can stand the fire, and that he can say with Job (13:15), 'Though He slay me, yet will I trust in Him.'"

The Back Cover

So what does the "book" of the life and ministry of Pastor Henry Carl Nitz look like? A man devoted to mission work. A man who dearly loved his family. A man who cherished the work of the Lutheran pastorate. A man who proclaimed "God's Word and Luther's doctrine pure." A caring and considerate friend. All of these and much more. However, what stands out the most about this "book" is its saturation in the blood of Jesus. That is the Gospel in which he lived and proclaimed. And now it is only because of the Author of that Gospel, Jesus, that Pastor H.C. Nitz is now enjoying the marriage feast of the Lamb. Yaalahn!

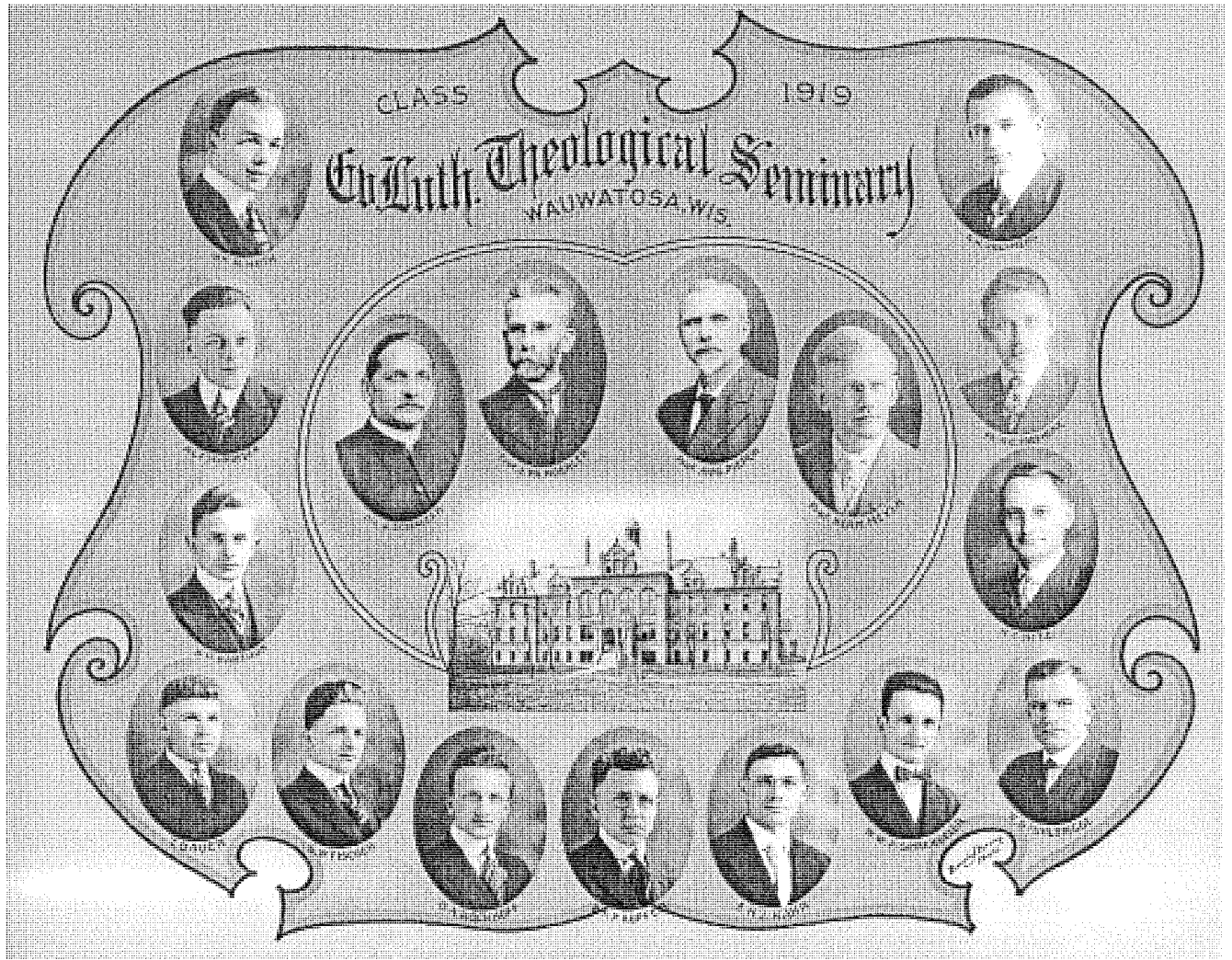
Bibliography

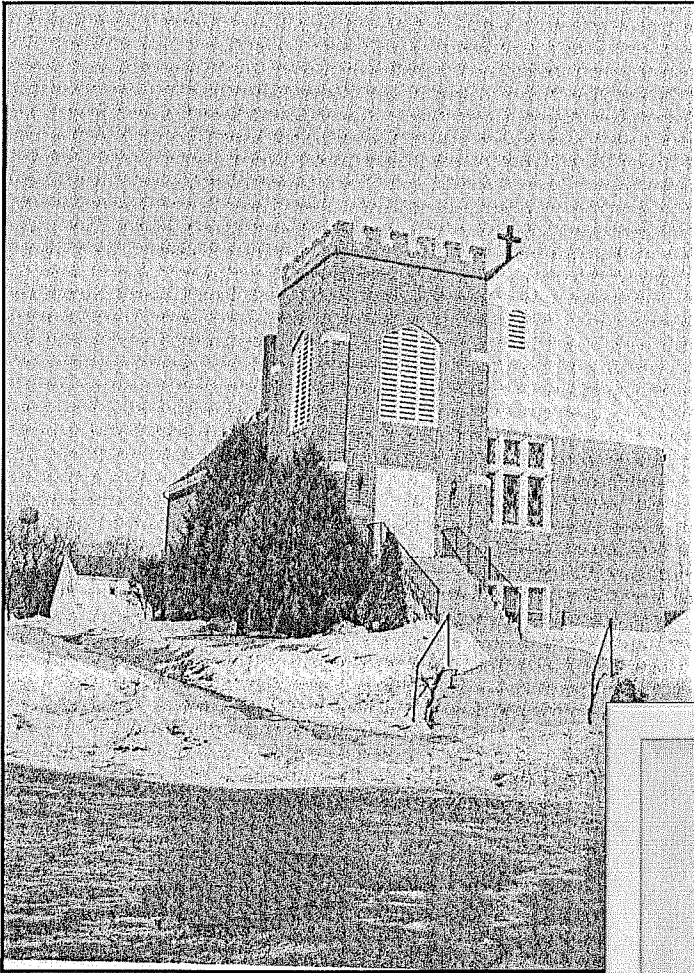
- Centennial Booklet: St. John Evangelical Lutheran Congregation (Waterloo, WI) 1867-1967
- Centennial History of Zion Lutheran Church, Eitzen, MN.
- Golden Jubilee 1906-1956: A Brief History of Cross Evangelical Lutheran Church (Wisconsin Synod)
Rockford, Minnesota
- Golden Jubilee Convention of the Minnesota District. Golden Jubilee History of the Minnesota District of
the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod and its Member Congregations 1918-1968.
Minneapolis: Ad Art Advertising Co., 1969.
- Nitz, Alma. Letter to a friend. 3 December 1953.
- Nitz, Frederic. A Brief Biography of H.C. Nitz. 9 February 1968.
- Nitz, Frederic. A Brief Review of the Married Life of Pastor and Mrs. H.C. Nitz for the past Thirty-Five
Years.
- Nitz, H. C. A History of St. John's Church Waterloo, Wisconsin 1867-1942. Waterloo: Courier Printing
Co., 1942.
- Nitz, Henry. Letter to Arnold Sitz. 18 February 1954.
- Nitz, Henry. Letter to Frederic. 21 January 1946.
- Nitz, Henry. Letter to Marcus Nitz. 5 July 1949.
- Nitz, Henry. Personal Diaries. Various years between 1939-1968.
- Nitz, Henry. Sermon Outlines. Various years between 1933-1964.
- Nitz, Irene. Grandfather Henry Nitz. Email to the author. 27 Oct. 2010.
- Nitz, Joel. Rockford- 1929-1937 As We Remembered It. 1 September 1986.
- Nitz, Marcus. Letter to the author. 25 September 2010.
- Nitz, Marcus. Letter to the author. 30 October 2010.
- Nitz, Michael. H.C. Nitz and the Apache Mission. March 26, 1986.
- Nitz, Ramona. Letter to the author. 4 October 2010.
- Proceedings of the Minnesota District of the Ev. Luth. Joint Synod of Wisconsin and other states.
Milwaukee: Northwestern Publishing House, 1930-1936.

Proceedings of the Western Wisconsin District of the Ev. Luth. Joint Synod of Wisconsin and other States. Milwaukee: Northwestern Publishing House, 1938-1966.

The Northwestern Lutheran. Milwaukee: Northwestern Publishing House, 1957-1968

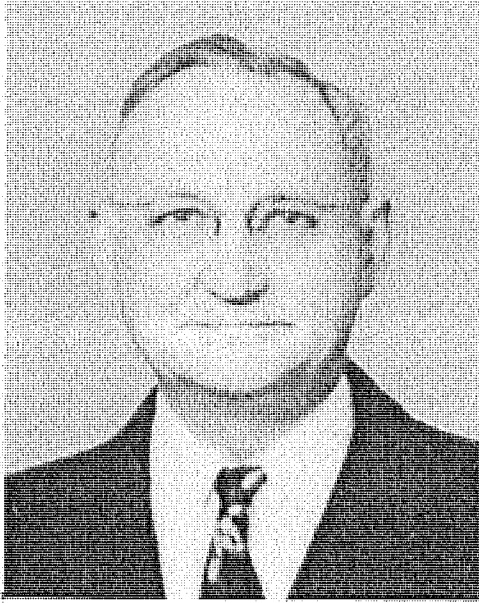
H.C. Nitz's graduation class from the Ev. Luth. Theological Seminary 1919



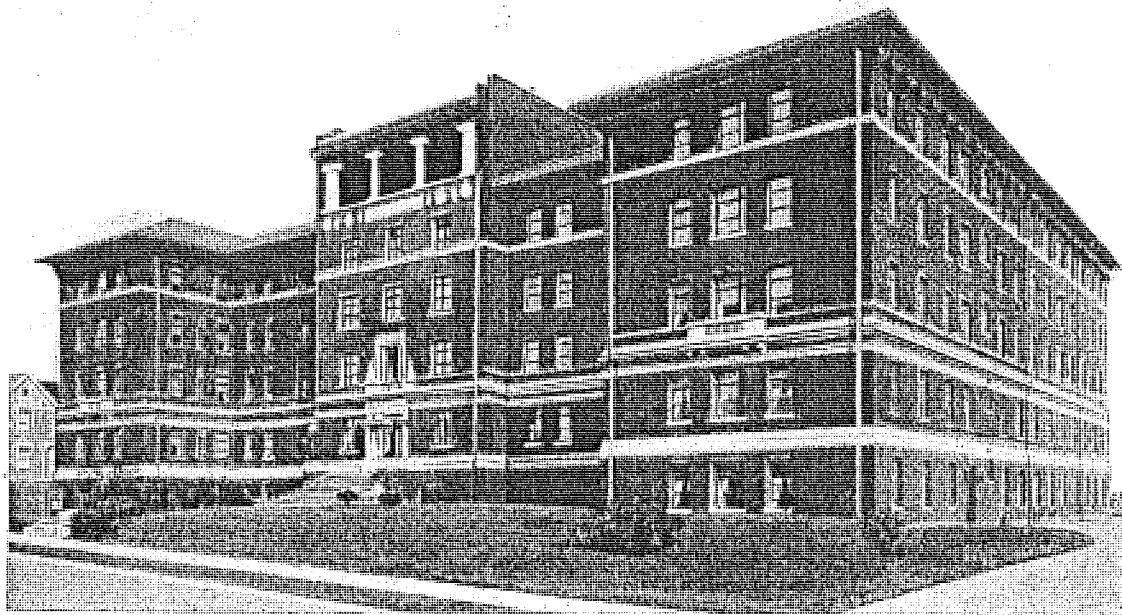


*Cross Lutheran Church,
Rockford, MN- where
H.C. was pastor from
1929-1937 (top left is
the new church built in
1930; middle is the
inside of the new
church; bottom left is
the old church)*





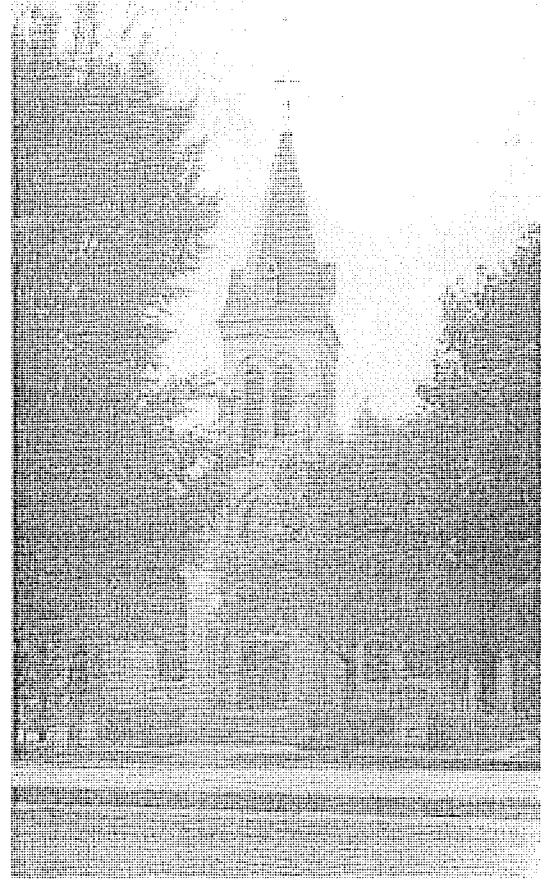
Top left is Pastor H.C. Nitz while pastor at Cross Lutheran in Rockford (1929-1937); bottom is Fairview Hospital where he spent 2 months recovering from a broken hip in 1936



"FAIRVIEW HOSPITAL, MINNEAPOLIS, MINN."



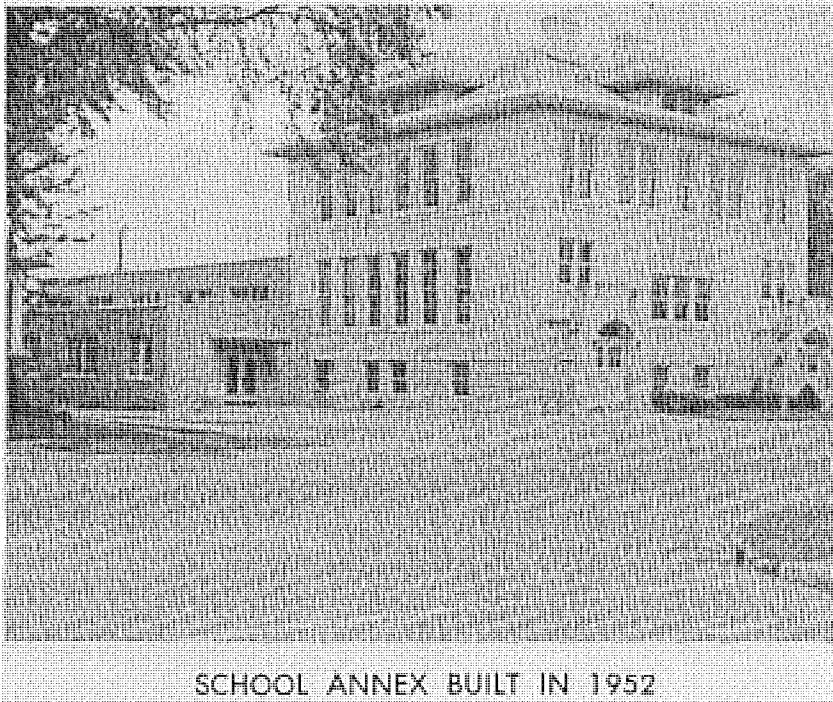
THE CHURCH INTERIOR AS IT LOOKS TODAY



*Top left: St. John's
Waterloo church interior
in 1960s*

*Top right: Outside view of
church also during the
1960s*

*Bottom left: Parsonage
and home of H.C. Nitz and
family at Waterloo*



*St. John's Waterloo,
Wisconsin*

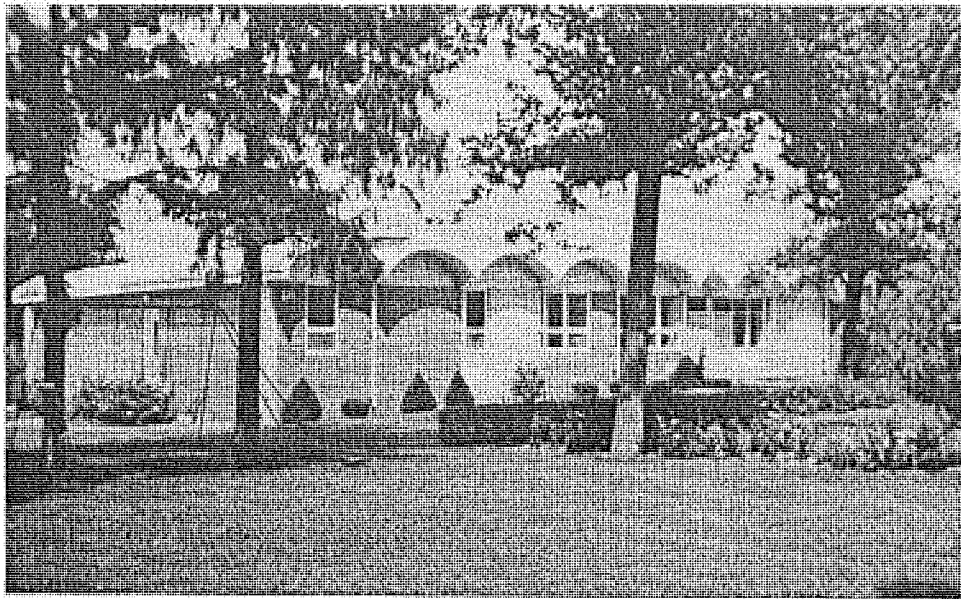
*Top picture: School
building and the
annex built in 1952*

*Bottom: the
groundbreaking
ceremony for the
addition*

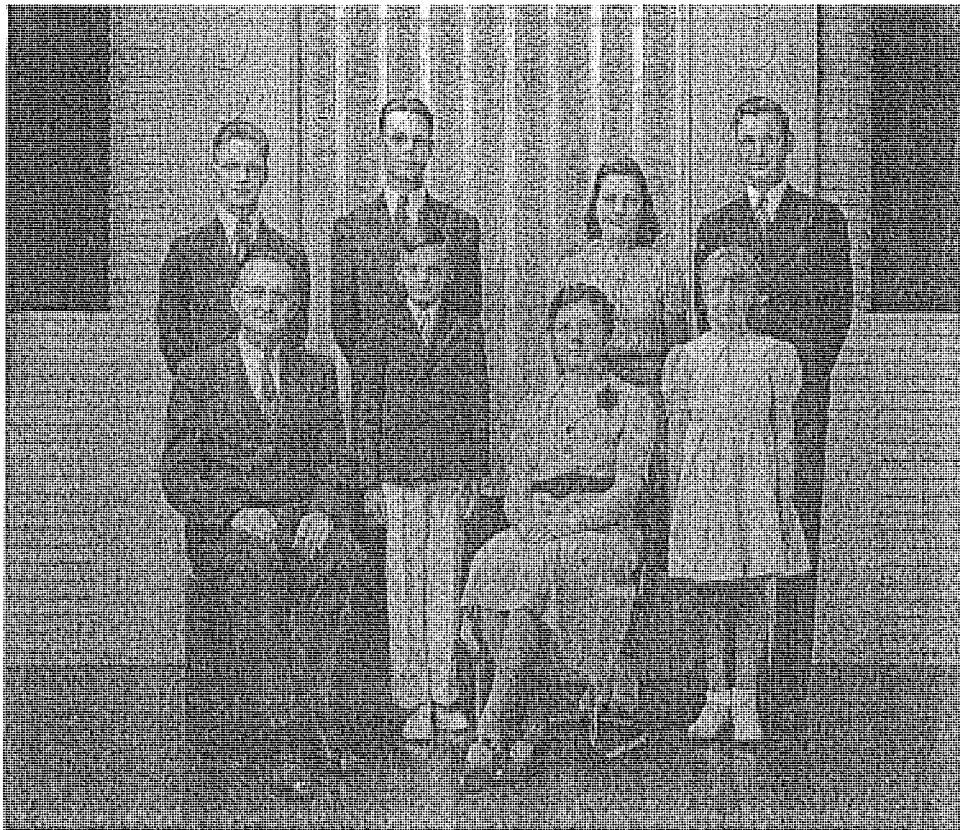
St. John's Waterloo

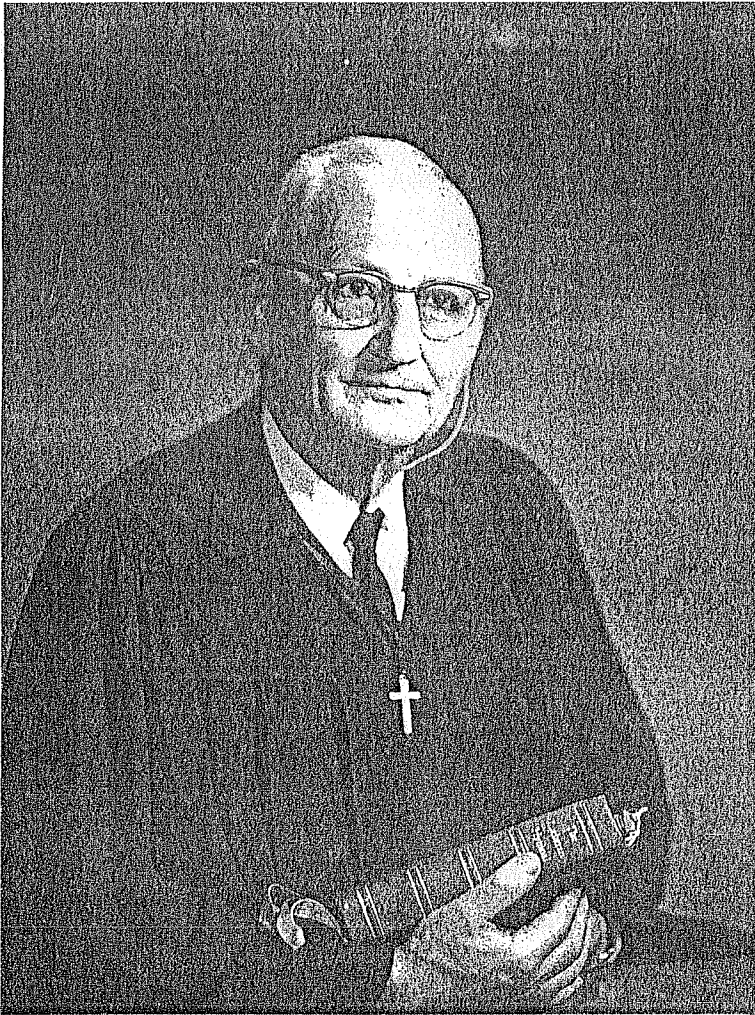
Top: school addition built in 1960

Bottom: Family picture

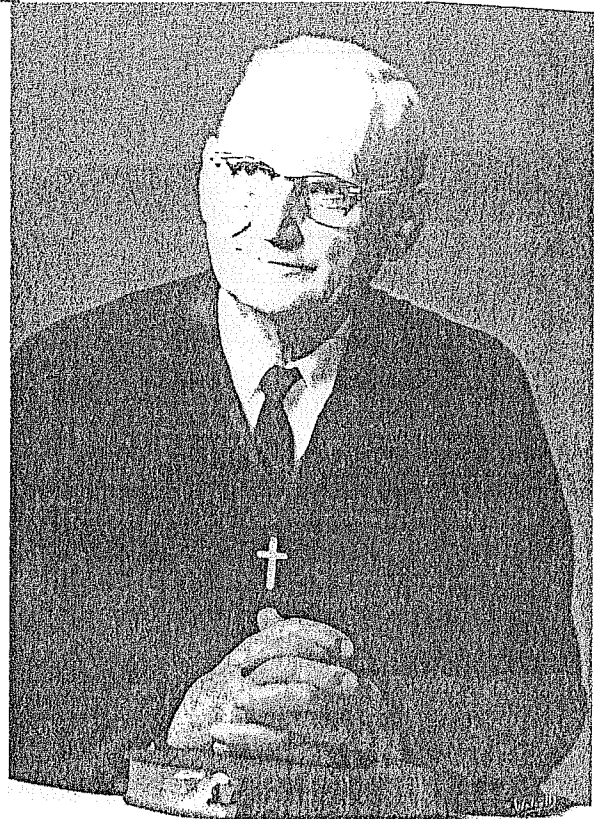


NEW CLASSROOM ADDITION BUILT IN 1960





*Later pictures of
Pastor Nitz*



† Pastor Henry C. Nitz †

The Father in heaven received Henry Carl Nitz into His kingdom by the Sacrament of Holy Baptism on the day he was born, January 29, 1893. He then strengthened him in his body and later filled his heart with the desire to serve in the public ministry. In addition to serving various congregations as pastor, he also served the Western Wisconsin District as president for 10 years, and served the Synod on its Doctrinal Commission, the Board of Control of Northwestern College, the Seminary Board of Control, and as a member of the Board for World Missions. In 1963, he undertook a survey of Puerto Rico in behalf of the World Board, and was a member of the Executive Committee for Latin America at the time of his death. His desire and compulsion to share the Gospel with others made Pastor Nitz a fervent advocate of mission work in the counsels of our Synod, a fact that was emphasized at his funeral by Pastor Edgar Hoenecke, who spoke as Executive Secretary for the World Board.

The Lord also gave our brother a facile pen to write Gospel commentary on current trends in the church as a contributor to "By the Way" in *The Northwestern Lutheran*. He translated the work of Pastor G. Harders, early missionary to the Apaches and a constant source of inspiration to Pastor Nitz. He served as essayist on a number of occasions, and ready on his desk at the time of his death was a history of the Western Wisconsin District to be delivered as an essay at its June 1968 convention. This man of many talents by God's grace used them well in the service of his Savior, and it was his desire first and foremost to lead men to see "no man save Jesus only."

Pastor Nitz was born at Dallas, Wisconsin, the son of Mr. Herman Nitz and his wife Augusta, nee Radtke. He was baptized by Pastor A. Freund. In 1906, he was confirmed by Pastor H. Ahelmann. In the fall of 1908 he began his studies toward the ministry at Dr. Martin Luther College, New Ulm, Minnesota, transferring to Northwestern College, Watertown, in 1912, and graduating in 1915. His studies at the Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary, then situated at Wauwatosa, Wisconsin, were interrupted twice to help at the Indian Mission. Upon graduation in 1919 he



Pastor Henry C. Nitz

was again assigned to the Apache field, serving at Lower Cibeque and Globe. When the Synod in 1921 purchased the government school at East Fork, Pastor Nitz was placed in charge, and accepted the call to East Fork the following year. During this time he was instrumental in founding the well-known East Fork Nursery and Orphanage. From 1929-1937 he was pastor of Cross Lutheran Church of Rockford, Minnesota. In 1937 he took up his pastorate at St. John's, Waterloo, Wisconsin, and served there until 1965, at which time he became pastor of the dual parish, Zion Lutheran Church of Eitzen, Minnesota, and St. Peter's of Union Ridge (rural Caledonia). On February 3 the Lord took his servant to the heavenly home at an age of 75 years and 5 days.

Surviving are his wife, the former Alma Pingel, whom he married on June 22, 1920; two daughters: Ramona, the wife of Mr. Wallace Heikinen of Tower, Minnesota, and Naomi, the wife of Pastor Raymond Schultz of Wausau, Wisconsin; four sons: Pastor Frederic Nitz of New Ulm, Minnesota, Mr. Joel Nitz of West Columbia, South Carolina, Pastor Paul Nitz of Milwaukee, Wisconsin, and Pastor Marcus Nitz of Tucson, Arizona. Two brothers and 29 grandchildren also survive.

Funeral services were conducted at Zion Lutheran Church, Eitzen, on February 6, with Pastor Ruben Kettenacker in charge, and at St. Mark's Ev. Lutheran Church, Watertown, Wisconsin, on February 7. At the latter service Pastor Carl Mischke

preached on Matthew 17:8, and the undersigned read the liturgy. Professor Erwin E. Kowalke read the committal at the Lutheran Cemetery, Watertown.

Blessed are the dead that die in the Lord! May the remembrance of his zeal to share the Gospel with others encourage his brethren!

HAROLD E. WICKE

† Pastor G. W. Scheitel †

The Lord called the soul of Pastor George W. Scheitel out of this vale of tears to our eternal home in heaven on February 9, 1968, less than two months after the death of his wife.

George W. Scheitel was born on February 15, 1888, in Posen Township, Wood Lake, Minnesota, to Pastor William and Catherine Burmester Scheitel. Four days after his birth he was received into God's kingdom of grace by means of Holy Baptism, administered by his father. He attended St. Luke's Christian Day School and was confirmed in the Lutheran faith on April 6, 1902, by Pastor E. F. Mueller. He had succeeded Pastor William Scheitel, who met an untimely death by drowning in the swollen Yellow Medicine River on May 20, 1892.

After his confirmation he attended Concordia College, St. Paul, and Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, Missouri. He was presented to the church as a candidate for the holy ministry in the year 1911 and was assigned to the Monson-Taylor, Minnesota, parish. This parish he served until 1914, at which time he accepted the call extended to him by Peace Ev. Lutheran Church, Potsdam, Minnesota. Here he labored for 24 years. In June 1951, he moved to Milroy, Minnesota, having accepted the call to First St. John's Ev. Lutheran. There he served until the time of his retirement, August 1962.

In 1961, he was privileged to commemorate the fiftieth year of his ordination as a minister of the Gospel of Christ crucified. In September 1862, he and his wife moved to Echo to make this their home in their declining years.

Pastor George W. Scheitel was united in holy matrimony to Mathilda Burmester in 1914 in Eitzen, Minnesota. The Lord blessed this union with nine children, four sons and five daughters. In 1964 Pastor and Mrs. Scheitel were privileged to observe their golden wedding anniversary in

Proposed Agenda
BOARD FOR WORLD MISSIONS
April 23/24, 1968

April 23

10:00a.

MEMORIAL DEVOTION FOR PASTOR HENRY C. NITZ
January 29, 1893 -- February 3, 1968
Devotion led by Pastor Karl F. Krauss

Pastor Henry C. Nitz

senior member of the Board for World Missions, was entrusted with many important offices in his Conference, District, and Synod during his forty-eight years in the ministry. But his special interest and abiding love was always the cause of World Missions. To this he devoted much of his time, money, and his great gifts of understanding and writing.

Already in his Seminary years he was twice asked to fill vacancies in the Indian Mission at Cibecue and Globe. In 1928 he was called to take charge of the new East Fork School; and the East Fork Nursery was begun during his tenure.

His mission love led to his appointment as our Synod's representative on the Missionary Board of the Synodical Conference a post which he filled capably until our withdrawal in 1963.

In that year the World Board sent him to survey mission opportunities in Puerto Rico because of his knowledge of missions and his speaking acquaintance with Spanish.

His death interrupted his writing of the history of the Apache Mission and a series of articles for the Northwestern Lutheran marking the 75th anniversary of this, our first World Mission.

Our Board mourns the loss of its senior mission statesman!

†

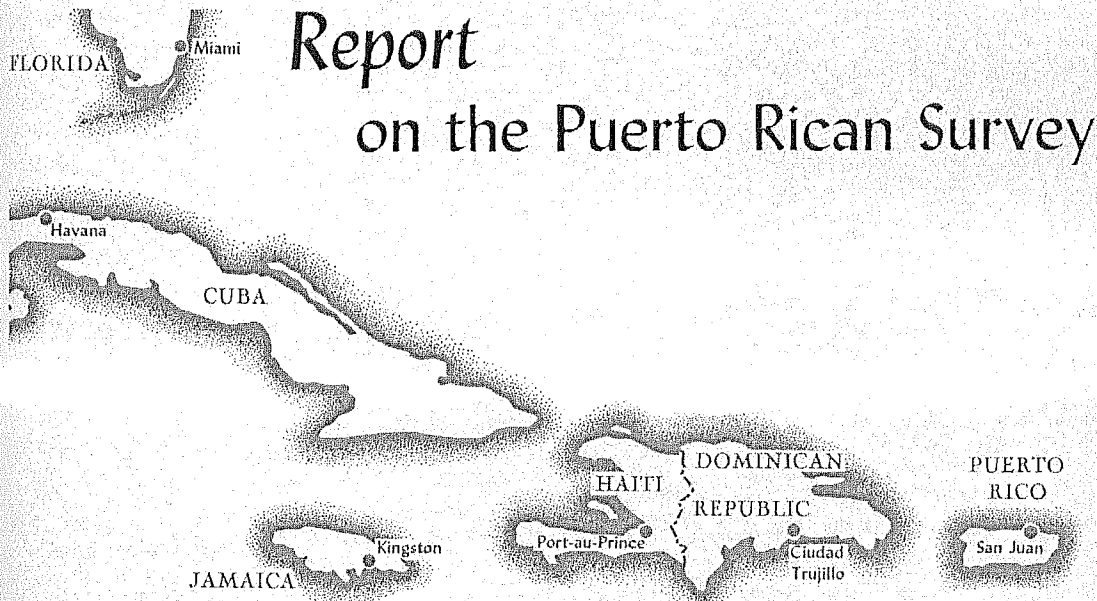
For all the saints who from their labors rest,
Who Thee by faith before the world confest,
Thy Name, O Jesus, be forever blest!
Allelujah! Allelujah!

Thou wast their Rock, their Fortress, and their Might;
Thou, Lord, their Captain in the well-fought fight;
Thou, in the darkness drear, their one true Light!
Allelujah! Allelujah!

Oh, may Thy soldiers, faithful, true, and bold,
Fight as the saints who nobly fought of old
And win with them the victor's crown of gold!
Allelujah! Allelujah!

From earth's wide bounds, from ocean's farthest coast,
Through gates of pearl streams in the countless host,
Singing to Father, Son, and Holy Ghost:
Allelujah! Allelujah!

The golden evening brightens in the West;
Soon, soon, to faithful warriors cometh rest.
Sweet is the calm of Paradise the blest!
Allelujah! Allelujah!



Report on the Puerto Rican Survey

[Pastor H. C. Nitz received a leave of absence from his congregation in Waterloo, Wisconsin, to make a survey trip to Puerto Rico. The Board for World Missions had asked him to do this exploratory work. This, in turn, was to be a step preparatory to the calling of two men to work on the island, in accord with the Missioner Corps program. Pastor Nitz made the survey during January and February. He reports some of his findings in this report. In the time since his return the Board for World Missions has met and has extended calls to two men to be missionaries in Puerto Rico. — Ed.]

A Cluster of Facts

When the report on the survey of Puerto Rico was filed with the Board for World Missions on March 12, it was introduced with the following prologue:

According to G. K. Chesterton, "modern masters of science are much impressed with the need of beginning all inquiry with a fact." To begin with a fact, to seek factual information, and to act on the most reliable information attainable is, of course, the strategy of God-pleasing mission endeavor. Now, our inquiry does not begin with one fact, but with a cluster of facts.

1. There is that monumental mandate, that uncomfortably clear command of our Lord: "Go!"

2. There are tens of thousands of "other sheep" among the nearly three million Puerto Ricans whom the Lord included in His yearning statement that they must be brought into His fold. "Them also I MUST bring, and they SHALL hear my voice" (John 10:16).

3. Thousands of Puerto Ricans are being ensnared by a score or more of religions (falsely so called), all of which have one basic venom in common: "You can do something to save yourself."

4. In some manner similar to the genesis of our missions in Apacheland, in Northern Rhodesia, in Japan, Puerto Rico appeared on our synodical radar screen and persistently remained there till it moved us to action.

5. There are a considerable number of fellow Lutherans in Puerto Rico as tourists (450,000 a year), or as more or less permanent residents perforce (thousands of military personnel), or by preference (in the 800 Continental firms doing business there). They are without the ministrations of Word and Sacrament in their purity. Some of them worship with congregations not of our fellowship. Some drift, some succumb to error, most are unhappy.

The People

In the past generation, Puerto Rico has made fantastic progress econom-

ically, industrially, and educationally. The average man on the street is clean-looking, neatly dressed, handsome, and walks briskly.

Schools abound. In city or country, the most frequent highway sign is ESCUELA. Illiteracy is disappearing fast. The displays in newsstands and bookstores (of which there are surprisingly many) indicate the interest of the readers: astrology, Yogi, Bahai, Kierkegaard, Zoroaster, Rosicrucianism, science, sex. The Muchlenberg Press has a well-stocked store (La Reforma) on the plaza in Rio Piedras.

San Juan's two Spanish dailies: *El Mundo*, *El Imparcial*; a well-edited English daily, *The San Juan Star*; and an especially interesting English weekly, *The Island Times*.

According to reports, in 1940 about 32 percent of the population of 10 years or older could neither read nor write. By 1961 it was down to 13 per cent. Allegedly 88 per cent speak English, but this is doubtful. Shoppers find very few clerks who speak fluent English. And some of those who think they speak it are hard to understand.

The instruction in all public schools is in Spanish, with English taught in all grades as a foreign language. But if our observation was a fair sample, the result is not one to boast about.

In San Juan there are two private schools offering courses on the ele-

mentary and secondary level in which English is the medium of instruction. Each school has about 400 pupils. One is under Methodist auspices, the other is nonreligious. The tuition is \$45.00 a month plus textbooks and various fees.

There are numerous private grade schools, Catholic and Protestant.

Besides the University of Puerto Rico (20,000 students) there are an Inter-American University, a Presbyterian University (at San German), and a Roman Catholic university in Ponce.

Religion

Nominally, most Puerto Ricans are Roman Catholics. While Rome seems to be losing its grip on the people as a whole, there is ample evidence of superstitious devotion. This observer got the impression that attendance at masses is meager.

There is one English-speaking Lutheran church on the island: Grace Church, a member of the Lutheran Church in America. This group began Spanish work in Puerto Rico in 1898 and has about a dozen stations, mostly in the metropolitan area of San Juan, a city of half a million.

Practically all shades of Protestantism are represented. Six of the major denominations have a joint theological seminary in Rio Piedras. It has a staff of 10 professors, a student body of 60 men, a library of 10,000 volumes, substantial buildings, a beautiful campus. Each of the participating churches reportedly has about 30,000 confirmed members. They are all planning expansion, but are hampered by a shortage of men and money.

The Lutherans train their men in Philadelphia. The Defenders of the Faith have a seminary in Rio Piedras. The Episcopalians, who seem to have a sizable membership, opened a seminary in San Just last year with 20 students. The Pentecostals reportedly are the most active and numerous sect. Mormons, Unitarians, Jehovah's Witnesses, Seventh Day Adventists, Bahá'ism, Spiritism, and Christian Science are also bidding for the soul of Puerto Rico. Judged by the size of the Grand Lodge temple in Santurce, Freemasonry has its devotees also.

There is complete religious liberty, guaranteed by the constitution of the commonwealth. Rome does not interfere, at least not openly. But "God's Word and Luther's doctrine pure"

is a scarce article on the island. By stating this fact we would not deprecate the efforts of many evangelical workers.

In all of the larger cities there are so-called union churches. The one in Santurce boasts that its membership includes people from nearly 30 denominations. It uses the Presbyterian hymnal, but identifies itself merely as a member of the World Council of Churches.

A writer reported in *Christian Herald* (July, 1962): "To my surprise, on a recent 10-day trip to Puerto Rico, I discovered that as many Protestants are in church on any given Sunday morning as Roman Catholics. And their social concern equals their warm personal faith. They are a force in government."

Of the nearly three million people in Puerto Rico, 80 per cent are considered Roman Catholics. But the Bishop of San Juan stated to an interviewer that only about 20 per cent of the nominal members are active.

Dr. Thomas A. Liggett, president of the Seminario Evangelico de Puerto Rico, is reported as saying: "The only religion that's really aggressive in Puerto Rico is Protestantism. So far as I know, this is the only country in Latin America, with the possible exception of Chile, where Protestants comprise 10 per cent of the population. Now, while 20 per cent of the Catholics are practicing Catholics, I would say that 80 per cent of the Protestants are practicing Protestants." (Ruth Gruber, *Puerto Rico: Island of Promise*.)

To this author the Bishop of San Juan complained: "The Catholic Church has suffered for years because there were too few priests, about one priest for 7,000 people." It's a lame alibi. Rome has been in Puerto Rico since Ponce de Leon began to settle the island in 1508. But in four centuries, Rome failed to develop a native clergy. Even today most priests and nuns are imported from Spain and Venezuela.

Non-Biblical cults are prevalent. Miss Gruber reports: "There are said to be over 100,000 Spiritualists practicing actively the art of turning to the spirits, holding seances, and listening to voices." She also reports that Rossi, a former newspaper-woman, is a Spiritualist leader near San Sebastian who heals at \$25.00 a visit, is a millionaire, rides a Cadillac, gets her followers to farm her land for nothing.

The Mitas are the newest religious group, followers of Juanita Garcia, who call her Mamita (little mother). Reportedly she says: "I am the vessel through whom the Holy Ghost speaks, . . . Moses is no higher than I am. Jesus is no higher. . . . I am the last messiah."

Opportunity and Obligation

After checking the findings of our survey of Puerto Rico, Pastor Edgar Hoenecke, executive secretary of the Board for World Missions, summed up his impressions thus:

"That we have both an opportunity and an obligation in Puerto Rico is apparent from the fact that much of the work today lacks the solidarity of Scriptural confession and practice which is consonant with the Truth that makes men free from spiritual bondage and fit for the kingdom of heaven. There is a definite need for our sound Christian position and influence.

"We also carry an obligation and have an opportunity in the area of doing work in gathering those among the nonnative residents and citizens on the island who seek our conservative Gospel. Here, as in many large centers of commerce in the world, members of our Synod and of other synods who still seek a confessionally responsible church are looking for a place to worship. This might be either a beginning for us or a second purpose of our entering Puerto Rico; but it cannot be left out of sight.

"Puerto Rico is important in our Synod's plans for extending her mission thrust into Latin America. Here is an opportunity to begin this important new work in an easier way than to enter into Latin America directly, either in South or Central America. If we learn how to operate among Latin Americans, where our ways are known and imitated and English is understood and spoken by many people, we will be more competent through understanding and experience with the problem to undertake the final, greater assignment in the larger areas of Latin America.

"As much as possible, especially in the back country, we should try to operate under the guidelines of the Christian Missioner Corps program; in the urban centers — and these ought not to be overlooked! — we will have to make certain concessions with support in establishing modest places of worship." H. C. Nitz