

**The Saga of a Mission District
Dakota-Montana
The First Ninety Years 1880-1970**

**BY
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**WHO LIVED AND WORKED IN THE DISTRICT FROM
1920 TO 1969**

**[Written for the 75th Anniversary of the Dakota-Montana District and Presented at the Dakota-Montana
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Some things grow just like Topsy. That is what happened to this history. It started out with not much of a plan and just grew. But like a tree it did spring a few branches. So we can divide the history of the Dakota-Montana District into chapters.

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I. HUMANLY SPEAKING: HOW IT STARTED

CHAPTER 1 THE SAGA OF A MISSION DISTRICT—DAKOTA—MONTANA: THE FIRST NINETY YEARS--1880 TO 1970

In the back bedroom of our home hangs this original:

HOMESTEAD CERTIFICATE NO 4904

Application 20000

THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA, to all whom these presents shall come, Greetings:

WHEREAS There has been deposited in the GENERAL LAND OFFICE of the United States a CERTIFICATE OF THE REGISTER of the land office at Watertown, Dakota Territory, whereby it appears that pursuant to the Act of Congress approved 20th May, 1862, "To secure Homesteads to Actual Settlers on the Public Domain," and the acts supplemental thereto, the claim of Charley Anderson has been established and duly consummated, in conformity to law for the north-east quarter of section three, in township one hundred and twelve north, of range fifty-one west of the Fifth Principal Meridian in Dakota Territory; containing one hundred sixty-seven and sixty-five hundredth of an acre according to the OFFICIAL PLAT of the Survey of the said Land, returned to the GENERAL LAND OFFICE by the SURVEYOR GENERAL:

NOW KNOW YE, That there is therefore granted by the UNITED STATES unto the said Charley Anderson the tract of land above described: TO HAVE AND TO HOLD the said tract of Land, with the appurtenances thereof, unto the said Charley Anderson and to his heirs and assigns forever; subject to any vested and accrued water rights for mining, agricultural, manufacturing, or other purposes, and rights to ditches and reservoirs used in connection with such water rights, as may be recognized and acknowledged by the local customs, laws, and decisions of courts, and also subjects to the right of the proprietor of a vein or lode to extract and remove his ore therefrom, should the same be found to penetrate or intersect the premises hereby granted, as provided by law.

IN TESTIMONY WHEREOF I, Benjamin HARRISON, PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA have caused these letters to be made Patent, and the seal of the GENERAL LAND OFFICE to be hereunto affixed.

GIVEN under my hand, at the CITY OF WASHINGTON, THE twenty-eighth day of December, in the year of our Lord one thousand eight hundred and eighty-nine, and of the Independence of United States the one hundred and fourteenth.

BY THE PRESIDENT: Benjamin Harrison

By M. McKean, Secretary.

J. M. Lowissend, Recorder of the General Land Office

This instrument belongs to my wife. Her grandfather was the Charley Anderson above. Documents like this could be found in hundreds of homes visited by the missionaries of the MINNESOTA SYNOD in the 1880s and 90s. It was the Act of Congress of May 20, 1862, that caused an exodus of Lutheran Germans and Scandinavians to journey from other states and Europe to the Dakota Territory for free land together with the opportunity to prosper.

Said Charley Anderson was not a German. He came from the State Church of Sweden. Charley spoke no German and the Minnesota Synod Missionaries spoke no Swedish. So the two never got together. If a German Lutheran had not married Charley's daughter, who knows what my wife might have been. The avowed purpose of the Minnesota Synod was to gather into congregations displaced German Lutherans. As this history shall reveal they did a very good job. Later, in the twenties of this century we began to pick up a few Scandinavians when the German Lutheran boys looked on the Scandinavian girls and beheld their blond beauty. But we also

lost our German girls, because in those days women followed their men into their churches. Evangelism had no thing to do with it.

Charley's land contract was dated Dec. 29, 1889. The land contract still reads "Dakota Territory" But in November of the same year the territory had become the states of North and South Dakota. At that time the Sioux Indians ceded parts of their reservations west of the Missouri River, which were opened for settlement in 1890. The great "Dakota Boom," a period of rapid settlement occurred between 1879 and 1886. It is interesting how many of our early Dakota congregations had their birth during that very period of time. Also, the movement of German Russians into the West River Country began about 1890 when the Sioux Indians ceded some of their reservations back to the U. S. government. Truly the Lord is gracious, He followed his people into their new homes with Word and Sacrament.

CHAPTER 2 LET US TALK ABOUT THE MAKEUP OF THE DAKOTA- MONTANA DISTRICT.

This will help us see how God shapes His history. In fact, this is what mission boards have to take into consideration even today.

In a manner of speaking, Dakota-Montana has always been a mission district. My memory of it for seventeen of the 27 years I served as a district pastor was making out reports for the mission board. In some respects it was adversarial—me versus them. Of course, I am speaking from my own sinful standpoint: The bottom line was numbers: numbers of souls and communicants and voters and money. In my mind that decided how good a missionary I was. I am certain that that was also the feeling of my contemporaries, I found myself dreadfully lacking. The same pressures were put on me that are put on home missionaries today: “Go out and make more calls.” Throughout the years I have followed in the Statistical Reports of Synod the history of the congregations I have served. It still gives me a perverse pleasure to see that the men who followed me did no better than I did. Indeed the Savior said, “Compel them to come in,” but he didn’t promise he would force them to come in.

It is not my assignment to write a doctrinal paper, but since I opened the Pandora’s Box let me try to close it. The Apostle Paul certainly had all the self-doubts we pastors have. Why did he so often fail among his own nation? It wasn’t because he refused to carry out the commands of his Savior. I would recommend that all of you read and study carefully Romans chapters eight through eleven. There lies the answer to the conundrum why we so often fail in an area. There lies the answer: It is found in God’s *Election to Grace*. In those four chapters, where we find one of our better mission texts, Paul comes back again and again to that thought. I’ll quote only from Romans 8:29 & 30: “For those God foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the likeness of his Son, that he Might be the firstborn among many brothers. And those he predestined, he also called; those he called, he also justified; those he justified, he also glorified.” Moreover, only “God knows those that are his;” only God knows how many of his elect are out there. It is not for us to know lest we say in our hearts, “There are only a few out there, why should we go?” But it is also true that as Paul also points out, God opens and shuts doors. But he does want the elect called into his kingdom. That’s why Jesus compares his Church here an earth to fisherman who catch all sorts of fish. So, if you and I don’t call in God’s elect, God will call someone else to do it. That’s our mandate. “Moreover, it is required of stewards that they be found faithful.”

Certainly the number of God’s elect are limited in a District of limited population. The numbers that missionaries send in to their District Mission Boards are decided by many things. We call these things “demographics.” Every mission board deals with them when they present their requests for money in Milwaukee. They talk about population, the economic health, the industries, the movements in and out of a region where they want to do mission work. The argument is that if these things look good there will be some of God’s elect there. It is a human judgment which may have some basis in fact. Further than that we cannot go.

Over the years the demographics of the Dakota-Montana District have decided when and how much a congregation will grow, and just as often when it would stop growing despite all the efforts of the missionary. We certainly see this in broad outline as we review the 115 years of our history of which I shall try to capsulize the first 90 years—till 1970.

Let’s take South Dakota as a model. Today, there are three population regions: the eastern, the central man-made great lakes and the western Black Hills. It is in these regions where some of our older congregations are still prospering. Why? Because the people are still there.

But back in the 1880s to the 1920s in the James and Sioux River areas it was different. The land act opened these fertile regions to farmers who came from near and far. Farming was a labor intensive operation back in those days. Families were large to do the work. The norm was 160 acres—a quarter section. There were often four farms to a square mile with as many as 24 people or more. One could start a church in a country school house, and it would prosper. Many did, as I learned when I read the mission board’s minutes back in the

60s. Several years' drought could also affect congregational growth. The "Little House on the Prairie" books give a good picture how things were in the early years of our District. But then came the tractor, the combine, the duck-foot plow, etc., so that by 1970 the 160 acre farm had grown to an average of 978 acres, according to my encyclopedia. Nor does it take a large family to operate such a farm. That's why once prospering congregations in east river South Dakota have grown static, or smaller, or have been closed. Don't blame the pastor.

Where we went and what we did was also decided by other matters—not always noble. In our early work the German language was the important thing. It wasn't always either because the missionary did not want to preach in the English language. It was the tyranny of the people themselves who argued that, "Der Heilige Geist kann kein English," (The Holy Spirit can't speak in English). Back in the 60s, when we were trying to open the Alberta, Canada field we had to let a young man go because he was committed to keeping alive the German language and culture.

And other things played in: We had a gentlemen's agreement with the Missouri Synod not to open opposition congregations, especially in the cities. This went on into the 50s. Among brethren that was fine. So we did not go into the larger towns until a start was made in the 50s.

Nor when looking at the growth of the district should we ignore the roads and the railroads that led into and opened areas of influence. Even the modes of transportation played their part. As Prof. K. G. Sievert reports in his 1970 history, the first missionary, Christian Boettcher complained to his superiors that his work was hampered because his horse had sore feet. Horse drawn vehicles traveled about five miles an hour; so in some areas there was a church every ten miles. Along came the Model T Ford; now two congregations could have every Sunday services. Now it is sensible to have congregations 50 or more miles apart because of the modern auto. My own father, when he came into the district in 1920 relied on a spur line of the Northwestern Railroad to serve his three congregations. Trains on that 40 mile line ran four times a day back and forth. When the congregations bought him a Model T Ford things changed; now he could serve each congregation more often. But in winter time he sometimes went back to the train. So even the weather played its part in district work.

CHAPTER 3 PRE-DISTRICT DAYS AND NOW

A Mrs. Paul Schwantz, aunt to our Pastor Wilbur Dorn, gave my father a copy of the 1909 “GESCHICHTE DER MINNESOTA SYNODE” (History of the Minnesota Synod). It is a most valuable source of information concerning pre-district days. It contains historical profiles of many of the congregations which existed at the time we became the Dakota-Montana District in 1920. Much of the information which I shall pass on in this part of my history comes from this book. The Dakotas were the then mission-field of the Minnesota Synod and then after 1917 of the Evangelical Lutheran Synod of Wisconsin And Other States. In fact a disproportionate part of WELS mission funds were spent on the Dakotas.

What I am going to try to do is call the role of the congregations and preaching stations that existed at the time we became a district. If, I miss some, forgive me. The History of the Minnesota Synod depended on pastors sending in profiles of their congregations. As happens in cases like that not all pastors responded. In fact one of the glaring omissions is that of the important St. Martin’s congregation at Watertown, the city where Charley Anderson’s land title is recorded. I shall try to pick up some of the congregations that were omitted, but my sources are limited. In listing the congregations I shall number them (1), (2), etc., to give you an idea of how many existed when the district was formed. You’ll be surprised as I was.

(1) Let’s start with Christ of Marshall, Minnesota. At the time the district was formed, towns along the border could decide which district they wanted to join. A Pastor Edgar Gamm, long time pastor in the District and later pastor at Marshall gives us some information regarding the congregation. Marshall was the platform from which Missionary Christian Boettcher started his work in the Dakotas. He traveled as far west as Redfield, SD. As the crow flies it was a distance of about 140 miles, but much farther by horse and buggy. Because he and later men traveled by horse, they were given the name “Reiseprediger,” literally translated “riding preachers.” In the German mission reports up till 1936 all district missionaries were called “Reiseprediger.”

A mission trip took Boettcher six weeks to make by horse and buggy. So you can see how often the people had services. Prof. K. G. Sievert, who served the Grover congregation, was told by an old lady how Boettcher did his work there. She would board him in her sod hut. When he came she would send her sons out into the community to tell the people that the pastor had come. It made no difference what day he arrived; the next day was church day, also held in her sod house. People came by ox-cart, by horseback and horse and buggy. Babies born since the missionary was last there were baptized. There were instructions, which were sometimes turned over to a knowledgeable layman. The day was well spent, and the missionary traveled to the next place.

Boettcher thought of Marshall as an inhospitable and expensive town where he could not support his family. So he moved over toward Taunton, MN. But even so, work was begun in Marshall as early as 1876 and 1877. Boettcher arrived there December 20, 1878. However, it was not until twenty years later that Christ of Marshall was finally organized. Its story is interesting, but this is not the place to tell it. Marshall was in the Dakota-Montana District till 1942, when it finally joined the Minnesota District.

(2) Another Minnesota place was St. Peter’s of Balaton. It remained in the Dakota-Montana District till 1930. Ch. Boettcher started this congregation in the winter of 1884-85. The dates I give you will not always be the dates the congregations organized. Congregations like babies, don’t begin with names. I find Balaton interesting, because the Rev. Paul Scherf, second president of the district, pastored there from 1905 to 1921. From there he was called to Roscoe, SD, where he served till about 1940, just before he died. He was a colorful character who served his district well. I’ll tell more of his story later.

(3) St. John’s of Arco, Minnesota. This congregation had its birth about 1900 when the Northwestern Railroad passed through and set up the town site. Most of its life it had every other Sunday services. It was closed about 1954.

Forgive me again if I digress, as I shall do often. What I report here happened in other places and impacted on our mission work. In 1900 the Northwestern Railroad ran a 40 mile line from Tyler, Minn.

to Astoria, SD. It set up four town sites along the line: Arco, Ivanhoe, Hendricks and Astoria, SD. The towns came into existence about the same time. My father in 1920 was called to serve congregations at Tyler, Arco and Hendricks. They were all original congregations of the Dakota-Montana District.

(4) Immanuel, Tyler, Minnesota organized in 1905. Here is a congregation that was supposed to grow, because it was the largest town in Lincoln County, Minnesota and because it was a railroad division town. But as every mission board eventually finds out, it does not work that way. Tyler was the stronghold of the Danebod Synod—Danish Lutheran. That church body had an academy there. It was also a lodge town as were many others we entered. Lodges also sold insurance, and it was hard to get someone to give up his insurance policy. That is why the Aid Association for Lutherans was founded—to fight fire with fire. As a little boy I can remember my father bemoaning the lodge problem in Tyler. Even to this day the congregation, now a member of the Minnesota District, only numbers about 107 communicants (1993).

(5) Trinity, Hendricks, Minnesota. It was started by Boettcher in 1880 but was not organized till 1890. For years it worshipped in a consolidated school in the New Grove District. In 1909 it decided to move into Hendricks and proceeded to build a church into which it moved in 1910. The first child baptized in the new church was our long time District Pastor Wilbur Dorn on October 2, 1910. When my father was installed in Hendricks in the summer of 1920, I was four and a half years old. “Swede” Dorn, cousin to our Wilbur Dorn, picked us up in Argo Township, SD, where we had stayed with Pastor Henry Sprenger, while waiting for our furniture to arrive from Missouri. Upon arriving the first thing I laid my eyes on was our coaster wagon. That was my introduction to the Dakota-Montana District.

Again I digress. Hendricks, a town of about 800 then, was solid Norwegian, representing two Norwegian Synods. It had three Norwegian Lutheran churches, all prospering. The German settlement was around the New Grove School south of Hendricks. When we came to town we were known as the German Lutheran Church. No one cared what Synod we belonged to; it was enough to know we were German. Ethnic feelings ran high.

Why move to Hendricks, where ethnic feelings were still very strong? Well, William Dorn (Grandpa to us), founder of New Grove, was fluent in both German and Norwegian. One of his sons was a very successful implement dealer in Hendricks. Grandpa Vierhuff, another founder of the congregation lived in town. Why not? The church did grow. One mission festival it even had a Norwegian sermon. The church was so tightly packed that at times we children were seated on the steps leading to the chancel. There was a Sunday School class every other pew—teacher, class; teacher, class; etc. One of my teachers was Bill Dorn’s mother, Martha, truly a Christian lady.

In 1929 the church was enlarged. Its dedication and the stock market crash came at the same time. That had very little impact on the congregation, but the depression that ended Herbert Hoover’s presidency and the bank holiday of Franklin Roosevelt (1933) did. The congregation lost the little money cushion it had as did many other congregations as well as members. The church debt became an albatross around the congregation’s neck. Pastor’s salary was reduced as were many other pastors’ in other congregations. The “dirty thirties” with its drought and dust storms did not help. Tensions between pastor and congregation grew. The congregation stopped growing.

But it wasn’t the tensions that did it. What happened to Trinity of Hendricks happened everywhere. All around Hendricks were 80 and 160 acre farms. There were farmsteads four to a square mile. New farm machinery changed things. Now when I visit the area most of those farm places I knew as a child are abandoned. I tell the story of Hendricks because it is the story of many another place in our District.

Hendricks is still a part of the Dakota-Montana District though it is in Minnesota. The only other congregation of our district in Minnesota is at Morehead, another Norwegian stronghold, seat of one of their colleges.

(6) Across the border from Hendricks was Argo township, St. Paul’s. Many of its people, like at Hendricks had come from Door County, Wisconsin. It too was Chr. Boettcher founded about 1880, but it organized itself in 1883, seven years earlier than Hendricks.

It was a strong, viable congregation till the “dirty thirties.” Two things led to its downturn. One was a pastor who had Protestant’ leanings and wanted to commune Lodge members. The other was the great change in farming operations after World War II. It disbanded in the 70s and many of its members transferred to Brookings.

Two items of interest. Argo had an old tracker action pipe organ. In the 40s they electrified it by building a box with the blower outside. So when the organ was played it pumped in, in winter, frigid, outside air. I had cold feet for two years while serving the Congregation from Estelline. The last I heard was that the organ was moved to Brookings and was in use there.

The other item of Interest: When I served it, it had 95 souls. It had afternoon services, yet attendance always ran about 90. This was in 1953.

(7) White, SD, Zion. This was a filial with Argo. Its organization date was 1896. It was formed by people from the Argo congregation. When its pastor left the Synod in 1936 it went over to Missouri. We shall tell more of its story later.

(8) Hidewood Township, Zion. Between Estelline and Clear Lake, SD. Organized in 1898. There was no write-up about this congregation in the 1909 history. The author knew many of its members. It went over to the CLC in 1959.

(9) Along the South Dakota-Minnesota boarder is the very small town of Ward, SD, Immanuel. My history tells me that it was started by “reispredigern,” among whom may well have been Boettcher. It was organized in 1886 by a Pastor Polzin, whose name appears in the histories of several congregations. Like many of these early congregations it once prospered. It was served from Elkton and still is.

(10) Elkton, SD, Trinity. Polzin also organized this congregation in 1889. It hosted several District Conventions in the 20s and 30s. Back in those days district conventions started on Wednesdays and ended the next Tuesday evening. Sunday was a big day. Congregations in the neighborhood of the convention congregation would call off services. In 1934, this author, just out of the 12th grade at DMLC, was present at the convention in Elkton. The morning service was in the German language. At the service we sang the German hymn, “Fahre fort! Fahre fort!” (Literal translation, “Ride forth.”). After the service two young preachers were kidding one another. One was our late Professor Blume. The other was that year’s candidate, Edward Krueger, “Cutie” to his friends. Krueger, having just graduated from the Sem had received a fine new Graham Paige car, a luxury vehicle in those days. I overheard Blume saying to his friend, “Cutie, don’t you know what we sang today in church. We didn’t sing, ‘Fahre Graham Paige ;’ we sang, ‘Fahre Ford! Fahre Ford!’” Blume drove a beat-up old Model A Ford.

(11) Moving north again, we come to Altamont, SD, St. John’s. It’s founding date, according to statistical reports was 1887, which would also place it among the Boettcher founded congregations. It too was once a flourishing church. It was served from various places last of all from Clear Lake. It closed its doors in the 60s. The town is a ghost town that still exists, but barely.

(12) Gary, SD, First (and only) Lutheran. Why are there no “Second or Third Lutherans?” This was a new kid on the block when the district was organized. It was not organized till 1924. It was then served from Altamont, which did have a resident pastor for a while, a Roy Volmers. As a child I remember him for his Star car, which had a hole in the roof, because the shot gun he carried between the seats while hunting had gone off.

Gary is a parish that has held its own throughout the years. We have known the congregation ever since we came to the district, and we can’t figure out why. It has to be God’s Word, because it is not the area. It was one of the congregations, who in the 30s called a candidate for \$25 a month, supplementing his salary with food, fuel, etc.

(13) Dempster, SD, St. John’s. Its organization date is 1912. For a while it also was a part of the Altamont, Gary, Dempster “Parochie,” as they called it. It never had a pastor to itself but was shoved in with this or that congregation. Yet it survives to this day. It was once my congregation, so I had better be careful what I say. But let me tell you a story about one of its pastors. For a while it was served by a colorful Otto Klett. He was known in the Estelline Dempster community for his little dance band. In those days the Missouri Synod was dead set

against dancing, but Wisconsin took a more lack-a-dasical attitude. One of my wife's music teachers told me about Klett's band. A pious Norwegian she didn't know whether to praise or condemn it, but she danced to it and even played in it.

(14) Havana Township, SD, St. Paul's, about ten miles south of Goodwin. Another Deuel County congregations, which had its moments of glory. Our Wilbur Dorn once served this congregation. It has a big write-up in the 1909 history. Organized in 1885 it already existed in 1881, another Boettcher preaching place. It was the mother of the Goodwin congregation and may have helped found others. It once had its own parsonage.

Let me tell an interesting incident from the 1909 history: Before it had either a church or a parsonage, a meeting was held in district school house. Conducting the meeting was a Pastor G. Albrecht. Also present at the meeting was a Pastor Hupfer. The congregation was without a pastor. At the meeting Pastor Hupfer was called by acclamation. He accepted the call in the same meeting, and in the same meeting was installed as pastor of the congregation. He served two years, till 1890. The next pastor was C. Albrecht. The history reads, "It was not clear whether he was officially installed as a minister and care-taker of souls, but he served till 1894."

Havana's doors were shut about 1951. One of the last times I passed the place (1993) I noticed a clump of bushes standing where the church once stood.

(15) Closely associated with Havana Township was St. Peter's, Goodwin, SD. It started as a daughter congregation. It was organized in 1898. It prospered and had its own pastor till 1970. Now served from South Shore it continues to hold its own and has a communicant membership as large as it ever had. It is often alleged that in order to prosper a congregation must have a resident pastor. The history of the district proves that that is not true. It is the Gospel in Word and sacrament that builds and keeps alive a congregation—not the number of societies or organizations it has.

Among the pastors of Havana and Goodwin is also our veteran Pastor Wilbur Dorn. Today, the little town of Goodwin is known for its golf course for beginners.

(16) Watertown, SD, St. Martin's is the biggest parish in our District. For some reason this congregation was not written up in the 1909 History of the Minnesota Synod. After we read this essay to the District in June of 1994, we received a history of St. Martin's from which we will draw a brief profile. In the early 1880s Missionary Christian Boettcher did work in the areas of Germantown, Rauville, Mazeppa townships and Watertown. St. Martin's was organized in the home of J. C. Miller on January 24, 1886. Its pastor at that time was J. Johl. Her first church was dedicated on September 14, 1902. During this time she was served together with the aforementioned congregations. A house was built for her first resident pastor in 1905.

In 1911 Pastor William Sauer became her pastor. He would be the first district president elected in the summer of 1920. Other district Presidents who served the congregation were W. T. Meier in the 40s and Walter Schumann, Jr. in the late 50s and early 60s. Her day school was started in 1957.

(12) Grover Township, SD, Immanuel. It has also been listed as Oxford and Hazel, SD. It too was Boettcher founded as I mentioned earlier. Its organization date was August 10, 1884. In the 1909 history its little church was called a jewel. It still is today.

Grover had its moments in the history of the District. The first Dakota-Montana District Convention was held there in 1922. It has given our Synod a number of pastors including our last Synod President Carl Mischke. The profile of the congregation in the 1909 History ends with the prayer: "May our faithful God watch over the congregation so that many may be led to Christ." That prayer has certainly been answer in the case of this congregation as its history proves.

One sad note: In 1959 this congregation was split by its pastor forming a Church of the Lutheran Confession congregation in Watertown. This writer attended a very stormy meeting there, where the two sides were separated by the center aisle of the church. The controversy split not only friends but also families who had given pastors to our Synod.

(18) Henry, SD, St. Paul's is also a Boettcher congregation. It was started in 1882 and organized in 1884, the same time as Watertown. Its membership rose and fell with droughts and bad times. But it had this going for it.

Being a village it had the parsonage. Henry, over the years, has been yoked together with a number of neighboring congregations. At present, Grover is served from Henry. Our Prof. Wayne TenBroek was pastor there in the early 1940s, and from there was called to the academy at Mobridge.

(19) Raymond, SD, St. Paul's. Another Boettcher place organized by Pastor Johl in 1884. If one looks quickly to the north while driving along 212, one can see Raymond. Here is another congregation that suffered much from droughts and bad times. The history states, "In 1908 the congregation built a Parsonage and a barn. On October 31, 1909 the young people of the congregation bought a nice clock." One wonders whether the clock was not a broad hint to the pastor to shorten his sermons. In 1909 the congregation had 195 souls. Compare that with about a 126 today. This is the area of South Dakota where the people have moved either east or west. The second vice-president of our Synod, the Rev. Robert Zink was assigned to Raymond in 1959.

(20) Bailey's Lake, Emanuel, 18 miles northeast of Raymond, organized in 1899 by a Pastor J. R. Baumann. It was served from Henry and later from Raymond. In 1923 Bailey's Lake reorganized and moved to Clark, since that was the center of activity. It was renamed, Peace.

(21) Crocker, Clark County, SD, St. John's. Crocker is a little town northeast of Raymond. It was organized in 1910 and served from Raymond. The 1909 history states that when the school was moved to town the congregation moved with it. Its name appears in early district Proceedings. The demise of some of these congregations never appears in any report.

(22) We are getting a little ahead of ourselves. Let's move back to the area north of Watertown. I'm going to have to confess that my information may not be too exact in speaking of the next three congregations. For one thing their beginnings are closely bound together. Then too, some of the information given in my 1909 history was not written for prosperity but for those in the know, who were living at the time. So unless one was there one is left in a quandary.

The first congregation is Germantown Township, SD, Codington County, St. Luke's. Christian Boettcher was there; that is clear. The congregation shows a 1888 organization date. Its first church was also built in 1888. The 1909 history shows a very large and grand parsonage which overshadows the little church. It was once a prospering place. Now it listed as Summit 11 SW and goes by the name of St. John's.

(23) In 1889 a group of people broke away from the Germantown congregation and became St. John's of Rauville. They build their own church. My history was not very clear concerning its organization. Rauville too had its moments of glory and hosted a District Convention. It is now listed as 10 miles north of Watertown. As a child I became acquainted with one of the Raus from Rauville. He was caretaker of the hospital at Hendricks, MN and his wife was the first nurse there.

(24) The third early congregation in that region was Mazeppa Township, SD, also St. Johns. I found two dates for its organization, 1888 and 1890. It build a church in 1897 and a few years later it built a schoolhouse. One must be careful and not equate that with a Day School. Other congregations had such schools, such as St. Paul's, Argo Township. These schools supplemented the public schools during the summer months with lessons in catechism, Bible History and German. There were no Sunday Schools as such. Confirmations classes in the winter time were virtually impossible. Then too German was taught, because the child in the public school were taught only in English, and was in danger of loosing his German. It was considered sacrilegious to teach religion in English to these German people.

Mazeppa too had its moments of glory and hosted a convention. When it disappeared from the 1969 Statistical Report, Bethlehem on the north side of Watertown took its place. In reality, St. John's of Mazeppa became Bethlehem of Watertown.

(25) South Shore, SD Immanuel, organized March 6, 1905. Its first pastor was R. Polzin. Polzin seems to have gotten around a lot. This writer remembers preaching the sermon at the dedication of its present parsonage 30 years ago. It was also the seat of one of your bishops, Edward Werner. This church has grown and prospered throughout the years.

(26) Lets move again to the Grover area: West Badger Township, SD, St. Peters, It was served for years from Grover till about 1960. It seems the CLC controversy killed it. It also seems to have been a Boettcher endeavor, because it has a founding date of 1883. It had its own little church but never grew to any size.

(27) Stuck far out in the country was Hague Township, SD, Clark County, Bethlehem. Its people too had been gathered together by Ch. Boettcher. It was organized in 1884 by Pastor J. Johl. The 1909 history admits it was not very large and that was true of its entire history. The history closes with the prayer of its then Pastor M. C. Michaels, "Möge der Herr auch ferner in ihr wohnen und sie auch fernerhin segnen." (May the Lord also dwell within her in the future and continue to dwell in her.) The prayer was answered in that she did celebrate her 100th anniversary and closed her doors soon after.

Of the 27 congregations I have listed over 20 that owe their birth to Christian Boettcher. He, no doubt, worked in other places of which we have no record.

CHAPTER 4 THE YELLOWSTONE TRAIL CONGREGATIONS AND THEIR SPIN-OFFS IN PRESTRICT DAYS.

We are now entering German Russian country. I quote from Prof. Sievert's paper read to the District Convention of 1970: "Ethnically these people were German. Their forefathers had been lured to leave their fatherland by the promises made to them by Catherine the Great of Russia. In appreciation of what these people might mean to her, her manifesto promised anyone who would come to Russia free land, and this land free of taxes. She promised these people religious freedom and freedom from all military service. These promises attracted many German peasants, especially those from south Germany.... The Crimean Peninsula and the area about Odessa were most attractive to them." The German Russians this writer dealt with came mostly from Bess Arabia. The promises made to them by Catherine were later broken, and that brought them over here.

They were different and their German was also different. We were told at DMLC that one could not misspell German and that it was spelled like it was spoken. Well, it depends on how is spoken. The German Russians spelled it the way they spoke it. "P" became "B" and "K" became "G." Take the word "kaput" meaning broken. They spelled it "gabut," After World War II, when people from the U. S. were sending "Care Packages" overseas, relatives of my people at Faulkton and Ipswich, SD would send begging letters. My people, not being able to speak or read German would bring them to me to translate. They did not know how poor my German was, but I was the educated preacher. I learned by reading the letters aloud to myself.

Their Lutheranism had been diluted by the Greek Orthodox. They were very pietistic. They did not like to have their preacher used "canned prayers," as we used to call written prayers, but wanted "ex corde" ones. Pastor Edgar Gamm reports, how before 1920, a group of German Russians threw him out of their prayer meeting, because he sought to instruct them. Yet they were Lutheran at heart. My father, who served them in the McIntosh area told me, how though they had been served by the "Congregessor" as they called the Congregationalists, still they insisted that their children be taught out of Luther's Catechism, which the Congregationalists adapted. This was in the 40s. They were also superstitious. My roommate at DMLC, Allen Hoff, later also a pastor in the District, used to regale us with stories of ghosts and queer happenings, which he swore were true.

In this new area of South and North Dakota, the names which most often appear are G. Lahme and R. Wolkert. G. Lahme started work out of Redfield, SD. As already pointed out this was the westernmost outpost of Ch. Boettcher.

Let me digress again for it will help us understand the district better. It would be interesting to know more about Redfield and our work there, but very little seems to have been written. A Pastor R. Volkert lived in and worked out of Redfield in 1887. This writer could find the name of no church there. It is interesting to note that Ch. Boettcher seems to have had no immediate success in Marshall, Minnesota the platform from which the eastern South Dakota congregations had their start, and we see the same thing at Redfield, SD.

Many years later, this writer was told that in the 1930's WELS opened a mission in Redfield and closed it on the same day because Missouri had opened a mission there about the same time. Because Missouri did the towns and we the country, we pulled out. Not even Missouri had much luck in Redfield. Back in the 40s, when we still fraternized with Missouri this writer remembers speaking at a mission festival in a struggling LC-MS mission in Redfield.

So mission board—even demographics mislead us.

The history of the western area of our early district again shows how important district schoolhouses were in giving us places to worship, since a church could be build.

(28) A case in point is Gale Township, Peace, organized in 1887. For 65 years, till the last of its members joined Mound City, it worshipped in a school. I remember a mission festival there. The teacher's desk was the altar. People squeezed into the pupils' desks or sat in chairs along the wall. Since there was no piano we sang

without accompaniment. The preacher would give the tone, sometimes high and sometimes low, but we sang. A few of you preachers still have to do this from time to time, I know.

Opening congregations also worshipped in many other places—in saloons, as bars were called then. They worshipped in lodge halls until the lodge people found out that Wisconsin was anti-lodge. A family with a large home would open their living room for services. Even sod huts became worshipping places as already noted.

No one said it was easy. In Mandan there was a concerted effort on the part of business people of other churches to keep us out by refusing to rent us quarters anywhere. This happened during the 30s. Other missionaries wrote their mission boards telling them how difficult it was to find a place to worship.

Sad to say, Mission Boards could not and did not support the men they sent out. There were no hymnals or service books of any kind. Salaries were shameful. People were expected to supply the missionary with meat and potatoes and corn cobs for cooking fuel. Some parishes were generous and others not. It was not unusual for a pastor, making a call to return with a rooster in a gunny bag and a bushel of oats for his horse. Even this writer had a chopping block to decapitate live chickens given to him back in the 40s.

This also led to the movement of pastors out of the District. Young men came out filled with zeal, which soon cooled. Their wives were unhappy with the rented quarters, which sometimes were as hard to as places to worship. Likely as not, if they were called back east to an established congregation they went, and who could blame them. They often went back poorer than they had come out. The district never did solve the problem for which it had been formed—to stop the rapid turnover of pastors. It was the people's fault as much as the Synod's. But who are we to place blame? We were in it and a part of it.

Let's continue to call the roster of the congregations at the time of our District's formation. We have already spoken of Gale Township in the Mound City area.

(29) Bowdle, SD, St. John's, organized in 1891. Pastor G. Lahme began preaching in the house of William Haupt. Later Pastor R. Volker held services in a country school. Though organized later its church was built in 1886. In a manner of speaking it is still worshipping in the same church today. The church was renovated in 1906. In the late 1940s, under Pastor Paul Albrecht, the church was rebuilt. It was split along the roof line and widened and lengthened. An open scissor rafter system was installed. The outside was covered with Lannon stone and it became one of the more beautiful churches of our District.

Bowdle was also the mother of other congregations in the area. She was the second largest congregation of the District for years and hosted several conventions. Once her membership approached 300. Her Pastor Albrecht was District President for 12 years. Because of a split in the congregation due to her pastor and the CLC controversy her membership is down to about 125 members.

(30) Theodore Township, Walworth County, SD, Trinity. Groundwork was done there in 1888 and 1889 by G. Lahme and later by Volkert. The start was made in a school house. Ten years later, in 1898 a church was built. It had been built by the farmers themselves, as is said, "not for time, but for eternity." It was shiplathed inside and outside. Solid as a rock, but the corners were not square. In the middle 1940s the church was moved to Faulkton, SD, where this writer had been assigned. Because of its crooked corners he learned what a "try square" was for. But it made a nice church. Many of our missionaries had to also be builders and mechanics and janitors and firebuilders.

Theodore was once a flourishing congregation, and was served out of Bowdle till it closed in Nov, 1945.

(31) Roscoe, SD, St. Paul's, organized in 1893. In point of time it was organized later than some of the congregations which follow. The 1909 history gives an organization date of 1905 though the Statistical Report of 1993 gives the early date. What happened? It was first organized as a congregation of the Missouri Synod and was served out of Aberdeen by a pastor named Prey. The 1909 history also stated that it was served for a time by the Iowa Synod. Out in this area the Iowa Synod was very aggressive. It came into the Minnesota Synod in 1905.

Roscoe was the seat of the District's second district president, J. Paul Scherf, of whom we spoke earlier. We'll meet him again later. In the 1929 just before the depression, Roscoe built a fine, new brick church. No one knows how much of Pastor Scherf's money went into it. Then Pastor Scherf bought his own house, and the little old parsonage stood in the shadow of the new cathedral. The next minister, Pastor Herbert Lau lived in the old house again. Later in the days of Pastor George Boldt, Martin Scherf, a son of Paul Scherf saw to it that a fine new parsonage was built to match the church.

This church also had its moments of glory and reached almost 500 communicants. But Dakota economics also had its effect on the parish. The 1993 Statistical Report says it had 320 souls and 278 communicants. A difference of only 42 souls between souls and communicants speaks of an area where the young people move out as soon as possible to seek work elsewhere. This is the story of many of the older congregations of the district in the smaller towns.

(32) Whoever heard the name "Cloyd Valley"? It had a congregation named St. Jacobus (St. James). It was organized in 1900 and also was served out of Roscoe. Cloyd Valley appears in the District Proceedings till about 1930.

(33) Sherman township, Emmanuel's, 1908, also served out of Roscoe. In 1908 it built a concrete block church. Later it was served out of Tolstoy by Pastor William Lindloff, another long time district minister. It disappeared from the record in the early 1920s.

(34) Mound City, SD, St. Paul's, 1887. Its early history was written by Pastor William Sauer, who, became pastor there in 1905. This rather important congregation in our early history was founded by a Pastor Mundt of the Missouri Synod from Ellendale, ND in 1886. In 1888 it built its pastor a 12 by 16 foot house, like the claim shacks that many of the early settlers built for themselves. In some respects it was better than the sod huts some pastors had to settle for, although it must be admitted that the sod huts were warmer in winter. Shortly after St. Paul's was founded there was a vacancy and the Iowa made a move on the new parish, Since Mound city could be more easily served from Bowdle, the LC-MS gave Mound City to the Minnesota Synod. That was in the summer of 1890. Sauer writes that in the 1890s the congregation experienced a large growth through the influx of German Russians and reached 35 voters. One can translate voters into "families." Moreover families were big in those days. Another long vacancy began in 1904 and again Iowa sought to annex the parish. After Wim. Sauer came the congregation experienced another spurt in growth and reached in 1909 315 souls and 151 communicants.

Before Mound City built its church, she, like her sister, Gal, (same organization date) worshipped in a school. Then Mound City used the county court house for worship. Later, a neighbor of this writer, a court reporter, told how his uncle, the judge, in the 1940s had to clear the court room upstairs so those trapped in the rooms downstairs could get out of the court house. Must have been a big crowd.

This may also interest you. In the mid-forties, a son of Wim. Sauer, Harold Sauer, became pastor in Mound City. Still later, one of the authors of our new Hymnal (1993), Theodore Hartwig became pastor there and tried to introduce the singing of the introits and graduals. But the German Russians were not buying. A later pastor told me how relieved they were when a new pastor came, so they could go back to the old-fashioned way. In those days it did not pay to be too liturgical. This was in the late 1940s, a time when the St. James movement was rather active in Lutheranism.

The old history goes on to tell us that in 1908 Pastor Sauer obtained a vicar from the seminary at Wauwatosa and work was begun in Akaska (formerly LeBeau), Glenham (formerly Evarts) and Mobridge. But it would take time to organize the work done in these places.

(35) Zeeland, ND, Zion, started in 1888 by George Lahme from Redfield. It too was an important congregation in the early years of our District. The 1924 District Convention was held there.

On June 10, 1888, George Lahme held services in the home of David Hein to organize the parish. It was given the name of Immanuel Congregation of Campbell and McIntosh Counties. Its area of influence also went into Emmons County. The next year when the Dakota Territories became North and South Dakota, McIntosh County was in ND and Campbell County was in SD. The place where the church was founded, called Hein after

the family, was in Campbell County, SD. But when the town of Zeeland was formed in McIntosh County, on the other side of the state line, Immanuel moved into Zeeland, ND.

Early services were held in the “Rasen Hütten” (sod huts) of the members. The first pastor did not stay long. Then the place was served from Bowdle by Pastor Hermann Volkert. There seems to have been a different pastor every year or two. About 1892, a Pastor Julius Engel moved to Zeeland and lived in a sod house. Later he moved to Mound City and served from there.

The author of my 1909 history closes his rather long description of Zeeland and its vicinity with the observation that the congregation suffered much from frequent changes of pastor, but that in a way it was also the fault of the people who didn't see to it that their pastor had a decent place to live. When Zeeland did build a house it was rather palatial for that time and place.

Even into the sixties the congregation was noted for its insistence on German services long after the need had disappeared. But they were not the only ones. This writer conducted German services in Mobridge into the late sixties. They were reading services.

(36) Hague Township, ND, Friedens (Peace Lutheran). This is not to be confused with Hague Township in South Dakota. It was begun at an early date out of Hein (Zeeland). According to the 1952 Statistical Report it was organized in 1904, though it was served out of Zeeland long before. It disappeared from the record in the mid fifties.

(37) Hazelton, ND, St. Paul's It's organization date is 1924, but work was begun in the general area in the late 1880s from Zeeland. It seems that a place called Hampton became Hazelton. About the same time as work was begun in the Hampton area work was also begun in Emmons County, and places like Omio, Emmonsburg. Again my little history leaves me in a quandary about these early preaching places, which were served in the general Hazelton area.

(38) Mobridge, SD, Zion, 1912. The history of the town of Mobridge starts out with the little cattle towns of Evarts and LeBeau. Both townsites are under the Oahe Reservoir. When the Milwaukee Railroad built the bridge across the Missouri River, where Mobridge is now located, the telegrapher's place and dateline was MO BRIDGE, short for Missouri Bridge. Many of the early buildings in Mobridge came from LeBeau and Evarts. In fact, Zion's church, which she used into the late fifties, when it burned down, came from LeBeau.

Mobridge was destined to become a leader in the district, when her bid for Northwestern Lutheran Academy was accepted in 1928. Her Pastor Gamm in those days was a very influential man. We will not write much about the Academy, since the assignment to do so has been given to Prof. Wayne TenBroek. For years the Academy hosted the Easter District Pastors' Conference, which many of us older pastors remembered as a time to relax after the Lenten Season. Later, in the fifties, when its Administration Building became a reality, it also hosted the District Conventions. The pastor's and professors' homes became the stopping places for other pastors and their wives as they passed through the town of Mobridge.

Though not the first to have a day school, her school has now been in existence for over fifty years. It may interest some to know that this writer, when he served Mobridge, called the Academy his high school because 25% of the Academy enrollment was from Zion of Mobridge. For years Zion's young people went to the Academy free. What a hue and a cry went up in the congregation when in 1968 Synod started charging all students \$75 a year for tuition. The same thing happened when Synod closed Northwestern Lutheran Academy.

In reading the 1920 Minnesota district proceedings we see that Mobridge and Glenham called Pastor A. W. Eggert with a salary of \$1,000 a year. The year before they had received \$970.71 from the “Kasse” (cash box) as the Synod's Mission treasury was called.

(39) Glenham, SD, St. Jacobi (St. James) Glenham was organized in 1920, the birth year of the District, yet its history goes back to the Evert's era. In 1921 it built a church basement in which it worshipped for a time. Glenham has always been a very mission minded congregation. One of her members, Charles Schlomer served on the General Board for Home Missions for more than 30 years. Charlie's brother Walter, gave us Missionary Larry Schlomer.

Really, the town should have been named Schlomerville for various reasons. Charlie built and for a time owned the sewer system. Before the church basement was built, St. Jacobi held services in the home of Charlie's Uncle Codie. This incident will give you a smile: When this writer was installed at Glenham in January of 1963, a Mrs. Carrie Gosch, sister of the above mentioned Codie took him aside. We knew one another from the time she had served as cook and sort of a matron for girls at the Academy, when the writer was president of the Board. She said to me. "See all these children. There are 62 of them, and they are all mine except two." She was right. Moreover, five Schlomer brothers has married five sisters. Did you ever try to tell apart double cousins?

This points to something else we do not see so much today. Early congregations grew much from within. Early statistical reports show many more baptism and confirmations than today. It was not unusual to have five to ten confirmands a year in a 60 communicant congregation. But the sons and daughters of these congregations soon moved out to seek jobs.

(40) Tolstoy, SD, St. James. Organized in 1924 it had been served long before from Mound City. Tolstoy is a tiny, inland town off the beaten path. Once it had a large settlement of German Lutherans. A pastor even lived there for a time. Shoved back and forth among neighboring congregations it is now served from Akaska. I remember it from being a mission speaker there, and the few people in the pews then were pathetic. Yet it still lives on with about 20 communicants.

(41) Akaska, Zion, 1911. My 1909 history tells me that work had been done in LeBeau, which later was lost to the Iowa Synod, but then became present day Akaska. This writer remembers picnicking on the old LeBeau site with his family as the Oahe Lake was covering it. We picked up an old ink bottle which is still displayed in my wife's writing desk.

In 1950, when Akaska had twice as many communicants as today, the mission board subsidized a school in her midst. It had about 20 pupils. Just this week as I write this (4/16/94) I reminded Pastor Kermit Bledenbender's son how his father faithfully made the rounds of the countryside every day picking up and returning the students.

CHAPTER 4 WEST RIVER CONGREGATIONS

The 40 congregations above are or were on the east side of the “muddy Missouri.” That’s the farming side of the river, for the most part. We move now to the “west river country,” as it was known. Sad to say, parts of it were farmed when it should have been left to the cattle people. Because of this farming there was quite an influx of people after 1890, and the Minnesota Synod followed them. Two thrusts were made across the Missouri in both North and South Dakota, one from the Hazelton area, the other from the Mobridge, especially after the bridge had been built, but also before, by boat.

Two names appear rather often in district mission reports: F. Wittfaut and Kowalksky. Wittfaut reminds one of Chr. Boettcher. For over 20 years, as far as this writer can ascertain, he traveled back and forth in the western North Dakota and eastern Montana starting preaching stations here and there and continuing to serve the little places he founded. He was the missionaries’ missionary. Prof. Sievert, who knew him well reports, “Though completely impractical where automobiles were concerned, he drove his Model T touring car from ranch to farm and farm to ranch. His luggage in the back seat, in addition to his personal belongings for the trip, consisted of flour, sugar, and other staple supplies, which he distributed from place to place as needed. Those able to do so paid, and often charity moved the missionary to leave the goods as a gift.... The finest church he ever had was a country school house.” The first Church in Montana, where he worked for twenty years was built in Circle after his death. Wittfaut died on Dec. 10, 1934 at the age of 62. We are not going to try to list all the places Wittfaut worked, because many of them were personal endeavors on his part and soon disappeared from the record.

I mention Kowalksky because he was more of what the Germans called a “Seelsorger,” a carer of souls. His name was Max. He never married. He started work in the area west and south-west of Mobridge and stayed till his death in the 30s. At one time or another he served nearly all the congregation there. In one report, the mission board rejoiced that he was a single man, who was satisfied to live with members in a single room so they would not have to provide a parsonage. Here was an unselfish man. In another report the district actually thought of starting a “Fordfund” (Ford fund) so people like Kowalksky would not have to use horses. Kowalksky was mentioned, but he had to later buy his own Ford.

I’m going to lump some of the early North Dakota places together, because many of them were just preaching stations.

(42) Flasher, ND, Trinity. This is a Wittfaut church that grew and is still with us today. It was organized in 1914. In 1950 it had 26 communicants. The 1993 report lists 28 communicants.

(43-47) The 1920 WELS proceedings lists the following which were served out of Flasher: Freda, Regent, Selfridge, and Keyser Schoolhouse. Then the report goes on to say that the field had been partitioned and that Burt (whom we shall mention later), Regent and Runkel’s School had been given to Candidate Walter Sprengler. This man became one of the veterans of our district, though he moved out of it for a while.

(48) Burt, ND Zion, 1919. This little congregation hung on for 67 years till 1966. One cannot accuse the Dakota-Montana District of not taking care of its little flocks till all hope was gone. To God the praise.

Back again to the east side of the river in North Dakota.

(49-50) Streeter and Hartford, ND. In connection with this field is mentioned another man, who spent a longer period in the district, a Pastor Samuel Baer, father to George Baer, also a pastor of the district and later professor at Northwestern College. Let me translate part of the report from the 1920 Proceedings: “The congregation (Streeter) has purchased a parsonage in spite of the fact that the church treasury (The Original CEF) did not help out. The missionary begs that we relieve him of Harford, because in winter time it is an awfully long ways to go there by railroad. From the railroad one must travel another ten or twelve miles over land to get there.” Then the report goes on to explain that twenty miles north of Streeter a new station is being formed north of Medina. I wonder what happened to it.

(51) Carson, ND, 1908, a Wittfaut congregation. In 1920 it was served together with Elgin. It's pastor was A. Traub, who was later called as teacher at the Academy. He was installed August 4, 1918. Mention was made of the fact that the two congregations were self-sustaining and had paid the moving expenses of their pastor from Idaho. On the same day the congregation from Carson got together to meet their new pastor. They pledged the sum of \$1,000 for a parsonage, which they soon bought. That was a large sum of money. How could a small congregation do it? One must remember that people were prospering right after World War I.

(52) Down the road from Carson is Elgin, ND, Emmanuel, 1905. I don't know a great deal about this place, but it has hung on during the years and is larger now than it ever was.

(53-56) In the 1920's report this was called the "Lemmon Parochie," the "Lemmon Parish." Five places are mentioned: Lemmon, North Haynes, South Haynes, Hettinger (which we shall mention later), all in ND, and White Butte in SD. Later Haynes is added to North and South Haynes. Some of these places appear in later reports, but they were all preaching places when the district was formed in 1920. Some were served a year or two, then dropped only to be picked up again.

Lemmon, SD, St. Luke's, 1915 was the place that prospered, because the town prospered. This promising town was lost to us in 1958 due to the CLC controversy. Two of our later district presidents served in Lemmon, Walter Shumann and Reginal Pope.

(57) Paradise Township, ND, St. John's, 1910. Now here is a place that is really out in the "sticks," really "bad lands." When my father was called to McIntosh, he wrote back to the mission Board, "Where is Paradise? I can't find it anyplace on the map." Now it is listed as Carson, 34 miles south. Back in the 40s my mother asked one of the women of the congregation why they called the place Paradise, when it was really in the bad lands of North Dakota. She answered, "if you had come from Russia, you would know why." The congregation wanted German. My father's call read "German every other Sunday." When they found out that he could speak German well they demanded and got it every Sunday.

In 1953 Harold A. Johne, now Prof. Johne, was assigned to the Carson-Paradise parish. Then President Paul Albrecht told me this story: Johne's wife had been faithfully travelling with him every Sunday to play the organ. On this particular Sunday she was days within giving birth to a child, so she stayed home. When Johne walked into the church that Sunday he was met at the door by the elders, who demanded to know where his wife was. "She had no right to let them down, when they needed an organist so bad." Johne "lost his cool" completely. Not even taking off his coat, he stood in the chancel, placed his satchel on the floor and gave the congregation a long and a stern lecture. Then he picked up his satchel, put on his hat and walked down the aisle and out the door. There were no services at Paradise on that day. The congregation sat stunned. The very next morning a delegation of the officers drove clear over to Bowdle to see if the District President would intercede with Johne on their behalf.

I remember preaching for a mission festival there in the 60s. Its little frame church still had the oil-lamp chandeliers, which they had electrified. Are they still there?

BACK SOUTH OF THE BORDER ON THE WEST RIVER SIDE.

Along the Milwaukee Line that had just crossed the river at Mobridge lay the towns of McLaughlin, Walker, McIntosh, Watauga, Morristown, Thunder Hawk, Lemmon, Hettinger, ND, Reeder, ND, and the three Haynes, mentioned before. We did work in every one of them. Walker and Thunder Hawk were on and off again preaching stations. Mostly the missionaries complained that they wanted church services, but no one came to church. We looked at McLaughlin and walked away. Iowa was active there. I'll, just list those where we had success. Early pastors William Pankow and Edgar Gamm were very active in these places in the late teens and twenties.

(58) McIntosh, SD, St. Paul's, 1914 is still with us today. Missionaries worked out from this place. The town itself was a division point on the railroad, because of its soft artesian water. When the diesel came in, it started

to fade away. In 1943 my father reported to the mission board that it was becoming a ghost town. When I last visited, it was a town of 300 with most of the houses vacant. What keeps it going is that it is the county seat. Our Prof. Wayne Ten Broek came out of McIntosh. A lot of good things came out of these old congregations. (59) Watauga, SD, Bethlehem. Though it has a 1924 organization date it was a preaching station long before then. It was closed briefly in the early 40s and opened again. Watauga closed for good in 1983. Oh, how slowly hopes die!

(60) Morrystown, SD, Christ, 1919. It too had its years of growth and hopes of becoming a large congregation. For a while it prospered and even had a synod subsidized day school in the 50s and early 60s. I remember a nice parsonage and church. It is now a Social Security congregation with a Social Security pastor.

I do remember a meeting of the congregation when they were calling a pastor. They were angry and faulted the district President because of the great turnover of pastors. It was not that they minded the change in pastors; it was “those high moving expenses.” We told the voters, that if they would be nicer to their pastor he would stay longer. Apparently, they did not hold this against President Schumann and myself, because they tried to call both of us back to be Social Security pastors.

INTO THE INTERIOR OF THE SOUTH DAKOTA WEST RIVER COUNTRY

Demographics again. The area of which we now speak covers about 13,000 square miles. It stretches from Mobridge west beyond Bison, and south down below Faith. It was opened by the Minnesota Synod about 1914. Once it had more people living in it than now, because it was opened to farming. That that was a mistake can be seen from the 1920 and 1922 Proceedings. They tell of many people moving out. Now it has many more cows than people. Only one pastor ever stayed long there. It was Pastor Max Kowalsky, of whom I spoke earlier. Three or four congregations to a pastor was the rule. Back in the late 60s a gentleman from the Timber Lake congregation scolded me because of the rapid turnover of preachers. He had liked one young man very much, but the man’s voice gave out and he had to resign. He said to me: “if the mission board wouldn’t give so many congregations to our pastors they would last longer.” After hearing that several times I said to him, “I’m 53 years old and preaching four times a Sunday, and I haven’t lost my voice.” So then I moved to Flint, Michigan where I soon started preaching three times a Sunday, all in the morning.

This brings up another reason why men did not stay in the region. It was a lonely place for wives, and that was the reason many gave for leaving. Cars wore out quickly because of the miles and the terrible roads. I was taking care of the dying Timber Lake congregation out of Mobridge, giving them an afternoon service. They told me, “if it rains stay home; we can’t get to church.” But I thought they were kidding, so I drove out anyway. I sat alone a couple of times before I learned. Right when it was raining the gumbo was slippery as ice, but after the rain it gummed up under the wheels and become so hard that they could not go round. This was in the 60s.

I’ll pick up these congregations as they are listed in the 1922 report. Some will show a later date in the statistical reports, but all had their birth about the same time.

(61-63) Meadow, Drew, Bison.

The synodical report of 1920 reports that these three had been vacant since 1918 and it was only with the greatest difficulty that they were being served. I can well believe that, having had the problem thrown into my lap. Meadow and Drew appear briefly in other early reports, but the work was finally stopped. The Meadow people went to Bison.

Of the three only Bison survives today. It’s name is Christ and it was finally organized in 1937, when one of my roommates, a G. Ehlert became pastor there. It’s an inland town and unique in that it never had a railroad. The congregation is more prosperous today than it ever was. We wish we could give you more information concerning these congregations, but this little history is getting overlong.

(64) In reading the 1920 report again I came across another interesting name. In was up in North Dakota, a place called “Swastika.” It was a preaching station in 1920.

The next three long formed a tri-parish.

(65) Trail City, SD, St. Paul's, 1913. A Kowalsky congregation. It was closed in 1966. Its name was Emmanuel. (Have you noticed how many different ways Emmanuel has been spelled?)

For a number of years before it closed, Prof. Sievert served it from Mobridge. Later on, he begged me to go out and serve it on Sunday afternoons. In the 50s and 60s one family tried its best to keep it going. Their name was Bieber. He was the janitor, the congregation president, the Church opener and the organist, who played the hymns on the old reed organ with one finger. She was the assistant janitor, the Sunday School superintendent and the only teacher. Ten to a dozen people showed up every Sunday, except when it rained and the gumbo roads kept them home.

(66) Timber Lake, SD, St. Paul's, 1915. Timber Lake is one of the "Medicine Lakes" of SD. The other that I know of is in the Watertown area. They are very alkaline and salty, because they have no outlets. All the water that flows into them evaporates and the remain behind.

To give you an idea of what many of these congregations are like today, consider the 1993 statistics. Timber Lake listed 52 souls and 49 communicants. It is a congregation of old people as are so many others in the District.

(67) Isabel, SD, Peace, 1942. Like all the other congregations to this point, Isabel was already in existence before 1920. The date shown for many of these places was the date they finally became a member of the District. They were not officially members of the District till they were received in a convention. At that convention they had to present a constitution.

To show how hard it was to serve these places and lure pastors out to them, let me tell of another experience. In 1965 the three places above were wished on me as a vacancy. I simply could not serve them at the time, so I was given a vicar. His name was Herbert Filter. We still see one another and talk about old times. Like most vicars he was to preach only once a month. But he preached three times a Sunday for 12 months and took care of three congregations. I saw him once a month for sermon study.

After that we were given Candidate Nathan Engel. He was given five congregations to serve. He drove about 50,000 miles a year, but we did pay his mileage for all driving. This was kind of a first. Then on top of that we asked him to go and see if he could stir up something in Pierre. Then Nathan left in 1969, and part of the vacancy (Isabel and Timber Lake) became mine again. Here was another interesting facet of being a minister in Dakota-Montana. One could expect a vacancy every three or four years.

In Timber Lake, above, in the 1960s, the congregation had a secretary who could neither read nor write. After a meeting he went home and told his wife what had happened and she wrote up the minutes. At the next meeting another member would read them. One of the best elders I ever had could neither read, nor write. I also had a treasurer, who was as honest as the day is long. If someone told him the congregation owed him money he would pay out of his own pocket. But he would forget to write it down. One time he found a collection from the last summer in his summer pants pocket, a year later.

My final remembrance of Isabel was that it was the last on the route on the Sunday afternoon I preached my farewell to my parish and the district. I was tired after four services and the farmers were sleepy. Then there was a meeting after church, and finally the 60 miles back to Mobridge.

(68-71) Faith, Lantry, Red Elm, Dupree. Lantry and Red Elm disappear from the reports soon after 1920. Faith, SD, St. Paul, 1914. The 1920 report tells us that Faith built a "fine" parsonage in 1919. They raised \$2,632.00 for that purpose. Again, remember that this was right after World War I when, the economy was booming. Never again would these western people prosper as then. It is not hard to understand why the mission board wanted to work this area in the teens of this century.

Dupree, SD, First Lutheran, 1914. Dupree was unusual from its very beginning. The work was done only in English, whereas in all other places without exception the work was done either in German alone or German and English. Dupree still exists with about 30 communicants (1993).

I'll mention it here rather than later. In 1934 work was done out of Faith in Turtle Creek and Ridgeview, thus getting us very close to the hills. Before 1920 we did not make it into the Black Hills area.

(72-77) No doubt we can add to the numbers thus far reported, but these names appear in the reports of our pre-1920 work in eastern Montana: Ismay, Terry, Olanda, DeGrand, Mildred and Crow Rock. The only place that organized itself was Terry, Trinity in 1935. The early missionary, Wittfaut, worked in many other places.

(78) Circle, MT, Salem, 1933. This place was also worked by Wittfaut. From Circle we worked out to other places later. I visited the place several times. Here is another place, like so many, where we refuse to desert the few souls under our care.

(79-84) As I was trying to close up this part of my early history before the district was organized, I once more went through the list of congregations and preaching places mentioned in the 1922 District Parochial Report. I found the following, which I had not found elsewhere. They were Oshkosch, MN, Wabbasa, MN; Gales, SD; Goose Camp, SD; and Crow Rock, Montana. As far as I know none exist today.

CHAPTER 6 TO SUM UP

About 1920 there were 32 pastors serving these 84 places. In 1922 President Sauer estimated the 1920 District membership at about 7,000 souls and 3,500 communicants and 1,200 voters. As pointed out earlier, “voters” was a more important figure than it is today, because it was also an indication of the number of families and contributors in a parish. So President Sauer used the figure of six members to a family to come up with the total number of souls. He also estimated that half the members of the family were communicants. It is interesting that after 1974 the Statistical Reports of Synod no longer mention the number of voters, because the figure has grown rather meaningless.

So in 1920, each pastor served on an average 218 souls half of which were communicants, or about 36 families.

Today (1993) the district numbers 77 congregations, 54 pastors, 12,256 souls and 9,276 communicants. So the average pastor, if there is such an one, ministers to about 227 souls among whom are about 172 communicants. That’s only about nine souls more than in 1920. He does it more easily than the 1920s’ men who had open cars and mud roads to travel and more congregations. We take our hats off to these “Reisepredigern.” They were riding preaching indeed.

It may be well to mention something else—something we too should take to heart. These early missionaries were sent out without having a philosophy of missions other than that of the Scripture itself. There was no such thing as a chair of missions at the Seminary. A few hints were given them in “Pastoral Theology.” That was true also at the time this writer graduated in 1941. These men went out with the faith that the Gospel alone is the power that saves, and that when and where this gospel is preached it will not return without accomplishing that which God pleases. And that gospel did find God’s elect in many places.

CHAPTER 7 THE NEW DISTRICT, 1920

Anyone, who writes history has a problem, especially if he was a part of that history. First, as a part of it, he writes himself into the history. That makes him subjective, because he cannot divorce himself from the history. You have seen that in this history and will see more of it. Second, if he did any research at all, he has more information than the reader wants or can take in. Third, in spite of the information he has, something is always missing, and it may be very important. So, again I remind you that this history can be skewed and not completely objective. So read on and season it with a grain of salt.

The idea of forming a new district certainly did not have its birth in 1920 or even shortly before that. In fact the idea was not that of forming a new district, but forming a new Synod. It started about 1912 when a new conference was formed in the Minnesota Synod at Lemmon, SD. Thus in 1915 the talk in this conference was forming a “Northwestern Lutheran Synod”—a new Synod. The reason was that the conference was so far from the mother Synod. In fact, a constitution was written and carried to a meeting of the Minnesota Synod. Then in 1917, when the Minnesota Synod amalgamated with the Wisconsin Synod, the idea of forming a Synod was changed to forming a district of the Wisconsin Synod, which would be called the “Dakota-Montana District.”

Even before 1920 three reasons were given for forming a new, district. We find them in the 1920 Minnesota District Proceedings:

- “1. Much travel time and money would be saved when it came to attend district conventions.
- “2. The area would have district officials of its own living in the actual field of labor.
- “3. A more stable ministry could be envisioned, since pastors tend to remain in their districts.”

For point one it was argued that by forming a new district its borders could be shrunk and much travel and travel time avoided. This was a very real concern, because most pastors before 1920 went to conferences by train, and it often meant a number of changes of lines. In Minnesota, conferences were often established following a single railroad line. I think of the early New Ulm conference which followed the Northwestern line west. That luxury was not given Dakota-Montana men. In the later 20s this writer remembers his father preparing the 1920 Model T Ford for trips to Conventions to Bowdle and Roscoe, SD, a 150 to 175 mile trip, and that over dirt roads made muddy by rains.

Point 2 had a great deal of merit especially when it came to mission work, for the district would remain a mission district in many respects.

Sad to say, forming a district did not help the movement out of the district at all. Often wives, uprooted from homes in Wisconsin, were given as a reason for moving back. This was not stated publicly in letters written to district presidents, but was often stated to fellow ministers. Other District presidents found good picking among dissatisfied men and their wives. Part of the problem was also the system of reimbursing pastor for their travel expenses between their congregations or shall we say, “lack of system.” Men could not afford to stay in the district that demanded thousands of miles of travel a year. The system of the past few years of paying mileage has helped.

At the district meeting of the Minnesota Synod in Mankato in 1920, the formation of the new Dakota-Montana District was almost an anticlimax. Twenty-three pastors and six Lay delegates met the Friday afternoon of June 25 to organize themselves. They elected Wm. F. Sauer, president; J. Paul Scherf, vice-president; Edward Birkholz, second vice-president; and Carl Schweppe to the “Reisenpredigerkommission,” the Mission Board, as we call it today. The meeting closed with the motion that a short reference be made to the meeting in the Minnesota District Proceedings. It was short, just a little over two pages, and, of course, in German the official language of all synodical business for some time to come.

The organization of the new district was ratified by the Wisconsin Synod Convention which met from July 14-20, about four weeks later.

A personal note: My father was installed at Trinity, Hendrick MN the Sunday of July 25, 1920, right after the Synod Convention. Thus I, as a little four and a half year old boy became a member of the Dakota-Montana District, a relationship that lasted 49 years. Hence this history.

The borders of the newly formed field were three states: North Dakota, South Dakota and Montana. Congregations along the Minnesota-South Dakota line could decide to which district they wanted to belong. Seven congregations in Minnesota joined up with Dakota-Montana.

WHAT WERE THE TIMES LIKE WHEN WE BECAME A DISTRICT IN 1920?

World War I was over and times were good for both industry and farming, and most of the Dakota-Montana District members were in the farming or grazing industry. When members prospered so did pastors. Building projects were completed.

World War I helped bring about a greater use of English in our congregations. It was not what most of the German speaking members wanted, but it had been forced on some of them. For the young people it was a blessing, because their schooling was in English and they were actually loosing the ability to even converse in German. Theologically it was not a blessing, for the simple reason that most theological, instructional material teaching true doctrine was in German, and even theological students had to be taught German before they could do Seminary Work. As late as 1940 most lectures at Mequon were in German. Our pastors began using English works with a Reformed bent, and that has not been good for our church body. At present attempts are being made to remedy the situation.

Interesting enough, it would not be until 1936 that the District Proceedings were finally printed in English, and even the 1936 edition still had its mission report in German.

There has always been feminism ever since the fall into sin. We hate to blame Eve for it, but we are only following the Apostle Paul. But in 1920 feminism was flexing its muscles and winning victories in the political realm. Two amendments to the U. S. Constitution were passed in 1920, both feminine inspired. The first was the 18th amendment, also called the Volstead Act, forbidding the sale of beverages containing more than 1/2 of 1%

Alcohol. It was inspired by women like Carry Amelia Nation (1846-1911), who with her little hatchet worked havoc in various saloons. German ethnic people felt that their civil rights were breached and their pastors were hard put to explain to them, that though this may be the case, yet their government's mandates were to be obeyed. The government did permit pastors to purchase communion wine from authorized dealers like drug stores and certain wineries. My great grandfather on my mother's side ran such a winery. This was the era of the "Women's Christian Temperance Union," a rather powerful organization. Even after the amendment was repealed in 1933 they managed for a while to make it illegal to buy hard liquor.

The second amendment passed in 1920 was the 19th, which gave women political franchise. In 1919, the new Pacific Northwest District reported of one of its congregations, "We have Woman Suffrage. Our committee (sic) list is our membership list." Fredrich, in his history says; "There were obvious but unreported dealings in the matter." My home town Hendricks had a Methodist woman preacher in the 1920s. Recently our Synod has felt compelled to restudy the issue of women in the church as it relates to franchise and even the pastoral office. The issue is: In what ways can a woman serve her church without violating the teaching of Scripture that women must not have authority over the men in the church? We haven't heard the last of it.

So, in some respects the new era of the Dakota-Montana District ushered in a theological problem with far reaching consequences.

CHAPTER 8 THE NEW DISTRICT IN ACTION; 1920-1922

Much of the information in this part of the history will be taken from biennial Dakota-Montana District Proceedings.

The 1922 District Proceedings show the district off to a running start. President W. F. Sauer was a good organizer. Back in those days conventions lasted seven days, starting on Wednesday, going over Sunday, and ending on Tuesday afternoon, after which the assembly boarded Model T Fords or trains and headed for their fields of labor. The first Convention of the District was held at Grover Township, Immanuel, August Pamperin, Pastor. Back in those days Grover was the third largest congregation in the District with about 275 souls and 175 communicants. Only Watertown and Roscoe were larger. Compare that with 76 souls and 57 communicants reported in 1993.

Reason No. 3 for starting the district was to stop the movement out of the District. President Sauer reported nine installations of new men, eight of which were candidates. Five men moved out, one of which had stayed only eight months. There were seven moves within the District, accounting for 16 changes, and creating some new vacancies which would not be easy to fill. Men in those days as now sought to crawl up the ladder rather than down. In 1920 the number of pastors in the district were 32. The 1922 statistics showed 32 also. In 1922 the district counted 83 congregations and preaching stations.

11 pages of the Proceedings would deal with missions. There were fifty places where work was carried on, some organized and some not. So approximately 5/8s of the district's congregations were missions. We will just list the new places:

(1) Willow Lake, Willow Lake Lutheran, 1921. It's pastor was Candidate Karl Sievert, who would spend his over 50 year ministry in the District, thus establishing a record.

Florence and Crandall, SD were opened in September 1921. Their candidate pastor would stay only eight months and move to Flint, Michigan where he would spend the rest of a long ministry in one congregation. Neither of these congregations exist today.

Ipswich, SD, Zion and Loyaltown would also be opened in September 1921 and were served by Candidate Walter T. Meier, who would later become district president. Loyaltown would never amount to anything and would close. The county seat of Edmunds, Ipswich was started with high hopes, but never would amount to much. It went over to the Church of the Lutheran Confession in 1959.

Streeter and Tappen, ND, St. John's. We mentioned Streeter as a pre-20s congregation. it seems work had been done there from Zeeland very early. Later it was joined with Hartford, an inland town (Called "inland" because it had no railroad) on the Missouri River. It had been put together with Streeter 65 miles away. Lack of roads and railroad created an impossible situation. So in 1921 a new field was opened at Tappen and joined to Streeter, where there was both church and parsonage. But the Mission Board even then noted that Streeter was a poor place to work, while Tappen had a great deal of promise. In spite of that we hung onto Streeter for many years. Hartford was joined to Hazelton. Here was a like situation: The mission board reported that Hartford only grew from within, because Iowa was so active in the community, while the town of Hazelton was very promising. Soon Hartford disappears from the record. Even the town of Hartford has been gone for years.

It is interesting to note how many of the missions were begun with high hopes, how many have passed from existence, and how many of them reached a plateau very quickly, at which they still are today. Mission strategy was to collect together Lutherans, but it was now getting harder. Many of these Lutherans had been without their church for several years. They had joined the lodges and other churches especially Congregational and Methodist. In the 40s this writer was brought to recognize the fact that many of these people had purposely fled their church at home and did not want to be bothered again with a church body which they thought was too rigid. Moreover as one who has passed through the system, as I read these proceedings, I am reminded of the Savior's parable of the four kinds of soil. Dakota-Montana soils were no different from that in other places, There also comes a time, whether we like it or not, when we wipe the bad soils off our feet and use our feet to go to other fields.

Of the first two years of our district history let us note three more things: 1. The district constitution was adopted at this meeting. Later, President Sauer would complain that it made no provisions for him to be an ex-officio member of the mission board. 2. Elgin, ND opened the first day school in the district the fall of 1920. It was funded by a single family of the congregation. A miss Hinz was called. It would close the next school year for lack of funding. 3. Elgin pastor had been taken out of the seminary after his second year, and he had to pass a colloquy before he became a full-fledged pastor. Pastor shortages would cause this to happen again and again.

1923-1924

The 1924 convention moved west to Zeeland, ND. Edw. C. Kolander was its pastor, one of two Kolanders in the district. Essayist was Prof. E. R. (Stubby) Bliefernicht. When this writer was student at DMLC we interpreted his name to mean, "Stop here not." (Later, another "Stubby" would be the school's director, Conrad Frey.) The theme of his essay was "Christian Upbringing," and was a polemic for the Christian Day School. It is kind of ironic that this would be the essay after the Elgin school failed. Over the years there seemed to have been a concerted effort to give the district a bad conscience for not having more Day Schools. This writer ran into the same thing in the early 1950s, when he, as a member of the district's school committee; was chided in a Milwaukee meeting for not having more than one day school in the district. He was told that the size of the congregation or its ability to support a school made no difference. Every congregation ought to have one. Committees can't always be objective, nor could they begin to understand the problems of a district like ours.

President Sauer's report again underlined the movement of pastors in and out of the district and also within the district. Nine Candidates and three pastors would accept calls into the district. Two of the candidates would be from Missouri's Springfield Seminary. This was not unusual, because of Springfield's short pastoral course. This writer remembers a 19 year old vicar, who about this time was sent to Tyler, MN. Later he became a Missouri Synod pastor in the Mequon area and was known to many of our people for his conservatism.

Among the three pastors who came into the district was Paul Albrecht who would later become a district president. Six pastors would leave the district. One would be called to the Missouri Synod congregation in Sioux Falls. Shifting Synods was easy to do in those days. My father in 1920 had come into the district from the Missouri Synod. Six pastors moved within the District from smaller to larger parishes. One pastor would resign due to health problems.

A candidate was sent to help F. Wittfaut in Montana. He left his field at Ismay after only four weeks. Another Candidate was sent to Ismay and was withdrawn after only four months. He was sent to Faith where there were more people. Thus Wittfaut, who was celebrating his 25 anniversary in the ministry had the entire field to himself again. This writer wonders how the poor people at Ismay and vicinity felt.

In North Dakota a new station would open at Carl, because people from Winthrop, MN had moved in and asked for services. It was also noted that many Norwegians lived in Carl, who were also invited to services. We are not told whether they came or not. Another place, Pretty Rock, was added to the Elgin, Carson, Antelope parish. All the work there was done in English, it was reported. Pretty Rock was across the border in Montana. Later in the Proceedings it would be reported that Pretty Rock was lost to the Iowa Synod. Lack of funds was given by the mission board for not opening more fields. This writer also notes that it was hard for a mission board to be objective about a field especially if a family or two of Lutheran Background asked to be served. It was and still is hard to say, "No." Even Carl would have a brief life.

In the 1924 proceedings, we also have the report of a new parish that was put together at Aurora and Bruce, SD. Bruce had been served prior to 1920 as a preaching station of the White, Argo Township congregations. Bruce would exist until its members finally joined the Estelline-Dempster Parish.

But the history of Aurora is rather interesting. This is not a part of our written history. The Dakota-Montana mission board wanted to open in Brookings, SD, and for good reason. Many of our people were moving to this growing college town. An E. R. Blakewell was called. He would during World War II play

an important part in the Spiritual Welfare division of Synod. After he was called (This was in 1921) a large group of disgruntled Missourians would ask us to come into Aurora, a little town a few miles east of Brookings. So the mission board skuddled the idea of entering Brookings. After 1948 the congregation became displeased with us and went over to Missouri. We would not go back into Brookings until the 1950s. Back in the 1920s mission boards felt we had to have a definite call from a group of people to enter an area. Thus we could go into a place like Carl, ND with no promise and stay out of place like Brookings. Often these were regarded as Macedonian calls, forgetting that the Macedonian call was extended through the medium of a dream and not an actual call through people.

But let's leave this biennium for a new one.

1924-1926

The District Convention was held on the east side, at Elkton, SD. Essayist was Prof. E. E. (Eek) Kowalkee. Theme: "What can we learn from the shameful things that happened in Corinth?" In his presidential report, Wm. Sauer gave some interesting statistics. The district was growing. Its growth in souls was about 8.75%. Communicant growth was 8.33%. Compare that with our minus growth recently (1993). Interesting too is the fact that of the 75 congregations (Not counting the 17 preaching places), only 33 were members of Synod. Even into the 40s we had congregations who wanted to hang onto their independence and thus refused to be added to the Synod rolls.

Seven pastors left the district and one young preacher died. Only five came in—all candidates. Three pastors would move within the district. The pastor at Balaton, MN would be suspended.

Another field would be opened at Windsor, ND, which was added to the Tappen-Streeter field. Windsor would be with us for some time.

We mention here another place we missed before—Athboy, SD in the field west and south of Mobridge, not have we mentioned Onaka before. It had been worked out of Tolstoy. In the Spring of 1926 it built a church.

Faulkton, SD, First Lutheran was opened in 1926. It was really the second Lutheran church to be opened in Faulkton. The first, a Norwegian Lutheran Church had failed and the new mission inherited the church building and its name. This endeavor is interesting to the writer for several reasons. Faulkton was his first place and in a way his first love. But Faulkton's opening was also indicative of other things which would happen in the synod and district in the late fifties and early sixties.

Lets start from the beginning: Wisconsin and Missouri had a gentlemen's agreement not to intrude on one another's fields of labor. Faulkton was considered Missouri territory, since there was a large Missouri Synod congregation at Wecota, about seven miles to the north. But Paul Albrecht at Tolstoy was no friend of Missouri, even in those days. He persuaded the Mission Board to let him go into this Faulk County seat. Later, as Mission Board chairman and also president of the district he would breach this agreement by entering the Black Hills and Aberdeen and Sioux Falls. Still later he would try to lead the district in making a break with the Synod because it refused to break with the Missouri Synod when he thought it should.

Because Faulkton seemed to hold promise, Albrecht moved his residence from Tolstoy to Faulkton. But here is another irony: Faulkton did not grow as expected. During the forties, when this writer had the Faulkton-Ipswich field, he was urged to move the pastor's residence to Ipswich, because Albrecht felt it had better promise than Faulkton.

As pastor of the two congregations I remember a lot of movement of people into and out of the two county seats. Many of them were renters. About May of each year I began to wonder what happened to some of my members. They had rented a different farm away from the area. At the same time I was transferring many members to Zion (Missouri) of Aberdeen. I often said I had more members in Zion of Aberdeen than in my two congregations.

There were five churches build or otherwise obtained in the years 1924 AND 1925. Two were being erected. The district treasurer reported that he had collected for Synod \$28,027.84 and that he had disbursed

\$37,202.32, \$9,174.48 more than he took in. Truly, Dakota-Montana was a mission district and would be for years.

A later note in the Proceedings tells of a sixth Candidate that had been called into the District, but had not yet been installed.

1926-1928

On January 11-12 a special district convention was assembled at Watertown, SD to consider a location and the opening of a new academy in the Dakota-Montana District. Synod in its 1927 Convention had authorized the opening of an academy and underwritten \$5,000 for its first biennium.

It was the conferences of the district that had pushed for such a school, arguing that it would help the district in various ways. So, at this convention, even though the matter had not been discussed in a previous convention, the purpose of the meeting was to pick out a site for the school from the offers of four towns, and the congregations in these towns.

(1) The city of Bowdle was willing to donate a 30 acre site west of the town, plus \$8,000, free water for five years and free sewer connection with no charge for use. To this the Bowdle parish made the following inducements: \$5,000 in cash and a furnished schoolroom 28 X 50.

(2) The city of Elgin, ND offered 40 acres of land, free light and water for a period of five years, plus \$10,000.

(3) Mobridge offered its "West Side School" because it was building another, but it would have to remain at its site in 1928 and the new school would have to pay the fire and tornado insurance, a sum of about \$60.00. The above was the school district's offer.

The Mobridge Commercial Club sweetened the offer by promising to pay for a 20 acre site.

To this the Mobridge congregation obligated itself to buy the "West Side School" and move it to a new site without expense to the Synod.

(4) The town of Roscoe boasted of all the money they had in their treasury and of the low mileage rate. Even though they had no sewage system, they would put one in when the "Lutheran College" would locate there.

The Roscoe Independent School District offered the free use of their old school, and were sure that it would be donated to the "College."

Also 69 people of Roscoe were willing to subscribe in five years \$31,450 inclusive of a tract of land worth \$3,000.

It is interesting to this writer to note that three of the towns, Bowdle, Elgin and Roscoe were of the opinion that the district could build a college in their town. Only Mobridge was clear on the idea that an "Academy" was to be built.

To this writer the Mobridge offer was the least generous, but the location at Mobridge seemed better to the voters at the special convention. Out of 64 possible votes Mobridge received 51, Roscoe 7, Bowdle 4 and Elgin 2. By September of that same year Pastor K. G. Sievert of Grover had been called to be teacher and the classes were being held.

If the start up of the school was fast its closing in 1979 took place even quicker. While preparing for the fall school year, Synod at its convention closed the school before it could open for the 1979-1980 year.

This writer was closely associated with the school for a number of years, first as a member of its board of control and later as pastor to its teachers and students. It was a sad day for the district when the Academy closed for many reasons.

At this special convention we find the name of a congregation that had not appeared in any of the reference material available to us. It was Bethlehem of Cottonwood Township in the Roscoe-Bowdle area. The five pastors who had moved into the district since the last convention were received into membership

The regular 1928 summer convention met at Zeeland N. D. In 1927 President Sauer had accepted the call to Grace of Milwaukee and so the mantle of the presidency had fallen on the first Vice-President J. Paul Scherf. Let me profile him: He was quite an entrepreneur. When pastor at Balaton he sold pianos and tomb

stones. I know, because he sold his wares to the people of the Hendricks parish, and my parents bought a Packard piano from him. In Bowdle he got into the grocery business he turned over to his grown sons. In this store was a loft containing his office. During the 1930's depression he became the village banker. Though he did have to foreclose on farms no one held this against him, since he was so fair-minded. He made it possible for many of them to buy their farms back. While the people there were "so hard up" they could always go to his grocery store and "charge" their purchases. As I already told you, it was during the late 20s that Roscoe built its fine church and much of Scherf's money went into it. No one ever found out how much.

It might also interest you to know that our late Synod President, Oscar Naumann, was his nephew.

This 1928 convention was interesting in that it discussed and also adopted the resolution of Synod regarding Baccalaureate services. These services fostered unionism and mixed church and state. School boards and Superintendents of schools would proposition town pastors on a rotation basis to serve as baccalaureate service speakers. Our men would sometimes serve, especially if they were given the option of conducting the entire service without the help of a sectarian clergyman. Thus Synod's stand on unionism was being developed. Otherwise the regular convention was sort of anti-climax to the one held earlier in the year.

The Balaton, MN congregation that J. Paul Scherf had served for years, before he came to Roscoe, was released to the Minnesota District. Nine new men entered the district in the past biennium. There were eight moves out of the district. A young Pastor Peter Schlemmer of Flasher, ND died. The number of moves within the district was ten.

No new missions were formed. Attempts were made to form new preaching stations 14 miles south of Hazelton, ND and 20 miles south of McIntosh on the Grand River. Apparently nothing came of these endeavors.

1928-30

The 1930 convention would meet at Roscoe, SD in their fine new church. For that day it was a show place. On Convention Sunday everyone would travel to Mobridge for the dedication of the "Wohngebäude," at the Academy. "Wohngebäude" has the idea of a place where the Academy family would live. Later it would be a boys' dormitory, but for a number of years it would serve as a dorm, living quarters for the cook and handy-man and tutors. In it would also be the kitchen dining room—an all-purpose building.

Seven new men would enter the district that biennium. One would be called as a professor at the new Academy to share teaching duties with K. G. Sievert. Four men would leave the district. The next ten years would show less movement in and out of the district because of the great depression. It started in 1929 with the collapse of the stock market. By 1930 self-sustaining parishes would be begging the mission board for subsidy help.

Mission board reports are always interesting reading for this writer, and it is easy to find fault until one remembers that he was in the same boat. The mission board gloated over giving the news that the movement within the district had slowed down, being unable to see the future. In 1930 they were still operating with the mission philosophy of Boettcher and Lahme. If a few displaced Lutheran people were found in an area adjacent to where they were working they would open a new preaching place. New preaching places were started at Reeder, because Missouri had abandoned a field there. Its story is rather interesting. Hartford connected with Hazelton closes and a new place is opened at Buchanan School, but it wouldn't last long. Also in ND preaching would begin at Cleveland, and Streeter would be dropped because it was in Iowa Synod territory.

Bison, Meadow, Drew, Coal Springs, Athboy, Timber Lake, Trail City, Isabel: For some strange reason hopes continued to run high for this area that was still being farmed, but should have been left to the grazing industry. Except for Max Cowalkse, who had been out there since the teens, it was virtually impossible to keep a pastor there for over a year. Yet it was the hope of the mission board that a railroad would come into the area and economic conditions would improve. But it was not to happen. The era of building railroads was also coming to a close which meant that demographics would change. Where there were once eight congregations there are now three, but the same old problems remain: How shall they be served?" In Montana there were 9 stations where 2 are today.

It was also reported that there were 60 mission stations in 20 parishes. 65 % of the work in 1930 was being done in English.

In the 1909 history a Pastor Hellbusch was at Raymond, SD. He was a rather successful missionary. For a number of years he disappears from the record. In the 1930 report we learn that he confessed his sins and could now be communed again. However, because of his sin he could not continue serving. He could however be called to another parish. We mention this here, because we later became acquainted with the man in the early 1950s. Once again his case had come before the district and he became a member of St. Martins, Watertown.

His sin was that of drunkenness. He had moved to Castled with his family and had a family church there. From Castled he worked south into the Bruce-Estelline area, before the congregation at Estelline, was established about 1936. He was an independent. Later when this writer was pastor at Estelline-Dempster, we often heard of him. In fact the writer's father-in-law was confirmed by Hellbusch. The people he served were well indoctrinated. But they often joked about Hellbusch, and how on communion Sundays they could not be sure what shape he was in. He often said to them: "Don't do as I do, but do as I say." We mention the man to show how God continues to work through Word and Sacrament, even when administered by sinful men.

CHAPTER IX THE DIRTY THIRTIES AND THE DEPRESSION.

One must have lived during the period known in our western states as the “Dirty Thirties” to know what they were like. I was a student at New Ulm from 1930 to 1934. One hot fall night we went to bed. Open were all windows and doors in our rooms to get as much air as we could. Then we slept the sleep of the blissfully ignorant. During the night a dust storm blew in from the Dakotas over a hundred miles to the west. We woke up with dirt blacked faces and sheets, with a trail of good Dakota soil through the room from window to door and out into the hall and the room across the hall. Out in the Dakotas the fields were as bare as the roads. When the wind blew hard day was turned into night because of the dust. Cars drove with their lights on. What grew when there was a little moisture was Russian Thistles. It was surmised that the seed for these thistles had been brought over to the states years before in the straw mattresses of the German Russians. Farmers cut the thistles and put them up to help the cattle survive. Many farmers gave up and left—no crops and no money.

The time was also know as the “Great drought of the Thirties.” It lasted and lasted. Milk producers could not sell their products and poured them out on the roads. Farmers dug trenches and lined up their starving cattle and hogs and shot them.

Congregations and their pastors, our Synod schools and their teachers felt the repercussions. Salaries were first cut ten percent and then another twenty percent, and many pastors’ salaries went below that. Treasurers of congregations would give their pastors what came in on a Sunday in the collection plate. For the writer’s father this was often only six or seven dollars on a Sunday. About 1936 candidates entered the district for a cash salary of \$25 a month to be supplemented with a cut of meat when the farmers butchered, plus garden produce and fuel, like corn cobs for the cook stove. As stated before, much movement within the district and Synod stopped. Those who had a place that could support them hung onto the place. Those who didn’t had no choice but to stay, because there were no calls.

Synod entered the 30s with high debts. The interest would almost crush Synod. We could write much more, but with this in mind lets enter the decade of the thirties.

1930- 1932

The 1932 Convention met north of Watertown in Rauville Township. President Scherf mentioned the economic depression and urged that it not hinder mission expansion. But it was. The mission board reported that the lack of money was hindering expansion. The Buckeye congregation close to Tappen closed its doors because so many people moved out. The same happened to Onaka. Said the mission chairman: “Its church stands empty and the insurance has been cancelled.” Pretty Rock also closes.

But the will to open congregations is still there. Eyes are set on Baker, Montana and Ives School. But apparently we were never able to open in Baker. Out in Montana we make a deal with Missouri. They took two of our fields at Benrock and Volt and gave us two unnamed fields close to Crow Rock. Cohagen, Timber Creek, Watkins and Brockway are now served in Montana by a second man, so Pastor Wittfaut has a helper. It is no mystery to this writer why so few of these places have survived in eastern Montana. There are not just that many people. An attempt is also made to open at Ridgeview 75 miles east of Faith. We also entered Jamestown, one of the larger towns of ND, and there we prospered. Selfridge is opened for the second time. The winter of 1932 was bad in many places and few services were held.

Earlier, this writer spoke of the fact that we were never able to establish ourselves in Redfield. In the 1932 we read of the attempt that was made to open there in May of 1931. A man was called into the field, but was sent instead to Jamestown and Windsor.

Six Candidates entered the district, one a tutor at the Academy. Two men left the district. A third man resigned.

We meet again with the Hellbusch case. He refused to leave Castlewood and was denied pulpit fellowship and the right to commune.

One other thing merits mention—the large number of students in our school receiving support from Synod. From the Dakota-Montana District there were eighteen in 1930-31 and 22 in 1931-32, each receiving over \$140 a year. Board and room and tuition in our schools at this time was \$120 a year. So many of these

students were also receiving travel allowances. They were to work it off doing work like dishwashing, yard work, hall sweeping in the dorms, etc., at 25¢ an hour. To this day this writer kids his wife telling her he washed many more dishes than she will ever wash. This support of students would continue in spite of the bad times. How things have changed!

We would like to talk about a new place at Marmarth, a new endeavor in 1931. It was joined to two places that had been served from Hettinger. For various reasons the place never prospered, yet the mission board tried to do something there till 1952. In some respects it is a story of misplaced zeal for missions. It started with a Norwegian settlement that the board wanted to work, but that fell through. A candidate was sent out in 1931, but by 1932 he had resigned. Oil had been discovered south of the town, and the hope was that the town of Marmarth would grow, because already then it was becoming a ghost town. But oil discovery, as we also learned later at Winnett Montana, does not mean an influx of people. After the wells are put into production it takes only a few people to keep them going. Those who dug the wells move on.

An older man, a Pastor Bade was sent there in 1942 from Zeeland. The man should never have been sent there. He reported a membership in 1942 of 31 souls and 20 communicants. In 1944 the report states that there were 74 souls and only 14 communicants with 26 in Sunday School. In 1946 P. Kuehl served it from Reeder and reported 35 souls and 13 communicants. In 1948 another candidate E. Semenske served it and reported 20 souls and 5 communicants.

Then in 1950 another man, an R. Steffenhagen was sent to live in Marmarth (like Bode). He claimed 69 souls and 33 communicants and 30 in S. S. These numbers, going up and down like a yo-yo cause this writer to wonder. We will come back to Steffenhagen shortly. The 1952 mission report merely says of Marmarth that it was a difficult place. In 1953 Marmarth was “discontinued.”

In my research for this paper, I came across a letter written on 5/22/74 by mission board chairman Wayne Schultz to Norman Rerg in Milwaukee in which he talks about some lots in Marmarth on which Synod was paying taxes. Schultz wrote that he had been through the place several times and it was a ghost town. In trying to find out about the lots Synod owned he had also come across the correspondence of a missionary in 1950, who also called it a ghost town. This writer also remembers stopping in Marmarth in the 1960s and talking to some people there, and saying to himself, “What a ghost town.”

Marmarth was the case of a few Lutheran families, who took advantage of WELS earnest desire to serve displaced Lutherans. From the large confirmation classes for so few communicants it was evident that they had children they wanted confirmed, and then they dropped out. They were for the most part ranchers who lived in town in winter and went out to the ranches in summer. They just wanted free services when it was convenient for them to come, which was not often.

Then there is the sad case of the last man we sent out there. Again, like Bade, he should never have been sent there, but due to certain circumstances, he needed a place to go. He had a child, whose need for medical attention had gotten him greatly into debt. When he got to Marmarth, he could not find a place to live, and there was no place to worship—no hymnals, no Sunday School literature, nothing. He asked the mission board whether he could order supplies, and they told him not to make a debt at the publishing house which neither he nor the Synod could pay. The poor fellow wrote back again complaining that he could not unpack his household goods because there was no place in the town to rent. He added that the former house rented by Synod for Bade in the early forties was not for rent, because the rancher who owned it said he wanted to use it himself that winter.

To make a long story short, I don't know anything either about the lots Synod owned in Marmarth as late as 1974.

1932-1934

For the second time the District Synod, as the convention was often called, met at Elkton. President J. Paul Scherf bowed out and Edgar Gamm from Mobridge was elected chairman, He had been in the district from the middle teens and had made a name for himself in getting the Academy established at Mobridge. He can be

described as “a mover and a shaker,” an interesting character. We learned to know him rather well. All his life he suffered from asthma, but it did not slow him down. He would serve till 1938.

Five men entered the district—all candidates, three pastors and two tutors for the Academy. Bowdle would open a Day School and called a Clara Mehlberg, a district girl. Pastor E. Rekow from the Marmarth parish resigned in April 1934. Pastor Ralph Gamm, a younger brother of Edgar, the president, died as he traveled home to see his sick father. The mission report tells us that 19 workers were serving 57 places. Workers’ salaries in the mission field were reduced another 20 %. There were three men now working the Montana field, but Watkins and Cohagen were closed. Cohagen was picked up by the Iowa Synod. Old Iowa with its doctrine of open questions and rather lackadaisical attitude towards the lodges caused us a lot of trouble in those days. Olanda, which had the same trouble with Iowa is picked up by us again.

During the biennium we opened in Mandan. A candidate Ernst Krueger was being sent to Mandan. Eventually we would establish a nice congregation in Mandan, but the start would be hard. No one would rent a place to worship to the conservative Wisconsinites with their anti-lodge stance. There was a concerted effort to keep us out.

Services were also held in a place called Crimmons and Kowalsky adds Bader School to his field. It was 14 miles north of Timber Lake and he served for a while 60 souls in two languages. How different the area is today. As today in the Dakota-Montana District, fields were constantly realigned trying to find the perfect combination to make a self-supporting parish.

A statistical report was also added to the Proceedings. The District was growing. It counted 9,572 souls and 4,914 communicants. There were 70 congregations and 20 preaching places. 363 children and 33 adults were baptized. 91 adults and 276 children were confirmed. Compare those baptisms and confirmations with today. In 1993 there were 230 children and 13 adult baptisms and 184 children and 81 adults were confirmed.
1934-1936

The economy of the nation had hit rock bottom. Except for the mission board report the whole proceedings were in English—a sort of first in the district. Really, it was overdue, because most of the work was now being done in English, except in a few German Russian congregations. Some like Zeeland and Mobridge would hold on till the late 1960s. A Sem student from Mobridge in the 1960s would tell this writer, that his father, one of the hold-outs, did not even think in German anymore. This writer’s mother, who was proficient in German would visit and talk to the old German ladies in German, only to be answered in English. In spite of this, during the summer months in the late 60s at Mobridge, we had Missouri synod old people who traveled over 100 miles from the Pierre area to attend 7:30 a.m. German services.

Six candidates enter the district. Some had waited two years for a call. A Rev. F. Reuter of Argo Township and White was suspended from the district and Synod because of his stand concerning serving communion to lodge members, alleging they should be given communion to strengthen their faith. He was a well-liked pastor and because of this White would later join Missouri and the Argo congregation would loose members.

Long time Montana Missionary F. Wittfaut died on Dec. 9, 1934. Thus would pass a legend.

Mt. Calvary, Estelling, SD was opened in July of 1934 with 75 souls and 30 communicants. Some of this was due to the Pastor Hellbusch work we described earlier. Dempster is added to the parish.

Leith, ND. The mission board reports: “Leith is the second orphan that has been set before the door of the mission board.”

We meet in the 1936 proceedings for the first time the congregation at Valley city, which had been organized the year before. Of it the mission board reports, “Wachstum sehr langsam; sollte eine Kapelle haben.” (Growth very slow, should have a chapel.) It was served out of Jamestown.

In the biennium 28 souls and 47 communicants were added in the mission field.
1936-1938

A new president was elected—Walter T. Meier of St. Martins, Watertown. He had come into the district as a candidate in 1921 and so was a 17 year veteran. A rather quiet, unassuming man, he was a hard worker. He

would hold the office till 1946. The president's and the mission board's reports indicated a change that was taking place in the district. To make a comparison, mission work in the district had been like water filling a valley, proceeding ever westward and slightly northward, first along what is now highway 212 and then going north into highway 12. When it reached the Missouri River it began to spread out west and south of Mobridge and west and north of Mobridge into North Dakota and then into eastern Montana. A branch also spread north into east river North Dakota. Now, for all practical purposes the basin was full. It was hemmed in on the north and the south by Missouri and Old Iowa. It took mission boards a while to realize this. A new policy was in order.

Then the good Lord got in on the act through the depression that troubled not only the country, but also the church. People had to face the hard fact that the Dakotas and Montana could not support the old one quarter section farm. Drought and low prices caused many to leave our mission area to seek their fortune elsewhere. The 1938 mission board report indicates that of the 26 mission parishes only six showed growth and another 13 or 14 showed a loss of members, sometimes substantial. That was but a reflection of what was taking place in the other parishes of the district. These people would not return and the farms in the east river country would get larger and larger while the cattle men would take over the west river country.

No new fields were opened for the first time in a long while. Pastor Max Cowalsky, the twenty year veteran in west river South Dakota, had to resign because of a complete physical breakdown. For years the area he served had been the field of hope, but no more. Five candidates came into the district plus two other pastors, But more moved out than in. Seven men were released to other districts and two resigned. It was kind of a low point in Dakota-Montana.

1938-1940

Things were looking up again when the 1940 Proceedings came out. The mission board reports an increase of 736 souls. Four candidates came into the district and one pastor came in from Nebraska. Prof. R. Fenske would be called to head Northwestern Lutheran Academy and would serve until his retirement. Six men transferred out.

The mission board started paying a travel allowance for Sunday travel--3¢ a mile. The mission board had a problem: What about the self-sustaining parishes that were now receiving salary subsidy from Synod? What was their status—mission or indigent? A salary code was suggested for missionaries in the hope that it might induce self-supporting congregations to follow the example of Synod and pay their pastors an equivalent salary. According to the code, salary for single men would start at \$75 and married men would receive \$90, with a child subsidy of \$3 a month after the child was 6 years old. Raises were foreseen after 5 years and 10 years. When this writer came on the scene in early 1942 his wages were \$75 a month plus \$8.16 a month for driving 70 miles on Sunday. For other trips he was on his own. If he would have married he would have received \$100 a month. Children were worth about \$3 a piece.

Services were discontinued at Crow Rock Montana. Valley City is opened for the second time. Miner, SD is opened again. A station is opened at Leith, ND. In 1928 Faulkton built a new parsonage and the missionary moved there because it was felt that Faulkton would boom. Now Ipswich is regarded as the place of promise and the talk is of moving the missionary up there. We mention this because in the eight years we pastored the two there wasn't that much difference between the two. Both had reached a plateau and would remain there. Ipswich had a lot of Bowdle and Roscoe people moving in and out—mostly renters.

A canvas was made of the Black Hills, especially the north Hills. We decided to open in the towns of Sturgis and Lead. Because of a protest on the part of the Missouri Synod we stayed out of Lead and started in Sturgis. Thus would be opened a new mission area, but going would be slow.

In the 1940 Proceedings appears a short report of the "COMMITTEE ON 'CURRENT UNION ENDEAVORS'." It was signed by John Brenner, Chairman, and Joh. P. Meyer, Secretary. It spoke of meetings held with the Missouri Synod at the turn of the year concerning Missouri's desire to enter into Union with the American Lutheran Church. (The old Iowa Synod, of which we have been speaking was a part of this church body formed about 1930.) Iowa had long advocated a doctrine of "Open Questions." According to A. L. C.'s

way of looking at things, any doctrinal difference that might stand in the way of union was an open question and not very important.

We doubt whether this report made much of an impression on the district, but it was the beginning of a controversy which would shake the district to its foundations. We will come back to it when we report on the 1950-60 decade.

CHAPTER X THE FORTIES

Prof. Sievert in his little history describes the third decade of our existence as a quiet period in the life of the district. The “dirty thirties” were over. Beautiful Lake Hendricks on the Minnesota-South Dakota border had completely dried up and a farmer had actually planted oats in its basin. But now it was full again. So were the marshes and pot holes. Fields and pastures were green. Many farmers bought back their places and paid off the debt with the first crop. Hope ran high.

Salaries were rising, as we mentioned earlier. A 1941 Standard Ford cost \$910, unless one bought it from Martin Scherf, who wrote off his profit. At the end of the decade the same car would cost about \$2,000. No preacher had car or health insurance. Many doctors treated pastors and their families for nothing. Preachers opted out of Social Security and none we knew of paid income tax. In South Dakota there was a tax on household goods, about nine or ten dollars a year unless one had a fine piano.

Synod’s debts were finally paid off early in the decade and under the leadership of Synod President John Brenner Synod went strictly on a “pay as you go” plan. That meant that no mission board gave permission to build anything unless the money was in Synod’s treasury. Naturally it hampered expansion, but it also stopped foolish expansion. When one would rise at a Synod Convention to speak of our mission call to “preach the gospel to the whole creation,” President Brenner would point out, “When God calls he also provides the money. Where is the money?”

As the decade of the forties rolled in so did the clouds of World War II. In 1941 our nation would be drawn into the fray. The district’s young men were called into service. Synod refused to call chaplains and the “Spiritual Welfare Commission” was called into being. Because there were no young men to hunt them the pheasant population exploded. Clark Gable came out to Clark to hunt pheasants. I doubt if he went to church there.

1940- 1942

In the last ten years district conventions were getting shorter. They were down to four days.

New members in the district were candidates who had graduated in the years 1937, 1939, 1940 and 1941. Two had waited four years for a call. None had been assigned at graduation from Thiensville. The total number was ten. The 1940-1942 biennium had been one of great movement within the district. There were 17 transfers within the district itself.

Past District President John Paul Scherf died on September 6, 1940 at the age of 69 years. He had served district congregations from about the year 1904.

The mission report speaks of five new openings. Carpenter, SD in the Raymond area opened, lived a brief life and died. Piedmont, in the Hills area likewise. We would open in Rapid city over the vigorous protests of the Missouri Synod. The start would be very slow. I remember preaching there in the mid-forties in a tiny rundown church with trees growing out of the foundation in the shadow of one of Rapid City’s hotels. I remember a family from the Grover congregation living in Rapid City, who willed it to grow and helped keep it alive. Now “Rapid” is one of the jewels in our crown, the district’s second largest congregation.

We would also open in Carrington, ND, which would also live a brief life and die. Three congregations, formerly with ALC would come over to us in the towns of Isabel, Trail City and Athboy. Our district would rejoice, not realizing that this was a harbinger of things to come. Demographics in the district were changing. In many areas where we worked population would decrease and we too would shut congregations. The time was coming when our future would lie in going into the cities and bigger towns of the District.

We would hear another report of THE STANDING COMMITTEE ON UNION MATTERS. But more of that later.

1942-1944

Only one candidate came into the district. He was Wayne TenBroek, who would later serve us so faithfully at our Academy at Mobridge. Nor was there a lot of movement within the district. In case you are interested, the base salary of single missionaries was raised to \$87.00 per month. We did not talk about inflation in those days, but that is what it was. We were not that much better off. All in all it was a quiet two years.

1944-1946

Walter T. Meier gave his last report as District President. The new president was Paul G. Albrecht. He had come into the district in 1924 after brief pastorates in the Indian Mission and at Graceville, Minnesota. A man with a strong personality he would shape the affairs of the district for the next twelve years. Toward the end of his presidency he would seek to bring the district out of the Wisconsin Synod.

Nine Candidates would enter the district that biennium, thus assuring that the Dakota-Montana District would remain a young men's district. In the late 60s this writer was asked by a friend at a seminar how come he knew so many fellow pastors. His answer: "I come from the Dakota-Montana District." Besides the large numbers of candidates there was much movement of pastors within the district. We can also identify with the small congregations who complained bitterly that pastors did not remain with them

Pastor G. Schlegel of Mobridge passed away and the district lost a long time pastor and officer. He was also father-in-law to Im. Frey, the late president of the Arizona-California District.

Preaching stations were opened at Kelly School, ND close to Valley City and Medina out of Windsor. Neither would have a long life. Here is evidence that the old way of forming a congregation out of a few Lutheran families in the middle of nowhere was coming to an end.

A canvas was made of the vacant area between Dakota-Montana and the Pacific Northwest in the hope of expanding westward. Pastor John Wendland was called as a general missionary to the area. The fruits of this canvas would begin to appear in the early fifties.

Missionaries' and Professors' salaries were raised another 25%. The Academy Board calls for a girls' dorm, and a change in the White Building to accommodate a growing student body. The Mission Board bewails the fact that there is a shortage of pastors. Four years earlier Synod had just finished placing the young men who had waited for calls.

1946- 1948

Again the district had many changes of men within its borders. Five candidates were received besides nine other changes in pastorate. A professor was added to the Academy in the person of Armin Schuetze. Fourteen men were released to other districts. Thus the movement within and out of the district would continue. The young men, who came into the district from the seminary were idealistic. They brought in a great zeal for missions and were for the most part called into the "mission" (Here read, "indigent") congregations. But it was like one old rancher who finally accepted the constant change of pastors said, "We broke off their horns." But it was a good thing for the young men and made realists out of them.

Three men celebrated twenty-fifth anniversaries. Of two of them the president said, "Although they are not the first of whom this could be said, they belong to that very small group to whom this tribute can be paid ." Their entire ministry had been in the Dakota-Montana District.

Two schools were opened that biennium, one at Zion Akaska, the other at Our Savior of Jamestown.

Vida, Montana, a new field was joined to Circle. Baker and Ekalaka were to be canvassed soon. Here too we see a shift in mission board policy. Things were changing. Bryant, SD, close to Willow Lake was closed. Places like Bryant were opened because they appealed to the sympathy of a neighboring pastor. It is easy to say now, but they should have been encouraged to drive to and strengthen the nearest congregation. This writer also pleads guilty. The idea of these people was, "That's the pastor's job. He can drive. Let him come to us."

The White case comes to the fore again. We bring up the White case, which started when its pastor went over to the Protestants and White went over to the Missouri Synod, because of the attitude of our new president towards the Missouri Synod. The case had been closed but opened again on a technicality. Eventually the presidents of both Synods would be drawn into the case and it would be closed. It was a harbinger of things to come. Again this is easy to say after the fact.

1948-1950

At the convention in 1950 the Centennial of the Wisconsin Synod was noted.

Again there were 17 changes of pastorates in the district affecting many more congregations. Eleven of the men were candidates. Eleven men also transferred out of the district including one candidate who had come into the district that biennium.

One parish disappears from the record when Aurora goes over to the Missouri Synod and Bruce dissolves. New fields were opened at Baker, Ekalaka, White Sulpher Springs and Livingston, Montana. The only one with us today (1994) is Livingston.

A third and fourth Day School are opened in Mobridge and Morrystown, SD. The district now has four schools three of which are partially Subsidized by the Synod. Of the four only Mobridge remains. President Albert's son, who had come into the district as a candidate goes over to the Protestant Conference, and this hapless writer must deal with the case, earning himself dishonorable mention in the Faith-Life publication of the Protestants. There is no mention of this in any proceedings.

CHAPTER XI THE TROUBLE DECADE—THE FIFTIES

Before this decade would end, Dakota-Montana would be shaken to its core. In 1958 the district in effect would be asked by its president whether it wanted to continue with the Wisconsin Synod or form a new church body. It wasn't as cut and dried as that, but that is what it amounted to.

To see the smaller district picture one must first view the larger, synodical picture. In 1930, the ecumenical movement within the Lutheran Church had brought into being the American Lutheran Church. The new body made overtures, especially to the Missouri Synod, to join. Wisconsin was also invited, but did not show that much interest. Missouri drew up a document of union, called the "Brief Statement." No one has ever found fault with it to this day, but for the ALC it was too rigid. So, in 1938 ALC came up with a union document they called the "Doctrinal Declaration," which was to be viewed as a settlement of past differences. To put it another way, they viewed the Brief Statement of Missouri in the light of their Doctrinal Declaration. But as Wisconsin told them that involved a denial of the truth.

So Missouri's Fort Wayne Convention told their doctrinal committee to come up with a single document of agreement. This was in 1941. They came up with a document called "The Doctrinal Affirmation." That same year Missouri abandoned its former position on Scouting. Because of World War II Missouri also entered into an agreement with the NLC to commune its boys in the service. There was also a growing list of other unionistic activities.

Then in 1947 ALC Issued another "friendly invitation" contending for "an allowable and wholesome latitude of theological opinion on the basis of the teaching of the Word of God." This was simply the old Iowa doctrine of open questions. Meanwhile, Wisconsin through its doctrinal committee was protesting.

Then in 1950, Missouri and ALC adopted a new document of union called the "Common Confession." Wisconsin pointed out that it was full of "weasel words," so that one could read into it both truth and falsehood. Missouri eventually withdrew this document as a basis for union, but she would never disavow it. One of its great weaknesses was that it had no antitheses, which would pin down the truth.

In the early fifties district president W. T. Meier started a study club in the eastern conference. The course of study were the afore mentioned union documents starting with the excellent Brief Statement. In that way the men of the eastern conference learned what was going on.

In 1952 there was a very stormy Synodical Conference meeting at St. Paul, MN. There the Wisconsin delegates declared themselves in a "state of confession." Remember, these were delegates, not the Synod. In 1953 at our Synod meeting, we also entered into a state of confession. However for the rank and file of our people it amounted to a "state of confusion." Many of us practiced a form of selective fellowship, which made us partakers of Missouri's sins.

One must also remember that our doctrinal committee was composed of the Conference of Presidents, the Mequon faculty, Synod Ex-president John Brenner and President Naumann. In 1955, at the convention in Saginaw our doctrinal committee came in with a very strong memorial urging an immediate break with Missouri. There was no way of misreading it. This writer was there. After the Reading of the memorial, my impression was that if a vote had been taken immediately, we would have broken with Missouri then and there. But the floor committee had to deal with the memorial first. The committee brought in two reports—a majority and minority report. The majority report recommended holding the report of the doctrinal committee in abeyance until the Missouri Synod could meet in convention in 1956 to study and react to it. The minority report said we should break now. The debate was long and at times acrimonious, but the majority report was adopted by a vote of 94 to 47. 26 or 27 delegates had their names recorded as being against the majority opinion. 19 advisory delegates also recorded their "nay" votes.

What happened? If one wants to know what is going on at a convention it pays to listen in on what the delegates are saying to one another during the recesses and after sessions. Things like this were being said: "What about our relatives and friends in the Missouri Synod? What about the joint Lutheran high schools operated by associations of churches? What about Bethesda? What about troubled Missouri Synod pastors who are looking to us for help? Don't we owe them some love? Shouldn't we deal a bit longer with the

commissioners of our sister synod? Maybe the Synodical Conference can help.” Maybe at this convention there was another thing that played in more than we think. The convention was being held at Michigan Lutheran Seminary, which had a large number of Missouri Synod students. The head of the floor committee was head of the institution. These thoughts and feelings prevailed at Saginaw in 1955 and they would prevail for the next five or six years till we broke with Missouri in 1961. In some respects it was a good thing, especially for many of our lay people. It gave time for patient instruction. In the case of Missouri it avoided the charge that our action was premature. It kept our own synod from being polarized when the break finally came.

The 1956 convention of the Missouri Synod taking into account the memorial of our doctrinal committee withdrew the Common Confession as a union document with ALC, but did not disavow it. Our entire union committee, which attended the Missouri Synod convention, saw in this a ray of hope and decided to continue negotiations with Missouri. There was a recessed convention held in Watertown a couple of weeks later that confirmed the decision of our union committee.

By this time numerous protests were being filed with synod for not immediately putting Romans 16:17 into force and breaking with Missouri. The protesters said that Romans taught that once the marking of the false doctrine has taken place the break must come immediately lest we become partakers of the other's sin. The other side said, “But we are in a state of protest. We are not partaking of their sins. This is time for admonition. We owe it to our brothers.” Bible passages flew back and forth.

In some respects the 1957 convention of Wisconsin at New Ulm was a repeat of 1955. The difference was that our union committee wanted to continue dealing with Missouri and our floor committee on union brought in a memorial to break. This the delegates at the convention voted down. Dealings with Missouri were to continue. The debate heated up even more, and it would heat up in our district.

We could give you the rest of the history of the conflict with Missouri, but this is enough to show what happened in our district. Our President Albrecht was on the protesting side. That in itself was not enough to condemn him, because others felt as strongly as he did and yet were coming to the state of mind where they felt we might accomplish some good, if we dealt with the Missouri Synod longer. What was happening in the case of our president was that the reports he was giving were skewed. We were not receiving the whole picture or the thinking of the union committee. Since in the district only the president was on the union committee, we had no way of checking up on him. So, many of us followed.

Our district met two weeks after the recessed Synod convention in Watertown in 1966. Our president reported to us what had taken place at the Watertown convention, dwelling much longer on the protests than on the reasons for continuing the negotiations with Missouri. Our floor committee went along with our president, deploring the action of Synod's Standing Committee On Church Union and recommending the original 1955 report of the standing committee to break. For most people at this time, things got a bit hazy. The 1955 floor committee also said we should break, but they also said we should wait. So by the “Saginaw Resolutions” which one was meant? Thus, the stance of some of our men was beginning to change from “break” to “continue to negotiate for a time.”

After this every conference, pastoral or delegate, was dominated by those who wanted an immediate break with Missouri. We heard the same arguments again and again. Some were growing suspicious and saying that the president was bringing into the district men who sympathized with him, and it seemed so. It was virtually impossible to do any district business. Even the mission board was paralyzed into inaction.

The 1957 Synod Convention at New Ulm was again flooded with memorials and protests urging a swift break with Missouri. In fact, among those memorials one will find one from our Eastern Conference, signed by me, its secretary, calling for an immediate break. There was another memorial, not so official, signed by a number of pastors and one layman of our district, including President Albrecht. By this time, some of us were discovering that our president was calling meetings involving those on his side. I however, was not of these “insiders.”

Interestingly enough, the floor committee of the 1957 New Ulm Convention did call for a break with Missouri. The vote to adopt failed by a standing vote of 77 to 61. From then on the doctrinal discussions with

Missouri would continue under a vigorously protesting fellowship. Three men of our union committee resigned: Prof. E. Reim of the Seminary, M. J. Witt, president of the Pacific Northwest District and our President Albrecht. The first two severed their fellowship with Wisconsin. Albrecht, on the other hand said he would no longer fellowship with those who held the position of the majority. Thus he became guilty of selective fellowship, the very thing of which we were accusing Missouri. At this convention Albrecht made a long statement of which the final sentence was, "I am fully aware of the implications of this statement as far as my District is concerned." I believe he went home thinking he could win over his district to his position and join those who were already making a break from Synod. This was happening in the Pacific Northwest and in Minnesota. What leads me to this conclusion was talk about forming a Dakota-Montana Synod. Twice I was asked by teachers of Northwestern Lutheran Academy, what I thought about forming a new Synod. I hasten to add that the Administration of our school had nothing to do with the idea nor were they for it. Later it would be pointed out that the thinking of the Albrecht group was to make the Academy the new synod's college, while the new education building at Albrecht's congregation in Bowdle would be the seminary. No doubt it was no more than talk, but it shows the thinking of some.

Then in the fall of 1957 a special district convention was assembled at Aberdeen to deal with the resolutions of the 1957 New Ulm Convention. The Eastern Conference had asked for this meeting, which again implicates me, its secretary. President Albrecht gave us a long history of the controversy raging in Synod from 1953 to the time of this special session. Again, he did not note all the facts or the reasoning of Synod. By the way, this special session was held on Oct. 22, 1957. He also gave a history of those people who had resigned from Synod. He repeated his statement made at the end of the New Ulm convention. In all honesty it must be stated that he did not ask us to break with Synod, but he did ask us to express ourselves on the resolutions adopted by the 1957 Synod Convention in the matter of our relations with the LC-MS.

His report was given to a floor committee. Since members of the floor committee were convinced we were not being given a full and objective report of what had and what was taking place, they called a member of the standing committee. They then brought in a memorial which in effect rejected the Albrecht report and asked for continued negotiations with Missouri.

President Albrecht then stepped from the chair, and I, the hapless first vice-president found myself in it. He then made a statement in which he resigned as president of the Dakota-Montana district. The motion was made to accept his resignation. It was debated, and believe it or not was rejected. Albrecht was asked to serve out his term according to the dictates of his conscience. After another lengthy discussion President Albrecht said he would consider the request to serve, and he did. This serves to show, how at this particular time, our own district was polarized. Subsequent events would change the picture.

I wish now that I had kept a diary. Early in 1958, in January, President Albrecht called me by phone and asked me to come to a meeting of the Praesidium in a hotel in Aberdeen. At this meeting Albrecht read to us twelve letters he received from eleven pastors and one layman protesting the district's action in Aberdeen in October 1957. It is interesting to note that one of the letters read was from the second vice-president, who had recently been appointed to fill a vacancy. I took the attitude that if people were that greatly troubled we should indeed call another meeting of the District. A date was set—February 11, 1958, to be held in Bowdle, SD.

About a week later I learned of the semi-secret meeting which had produced these letters. It came about in this way. A fellow pastor's wife was staying at our house while their child was in the hospital at Sioux Falls. He came to visit his wife and greeted me with these words, "Herb, you should have been at that meeting in Grover."

"What meeting?" I asked. Then he told me about the meeting and the letters. One of them had been written by him. To his credit, I must say, that at the Feb. 11 meeting at Bowdle he withdrew his letter. However, later, Albrecht was still using these letters, including that of the young man, and called for a special committee to deal with these conscience letters.

The special meeting at Bowdle only served to polarize the district more. At the same time more and more we were growing very suspicious of our president and his actions. They voted again to continue negotiations with Missouri.

The regular 1958 meeting of the District met as usual at the Academy in Mobridge. The lines were clearly drawn and it was a foredrawn conclusion that there would be a new administration in the district. Pro-Albrecht people sat by themselves in the Gym. The union floor committee urged that we continue negotiations with Missouri. There wasn't much argument. A new and a strong district president was elected, Walter Schumann, Jr., of Watertown. This whole meeting was an anti-climax. The climax had really come in the district meeting held on Oct. 22, 1957, though we hadn't realized it at the time.

My history is getting overlong. Let me sum up: Five congregations with more than 800 communicants and seven pastors left the district. A meeting of the new Praesidium was called, composed of President Schumann, first vice-president Reginal Pope and this writer. We drew up a list of names of those we felt we could salvage for Synod. We are happy that we did, for some of these men rose to rather important positions in Synod. To use Prof. Sievert's words, "Now the air was cleared, and a new spirit took over the life of the district." I must also agree with Prof. G. O. Lillegard, who in an essay written for the ELS said, "There is a great difference between entering a unionistic body and being forced to leave it. The first is not permissible under any circumstances; in the later case it may be necessary to remain for a shorter or longer period of time for the purpose of testifying against error." Later in 1961, after we broke with the LC-MS, one of my members said to me, "If Wisconsin had broken with Missouri before this you would have lost us all."

Let's go back now to a biennium by biennium report of the 1950s and pick up some of the things we missed.

1950- 1952

Because of the Missouri controversy there was very little action on the mission front. But that is not the only reason. We were running out of places to go in the area where we were serving. We would have to go farther afield. But some important openings would be made.

District presidents were a part of the "Union" or "Doctrinal" committee of Synod which was dealing with Missouri in its desire to join with the American Lutheran Church, so that naturally we would be hearing more about the issue.

Again 5 candidates entered the district. There were 14 changes of pastorate in the district affecting about 33% of the congregations. Remember: This had been going on now for 70 years. Certainly it is God's grace that the district continued. A new name is Ringling, Mont., where a class of adults was being instructed. This is the last we would hear of it. Grace of Carrington, ND would defect to the Missouri Synod. Also a pastor would be released to Missouri. We would see more of this because of the "Missouri controversy." People would start choosing sides, so to speak.

A long report would be given us regarding negotiations with Missouri by our "Standing Committee in Matters of Church Union." It was not a report of progress. We would hear of the White Case again.

1952-1954

Concerning the past biennium the president reports that "the exodus from our District the past year was unprecedented," and "As of today, ten parishes comprising twenty-one congregations do not have a pastor of their own." From the graduating class of 1944 ten were assigned to these vacant parishes. The mission chairman reported that "Comparing the names of pastors with the 1952 convention report, you will find that only six are in the same station." Then there is also the complaint we heard so often, "The low average contributions for home purposes is disturbing." Dakota-Montana was always behind. It was not ill will; it was a matter of economics. Altogether, counting the ten already mentioned, 16 candidates were assigned to Dakota-Montana that biennium. Besides that four pastors resigned for various reasons.

The new Administration-Gym building of the Academy had been dedicated earlier in the year and the Academy was hosting the convention this year, as it would till Synod closed it. The district lost more than an Academy when it closed; it lost a rallying place.

The 1952-54 biennium would see the opening of three congregations in larger cities. Up to this time we could only boast of congregations in Watertown and Rapid City. Now we would enter Sioux Falls, SD, Aberdeen, SD and Billings, Montana. Since these would become some of our larger congregations, let's have a look at them.

Good Shepherd, Sioux Falls, SD. About 1950 Bethel Lutheran (ELS) of Sioux Falls built a larger church and moved their small (about 15 by 46) church to the south-eastern part of the city. They started a mission but could not support it, so they sold it to WELS for \$15,000. Since we wanted into the city and could in this way enter Sioux Falls, without being hassled by Missouri, we took the offer and bought the lot and the building. The building became known as the box car because of its dimensions. We also took over the missionary, but he soon left us for health reasons in September 1953. Later, about 1962 it built what it affectionately called the "tin church," since it was a Butler building. It started a school. Still later it moved father south-east to its present location. A split in the congregation started a sister congregation, but that is not a part of this history.

Trinity, Aberdeen, SD. This congregation organized in 1954 also had its start about 1952 when WELS decided to enter the city over the protests of Missouri. Over the years neighboring WELS congregations had been transferring many of its members to Zion Lutheran (LC-MS) in Aberdeen. The start was slow. A candidate was assigned out of the 1952 graduating class of the Seminary, but he left for reasons of health before services were started. A Vicar H. Koch was sent till Candidate Warren Radtke would arrive. He too would leave in less than a year. In 1966 the church was able to support itself and after that it really started to prosper. It opened a day school in 1978.

Faith, Billings, Montana. Work was begun in mid-1953. it showed promise from the beginning. In 1969 an amalgamation of Faith with Lamb of God (Ex-Missouri) brought forth a new congregation named Apostles and a Christian Day School was opened.

1954-1956

This biennium only four candidates came into the district. There was some movement within the district itself resulting in ten installations. Five pastors were released from the district. One man resigned and one died after resigning. There were only a few changes in the mission field. The mission chairman reported that there was no real expansion. A preaching station (Kelly School) was added to the Valley City field, and Medina was added to the Windsor field. A survey was made of the area between Dakota-Montana and the Pacific Northwest. Pastor John Wendland was called to be a sort of missionary at large.

During the biennium mixed conferences with Missouri pastors were held in the District. Please permit a personal observation: This writer was elected secretary and was commissioned to write letters of protest for the conference to the worst offenders of those in Missouri practicing unionistic services. Some Missouri men were also troubled. But of the dozen or so contacted none bothered to reply. Here we see something happening in the Missouri Synod that eventually won the day for the unionists. It was the lack of discipline. However, these conferences also brought to the fore the differences between Wisconsin and Missouri in the doctrine of the church and ministry.

The 1955 convention of Synod at Saginaw spent hours dealing with what was becoming a Wisconsin-Missouri controversy. The union committee came in with a resolution to break with Missouri immediately. The convention said, "Let's wait till we hear from Missouri." Missouri met the later part of June 1956." Wisconsin Synod Districts waited till after the Missouri meeting to see what happened. For our union committee there was "a ray of hope." But Dakota-Montana asked in their 1956 convention that Synod carry out the resolutions of the union committee in 1955 at Saginaw and break. Then to get a little ahead of ourselves, Wisconsin met in a recessed session of the 33rd convention at Watertown, WI Aug.10-17, 1956 and because the union committee saw a ray of hope, decided to hold in abeyance the 1955 resolution to break with Missouri.

1956-1958

The 1957 Convention of Wisconsin at New Ulm decided to continue its dealing with Missouri. The debate in Wisconsin between those wanting an immediate break and those wanting to continue negotiations was

really heating up. The Evangelical Lutheran Synod had already broken with Missouri in 1955. Memorials from individuals and congregations and conferences were being circulated and floor committees were hard pressed to deal with the number.

In our District two special conventions met before the scheduled, regular 1958 convention at the Academy. Both were called to deal with Missouri matters. At the one held in Aberdeen, Oct. 22, 1957 President Albrecht made a move to resign because Dakota-Montana did not wish to follow his lead in vigorously protesting the actions of the 1955, 1956, and 1957 actions of Synod at their conventions. There was also this growing feeling that he wanted to take the district out of Synod, even though this was never stated in so many words. But actions often speak louder than words.

Then the presidium called a special pastoral conference at Bowdle on Feb. 11, 1958. Again the president was rebuffed by a majority vote of the pastors.

As stated before, when the 1958 Dakota-Montana Convention met at Northwestern Lutheran Academy in Mobridge, it was an anti-climax. Even the shouting was over. President Albrecht made only a half-hearted attempt to rally the forces. A new president was elected, Pastor Walter Shumann, Jr. of St. Martin's, Watertown.

Pastor Schumann brought back to the district the objective leadership it needed. A very orderly person himself he set the district house in order.

Seven candidates came into the district plus seven pastors from other districts, but there was not much movement of pastors within the district.

Bethlehem of Watertown was organized in 1956 and opened a school in September 1957 and dedicated its church on April 20, 1958. Its pastor, A. P. C. Kell would eventually become president of the district after President Schumann. Glendive, Montana would organize. We read that a new field at Winnett, Montana "has been divided recently. Lavina and Ryegate are to be served from Billings, and the other places are calling a candidate." Requests were being made to begin a mission at Fargo, ND.

The floor committee on doctrinal matters did not enter into the "Missouri controversy" other than to mention it. Instead it sought to set up machinery to deal with the protests in our own midst. The result was the so-called Committee of Six. This committee was composed of two pastors and one layman of each conviction. 1958-1960

A special convention met January 26-27, 1959 at the Academy to hear the report of the committee of six. For all practical purposes they reported an impasse. There were two divergent convictions in regard to the "marking" in Romans 16:17. After a long debate the district by a vote of 47 to 31 declared that it stood on the resolution that our Synod's negotiations with the Missouri Synod were scripturally correct.

In the regular convention of 1960, President Schumann reported that five congregations and seven pastors "reaffirmed their withdrawal."

Again, during the biennium, the movement in and out of the district would continue. Fifteen new men, candidates and transfers from other districts, would enter the field. Eleven would leave the district. Five would terminate fellowship.

The mission at Melstone had not been mentioned before. It was started in 1958 and permission was being granted to build a chapel for \$6,000. "Initial steps were taken for a new mission in the capital city of Bismarck, ND. A group of 70 Wisconsin Synod souls form the nucleus for this mission." It would receive the name, Our Savior.

On the union front it was noted that an impasse had been reached with the Missouri Synod. Hope was fast fading that there would be any more progress in dealing with Missouri. All forums for discussion seemed to be failing—Conference of Theologians and Synodical Conference. The District resolved, "That should the impasse continue, the necessary steps be taken by the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod to sever fellowship with The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod."

Messiah, Glendive, Montana would be started with high hopes in 1957-58. We build a parsonage chapel (Church in what would later be the garage) in West Glendive. This part of town did not grow as projected, so

that we not only found ourselves; out in the country, but out of circulation, in a place hard to find. Eventually this would lead to its dissolution.

Holy Trinity at Lavina, Montana would be organized in 1959. It worshipped for a while in rented quarters and died.

Thus ended “The Troubled Decade—The Fifties.

CHAPTER XII THE LAST DECADE OF THIS HISTORY: THE SIXTIES

The grief for the fifties is still evident in President Schumann's report to the 1960 district convention. In recent correspondence with Pastor Em. Schumann (7/8/94) he wrote concerning those years: "Many, many are the times I have relived them (the turbulent years of the fifties), wondering what actions we could have taken along the way to minimize the district's losses. I have come to the conclusion that, in reality there were none. The initiative always seemed to rest with the opposition. The 'colored' reports brought back from Milwaukee, the secret meetings to which only a selected few were invited, the declarations of suspended fellowship, the exclusive communion services, the establishment of a separate conference, the attempts to lead entire congregations out of the Synod, the efforts to gain control of physical property—all were instigated by the opposition. It seemed we were always on the defensive, reacting to challenges from the other side. I must confess that I don't know what else we could have done to prevent the losses that the district experienced."

Concerning the losses President Schumann would report at the 1960 convention: "The following have terminated fellowship with the Dakota-Montana District and the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod because of Synod's continued negotiations with The Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod:

"St. Luke's of Lemmon, S. Dak., and its pastor, V. Greve.

"Our Savior's of Jamestown, N. Dak., and its pastor, H. Rutz.

"Zion of Hidewood Twp., and its pastor, A. Sippert.

"First Lutheran of Faulkton, S. Dak., and Zion of Ipswich, S. Dak., and their pastor, L. Grams.

"Pastors M. Eibs, C. Albrecht and P. Albrecht.

"Pastor C. Hanson tendered his resignation from the ministry to accept a secular position in Minneapolis."

President Schumann mentioned the last man because earlier he had tried to take his parish out of the Wisconsin Synod after instructing them concerning the controversy with Mission only one week. He did not succeed and resigned.

But we pastors did profit by the experience. We had studied carefully the issues and the doctrines that had separated us, as well as the effect they had on the fundamental doctrines of Scripture. Now we could proclaim those doctrines with greater clarity to our people. Indeed, the Lord of the Church reigns, even when we think the church is being torn apart.

In 1961 Synod would break with Missouri. Most would be satisfied that everything had been done that could have been done to avert the break with our late sister Synod. We shall not attempt here to retell the last three years of the controversy. We could go back to the real work to which our Savior called us.

1960-1962

The movement within and out of the district continues. It was the thing that bothered the fathers when the district was formed, and it was hoped that the formation of the district would stop this movement both within and out. Ten Candidates enter, assuring that the district would remain a young man's field. One man came from another district. One pastor was suspended and went over to the Protestant Conference. The mission board reported that there were 30 missions grouped together in nineteen parishes. That is over one third of the congregations within the district. Congregations and preaching stations numbered 69. They were being served by forty men three of whom were Academy teachers. Altogether there were eleven congregations totaling 7 parishes. There was a manpower shortage. In our dealings with the Church of the Lutheran Confession we were charged with "willful and deliberate disobedience of Scripture," especially in the area of the ministry and the call and the interpretation of Romans 16:17.

No new mission stations were added that biennium.

1962-1964

President Schumann reports that "considerably fewer pastors than usual have accepted calls into other districts of the Synod." Five candidates came into the district plus three from other districts. Of the three two who had been previously in the district returned home Pastors Walter Sprengeler and Pastor Walter Herrmann. Five were released to other districts and one left us by accepted a call into the Missouri Synod.

On the mission front we entered three places:

- (1) Edmonton, Alberta. Here was a German speaking congregations which was brought over to us by a student at our Seminary from Germany, a Dieter Mueller. It numbered 170 souls and 107 communicants. Its per Sunday attendance ran about 125. But all that glitters is not gold. The congregation had problems with the doctrine of the call and ministry. We gave it a faithful pastor, but finally it defected from us in about the same way it had come to us. But it was our toe-hold into the Canadian Province of Alberta.
- (2) We also entered Great Falls, Montana with great hopes that we could be successful if we came into a larger town. We built a chapel hoping that it would bring us members. It didn't work that way. Growth has been slow over the years. After thirty years the congregation numbers 102 souls and 74 communicants (1993). The mission work of the early age was gathering together displaced Lutherans. That has changed and work is slower. Only the Lord gives the increase, not the number or the kind of men we sent into an area. Mission Boards often operate with the idea that a certain kind of man must be sent into the area to gather fruit.
- (3) Brookings, SD. The work that aborted in 1921 is begun again. We bought an old house and turned it into a student house and chapel. The start was slow and for a while more or less confined to students at the State College. But now we have a fine congregation of almost 400 souls and 284 communicants (1993).

This convention and the one before it talked about dividing the Western Conference. The question was referred back to the Western Conference for study.

1964-1966

President Schumann had accepted a call to Trinity of Watertown Wis., but would preside at this convention. Pastor Arthur P. C. Kell became the next president. He told this writer he had come from Germany as a 14 year old. He entered Dr. Martin Luther College Preparatory School at the age of 18. We met the man as a ninth grader when he was a twelfth grader. He was a big man with a deep bass voice, but in many respects a gentle giant. He had come into the district to pastor the new Bethlehem group in Watertown, SD. We would travel thousands of miles together into the new Montana and Alberta fields. He would serve till 1972, a period of 16 years—sort of a record.

Only five candidates entered the district. Two men came from other districts, and nine pastors would be released to other districts. So we sent out more than came in.

The mission board gave one of the Candidates, a Nathan Engel, five west river churches at Dupree, Isabel, Timber Lake, Faith, and Bison, SD. This was not the first time this experiment had been made. Earlier in the 1940s. Norman Lindloff had been asked to serve five congregations in this area. Now remember, this was once considered a fruitful mission field. Later, we would ask the same man, Nathan Engle to start work at Pierre, SD. We will comment more on this later.

Earlier we had talked about entering Fargo, ND. In this biennium we would enter its twin city, Moorhead, Minnesota instead, because we were given a piece of property in that city. Over the years we would wonder whether we did the right thing. But we do have a nice self-sustaining congregation in Moorhead. We remember dedicating the new church in Moorhead and leaving for Mobridge in a raging blizzard.

We also entered St. Albert, Alberta, a suburb of Edmonton, and the congregation was received as a member of the district in 1966. We built a parsonage. Sad to say, here we were deceived by our missionary. We found later we had no congregation but sort of a mutual camping society. Our missionary was let go for cause. The next man started almost from scratch.

St. John, Westaskiwin, Alberta, Canada is sort of a spin-off from the Edmonton endeavor. It also had its start in 1965 and today we have a self-sustaining congregation there.

We started a preaching station in Calgary, Alberta, Canada with the now graduated Dieter Mueller. He reported an attendance of 100, but the ads that appeared in the Calgary newspaper indicated that he was starting a society for the propagation of the German language and culture rather than a mission. In 1968 President Kell reported that Dieter Mueller had also been suspended for cause. He became an independent and we lost the mission, if we ever had one. Calgary made a fine start again in 1982.

Thus we found out that it is difficult to administer a field that is a thousand miles from the center of things. This writer remembers making a trip of 2000 miles to close a deal on the parsonage at St. Albert. The missionary refused to do so because of a solid porch support that would bow when the sun shown on it. It was a five minute meeting with the contractor and the deal was closed. We made other trips to meet with the members of St. Albert, only to be told that all had left town at the time of the called meeting. These were some of the frustrations in our early Canadian field.

At the 1966 convention the district adopted a plan to divide into three conferences, and from it the “Rocky Mountain Conference” would be formed. It was first called The Alberta-Montana Conference.
1966-1968

The president reports that ten men came into the district of which 8 were candidates. Seven men were released to other districts and one was suspended. He also reported that three congregations closed their doors: St. Peter at Florence, St. Paul’s at Grass Range, Montana and St. John’s at Altamont, SD. It was a sad day to see this old Boettcher founded congregation close.

St. Luke’s of Germantown Township closed its doors and merged with Immanuel of South Shore. Thus another old and rather important Boettcher founded congregations passes into oblivion. Goodwin would loose its pastor and become a part of the South Shore parish.

Concerning the difficulties in the Canadian fields the mission board reports, “The missionaries in our Canadian fields need our prayers and all the encouragement that you can give. Not only are they far from home, but their problems are unique. Many of their people were brought up in a culture different from ours. Matters of simple democratic procedure, which we take for granted, are not understood. We opened a station at Bashaw, Alberta. Work in Edmonton, Wetaskiwin and Bashaw was all in German.

The Montana field continued to have its distance problems. A parish consisting of Terry and Ekalaka were 150 miles apart by a good weather road. When one came to Ekalaka one came to the end of the road—literally.

The five congregation alignment we spoke of earlier becomes four as we added one to Hettinger and Reeder. Thus starts the ending of a noble experiment.

For the first time, in a mission report, the institutional work done at the State Hospital for the mentally ill at Yankton, SD is mentioned. This work was started out of Sioux Falls shortly after Wisconsin broke with Missouri. Up to this time Missouri had been serving our patients there. The patient load of our WELS people was between fifteen and twenty. So the Praesidium decided to “Put our feet where our mouth is,” and take over the work there ourselves. This writer was chosen, mostly because he was closest to Yankton. We went every two weeks and spent the entire day at the hospital. It was interesting and different and our patients appreciated our concern. As we recall there was no cost to Synod. Already then, we started toying with the idea of starting a congregation in Yankton, That would wait till 1972, about ten years later.

1968-1970 THE LAST TWO YEARS OF THIS HISTORY

Your historian would leave the district in July of 1969 after living in the district for 49 years and serving as pastor for 27 years.

1970 was the golden anniversary year. The district would put out an anniversary book, which was of great help to this writer. We wish now we would have been there for the festivities. Prof. K. G. Sievert, who had been in the district for 49 of the 50 years read a history. Pastor Walter Sprengeler, who had been in the district at the beginning and had returned, preached the convention sermon.

Let us take note once more of the movement in and out of the district. After fifty years it had not stopped. 13 candidates came from the Seminary. 4 pastors came from other districts. We received two pastors by colloquy. One pastor resigned; one retired and 11 were released to other districts. The losses equaled the gains. In fact, the net gain of pastors from 1920 to 1970 was eight. But that does not make a case against the district, as we shall see.

Faith, the WELS church in Billings, Montana would join with the LC-MS “Lamb of God,” and become the WELS “Apostles.” We mentioned Yankton, SD earlier. In July of 1970 we moved our District Missionary John Engel there to begin exploratory work. Prince of Peace would be established there in 1972.

Redeemer, Pierre, SD. We doubt whether even the members of this mission know much of its early beginnings. For several years the mission board wondered why we had never entered this capitol city of South Dakota. So about 1957 we sent Nathan Engel, who had four congregations of his own, to start services. We rented a funeral home. When Engel received a call this writer went there from Mobridge every other Sunday evening for over a year. Attendance was ten or fifteen. But both of us had so many irons in the fire that we could not do the place justice. So when Nathan Engel’s brother, John was called into the district as District Missionary he was sent to work Pierre more intensively. On June 21, 1970 Candidate Floyd Brand was ordained and installed as first pastor of Pierre. District Missionary John Engel was sent to do the same sort of work at Yankton.

We also did some exploratory work in Minot, ND, but nothing came of it. We also started exploratory work in Bozeman, Montana. In 1972 Shining Mountains would be organized. Another exploratory that never panned out was Barrhead, Alberta, Canada.

Thus closed the first fifty years of the organized Dakota-Montana District.

CHAPTER XIII POST MORTEM AND THE FUTURE.

Let's sum up: What were our gains in fifty years?

Already in 1920, we had over 80 congregations and preaching places. We closed the fifty year period with about 72. The reason for this was that the horse and buggy age was over and people could easily travel many miles to church. Even with less congregations we had expanded our borders.

In 1920 the souls under our care were estimated at 7,000. We closed the era with 11,275 souls. Communicants in 1920 were estimated at 3,500 and we closed the period with 8,064. We must also remember that during that fifty year period families had become smaller, and so the ratio of souls to communicants would be less. So communicant membership more than doubled. It was about 90 a year, nothing phenomenal but it was growth.

In 1920 the district had 32 pastors. We ended the period with 40. Whereas the 32 would be serving parishes averaging 110 communicants, the 40 would be serving parishes averaging 201. The average number of stations per pastor in 1920 was 2.56. In 1970 it was 1.8.

What really would be interesting is if someone of statistical bent would total the number of pastors who passed in and out of the district in those fifty years.

There is one figure we do not know now—the number that will be in heaven because the gospel was preached during the first ninety years. On that great day, when heaven and earth will pass away, Scripture indicates to us that those who were won by the gospel will take their place at our side like sheaves in a field, and there will be great joy for us all. Moreover, I am certain there will also be great surprises, when we have seen how we have misjudged one another, especially those of us who served on mission boards. Mission Board members certainly ought to be humble for great decisions rest on their shoulders.

The title we chose for this work was THE SAGA OF A MISSION DISTRICT. In many respects it remained that through the 90 years covered, and that is still its aim today. We should never become comfortable with a maintenance ministry.

The first forty years before the Dakotas and Montana became a district were years of growth in population. The aim of the early missionaries was to gather into congregations Lutherans who had moved in. They succeeded admirably. The work continued in the same vein for another forty years. Wherever we went we looked for displaced Lutherans. This does not mean that we neglected to work the unchurched. But beginning already in the twenties the work was becoming more difficult. The displaced Lutherans had been without church too long. Many had gravitated into the sects and the lodges. Moreover many of these Lutherans did not want to be found. Then too, instead of growing in populations the opposite happened. No longer were fields "ripe unto harvest."

Another curb on growth was that we did not work the cities. In the fifties that began to change. We did it more or less to follow up members who had moved into the cities and gravitated into Missouri Synod congregations. But people did not want to come back to us. The history of our district shows us that we did the right thing by entering the cities, even though start up work was often very slow and disappointing. It was a new kind of mission work, working with people who were not ready made members. We even gave it a new name—"Evangelism." We had always done evangelism work, but now, about 1970s it began to stand in the foreground rather than in the background.

Statistics can be great liars, but in this case they show us how much more difficult the work of winning souls has become. In the first fifty years of our history we won 5,776 communicants for a total of 115 a year. The last 25 years we have won only about 1,225 (estimated communicants for a total of about 49 a year.) We do not believe that we should blame the lack of money and manpower when one of our average district pastors today serves only about 170 communicants. Nor should we try to lay the blame on our pastors. They only cultivate the ground and water it. God our Savior still gives the increase.

Please permit a few more statistics to show what the district is working with when it comes to mission work. These statistics come from the Rand McNally Almanac of Word Facts (1994). Of the lower 48 states the lowest in population per square mile are Wyoming with 4.7, Montana with 5.6, North Dakota with 9.2 and

South Dakota with 9.3. Of the fifty states only Alaska is lower with 1 per square mile. Nor is Alberta, Canada highly populated. This is your present mission area. We did not make the roster of cities in the Almanac. This too should tell us something about success as men count it.

As I write these words two words of our Savior come to mind, both in close proximity to one another in St. Luke. In Luke 18:8 we read, "But when the Son of Man comes will He find faith on earth." The other is found in Luke 19:13, "He called ten of his slaves and gave them ten minas, and told them, 'Trade with these till I come.'" Both quotations from GOD'S WORD TO THE NATIONS. Just because the work is slow, we should not stop working as so many church bodies are doing.

It is also to our credit that we have not abandoned the souls the Lord has given us. Over the years our mission boards have sought to group congregations into self-supporting parishes. Pastors have been moved back and forth between the congregations to get the perfect "set-up." It is a never ending task as the proceedings of the district tell us. But there are areas where we cannot make such a plan work. We are afraid that a "new plan" is already causing hardship on some of our pastors and will force closure of congregations. Again we would like to place blame on our mission boards, but we should not. The blame rests with us all and a new mode of doing church work which has grown very expensive, while we ourselves are not supporting the Synod Mission Offering.

Post mortems are easy. We can blame lack of money and manpower. We can blame lack of zeal. We can blame demographics. We can blame poor planning and poor placing of churches. In spite of all this, the fact remains that it is the Lord who opens doors and calls. He sends us where he wants us to be, if it is only for a season. When Jesus sent out the seventy he told them to stay only where they were wanted. They were told to wipe from their feet the dust of the streets where they were not wanted and move on to the next place. It is still good advice for our day.

Lord, bless the work you have given us to do. Amen.

CHAPTER XIV PROFESSOR KARL G. SIEVERT

Permit a brief profile of a man who more than many others left his mark on the district. In writing this profile, I am well aware of the fact that Karl Sievert was very controversial in the annals of Zion Lutheran Congregation of Mobridge. Karl Sievert was not one to “let sleeping dogs lie,” and it must be admitted there was fault on both sides. Yet his contribution to the district should not be overlooked as a pastor, a teacher and an officer of the district.

He came into the district from the seminary in 1921 and was called to open a mission at Willow Lake, SD. It wasn't long before he was asked to serve the district in various ways

He came from a family of teachers. His father was a day school teacher. Three Sievert brothers including Karl would teach in Synod Schools. A brother and two sisters will spend their lives teaching in day schools. Later his retired father would help out for a while at Northwestern Lutheran Academy.

Karl was called to open and be the first teacher at the district's new Academy in 1928. For a while he was the only teacher, the dean and the administrator. As time went on there was not a subject that Sievert did not teach: German, English, Latin, Mathematics on all levels, Science, Religion, History and other social subjects. During his teaching years he touched the lives of hundreds of our district's youth. Some would go on to be pastors and Day School teachers, the rest went home and became leaders in our congregations. Though he could be a hard taskmaster his students did not resent him. He was the teacher they would visit when they came to town. Many spoke to this writer of Sievert's influence on them.

All congregations in the neighborhood of Mobridge at one time or another had him as a vacancy pastor. When the little Trail City congregation was left stranded he became their pastor and did not neglect his teaching duties. He served them for years and finally in his old age wished the congregation on this writer. When the Bowdle congregation was split as a result of the Church of the Lutheran Confession controversy, the Praesidium asked Prof. Sievert to serve and put the pieces back together. In that controversy he served us well with his counsel.

Among the district's pastors his influence was felt on conference and convention floors. We remember well, how at a mixed conference in the middle fifties, he with a brief history of the old Church controversy between the early Iowa and Buffalo Synod, exploded the Missouri claim, that Missouri had always held to the doctrine that the local congregation was supreme and that Wisconsin's doctrine that Synod could also be Church was false doctrine. He was a ready speaker, who with a few well chosen words could solve a problem which was troubling many.

He was never a “yes man,” and so at times could be very abrasive, When it came to doing battle, he seemed to be afraid of no one. This did serve us well when President Albrecht wanted us to defect from Synod. In an argument it was pretty hard to get around “Doc,” as both his friends and enemies called him.

I think I am correct in saying that he was the only man who served in the district for over fifty years. 49 of those years were served in the first fifty years of Dakota-Montana as a district. This in itself makes him unique and different. He did love his district and despite what some may say served it well.

In many respects he also influenced me and from 1963 to 1969 I was his pastor. He never meddled in my ministry and when I left Mobridge we both shed a few tears.

TO GOD BE THE GLORY!

RESOURCE MATERIALS USED FOR FACTS AND FIGURES

This writer knows that he will not go down into history as a careful “historian.” As you read, some of you may have noticed a lack of references to “end notes.” This does not mean that we have not tried to be accurate, so we give below a list of the resources we used to establish most of the facts and figures.

HISTORY OF THE NORTHWESTERN LUTHERAN ACADEMY, Mobridge, SD. Undated, about 1945.

TRINITY EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH, Hendricks, MN. Centennial Booklet, 1990.

THE WISCONSIN SYNOD LUTHERANS. History written by E. C. Fredrich, 1992.

GESCHICHTE DER MINNESOTA-SYNODE. Fiftieth anniversary history of the Minnesota Synod, compiled in 1909.

SYNODAL-BERICHT VERHANDLUNG DER ZWEITEN VERSAMMLUNG DES

MINNESOTA-DISTRIKTS, JUNE 24-30, 1920. This also contains the proceedings of the ALLGEMEINEN EVANG.-LUTH. SYNODE VON WISCONSIN U. A. STAATEN, held July 14-20, 1920.

SYNODAL BERICHTEN DES DAKOTA-MONTANA DISTRICTS for years 1922, 1924, 1926, 1928
1930 and 1932.

PROCEEDINGS OF THE DAKOTA-MONTANA DISTRICT from 1934 to 1992.

Various YEARBOOKS of WELS including most of those printed including one from 1917. The early yearbooks were joint endeavors of Missouri and Wisconsin.

WELS SYNODICAL PROCEEDINGS for the years 1951, 1953, 1955, 1957, 1959 and special seasons for the same time.

PROCEEDINGS OF THE EV. LUTH. SY. CONFERENCE FOR 1955, 1956, 1958, 1960, 1962.

PROCEEDINGS OF ELS for the year 1961.

Various WELS STATISTICAL REPORTS from 1942 to 1993.

FIFTY YEARS OF GOD’S BLESSINGS IN THE DAKOTA-MONTANA DISTRICT, 1929 TO 1970. This booklet contains two essays written for the 1970 District convention, written by the veterans of the district, Prof. K. C. Sievert and Pastor E. R. Gamm.

My thanks to various pastors of the district, who after I read my paper at the at the 1994 convention came to me with additional information and corrections. These I have sought to place into this rewrite, which is being published.

My thanks to my wife, Garnet, who put up with me and the mess on the desk next to the furnace in the basement.

Finally, my thanks to the library and librarian of Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary, who provided me with many of the research materials that were missing from my library. Without these materials you couldn't trust a thing I wrote.

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