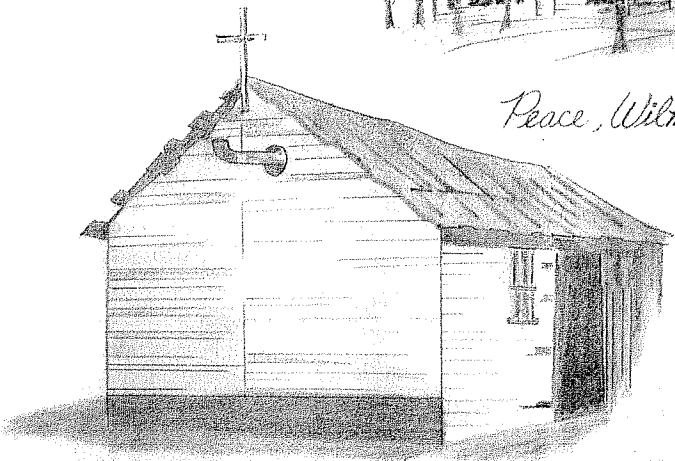
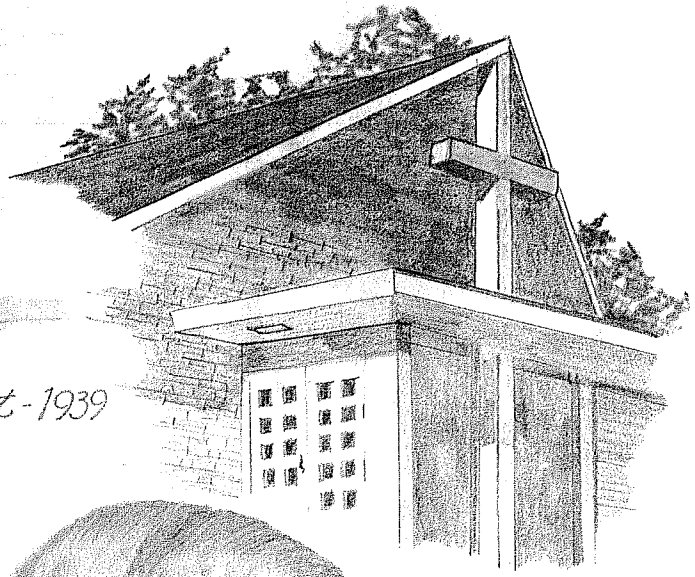
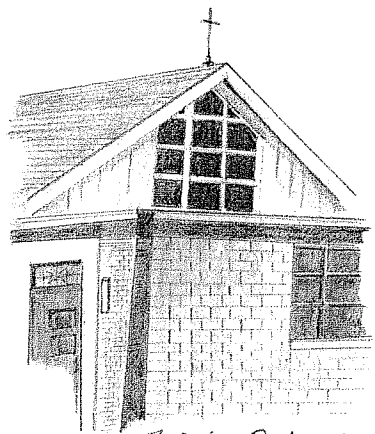




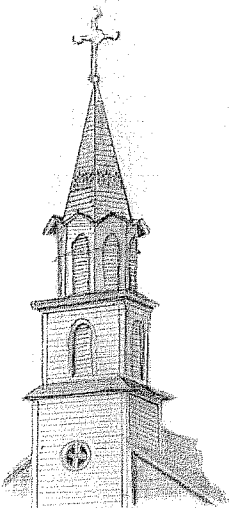
Peace, Wilmot - 1939



Whiteriver - Canyon Day - 1934



Faith, Antioch - 1951-

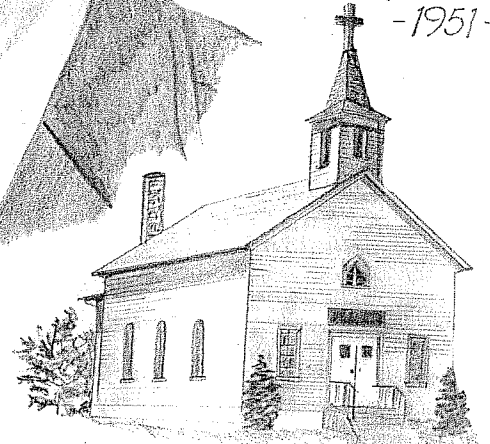


-1968-

St. Matthew's,

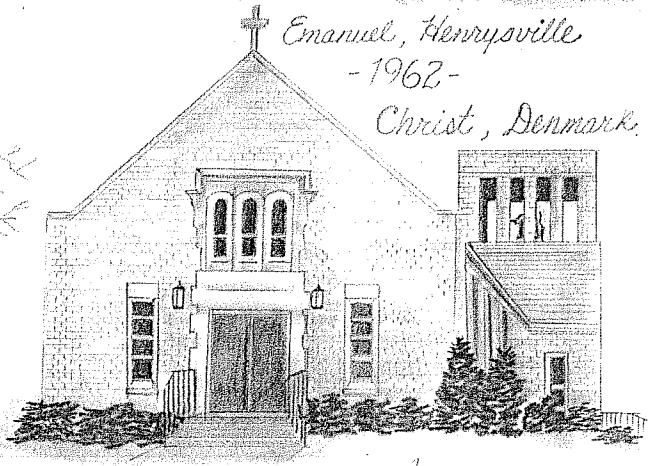
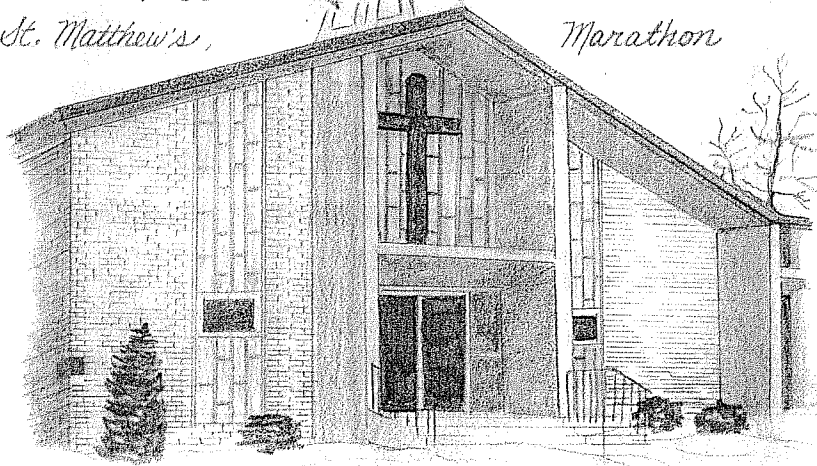


Marathon



Emanuel, Henrysville - 1962-

Christ, Denmark.



-Paul Otto - 1987-

**A History of the Life and Ministry of
Rudolf Paul Otto**

By Timothy M. Otto

Senior Church History

Professor Brenner

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The man that I write about was not well known. He was not famous in the eyes of the world, nor in the eyes of our church body. Yet, as one of his sons said, he held a very high office, one that can be described as the highest and most honorable calling that one can hold – that of a parish pastor. I, his grandson gladly write the history of this parish pastor, Rudolf Paul Otto.

Rudolf P. Otto was born on June 4th, 1910 in Arcadia, WI to the Pastor Carl A. Otto and his wife Edna. Carl Otto served as pastor in the small town of Arcadia. Rollie (as he was called) started his formal education in public schools. During his last few years of grade school at that young age Rollie considered studying for the full time pastoral ministry. So, for his high school years his father sent him to Watertown, WI to attend Northwestern Preparatory School. Rollie entered in the fall of 1924. While at NPS Rollie kept busy as he played offensive tackle on the football team. He was also in a military group, which was school sponsored. The group would learn to march, do drills, and go on outings. Rollie was always known throughout his schooling as an average, but hard-working student. He never really ^{W A} graduated from high school because in those days no formal graduation was held for the students who went directly on to Northwestern College which is on the same campus. The pre-seminary pastoral training was considered one program of eight years. In the dorms college and Preps would even live together. After completing his first year of college something tragic happened in the United States – the Great Depression. It is said that the Great Depression affected everyone, and it affected the Otto family then living in Wauwautosa where Carl A. Otto served as pastor. Pastor Otto could no longer afford to send his son Rollie to Watertown for schooling, so the next year Rollie enrolled at Concordia in Mequon, the LCMS

pastoral training college. In those days the program for pre-seminary pastoral training of the LCMS was only six years (four high school and two college) as opposed to the WELS' program of eight years. Rollie used to take the streetcar from Wauwautosa to Mequon, and live at home to save money for his parents. He completed his two years at Concordia and graduated in May of 1931. It is interesting to note that it was one of the last years before LCMS changed its program to a full eight years which was done ^{source?} because of complaints from the WELS. In the fall of 1931 Rollie began his seminary education in Mequon at Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary. The students that came from the Concordia system often were insulted by those who came from NWC. Rollie was no exception. The mockery didn't bother Rollie a whole lot. In fact he usually matter-of-factly told them what they could do with their insults. Back then there was no vicar program so Rollie graduated in May of 1934. WLS graduated 26 student that year. Among these were O.J. Naumann and W.H. Lange. Because it was the Depression many churches could not afford pastors and the WELS were not opening many new missions in comparison to today's numbers. Because of this, many from the class of 1934 never received calls into the public ministry. Others had to wait. Rollie was one of these.

ARIZONA

The call came in September. At this time there were very few missions. Really, the majority of WELS' churches were located in the Midwest. So when Rollie received the call to serve as a missionary to the Apaches in Arizona it was a surprise to him and to his whole family. They had call six pastors before him from the field, but all had

declined. Rollie was excited and up for the challenge. Rollie was single at the time, but his parents weren't so worried because they knew he would be living near his Uncle Ed and Aunt Minnie. Minnie Guenther and Edna Otto were sisters – both Knoops. Thus was the relation. Ed Guenther had started working among the Apaches in 1908. So it was a memorable fall morning in September of 1934 when the Otto's watched their son drive away in his "new" used car for AZ.

First, I will talk a little about what life was like on the reservation in the 1930s. The young pastor lived in the small town of Whiteriver, which was the seat of government for the reservation, in the old parsonage next door to his aunt and uncle. It was Depression and most everyone in the United States was poor, but Rollie and Guenthers were especially poor living on the reservation where there were limited luxuries. They simply had very little. Rollie made a mere \$69/month. Since the reservation did not have the stores of your average American town he basically lived out of Sears Robuck magazine. Life was somewhat primitive although he did have electric lights, indoor plumbing, and crack phones, but these could go at any time. Roads were unpaved, and instead of banking, their money was kept at the local trading post in Whiteriver. Some things were normal, however, like Friday night movies at the high school. They also got two radio stations from Phoenix on which they could hear their favorite programs. Life for the Indians can be described in two words – extreme poverty. Every day the Indians would come into town and fill up their gunny sacks with their food rations. The Apaches were nomads who moved about the countryside living in tepees. They used the small houses the government built for them for storage, garbage, and religious rituals. Their transportation was wagons, donkeys, and horses. At this time

there were still many Indians, especially young kids, who were coming off the range “completely unbroken,” as Art Guenther said. This posed problems as these children were not used to white man’s diseases. Hospitals were built with large TB wards to take care of the many sick children.

Now, a look at Pastor Otto’s ministry among the Apaches. Rollie worked along side Ed Guenther who was getting along in years. The two served the Whiteriver, Canyon Day, and Cedar Creek areas. There were regular Sunday services held with Sunday school, which attracted many children. Rollie took his turn preaching and teaching Sunday school. Most of the work was done with an interpreter. On Sundays at 4:00 A.M. Rollie had to take his turn getting up to start the fire in the church and stir the coal as it was the only source of heat. Another big part of ministry was “release time.” The public boarding school allotted a time for a WELS missionary to come in and teach them the Bible. This they took advantage of and the gospel was preached to many young souls. Another way to reach the kids was through the nursery, which Ed Guenther had founded some years back. The nursery was founded for two reasons: because of the many epidemics that would affect the Indian community, and also because of the Indian twin tradition. If an Indian family had twins they only kept the stronger one and let the other one go. This resulted in many orphans who came to live at the nursery in East Fork. There they were helped medically, physically, and academically, but the biggest help they got was the help that Rollie gave them – eternal help for their souls which God gave these children through the living Word. Because of the limited knowledge of the language visual aids were used often. They often used what was called the great national stereoptican, which would show Biblical slides to help teach a Bible history story. The

old Concordia flip charts were also used for the same purpose. A. Guenther said, “A picture is worth a thousand words, and it was for the Apaches.”

One of the most time-consuming and interesting parts of his ministry were “camp visits.” As mentioned earlier, the Indians were nomads, and in the summer they would move along the river. Where there was a valley there were Indians, and where there were Indians there were Pastors Guenther and Otto. They would go and find the Indians in car or by horseback. It was a good time to visit and get to know them and most importantly to teach them the Word. When Rollie would come, the Indians would always receive him with open arms. Some were members and others were “evangelism calls.” The Indians would gather together and in English or through an interpreter Rollie would teach them Jesus through Biblical leaflets and the Bible. Sometimes he would pack up an old Civil War camp organ that you could fit in a bag and he would conduct a mini service. Aunt Minnie or a deaconess nurse would come along and play organ. Many times it got late. So they would sit around the fire and the Indians would feed them tortillas, beans, and meat, and they would finish their service or study and sing hymns into the night. The Indians loved to sing many of the old gospel favorites, which you don’t usually hear in WELS churches. They were ^{easier} earlier to learn and understand and very well liked. Later in his life when Rollie would reflect on his Arizona days he always remembered the camp meeting when he would “sit around the fire and talk about Jesus.” When I asked A. Guenther what my grandfather was like as a young pastor he said that Rollie was a greenhorn, but energetic and willing to learn. Uncle Ed was not pushy, and Rollie matured.

An event that happened in AZ that affected Rollie's life more than anything else must be mentioned. There was a deaconess nurse named Edna Stuebs working at the East Fork nursery who was fulfilling one of her dreams because she had always wanted to "work among the colored people." Rollie got to know Edna when he would go to the nursery to teach the kids. Soon they started seeing each other. When Rollie would come to pick her up for a date, the little Indian girls under Edna's care would tease her and whisper, "Otto coming, Otto coming." The two soon fell in love, and in July of 1936 they drove back to Edna's hometown of Kewaunee, WI to get married. While he was in Wisconsin, Rollie had to visit the treasurer of the WELS to get money because he had gone three months without pay. The newly married couple stayed in Wisconsin for a month and honeymooned on the way back down to Arizona. Edna regularly played organ for Sunday services and camp meetings. In 1937 God blessed them with the gift of their first child, a daughter, Edna. There was a problem, however. Whiteriver is in the mountains at an altitude of 5,280 feet. This bothered Edna's asthma and made life very difficult for her. Rollie was put on call lists back in the Midwest, and in the spring of 1939 he received a call to serve Faith church in Wilmot, WI. In April, as Rollie was deliberating the call he received a rather strong letter of encouragement to take care of his wife's health and move to Wisconsin. In it he described Wilmot as a pleasant little village on the river. Rollie accepted the call. ^{Who is he?}

WILMOT

In the spring of 1939 Rudolf P. Otto moved from the reservation in Arizona to serve as pastor of Faith Lutheran church in Wilmot, WI. Wilmot was a town of only 400 people and was only six sq. blocks. Peace Lutheran had 325 communicant members and 500 souls. The parsonage was next door to the church and there was a parish and hall two blocks away.

The people of Pastor Otto's first parish responded very well to him. In fact, wherever Rudolf Otto served the people responded well to him. The reason is that he loved his people, and that is one of his chief characteristics.

Let us look at some of the other things that marked his ministry in Wilmot. Pastor Otto was very Christian education-minded, even though Faith did not have a LES. He always made an effort to keep the Sunday school strong, and it was. It was high quality and well attended. He did this through regular Sunday school teacher meetings, and in this way knew what was going on and could encourage the teachers. During the winter he would hold the meetings in the parsonage because there was no heat in the parish hall and very little heat in the church building. He also stressed the importance of catechism instruction. He taught them from 4:00 – 5:30, Monday and Thursday evenings in the balcony of the church and stressed memorization of key Bible verses. He was an interesting teacher and the kids were not bored.

Rollie was also innovative and tried new things to educate God's lambs. Because there was no LES in the early 1940s he started a three-week Vacation Bible School in the summer for kids. At this time this was very new and almost unheard of in the WELS. He wrote his own curriculum, and implemented crafts and projects. The VBS was not

meant as an evangelism tool as they are used for today, but rather as a training tool for the children of the congregation.

Pastor Otto also valued fellowship and fun within the congregation. He was also innovative with this. For instance he started a "Sunday picnic day – church service" once a year in the summer. A Sunday was picked every summer for the big event. The whole congregation would go to the Fox River Park and first hold an outdoor service. Everything was brought: bulletins, hymnals, chairs, even an old portable organ. After that was the picnic followed by games. Everyone spent the whole day at the park enjoying the Christian fellowship. Rudolf P. Otto was an emotional man, and he loved to have fun and he loved to laugh. He also loved to have fun and laugh with his members.

He was friends with his members, but more importantly he was their pastor and he understood them. He would give up his own home for them. For instance, in the 1940s there was a polio scare before they had discovered a vaccination. During this time Rollie would baptize most of the babies in his house because the mothers were afraid of exposing their children to others who may be sick or carrying the virus. Also attendance at the Lord's Supper was down during these times because of paranoia of catching polio. The 1940s also brought a war to the nation and sadness to the Peace congregation. The only child of a family named the Papes ^{was} got shot down in a P-38. It was devastation for the Papes, and a difficult military funeral followed. Rollie did what a pastor should do and comforted the family and the congregation with the everlasting comfort that their son ^{would} will rise again and live forever with Christ. It was said by one of Pastor Otto's sons how you could really see the soft heart of Rudolf Otto and the love he had for his people as he dealt with the Papes.

During his time at Wilmot\ God continued blessing the Otto family with children – four more, all boys. Paul was born in 1940, Carl in 1943, Philip in 1948, and Stephen in 1953. In order to support his family, Rollie would pick apples on the side. He would go picking early fall mornings and get paid by the bushel. Once he even fell off a ladder and cracked some ribs. Edna was not thrilled, but Rollie didn't stop picking. Rollie, as a pastor always made it a point to get involved in the community so he served on the public school board. He thought that it was good to get to know the people because you never know when you might have a chance to share the good news of Christ. Not a bad idea for pastors today.

On^o_^ could not write about the history of Rudolf P. Otto's ministry in Wilmot without mentioning Antioch, IL. Rudolf Otto was education-minded and fellowship-minded. He was also mission-minded, and the Wilmot congregation took on his attitude. There were about 20 or so members of Peace, Wilmot living across the Illinois border in the town of Antioch and the surrounding area so Rollie decided to start a home mission church early in 1951, and he already had a solid nucleus.

Back then very few churches had evangelism committees so Rollie did most of the work himself. His evangelism methods were simple: door to door canvassing. Rollie had a way of talking to people. He had good people skills and also had the skill of talking to people about Christ. It was not long before he started a Bible information class. During the early 1950s he always seemed to have a class going with students from the Antioch area. He found as many of the people in his class talking on the street or in the stores as from canvassing. The people liked him, and God used this gift to give him a chance to give them the real thing they needed – the Gospel.

Later in the same year of 1951 the group was large enough to start worship services. They rented the American Legion Hall. On Saturday nights other groups would have wild parties in the hall. On Sunday morning the Otto family would arrive early to clean up the booze, turn the swimsuit calendars over, and air the place out to make it suitable for worship. They also set up chairs and brought a portable organ. 35 People came to the first service. The hall was very close to the railroad tracks, and often Rollie would have to pause during his sermons as the trains went by. A few minor difficulties, but here the little group worshipped and grew in faith and numbers.

In the mid-1950s the small group bought property (also near the railroad), and in '54-'55 built a church. The '50s were a very bust time for Pastor Otto. In 1956 Wilmot also built a new church. Both were conventional brick buildings. Starting and following through on a building project was one of Rollie's talents, and he loved the challenge. He was shrewd and didn't plan something that was outside the capability of his people. In short, he used common sense. It was a great blessing for the people of Antioch, and they knew it, because much of the work was done by the members themselves. For instance, all of the interior staining was done by a member who was a banker. Every afternoon during the summer of 1955 you would find this man in the church. He would get off of work at 3:00 P.M., go to church and serve his Lord until dark. The architecture of the church was done by a visitor who didn't charge a dime. God works in mysterious ways.

It is interesting to note that from beginning to end ^{neither} Pastor Otto nor the Antioch church ~~never~~ received even a penny from synod. In 1956-'57 Faith, Antioch called their first pastor, Marvin Otter. The Wilmot congregation did lose some members, but it did not hurt them. It has been said, "When a church divides, it multiplies." This was the case

in Wilmot and Antioch as both churches were blessed by God tremendously. In fact, Faith, Antioch grew to be bigger than Peace, Wilmot and eventually started an LES. Later in life Rollie would often talk about Antioch. Antioch was his baby, the highlight of his ministry. He was in his prime.

No pastoral ministry is a bed of roses, and this was no different in Rollie's case. He also had his problems and fought his battles. The 1950s brought many joys and blessings, and they also brought many hardships because it was during this time of growth that he fought his harshest battles.

The first problem was one common to many WELS churches in the mid- '50s: scouting. Some members in surrounding WELS congregations including a few families at Wilmot had their kids in Boy Scouts. To deal with the situation Rollie and some neighboring pastors put out a brochure that dealt with the issue on the basis of Scripture. The Wilmot congregation lost one family because of the matter, but the others listened to God's Word and withdrew their kids.

The other major problem he dealt with was more serious and took its toll on Rollie. During the two building projects which were going on at the same time things were very busy, perhaps too busy for Pastor Otto. At this time some women of the Wilmot church with very strong personalities started coming to voters' meetings. In 1956 a resolution was passed at a voters' meeting that women be allowed to vote. Between 5-7 women attended the meetings for several years. When the women attended many of the meetings were wild. These women would argue for hours about things like what the color of the carpet should be in the new church building. Rollie's son Paul comments, reflecting on this problem, "God knew what he was talking about when he wanted

women to be submissive in the church.” It was not that Pastor Otto supported what was going on. He knew it was wrong, and he took plenty of heat from surrounding pastors . This was the most difficult time in his ministry. Something had to be done. In 1959 he taught some Bible studies on the Biblical principles and got the backing of the church council. Finally, in a voters’ meeting in that same year the resolution which allowed women suffrage ^{was} got reversed. Some of the women were hurt, but no one left the church.

In 1962, Rollie received a call to Denmark, WI. There was a voters’ meeting called to discuss the call of their pastor. Only 15 people showed up. Rollie thought that this was apathy, and he accepted the call. Apathy wasn’t the case. Basically no one thought he would ever go. They loved him, and they knew that he loved them. When Rollie announced his decision the whole congregation was up in arms and begged him to change his mind. The decision was made, and he stuck to it. That was how Rollie was. Once he made up his mind, that was it. The apathy really wasn’t the chief reason that he decided to take the call. Rollie was an emotional man who became attached to his people. He would later tell his sons that maybe he had stayed too long at Wilmot. He told them, “It’s very hard to bury your friends.” The Wilmot years are not remembered for their problems, but for their many blessings. God blessed his ministry and his family there. Rollie always said that he felt at home in Wilmot.

DENMARK

But in 1962 he made his home in a small town between Green Bay and Manitowoc named Denmark where he was called to serve the dual parish of Christ,

Denmark and Emmanuel, Henrysville. Denmark was a city of 900 inhabitants. Christ, Denmark had about 250 souls and 200 communicants. Emmanuel, Henrysville had about 100 souls and 60 communicant members. It was a more rural ministry and much more relaxed than Wilmot, and for the most part uneventful. Rollie, however did not change as he continued to stress education. That is why he sent his younger sons, Phil and Steve to the closest LES which was St. John's in Maribel and encouraged his members to do the same with their children. He also sent Phil to Manitowoc Lutheran High (MLH) and Steve to Northwestern Prep. Although in a more relaxed atmosphere Rollie kept very busy as he was chairman of the board of MLH. As chairman of this board he used his talent and knack for building projects. There was a need for a new high school building because of the growing enrollment. The board under Rollie's guidance planned and began to build the high school building that still stands and is used today. His sons remember their father making countless trips to Manitowoc. The building of the high school was really the highlight during his six years at Denmark.

The low-light of his time at Denmark was a personal tragedy. Rollie had become very close friends with Ted Stern, the pastor at Two Rivers. In 1967 he died of a brain tumor when he was only in his early 50s. It was very difficult for Rollie to take.

As usual, the people in Denmark loved Pastor Otto, and he in turn loved them. Rollie, wherever he was always made a point to get to know his people and become knowledgeable on the things that interested them so that he could talk with them. For instance, in Denmark, he knew just about everything about chicken farming because his members were chicken farmers. This is part of loving people – being in interested in them. It helps build confidence and trust. Rollie always knew where his people were

were and what they were doing, and he visited them often. Rollie considered this very important, and the people appreciated it. A few members had Packer season tickets and they showed their appreciation by giving several tickets to my grandfather each year. In 1965 he even went to the Championship game when the Pack beat the Giants on a last second field goal.

This is a good time to talk more about Rudolf Otto's personality and some of his strengths and weaknesses. As was mentioned he is most known for his evangelical heart and his love for his people. He also had a lot of energy. When he came to Denmark he was 52 years old, and the members thought of him as an energetic young man. He was a highly emotional man who put everything into what he did. As far as strengths as a *verb?* pastor. He was a good preacher who gave powerful and clear messages, which were easy to understand. For Rollie preaching was always a chore which he took very seriously. He was a highly intelligent man and an excellent teacher. As we see from Antioch he was a fine evangelist. He was good with kids and played with them, yet he was even better with the elderly. It seems that he was strong in every category of ministry. The fact is that when I asked what his weaknesses were there were usually long pauses. He had many skills, but what he should be remembered for more than anything else is that he was faithful and he practiced what he taught. He upheld the office of the ministry with his dress, demeanor, and life. He took I Tim 3 to heart. He also had a stall-worth love for the truth and a hatred of sin. This was a strength that could at times expose a weakness: impatience and stubbornness. One time his wife's sister married a Catholic. Rollie was so upset by this that he went six years without visiting her.

Rollie worked very hard, but he also believed in playing hard. He knew that a pastor had to relax to keep sane. He loved to play golf and cards, but more than anything he loved to laugh and joke around. He thought family vacations were important and took them often usually going out west. He also loved gardening and made it fun for the family. As a father and a husband he was strict yet gentle. His kids feared him because he didn't mess around. He might blow up at you if you were naughty, but was very tender, and when the chips were down he was always there for you and handled the situation evangelically. He was very strict yet loved to play around and horseplay with his children. I don't have many memories of my Grandpa, but I do remember a visit we made to his last parish in Marathon, WI when I was four or five years old. He played football with us as if he was one of the kids.

In 1968 Rudolf P. Otto was a veteran pastor and 58 years old. He received a call to Marathon , WI and accepted it. He didn't leave because of problems or because he was unhappy. It was late in his ministry and he thought it might be his last call. But more than this Marathon had proposed to start a building project and Rollie was excited.

MARATHON.

Marathon, WI, located 12 miles west of Wausau, WI was a town of about 1200 in 1968, and St. Matthew congregation had a communicant membership of 325 people with about 400 souls, closer in size to the Wilmot congregation. The congregation had a problem. Their church building should have been condemned long ago. Rollie's son Phil used to play organ for services in the small organ loft. The old loft creaked and groaned

and Phil often feared that the some day the loft would come crashing down. Thus, they started a building project, which Rollie took over when he became their pastor. They had gotten a good man for the job. As was mentioned earlier, Rollie was frugal, and always was mindful of his members and their resources. And so he implemented an idea of his members, the majority of whom were farmers. He suggested that they build the church using a steel post-frame construction, which was modeled after the farmer's pole-barn construction. The people thought it a good idea and went ahead with it. The final cost was \$140,000 as opposed to the cost of a conventional church building the same size which, would have cost around \$250,000. It was very economic, yet the finished product looked very nice. One of the interesting features of the building was a divider down the middle which was opened up for church services and big events, and closed creating sound proof rooms for Sunday school and meetings. This allowed for a lot of flexibility. As we see in the building projects in Antioch and Wilmot the members got involved. A man who was going through a terrible tragedy – the death of his son – built the altar in the new church out of granite from the local quarry.

Rollie thought that other churches in the synod should start building these economic, practical, yet beautiful churches. But when he suggested the idea to other pastors or synod officials the idea usually got laughed at without them having even seen the church. There is probably only one other church in the synod with the post-frame construction. St. Peter's, Lutheran church in Dorr, MI four years ago built a new church using the same construction. The church has been served for 17 years by Rollie's son Stephen. He learned something from his father. Is this an acceptable and wise construction for a church building? I have seen the Dorr church and will attest to the fact.

I have seen a lot of churches and this is comparable to any of them. In fact over 20 different church groups have stopped by the parsonage to ask if they could have a tour of the church.

About his work in Marathon. His wife Edna was as active and faithful as ever getting involved in as much as she could and serving the organist. As had always been in his ministry he was well liked by his people, and as had always been in his ministry Rollie got to know and love his people. Interestingly enough the soil in the Marathon area was of unique texture that it was beneficial to raise a valuable Chinese root called the ginseng. The land had to be perfect to successfully cultivate the ginseng. The Chinese would come to Marathon from all over the Midwest to buy the ginseng. The farmers in the area including some members of St. Matthew made pretty good money from raising this valuable Chinese root. Rollie in turn studied up and knew everything about the root. He did it because it interested him and because he could talk intelligently with his people.

There were also some hardships and tragedies that had to be dealt with. Once again there was a scouting problem, but really only with one family. They had enrolled their son in the boy scouts. Rollie had talked extensively of the danger of the scouts and that they should get their boy out. The family stayed in the church, but refused to take their son out of the Scouts. One day the boy was in the basement sitting on the dryer practicing tying his knots for Boy Scouts. As he was practicing he had the ropes hanging from the pipes which were near the low ceiling. His mother was upstairs and called for him. The boy did not come. She called again. No response. She then went downstairs to find her son blue in the face hanging. It was a very difficult funeral because of the

situation and cause of death. Yet Rollie never mentioned it. He only comforted with the Gospel.

Another problem was the 1970s. It was a changing world, which affected even WELS congregations. There were more and more delinquents, which really bothered Rollie. He would chase them down with zeal. There were also a few cases of couples living in sin, even couples within the congregation. This really upset Rollie, and he didn't put up with it. One thing that could be said about Rudolf Otto is that he hated sin and was impatient with it. As his brother Karl described him: "He was impatient with sin, and patient with the sinner." Because of the problem with delinquents Rollie made an effort to make every member visits regularly to keep tabs on his people. He stressed upon himself and also upon his sons that a pastor has to get into the people's homes. And he did.

By the mid-1970s Rudolf Otto was in his mid sixties but still in good shape and not showing signs of slowing down. Then in June of 1976 doctors noticed a blockage in the ^{carotid} karated artery. A serious, but somewhat routine surgery was required to remove the blockage. It was to be ^{performed} held in Wausau. During the surgery a clot went to the brain and caused a stroke. When he came out of surgery he could hardly talk and the left side of his body was paralyzed. I remember visiting him as a five-year old grandson in the hospital afterwards. My dad asked him how he was, and he barely whispered, "Good."

It became obvious that Rollie would have to retire from the public ministry. The people of St. Matthew, however, were always very supportive and helped my grandma. They did not force him to resign nor did they force them out of the parsonage. During that summer, Rollie and Edna's youngest son Stephen, who had just finished his junior

year at the Seminary served as an emergency vicar, and also got his friends to come up and preach. Rollie did not want to be a burden on the people, and in August the Otto's moved to Milwaukee under the care of their middle son Carl who served as pastor at North Trinity on the north side of Milwaukee. Steve who lived with them during his last years at the Sem also helped with the care of his parents.

The last years were difficult for Rollie. Often it was hard to communicate, and he would lose control of his emotions. Once his brother Karl visited him, and he just cried and cried. It was difficult for him not to do what he was used to be doing. But God used this time for good in his life because it drove him into the Scriptures, especially into the Psalms. Karl Otto once looked in Rollie's Bible and every verse of comfort in the Scriptures was circled. He never really changed after his stroke. I used to spend a lot of time at my grandparents' house because they lived only two block away. I would mow the lawn and if I didn't get it just right he would yell a little, but after I was done he would grab me with his still strong right hand and hug me.

Late in 1981, five years ^{after} since his stroke, Rollie's health diminished, and in December he had a heart attack. On December 23rd the doctors said he was looking a lot better and could probably go home the next day. Rollie even sang Christmas hymns that morning. Later that day as he was sleeping, the Lord called Rudolf P. Otto to his side. That Christmas he sang like he had never sung before, and heard Christmas carols like he had never heard before. His wife Edna continued to serve God with her life in Milwaukee and later in Lake City, MN until God reunited the two on January 31, 1997.

CONCLUSION

As a grandson, a very blessed grandson, I write this history. I have two grandfathers. One is still living and I know him very well. The other I got to know much better through writing his history. He is an excellent example for me as a pastor and father. He didn't do anything halfway. He was quick to anger at times, but also quick to love. That love, motivated by Christ, is what dominated his life and it is what he is most remembered for. He loved his family and the lambs under his care. And he dearly loved his Lord and his Word. It was a pleasure to write the history of my grandpa. It wasn't just family history or the history of a man or of a pastor. His life was CHURCH history, kingdom of God history, because he was a shepherd of souls and now he is a saint in heaven.

SOURCES

I received all of the information in this paper through interviews with members of his family and one other retired pastor. The introductory material and information about his schooling came from interviews with his brother and now retired Pastor Karl Otto and his middle son Pastor Carl Otto. The information on his Arizona ministry among the Apaches came from interviews with Pastor Karl Otto and Pastor Arthur Guenther. Information on his Wilmot years were taken from interviews with sons Paul and Carl Otto. Information on his ministry in Denmark came from interviews with sons Philip and Stephen Otto. And information on his Marathon years I received from an interview with son Stephen. Information on his retirement years came from interviews with all of the sons and brother Karl and from my own experiences. The cover was sketched by son Paul Otto. I thank them all for their insight and help in making this paper possible. As Grandpa would have wanted his written history to end: TO GOD BE THE GLORY.