

WE ARE HIS WORKMANSHIP

A Strategy for Renewal and Lay Ministry

at

Woodlawn Evangelical Lutheran Church and School

(Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod)

West Allis, Wisconsin, U. S. A.

A Course Paper

Submitted to Dr. Robert Boyd Munger

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by

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INTRODUCTION

On the cornerstone and seal of Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary in Mequon, Wisconsin, the school from which I graduated as a candidate for the pastoral ministry in 1959, are four Latin words: SOLA GRATIA, SOLA FIDE, and SOLA SCRIPTURA.



Those words have served me well as an inspirational motto and reminder during my years in the public ministry, three (1959-1962) serving a small two congregation parish in South Cle. Elum (Good Faith Evangelical Lutheran), and Ellensburg (Good Hope Evangelical Lutheran), Washington and since 1962 in the service of Woodlawn Evangelical Lutheran Church and school in West Allis, Wisconsin. As a clergyman affiliated with the doctrinally conservative Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod, the words GRACE ALONE, FAITH ALONE, and SCRIPTURE ALONE express very well where I'm at theologically and how I see my calling as a Lutheran Christian pastor. I believe, teach, and am privileged to proclaim from Woodlawn's pulpit that the salvation of sinners is 1000% due to the free grace of our Triune God, that the gift of eternal life in heaven comes to the individual through Holy Spirit-given faith in the world's one and only Savior, Jesus Christ, and that these priceless Gospel gems have been clearly revealed to us for our rescue from sin, death, Satan, and hell in the verbally inspired, inerrant Holy Scriptures.

One of my favorite Bible passages is Ephesians 2:8-10 because these verses bring out so beautifully the truths which Dr. Martin Luther rediscovered in the 16th century and which He used to trigger the reformation of the Church:

- 8 For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God:
- 9 Not of works, lest any man should boast.
- 10 For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them.

What was good enough for Luther and St. Paul is surely good enough for me: Grace Alone, Faith Alone, Scripture Alone. Surely from beginning to end, from Genesis through Revelation, the Scripture repeatedly drives home the teaching that WE ARE HIS WORKMANSHIP, that our salvation is due solely to our Lord's grace and comes to us solely through God-given faith in Christ. Our works play no part in our salvation. Indeed, whatever good works we perform flow from faith in our Savior who said: ". . . without Me ye can do nothing" (John 15:5). Surely we Lutheran Christians are eager to bring forth the fruits of Christian faith, to perform good, God-pleasing works daily in rich profusion, but not under the delusion of saving ourselves by those works, but solely to express our thanks for the finished work of salvation which Christ accomplished for us by His atoning sacrifice on Calvary. As St. Paul put it in Ephesians 1:7 - "In whom (Christ) we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His grace."

On the basis of Ephesians 2:8-10, then, I arrived at the conclusion that WE ARE HIS WORKMANSHIP would serve as an appropriate theme for this report to the members of Woodlawn as we are now less than a year away

from celebrating the fiftieth anniversary of our church-school's founding. As we review our history, as we consider Woodlawn's place in and contributions to the community of West Allis, as we trace the growth and development of our congregation and our Christian elementary school, as we offer some suggestions for future Gospel-centered activities, as we propose some challenging goals, especially in the area of evangelistic outreach and lay ministry, we must guard against the dangers of sinful pride on the one hand, and on the other, paralyzing fear. Both as we ponder past accomplishments and as we look to needs, opportunities, and responsibilities on the road ahead it is so helpful and comforting to remember: WE ARE HIS WORKMANSHIP. Whatever worthwhile things Woodlawn has done in the past 49 years, all glory goes to our Triune God and for the same reason we can face the future with assurance, confident that we, who are His workmanship, will receive the gifts and abilities we need to carry out the assignments He has allotted to Woodlawn Lutheran Church-School of West Allis, Wisconsin. Indeed, we can't go wrong as long as we remember that

WE ARE HIS WORKMANSHIP

CHAPTER ONE

CHURCH-SCHOOL SURVEY

The beginnings of Woodlawn Evangelical Lutheran Church-School go back to 1927 when the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod (then known as the Evangelical Lutheran Joint Synod of Wisconsin and Other States) purchased lots (for a mission church and school) at 2174 S. 96th St. in what was then the Town of Greenfield. The total cost of the land, church-school building, parsonage, equipment, and supplies was \$17,000. Woodlawn used the church-school and a barracks behind the church, added later for extra classrooms, until 1960. The parsonage on 96th St. was occupied by Woodlawn's pastors and their families until 1964. These original buildings provided housing and worship facilities for the non-denominational Calvary Bible Church until December 1977 and are currently for sale.

In May 1928 ministerial candidate Harry Shiley received and accepted the call through the Synod's assignment committee to become Woodlawn's first resident pastor. He was installed on 15 July 1928 and the next Sunday he conducted his first service at Woodlawn with 12 adults and 15 children present. Pastor Shiley also served as Woodlawn's first school principal and teacher; the school opened on 4 September 1928 with an enrollment of 35 children in 8 grades. The small mission congregation was formally organized by seven charter members on 13 July 1929. Under Pastor Shiley's capable leadership the fledgling church and school enjoyed good growth.

When Pastor Shiley preached his farewell sermon on 12 May 1940, after accepting the call to serve Trinity Lutheran Church, Waukesha, WI., there were 400 souls and 235 communicant members at Woodlawn and 48 pupils in the parochial school.

During the pastorate of Harold Schwertfeger from 1940-1948 the membership and school enrollment leveled off and stood at 440 souls, 266 communicants, and 63 students enrolled in the school when Pastor Schwertfeger preached his farewell sermon on 24 October 1948. In September of 1947 Mr. Robert Kolander, a graduate of Dr. Martin Luther College in New Ulm, Minnesota, undertook his duties as Woodlawn's organist, choir director, and parochial school principal, a demanding ministry which he has fulfilled very faithfully and capably for more than 30 years down to the present. On 21 July 1948 a new two manual Hammond electronic organ, still in use in our church, was dedicated.

The ministry of Pastor Reinhard Schoeneck at Woodlawn from 1949-1958 was hampered by personal and family illness, but in spite of that serious problem God in His grace enabled Woodlawn, His workmanship, to move ahead by supplying the congregation with capable, dedicated, optimistic, and forward-looking lay leaders. Some key actions were taken during this decade that have had far-reaching consequences for the good of the congregation: on 1 April 1952 the original church debt was liquidated; in January 1954 a special Building and Planning Committee was organized to arrange for future expansion and in June of the same year, in connection with the congregation's 25th anniversary, Woodlawn became self-supporting, no longer dependent on the Synod for financial assistance; in January of 1955 Woodlawn purchased three acres of land at S. 99th St. and W. Lincoln Ave., our

present property.

Adalbert Schultz' brief pastorate from 1958-1961 was highlighted by the dedication in October 1960 of a new school, containing on its lower level a temporary chapel. The decision by the congregation to build a new school before the building of a church is very significant, for Woodlawn has always placed Christian education in a high priority position in its program and expenditure of funds and has enjoyed (throughout its history) the many blessings that go with a parochial school. Woodlawn's commitment to Christian education extends also to the high school and college level as shown by the church's membership in the Wisconsin Lutheran High School Conference and the Wisconsin Lutheran College Conference. These associations of Wisconsin Synod congregations and individuals support, respectively, a high school with an enrollment in excess of 1,000 students and a small junior college with some 40 full-time students and scores of part-time participants in adult enrichment courses.

It has been my privilege to serve as Woodlawn's pastor since 1962. While we are well aware that the church as the body, building and bride of Christ is made up, not of wood, steel, brick, and mortar, but of living stones, of precious blood-bought souls, still the erection of physical structures do serve to some extent as milestones and measurements of progress for a Christian congregation. In the past 15 years Woodlawn has been blessed with numerical growth in membership and has been able to purchase a large, comfortable, prefabricated (Wausau Home) parsonage and to build an attractive, air-conditioned House of Worship to the glory of the Triune God, without Whom we could build and accomplish nothing.

Recently I came across in my files a letter dated 2 March 1962 sent

to me by a neighboring pastor at the time I was called to serve Woodlawn. His view of Woodlawn at that time supplies us with some interesting history and also gives us good reason to be grateful for the progress which has been made. Excerpts of his letter follow:

The 32-year history of Woodlawn Congregation is not a completely happy one. Although located in an expanding area of West Allis, Woodlawn Congregation was, until rather recently, handicapped by a decidedly sub-standard church and school plant. Perhaps you remember it. The chapel was most unattractive (exterior and interior). An overflow room just off the nave of the church formed one classroom; a condemned wooden barracks was the second classroom. The site was much too small, and the location was poor. This was one factor which severely restricted Woodlawn's growth. (My statistical reports go back to 1950; since then Woodlawn's communicant membership has increased by only 15%, from 266 to 306).

My acquaintance with the congregation goes back only eight or ten years, but what progress the congregation has made in that time has, under God, been accomplished through the humble efforts of some talented and dedicated laymen. The Lord has blessed Woodlawn with some gifted men, and consecrated, too. Two-thirds of the men present at this evening's meeting, I should guess, were in the 25-45 age bracket. The principal, Mr. Robert Kolander, is as co-operative as they come.

Despite the unimpressive growth rate, Woodlawn has made substantial progress. After many years of mission status, they went self-supporting. They purchased a beautiful site for relocation. Last year they dedicated their new school-church auditorium building. I was informed at the call meeting that they now plan to sell the old parsonage (a frame bungalow next to the old chapel-school combination) and build a new parsonage on the site. After that will come the final step in their long-range plan: the building of their new church. I am convinced that Woodlawn has a beautiful mission field - completely residential, with literally hundreds of new homes in the area surrounding them, and new homes being built constantly. The congregation has the potential for growth. Another of our West Allis congregations (Good Shepherd), with a considerably less promising mission field, doubled its size in five years. But what Woodlawn Congregation needs is leadership.

In the 16 years since that letter was written, Woodlawn, under the capable leadership of the talented, gifted, consecrated, and dedicated laymen referred to in the letter, has reached many of the goals it set back in the early 60's. However, in the 1980's Woodlawn will face some new

challenges. No longer are there "literally hundreds of new homes in the area." No longer can West Allis be described as "a beautiful mission field" with "new homes being built constantly." There are still hundreds of unchurched people living in the vicinity of our congregation, but aggressive personal evangelism outreach programs by well trained lay witnesses must be implemented to reach out to those precious souls with the saving Gospel of Christ, to bring them into the fold where they can be fed with the Word and Sacraments which the Good Shepherd wants to give them. We are undoubtedly passing beyond the period of our history when scores of prospective members seek out our church and school to enroll their children and to become communicant members of our congregation. Increasingly, it will be necessary for us to go out into our community seeking the lost, rather than relying on our location at a high visibility intersection (99th and Lincoln) next to a busy freeway (I-894) to enable people to find us on their own. I believe we are spending money wisely for a weekly ad in the religious section of the Saturday Milwaukee Journal, informing people of our Sunday morning and weekday evening services and inviting inquiries about our parochial school. I believe it is a good use of my time to make weekly visits to West Allis Memorial Hospital as a part-time chaplain for the Milwaukee Federation of Wisconsin Synod Churches. As I call on unaffiliated Lutherans, Protestants and those with no religious preference in the hospital and give out spiritual food in the form of brief tracts providing Scriptural meditations and prayers, I also am acquainting more and more people of West Allis with Woodlawn through the Sunday bulletins which I distribute to 40-50 patients each week. It is my hope, and it has happened at least a few times, that these patients, after learning about Woodlawn's interest in and eagerness to serve

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them, will seek out our church after their stay in the hospital or will tell others about our ministry.

However, much, much more must be done! Some specific suggestions about what exactly must or should be done will be found in the final chapter of this work.

MEMBERSHIP-ATTENDANCE-CONTRIBUTIONS

For the study of Woodlawn's membership, attendance, and the contribution patterns, I have divided Woodlawn's history into two parts, the first 33 years during which the first four pastors served Woodlawn and the last 16 years during which I have been Woodlawn's shepherd. Unfortunately the statistics of our parent church body were very sketchy up to 1934 and were compiled, not annually, but every two years until 1957. The strong clergy influence in our Synod, especially in its earlier years, over against lay participation, is evident from the fact that during the 1930's churches were listed not by their name and location, but were known as Pastor X's congregation in Suchandsuchatown, South Dakota. The Membership graph in the Appendix reveals that the congregation enjoyed good steady growth under Pastor Shiley up to the early 40's. Under his next three successors, however, there was very little advance in baptized souls, communicants, or students in the parochial school. Undoubtedly the church-school facilities had much to do with that stagnation. Buildings which were brand new in 1928 soon became a handicap in the post World War II boom years of interest in religion and the location, off on a little-traveled side street, did not help matters.

The graphs in the Appendix which cover my years of service at Woodlawn from 1962 to the present call for a few explanatory comments. The

jump in membership and contributions between 1965-66 can be attributed primarily to the fact that we engaged the services of a professional stewardship counselor during May, 1966. His well-organized work at Woodlawn and the mobilizing of lay leadership that accompanied that effort proved very beneficial to the congregation as the key nucleus of our membership (50 or 60 leaders) especially came to recognize the joy connected with faithful Christian stewardship of time, talents, and financial treasures and that "God loveth a cheerful giver" (II Cor. 9:7). The noteworthy jump in offerings between 1964 and 1966 from \$28,769 to \$50,026 for all contributions and from \$87.03 to \$140.16 per communicant giving can be accounted for by the aforementioned special stewardship program and the building of a new parsonage on our 3 acre church-property which called forth a special contribution campaign.

The activity at Woodlawn which unquestionably has brought about the greatest change and significant increase in our membership was the erection of a new church, dedicated in January 1972. Just before the church was finished, the evidence of an intensive building fund campaign can be seen in the figures for 1970 and 1971, shooting up from \$59,725 to \$83,430 for our total giving and from \$168.61 to \$227.09 per communicant in those years. The key role that our new church played in attracting new members can be seen very clearly by comparing the figures for 1972 with those for 1974. There we note some dramatic increases as follows: 540 baptized souls in '72, to 699 in '74, an increase of 159; 407 communicant members in '72 to 518 in '74, an increase of 111; our parochial school enrollment also showed a significant increase in this period, going up from 84 in '72 to 117 in '74 although some of that increase was due to pupils coming to our school from a sister Wisconsin Synod mission congregation, (Star of Bethlehem) in

neighboring New Berlin.

We belong to a church body that believes in exercising evangelical church discipline. As a veteran pastor told me recently: "A healthy congregation can be aptly compared to a coal stove. You have to put coal in the top to keep the fire burning to provide warmth. But you also have to remove the clinkers for best results." Now we should not forget that these "clinkers" or as they also have been labeled, "deadwood" members, are in reality precious immortal souls for whose salvation our Lord Jesus shed His blood, suffered and died on Calvary. Nevertheless, the exercise of loving Christian discipline over against delinquent members is vital and essential both for the good of the congregation (even though it may seem to have a depressing, detrimental effect on church growth and membership statistics) and for the ultimate spiritual good of the individuals who are merely nominal, fringe members. These so-called Christmas-Easter Christians must be forcefully informed that it is a sin to despise preaching and God's Word. We do such people no favors by giving them the impression it's perfectly O.K. to attend church once every two or three months or to partake of the Lord's Supper perhaps once a year at most, whether they need it or not. It is imperative that the lay leaders and pastor help delinquent members to be honest with their God, with themselves, and the congregation in which they claim membership. The meaning of church membership is cheapened and the name of Jesus who said: "He that is not with Me is against Me" (Mt. 12:30) is insulted and grossly dishonored by pseudo-disciples who are determined to practice the lukewarm form of Christianity so strongly condemned by Christ in Rev. 3:16-" . . . because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spue thee out of My mouth." Accordingly, many

of the fluctuations in the membership figures from '62-'77 can be attributed to efforts by Woodlawn's leaders to exercise evangelical church discipline in conformity with the Lord's instructions in Mt. 18:15-18.

CHAPTER TWO

COMMUNITY SURVEY

The material in this chapter came from the following sources: a six page mimeographed and stapled handout from the West Allis Chamber of Commerce; a "Comprehensive Plan" prepared by the West Allis City Planning Department in May 1966; notes taken during a meeting on 10 February 1978 with West Allis City Planner C. Elgar Williams and his Community Development Assistant, Thomas Sitter; a conversation with Mr. Fred Cashmore, a member and former president of our congregation, who is currently serving as a City of West Allis alderman and chairman of the City Council's Public Administration (Finance) Committee; a "Master Plan for Land Use-West Allis, Wisconsin," prepared by Johnson, Johnson & Roy/inc., 303 North Main Street, Ann Arbor, Michigan 48104. This very recent work, dated February 1978 was supplied to me by Alderman Cashmore.

A. LOCATION

West Allis is located at the western edge of Milwaukee County in the heart of the greater Milwaukee metropolitan area. Because of its proximity to the City of Milwaukee, West Allis has some difficulty maintaining its own identity and there is considerable sensitivity among the citizenry on this subject. Strenuous efforts are made by the city fathers to keep West Allis from being absorbed or dominated by the big brother City of Milwaukee. Some ads in the 17 February 1978 edition of the Milwaukee Journal (which most West Allis residents read daily, while considerably fewer subscribe to the weekly West Allis Star) point up the identity problem created by

West Allis' location. An ad for Toro snowthrowers lists a number of stores in several Milwaukee suburbs, but at least five stores located in West Allis appear under the heading Milwaukee, instead of being listed in a separate category under Suburban-West Allis. On the other hand, in the same edition of the Journal a Firestone tire advertisement does list its West Allis store under the more exact heading.

West Allis has excellent motor, rail, and air transportation access to all sections of the United States. The city is served by Interstate 94, just outside its northern limits and by I-894 which cuts through the western central part of the city and alongside which our Woodlawn Church-School is located. U.S. Highways 16, 18, 41, and 45 as well as Wisconsin Highways 15, 59, and 100 also serve West Allis. Rail service is adequate and air service is provided by the Milwaukee County Airport, Mitchell Field, which is just 15 minutes away via the freeway. The airport is served by five major trunk lines and two regional carriers. Local transportation is furnished by motor buses of the Milwaukee Transport Company recently purchased by the taxpayers of Milwaukee County. Although the bus line runs on Lincoln Ave. right past our church-school corner, very few of our members use the bus to travel to worship.

B. CLIMATE

West Allis has an average elevation of 670 feet above sea level. Our church-school site is on one of the highest points in the city. The seasonal temperature extremes are tempered by Lake Michigan with a normal temperature of 20 degrees in January and a normal temperature of near 70 degrees in the summer months. However, there is a school of thought that maintains that summer in West Allis lasts for just one day in July and on

that day it'll probably rain or there'll be a tornado thundering through town. That school of thought is much too negative and pessimistic, of course. In connection with our climate the congregation's decision to air condition the church at the time of its construction in 1971 has proved to be very wise indeed. It is a refreshing relief to worship in air-conditioned comfort on humid Sunday mornings and muggy Monday evenings, especially during July and August, and not have to open church windows which would bring in the noise of traffic from Lincoln Ave. and the expressway. Rainfall average is nearly 30 inches per year and although it varies considerably from year to year, the annual average snowfall is 46 inches.

C. HISTORICAL HIGHLIGHTS.

The City of West Allis has as its motto, "A City of Homes and Diversified Industries." This motto not only gives an accurate description of the present city, but it is also an accurate summary of the city's origins and past history, since demands for expansion of Milwaukee's many industries played a big part in the beginnings and growth of West Allis. Although the first recorded settlement in the area was in 1827, it was not until June of 1902 that the Village of West Allis was officially incorporated with a population of 1,018. The name was a tribute to Edward P. Allis whose moving of his machinery manufacturing company, the largest in the world at that time and still well known today as the Allis-Chalmers Manufacturing Company, spurred the growth of the area. Prior to its organization in 1902 the community was identified at various times as the Honey Creek Settlement, the Town of Kinnickinnic and as North Greenfield. Incidentally, Woodlawn's name comes from the subdivision in which it was origin-

ally located on 96th St.,; in fact, what is now 92nd St. was formerly Woodlawn Ave.

The decision of the Wisconsin State Legislature in 1892 to make a 180 acre site in what is now West Allis the permanent site of its annual State Fair also played a key role in the development of the city since the fair needed better transportation facilities to get fairgoers out from Milwaukee and these improved rail and street car lines encouraged manufacturers like Allis and Kearney and Trecker to set up their factories in West Allis. The facts and figures on finance, commerce, and industry, copied from the West Allis Chamber of Commerce hand-out, which is in the Appendix, point up the key role that the aforementioned industries play in the life of our city and how diversified these industries are.

In 1954 a very significant step was taken by the City of West Allis when it annexed a new area of more than six square miles (Woodlawn's property is in this area which before 1954 was known as the Town of Greenfield), which more than doubled its size and increased its population to the point that West Allis is currently the sixth largest city in Wisconsin.

The following fine summary of the history and development of West Allis is found on page 6 of the "Comprehensive Plan" mentioned above:

. . . the impetus for the City of West Allis was the industrial complex created within the city after the turn of the century. Although there had been Honey Creek, and later the North Greenfield Settlement, the real growth didn't occur until the industrial boom around 1900, precipitated by the initial movement of the Edward P. Allis Co. from Milwaukee. This event also established the character of the city, marking it as an industrial city composed primarily of wage-earners who work in the factories of West Allis, West Milwaukee and Milwaukee. Although industrial forces have largely shaped the nature of the community, it is questionable whether these forces would have been given a chance to work had it not been for the arbitrary location of the State Fair Park site and the consequent transportation improvements that accompanied this event.

D. THE COMMUNITY'S CHARACTER

While it's difficult to describe the average citizen of West Allis, some points can be emphasized. Even though many of the workers would be classified as blue collar, as City Planner Williams told me, it would be misleading to categorize most wage-earning residents as anything less than solid middle-class or even upper middle-class Americans since the so-called "blue collar" worker, skillfully manning an extremely complicated and expensive machine at Allis-Chalmers or Kearney and Trecker, could well receive much more financial remuneration than a good many white collar office workers. Mr. or Ms. Average West Allisan would be white and Anglo-Saxon, but not necessarily a genuine WASP, since there are many large Roman Catholic churches in the city and a significant percentage of the population identifies with that faith. There are very few minorities represented in West Allis. Less than 1% of all residents belong to racial minorities. This is also the case in our congregation and school where no more than a dozen of our members and students would fit in the minority category.

Although manufacturing remains as the City of West Allis' largest employer, this sector's relative importance declined by roughly 30% between 1950 and 1970. For example, in 1950, according to the U.S. Bureau of Census, 9,737 West Allis residents were employed in manufacturing and that was a whopping 71.1% of the total employed. By 1970 the total people employed in manufacturing had increased only to 11,784 (after being at 13,022 in the 1960 census), but the percentage of total jobs devoted to manufacturing had declined to 38.4%. Sharing almost as much importance with manufacturing in the West Allis job picture are wholesale and retail

trade occupations which jumped from 9.6% of all jobs in 1950 to 21.3% in 1970 and so-called services jobs which enjoyed an even larger increase from 8.7% in 1950 to 21.5% in 1970. To complete the occupation picture, at least as it stood in 1970, the Bureau of Census gave the following employment sectors and their respective percentages: Agriculture, .3; Mining, .1; Construction, 4.2 down from 6.3 in 1950; Transportation, Communication, Utilities, 6.0 up from 1.3 in 1950; Finance, Insurance, Real Estate, 3.9 up from 1.6 in 1950; and Public Administration, 4.3 up from 1.1 in 1950.

E. CHURCHES

West Allis, in addition to being a city of homes and diversified industry, can surely be called also a city of churches with 47 congregations representing nearly every segment of religious belief in our country except the Jewish faith. There are more than half a dozen large Roman Catholic parishes, each with a thousand or more families. Woodlawn's near neighbor, Mary Queen of Heaven, has about 1100 families, compared with Woodlawn's 265, yet is considerably smaller than most other Roman Catholic parishes in West Allis. The Lutherans make up the next largest segment of the religious population of the city. Our own Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod has four congregations, including Woodlawn, in West Allis, and three of the four conduct parochial elementary schools. Various Protestant or non-denominational congregations make up the remainder of West Allis' religious community.

To give a rough idea of how the respective religions are represented in West Allis, I checked the religious preference list available to the clergy at West Allis Memorial Hospital on 3/14/78 and counted the following totals: That day there were 137 Roman Catholics in the hospital, 60

Lutherans, 12 Methodists, 6 Presbyterians, no Episcopalians, 4 Baptists, no Jews, 12 from miscellaneous denominations like Christian Science, Assembly of God, Serbian and Greek Orthodox, etc., 15 Protestants with no church membership and 11 with no religious preference or connection with any church. I believe the above percentages pretty accurately reflect the denominational make-up of West Allis.

McGavran and Arn in their "Ten Steps for Church Growth" take what I would call a very soft approach to sheep stealing, maintaining that

Well-fed sheep cannot be stolen. Convinced Christians stay in their churches. They steadily refuse to join other congregations. In fact, one may say that if sheep can be stolen the practice is not sheep stealing. Finding sheep running while in the streets or hungry on the mountainside and bringing them back to the fold is not sheep stealing. . . Furthermore, charges of sheep stealing are usually exaggerated.¹

We at Woodlawn are very sensitive to the subject of sheep stealing. We are not out to woo away from their churches Roman Catholics, non-Wisconsin Synod Lutherans, or any other people who claim affiliation with a particular congregation. There are more than enough totally unchurched or unquestionably unaffiliated souls in our area, as well as in the U.S.A. generally, to challenge our zeal to reach out with the Gospel of Christ without sending out a beguiling siren song to draw people out of their churches and away from their shepherds who have the responsibility to feed them, even if we feel they're being fed inadequately or with spiritually poisonous doses of false doctrine.

Although we surely refuse to be intimidated by the presence of other churches in our community, especially those that are heterodox, mixing varying amounts of human error with the truth of God's Word, we refuse to be

¹ Donald A. McGavran and Winfield C. Arn, Ten Steps for Church Growth (San Francisco: Harper and Row, Publishers, 1977) pp. 44-45.

sheep stealers and will even inform prospective members that they may live closer to another Wisconsin Synod church, especially if that church is like Star of Bethlehem Lutheran Church in New Berlin which just started a school in 1977 and only recently was able to become independent, no longer relying on the Synod for financial support as a mission congregation. We refuse to resort to cutthroat tactics in soul-winning as if we were in bitter dog-eat-dog competition to build a "successful" church according to worldly standards. We have drawn up some unofficial boundaries for our main mission efforts as a congregation with Oklahoma Avenue on the south, 122 Street on the west, 84 Street to the east, and the railroad tracks between Lincoln Avenue and Greenfield Avenue to the North. Periodically in the past volunteer laypeople have saturated the above area with leaflets and door hangers to inform our neighbors of special services offered by the congregation, such as our summer worship schedule, our annual vacation Bible school, mid-week Lenten services, etc.

Because of our Scripture-based stand on church fellowship we do not belong to West Allis Clergy Association nor do we participate in their programs and church services. Although we well realize that we run the risk of being misunderstood and giving the impression of aloofness, self-righteousness, or harboring a superiority complex, we cannot in good conscience support or take part in unionistic activities where the attitude of agreeing to disagree in vital points of doctrine holds sway. The spirit of ecumania and a least common denominator kind of religion are much in evidence in West Allis and Woodlawn, always conscious that we are His workmanship, will not compromise our Scriptural fellowship principles for the sake of outward unity or popularity in the community.

F. PROBLEMS

West Allis is a wonderful place to live. The disadvantages of living here, such as some noise and air pollution due to our proximity to the expressway and occasional sub zero temperatures in mid-winter are outweighed by the advantages that accrue to those who live in urban areas, such as easy access to cultural, sports, and other recreational activities. Boating on Lake Michigan, watching the Milwaukee Bucks, Brewers, or Green Bay Packers, visiting one of the world's best zoos, listening to the Milwaukee Symphony, these are just a few of the pluses that must be kept in mind by residents of West Allis as they consider the pros and cons of life in their city.

Still there are some serious problems. West Allis is a landlocked close-in suburb of Milwaukee, surrounded by that city on the north and south, by West Milwaukee on the east (no mistake!) and by New Berlin on the west. The time of opportunity for significant population growth and expansion is past in West Allis; in fact, the population is declining, dropping from 71,781 in 1973, according to the Wisconsin Department of Revenue estimate, to 67,957 in 1977. According to City Planner Williams the average percentage of property available for purchase in West Allis at any time remains extremely low at about 2% with the result that younger families, especially those with children, have to look elsewhere for homes and the percentage of retired senior citizens is growing steadily in our community. 27% (up 6% from 1970) of the population is retired. This leads to the problem which is pinpointed in a West Allis Post Opinion article reproduced in the Appendix. There Post Community Editor Kurt Rogahn refers to City Planner Williams' concern that "West Allis is steadily becoming

composed of an aging population, one that is increasingly becoming unable to bear the cost of running the community."

Fortunately, the age profile for our Woodlawn Congregation indicates that the problem of too great a preponderance of aging in our community has not yet affected Woodlawn. There is still a healthy pyramid appearance to our age profile, also found in the Appendix, and the 80 members in our congregation over the age of 65 make up, not 27% as in the City of West Allis population but only 9.6% of our congregation members. More than half of our members, 405 out of 768 baptized souls, are under the age of 30. These observations are not intended to disparage the elderly either in West Allis or our older brothers and sisters in Christ at Woodlawn. Surely the elderly in our midst are very precious and their wisdom and experience are very valuable assets that should be used. In a society which seems to be obsessed with youth in fashions and appearance, we Christians must not forget the declaration of Leviticus 19:32 - "Thou shalt rise up before the hoary head, and honor the face of the old man, and fear thy God: I am the Lord." Nevertheless, most older members of our congregation themselves express pleasure in seeing so many young couples in our services and give generous support to our Christian day school even though they may have no children or grandchildren enrolled. They recognize that a healthy, growing congregation needs a steady infusion of youth, not only to thrive and prosper, but just to survive.

In his West Allis Post opinion article mentioned above, Editor Rogahn concluded with the ominous observation: ". . . the future seems no bed of roses for any of us." As Christians who are well aware that the Lord has promised us a not perfect rose garden on this earth nor that life will

be constantly a bowl of cherries, but rather that we should expect, as the early Christians soon came to understand, that ". . . we must through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of God" (Acts 14:22), we should not be surprised that serious problems and difficult times may well lie ahead for our community and inevitably for our congregation also as a part of that community.

However, we can be grateful that West Allis has a planning department that seems to be preparing the community in a responsible way for the changes which will have to be faced, and that the problems will not catch our elected officials unprepared. (cf. the newspaper clippings in the Appendix). As Christians we can be even more grateful that we have the Lord to call upon in whatever times of trouble and difficulty the future may bring to Woodlawn. Well aware that we at Woodlawn are His workmanship and that He has promised deliverance to all who call upon Him we can face the future with courage and confidence, declaring with hymn writer Georg Neumark:

If thou but suffer God to guide thee
And hope in Him thro' all thy ways,
He'll give thee strength, whate'er
betide thee,
And bear thee thro' the evil days.
Who trusts in God's unchanging love
Builds on the Rock that naught can
move.

Sing, pray, and keep His ways
unswerving,
Perform thy duties faithfully,
And trust His Word; though
undeserving,
Thou yet shalt find it true for
thee.
God never yet forsook in need
The soul that trusted Him indeed.²

²Hymn #518: stanzas 1 and 7 The Lutheran Hymnal (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1941).

CHAPTER THREE

THREE PICTURES OF THE CHURCH

In his letter to the Ephesians Paul not only declared in a general way "we are His workmanship" (Eph. 2:10), but he also presented to his readers some very descriptive and vivid concepts to show how believers in Jesus Christ function as the Holy Christian Church. In classical music circles the 3 B's bring to mind geniuses like Bach, Beethoven and Brahms. In Ephesians Paul also used 3 B's to describe the nature and characteristics of the Church of Jesus Christ. As we consider the role of our Woodlawn Ev. Lutheran Church-School of West Allis, Wisconsin, it is well for us to compare our congregation with these metaphors of the Church which Paul mentioned, namely, Building, Body, and Bride.

A. The Church as Building

In Ephesians 2:19-22 Paul reminds his Ephesian readers that they are no longer "strangers and foreigners," no longer pagan unbelievers and outsiders; but that, thanks to God's grace, they have been made "fellow-citizens with the saints," believers in and disciples of Jesus Christ. They have been brought into "the household of God," the Holy Christian Church, which Paul also calls a building (Greek: oikodomē) and a holy temple (Greek: naos) in Ephesians 2:21 and a habitation or dwelling place of God. (Greek: katoikētērion) in Ephesians 2:22. In verse 20 the "apostles and prophets" are described as the solid "foundation" of this building and Jesus Christ Himself is called the "chief corner stone." When a person

compares Ephesians 2:20 with Paul's words in I Corinthians 3:11 - "For other 'foundation' can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ" it might seem that we've come across a contradiction in the Bible since in one place we read that the foundation consists of the apostles and prophets, while in the other verse we're told that Jesus Christ is the foundation, as well as the cornerstone or capstone of His Church. Of course, this is merely an apparent, not a true, contradiction, since the Bible, the inspired, inerrant Word of God, written by the apostles and prophets as they were moved by the Holy Ghost, is truly the JESUS book from beginning to end. Therefore Paul has just one single foundation in mind when he writes in one epistle that the foundation of Christ's Church consists of the apostles and prophets and in another epistle that Jesus Christ Himself is the foundation, since the primary subject and recurring theme of the apostles and prophets in their writings is the Old Testament Messiah and the New Testament Christ, the God-man, Jesus of Nazareth, the only hope for sinners, this wicked world's one and only Savior.

A conservative Lutheran Bible scholar, the sainted Paul E. Kretzmann, offers the following helpful comments on the subject of the Church as a building:

In the building of the Church foundation and corner-stone are not two separate things, but the one includes the other. Christ Jesus is the content of the prophetic and apostolic writings; Christ is found in and with His Word, and nowhere else. . . Jesus Christ, the Savior of sinful mankind, of whom the Word of the prophets and apostles bears witness, is the Foundation of faith and of the congregation of saints which is being gathered out of the world of sinners. . . The one great building of the Church, by the addition of the individual members, who are properly joined or fitted together with those that were members before, gradually grows; it goes forward toward completion, the end coming with the conversion of the last elect member. Thus the building of Christ's Church everywhere shows symmetry and harmony. The members of the Church, by love which is grounded in faith, preserve harmony; they submit to one another; they accommodate themselves

to one another. Though of different nationalities and temperaments, Jews and Gentiles, Greeks and barbarians, wise and foolish, they are at peace among one another, and that in Christ. The common faith in Christ brings about this effect. On the last day the holy temple in the Lord will stand before our astonished eyes in the beauty of its perfection."³

Kretzmann's reference above to the temple in describing Christ's Church as a building brings to mind the contention of Howard Snyder that the best divine model for modern church structure would be Israel's tabernacle in the wilderness, emphasizing the crying need today for flexibility and mobility, rather than the temple. Snyder maintains that most church buildings today, modeled after the temple instead of the portable tabernacle, tell the world "of the church's class consciousness and exclusiveness" and "witness to the immobility, inflexibility, lack of fellowship, pride and class divisions in the modern church."⁴

Although Snyder's belief that the use of traditional churches should be abandoned is far too radical and unrealistic, his call for greater mobility, flexibility, friendliness, humility, and in- rather than ex- clusiveness in the church should strike a responsive chord in the hearts of all church members and leaders and can serve as a reminder of what the Church of Christ should be like and how far we have to go, God guiding and enabling us, to get closer to that ideal.

In a lecture period on 16 January 1978 at Fuller Theological Seminary, Pasadena, California Dr. Robert B. Munger used an illustration that has stuck in my mind and stirred my imagination. He called our attention to the ocean liner, the Queen Mary, which the City of Long Beach pur-

³Paul E. Kretzmann, Popular Commentary of the Bible, New Testament, Vol. 11, (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1923), p. 271.

⁴Howard A. Snyder, The Problem of Wineskins (Downers Grove: Inter-Varsity Press, 1975), p. 73.

chased as a tourist attraction and which is now permanently moored in their harbor area, waiting for the tourists to stream in. As I understand it this tourist promotion has not enjoyed too much success. Many millions more than anticipated had to be spent and the tourist traffic and trade has been disappointing. Be that as it may, the proud Queen Mary in her present state can serve as an illustration of many 20th century churches. Too many churches are like that boat (a 4th B in addition to building, body, and bride as pictures of the church). Instead of having smoke pouring from the stacks, with full power on, a complete crew on active duty, a capable, confident captain in charge, a clear course and destination agreed on by all concerned, a precious cargo in the hold - too many churches in 1978 (Woodlawn of West Allis among them?) are tied to their respective docks, spending money mostly on themselves, refurbishing their physical plant and hoping that people will be attracted to them by a lighted sign, a new paint job, or pretty park-like grounds. Too many modern day churches are like that Queen Mary, which a good many Long Beach residents label a white elephant. They operate with only a skeleton crew of real workers; the members have no clear perception of the church's purpose or the proper course they should be traveling; they do not appreciate the priceless value of the cargo that has been committed to their care and how vitally important it is to carry this cargo of salvation, the good news of the Gospel, beyond the dock area, indeed to every corner of the globe. And too many pastors see themselves as one-man bands, as self-styled superstars, who show off their rank from the bridge, basking in the admiration of their church members who are perfectly willing to pay homage to the pastor's position as long as he doesn't call for more than a token amount of their time, talents and financial treasures.