APPENDICES

Appendix One: 1996 Easter Bulletin and Sermon
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"CHRIST IS RISEN FROM THE DEAD!"

Grace Lutheran Church
Falls Church, Virginia

Easter Sunday
April 7, 1996

The Pre-Service Music
The Trumpet Fanfare
The Choir - "Sing Alleluia"

The Hymn - #156 "Awake, My Heart, With Gladness"

Psalm 118:14-24 (Read responsively)
The LORD is my strength and my song;
He has become my salvation.
Shouts of joy and victory resound in the tents of the righteous:
"The LORD's right hand has done mighty things!
The LORD's right hand is lifted high;
the LORD's right hand has done mighty things!"
I will not die but live,
and will proclaim what the LORD has done.
The LORD has chastened me severely,
but he has not given me over to death.
Open for me the gates of righteousness;
I will enter and give thanks to the LORD.
This is the gate of the LORD
through which the righteous may enter.
I will give you thanks, for you answered me;
you have become my salvation.
The stone the builders rejected has become the capstone;
the LORD has done this, and it is marvelous in our eyes.
This is the day the LORD has made;
let us rejoice and be glad in it.

The Easter Prayer
The Congregation - "Amen"

The Old Testament Reading - Isaiah 25:1-8

The Cong., Choir & Brass - "Jesus Christ Is Risen Today"
Hymn - #157

The Epistle Reading - I Corinthians 5:6-8
The Congregation - "Hallelujah! Hallelujah! Hallelujah!"
The Gospel Reading - Mark 16:1-8
The Sermon Hymn - #150 "Christ the Lord is Risen Today; Alleluia!"

The Easter Sermon Text - Job 19:23-27
The Easter Sermon Theme - "I Know That My Redeemer Lives"
1) I know that God's Son is My Redeemer who died for me
2) I know that He lives for me
3) I know that through Him I too shall live

The Hymn - #162 "He Is Arisen! Glorious Word" (In place of
"Create in Me a Clean Heart")

The Offering
The Offering Prayer
The Lord's Prayer
The Hymn - #160 "This Joyful Eastertide"
The Prayer
The Congregation - "Amen."

The Benediction

The Closing Hymn - #152 "I Know That My Redeemer Lives"

Preacher - Pastor Walter F. Beckmann
Liturgist - Vicar Daniel Sims
Choir Director - Kathryn Schultz
Trumpet - Myra Hedlin and Stan Sacha
Trombone - Ira Hedlin and George Martin
Organist - Ivan Huelle

The Easter Lilies are placed on the altar to the glory of God by the following families: Richlen, Zielke, Runquist, Bev Jenkinson, Krause, Braun, Fischer, Sacha, Gohlke, Gonyo and Greene.

A Blessed Easter To One And All!
Easter Sunday - April 7, 1996
Sermon Text: Job 16:23-27
Sermon Theme: "I Know That My Redeemer Lives"

With the beginning of daylight saving time today we’re up a little earlier than usual and it even looks as if we could be in for a cooler, cloudier day than some of the beautiful days we experienced this past week. But inspite of the hour and what the weather may be we can still say, "What a beautiful morning this is and what a beautiful day this is going to be" because today is Easter. Even the word Easter is a beautiful word. It comes from an old English word which means spring, and spring is certainly the loveliest time of the year. Spring means that the cold desolate days of winter are behind us once again. That heavy mantle of ice and snow which not too long ago made travel treacherous and the holding of worship services at times uncertain, is gone without a trace and everywhere we look we see signs of life and vitality. Lawns are turning green, crocuses and daffodils are blooming. The cherry blossoms surrounding the Tidal Basin are just about at their peak and once again we’re beginning to hear the songs of birds which have been silent for the past months.

It almost seems as if the trumpets on all those lilies on the altar this morning are calling out to all of nature to wake up from its long cold winter nap and calling to us as well to enjoy the wake up and life of spring and to blend our hearts and voices with all of nature in a joyful song of spring.

But those lilies were placed on the altar this morning to announce an even more important event than the arrival of spring. They were placed there to remind us that the cold desolate reign of sin and death is ended. Those white lilies with their open trumpets remind us how holy angels arrayed in white robes opened their mouths at the empty grave that first Easter morning and proclaimeed that joyful message of victory, "He is not here. He is risen." Those trumpets are calling to us to awaken our hearts with gladness as we turn to God’s Word to see what is done today and then to blend our hearts and voices in loud and joyful Hallelujahs and Alleluias, Hosannas, and Amens, praising our glorious Redeemer for His victory over death and the grave this joyful Easter Day.

Yes, Easter is a day of great joy but it’s also a day of great confidence, a day on which we can have complete confidence that death and the grave have been conquered, and that’s confidence which rests upon Christ our Redeemer and His resurrection this joyful Easter Day.

And which text is all of Scripture expresses that joy and confidence more clearly and powerfully than these words of Job before us this morning - I KNOW THAT MY REDEEMER LIVES.

PART ONE Job was a man who lived back in those dark ages of the past many centuries before the birth of Christ. He was a man who had been facing some cold, dark days and seemed to be sitting in the shadow of death itself.

Job had been a faithful child of God, but Satan had been plaguing and tormenting him, trying to destroy his faith, trying to tempt him to curse God and die in despair. One by one Satan took away all his earthly possessions, then his children and finally even his health. His body was covered with hideous sores so painful that he
sat in the ashes of what had once been his home and scraped his boils with a piece of broken pottery from what had once been his kitchen. The only healthy skin he had left was the skin which held his teeth in his gums. Satan had left his mouth in tact so that he could use it to curse God.

Satan even turned Job's wife against him. "Why don't you just curse God and die?" she advised him. One day three of his friends came to visit him but when they saw what a wretched sight he was, they were so shocked that at first they just stared at him without saying a word and finally told him that God was obviously punishing him for some sin and he would do well to repent of it.

But Job knew that God wasn't punishing him for his sins. He told his friends, "I know I have a redeemer." The word for Redeemer in the Hebrew is Goel, a close relative who had a duty to avenge your death if someone killed you, to buy back your property if you got into debt and your property was confiscated, or to pay off any bad debts you had if you were about to be sold into slavery to pay off those debts.

Job knew that He had a Redeemer who would pay off the debt of his sin, bail him out of the slavery of the devil, and even rescue him from death. And He knew who that Redeemer was. He said, "He'll stand the last day upon the earth, I will see Him and He will be Goel Himself." Job knew that the Son of God Himself would come into the world, take our flesh and blood upon himself, thereby becoming our close relative who could act as our Goel, our Redeemer.

1900 years ago Jesus said that He was that Redeemer, and not just Job's Redeemer, but our Redeemer, the whole world's Redeemer. He certainly proved that He was the very Son of God when He healed the sick, calmed storms, cast out devils and even raised the dead. He performed so many miracles that the Apostle John tells us that if they were all recorded in a book, the book would be so large there wouldn't be a place in the whole world which could hold it, but those which have been recorded in the Bible have been recorded to prove that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God.

To free Job, you and me, and all sinners from the debt of sin, the slavery of the devil and death itself, the Son of God our Redeemer died for us. We know that He was dead for God's Word tells us He died and also that a Roman soldier took a spear and thrust it into his side and blood and water flowed from the wound. Our Redeemer died. He died for us.

With Job we can confidently say, "I know I have a Redeemer, the Son of God Himself, who died for me."

PART TWO But would our great Redeemer really be able to pay off our great debt of sin and ransom us from the power of death and the devil? The Holy Spirit inspired Job to assure his foolish friends, "I know that My Redeemer lives and that He will stand the last day upon the earth." He knew that after His Redeemer would die for him, He would rise again to prove that His work had been successful, to prove that God the Father had accepted His sacrifice for our redemption and that having risen again from the dead He would live forever.
Job knew that not only would God's Son be His Redeemer but everyone's Redeemer, sinful man's only hope of Redemption. He also knew how sinful people tend to quickly forget God's gracious promises, so he cried out, "Oh, how I wish that these words could be written in a book, engraved on a metal plate and chiseled into a rock so that they would never be lost." Job's wish was granted. His words have been preserved here in the pages of God's Word and as long as the world stands, these words shall endure - "I know that my Redeemer lives."

That confident prophecy of Job was wondrously fulfilled that first Easter morning some 1900 years ago in Jerusalem. Before He died Jesus Himself even repeated this prophecy in His own words when He said, "Destroy this temple, this body, and in three days I will raise it again." Again He said, "I've come to give my life a ransom for many," and a number of times He said, "I will be crucified but I will rise again on the third day." On another occasion He said "Just as Jonah was three days in the belly of the whale so I will be three days in the belly of the earth." Obviously if that third day had come and gone without His resurrection we have much confidence in the promise of redemption. We'd have to conclude that He tried to redeem us but failed, that we are still in our sin and still slaves of Satan doomed to everlasting death and damnation.

Humans speaking of redemption didn't look very good out there at the grave early that first Easter morning. It was already the beginning of the third day but there were no signs of life in that grave. The stone was still blocking the entrance. Pontius Pilate's seal was still unbroken and his soldiers were still quiet. Back in Jerusalem the disciples weren't expecting any resurrection. They were locked behind closed doors filled with fear doubt and disappointment. The only sign of life was that group of women rushing out to the grave. But even they weren't going out there intending to worship a risen Redeemer but to anoint a dead one for His final burial. Their hopes were as cold and dark as the morning itself.

But SUDDENLY the earth began to shake beneath their feet as Christ sat up in the grave and smashed the powers of death. In the same instant and angel from heaven came down to earth, rolled the stone away and sat on it. He didn't take a chisel and begin to carve a message onto that stone. That would have taken too long. His message was too important for that. It had to be delivered immediately, so with His own angelic voice He announced to those women, "He is not here. He is risen."

And then in addition to the words of that angel, consider the other proofs of Christ's resurrection recorded here in God's own book. The grave was empty. The grave clothes were still there but Christ's body was no longer in them. Back in Jerusalem meanwhile the bodies of all those believers who had come forth from their graves on Good Friday began to make appearances in which they procured the resurrection. Then the risen Christ Himself began to appear first to Mary Magdalene, then to the rest of the women, to Peter, to the disciples from Emmaus, to all of the disciples, and on one
occasion to as many as 500 eyewitnesses. In those appearances He spoke to them, ate with them, allowed them to touch Him, and then gave them the greatest proof of all - He showed them how the Scripture had foretold it. Among the passages which He cited was certainly Job's prophecy in our text.

Today we can confidently proclaim with Job, "I know that My Redeemer lives, and with Paul, "Now is Christ arisen," "He who was delivered for our offenses has been raised again for our justification."
The resurrection of our Redeemer assures us that God has accepted His sacrifice for our sins. Our sins are forgiven. Our debt has been paid. We have been redeemed.

PART THREE Oh, but the resurrection of Christ means more to us than our redemption and Job knew what that was when he prophesied how his redeemer would rise and stand on the earth on the last day. The word used for earth here was APHAR, which means dust. It's the same word God used in Paradise when He told Adam, "Dust you are and to dust you will return." On the last day Christ will come again and stand on our graves filled with our dust. Job realized that when Christ would return again on the last day He Himself would have turned to dust. But he also knew that when His Redeemer would stand on his dust he would rise again from that dust and in his flesh and with his own eyes would see his risen Redeemer. He was so excited at the thought of it that he cried out, "How my heart yearns within me!"

That risen Christ promises us in His Word, "Because I live, you shall live also." "I am the resurrection and the life; He who believes in me though He dies, yet shall he live." Through His Apostle Paul He assures us that Christ our Saviour has abolished death and brought life and immortality to light through His Gospel. Again His Apostle Paul He assures us that when He rose from the dead He became the firstfruits of all that slept. At this time of the year when you see the first daffodil in bloom you know that soon all the other flowers - the tulips and azaleas, the rhododendrons and dogwoods will be shaking off their dormant sleep of winter and will begin to bloom with that daffodil. Because Christ our Redeemer shook off the bonds of death and rose from the dead, we His redeemed will follow him into a glorious resurrection to life and glory everlasting.

Unless Christ makes His final return in the very near future, like many of our loved ones who have gone before us, we're all going to die and turn to dust in the grave. But when our risen Redeemer does return on the last day, as He surely will, He'll stand on our dust and say, "Come forth," and we will, in our flesh and with our eyes to see him face to face. He Himself has assured us that the day is coming in which all who are in the grave will hear His voice and come forth." And when we do, it will not only be to life but to glory. We will rise, never to die again but to live forever clothed in immortality, incorruptibility and glory.

Because our Redeemer lives we can actually laugh death and the grave in the face as Paul did when he said, "Death where is you sting? Grave where is your victory. Thanks be to God who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.
Job said, "Oh that my words were written in a book, engraved on a metal plate and chiseled in a rock forever. To these words we are odd, "May these words be written in our hearts all the days of our life and finally engraved on our tombstones." I know that my Redeemer lives.

May these words continue to fill our hearts with faith, joy and confidence until that glorious day when we see them fulfilled before our eyes and in our flesh in our resurrection through Jesus Christ our living Redeemer.

Oh the sweet joy this sentence gives. I know that My Redeemer lives. HALLELUJAH AMEN.

W. F. Beckmann
APPENDIX TWO

I'm not a graduate of Dr. Martin Luther College. I'm not even a graduate of the prep department which used to exist on this campus. But over the years I have attended a number of graduations here at this school. Back in the early 1980s both of my daughters graduated from this college. Back in the 1950s my sister and my wife receive DMLC diplomas on days like today. I think that it's those graduations back in the 1950s which I remember most distinctly, and that's not just because I'm getting to that age when things which happened years ago seem clearer to you than things which have happened more recently. I remember those graduations so distinctly because the speaker for those services was the President of the college, President Carl Schweppe, a powerfully built man with eyes which seemed to look right through you and a voice which spoke with authority second only to those voices in Scripture which shouted from heaven or were uttered by the incarnate Son of God Himself. When he stood before the graduating class and pointed his finger at them and said, "Go, Go to your calls, Go with God's blessing and Go to do His Work, those graduates almost had to be physically restrained so that they wouldn't rush out of the auditorium to their calls even before that service was over. Those sermons were powerful and inspiring that I'd be halfway to Mankato before it occurred to me that I hadn't graduated that day and wasn't going to my call.

My prayer for you this day is that God would bless my words and use them to send you off and out with some of that same zeal and enthusiasm to do His work. You've certainly chosen a text which contains all the thoughts for such a send-off, thoughts like, "Stand firm, give it your all, work for the Lord, and be confident of success." Let's take those inspired thoughts, add a little imagery which reflects the nature of this college and I think what we have here in this verse is God's Lesson Plan for you and it's a lesson plan for success. So as we send you off this spring, let's take it slow and enjoy the hallowed halls today whether it's to your call, to await your call, to further your education, to begin a family and home, or whatever - we urge you, in God's Name we charge you - Go With God's Lesson Plan For Success.

PART ONE On page one of His lesson plan for you God tells you to stand firm and let nothing move you.

When God's inspired writer Paul first wrote these words to the Corinthian Christians, He was charging them to stand firm in the rich instruction they had received from God's called servants, men like Paul Himself, Peter and Apollos. To you today God is giving the charge to always stand firm in what you have learned from His called servants here at DMLC, that entourage of academically robed professors who have joined your joyful procession this day and in whose classrooms you have studied these past 4 years. The instruction which men like Paul and Peter had given to the Corinthians was God's own inspired Word. Paul once said, "We speak not in the words which man's wisdom teaches but which the Holy Spirit teaches." The professors who taught you here at this school were not divinely inspired but what they taught you was based on God's divinely inspired Word.
We demand that of them in their calls. Even the instruction they gave you in all secular subjects was always presented in the light of the Holy Scriptures. That's why we can charge you this day to go and always stand firm in what you have learned here and never allow anyone to move you from it.

You can stand firm on what you have learned here also because it's not only Scripturally based also Christ-centered. You could not have chosen a more Christ-centered verse for this occasion than the one before us. It's taken from Paul's famous resurrection chapter in which he makes statements like, "If Christ is not risen our faith is vain and we are yet in our sins, but now is Christ arisen." And "Death where is your sting, Grave where is your victory? Thanks be to God for He gives us the victory thru our Lord Jesus Christ." When we charge you this day to stand firm in what you have been taught in this school which is about to become your Alma Mater, we're recharging you to stand firm on God's Word and on Christ.

If you have already received a call or will eventually be receiving a call into one of our classrooms, always stand firm in that classroom. If you're going on to further education, continue to build that education upon the firm foundation which you have learned here. If your planning to enter into marriage to build a home instead of serving in a classroom, build that home upon what you have learned here. Whatever your plans for the future are as you go down this hill and leave this school today, you're going to begin the rest of your lives. Build your lives on Christ and His Word for Christ Him said that such a life is built upon a rock and will stand firm.

That's page one of God's Lesson plan for you.

PART TWO As we turn to page two, He charges you to always give yourself fully to your work. Give it your all.

God certainly gave you His all. He gave you His one and only Son to be your Savior. His Son gave His very life for you. Can you possibly give less than your all for the work to which He is calling you. The Apostle Paul certainly couldn't. He once said, "I always try to be all things to all men." Again He said that He considered himself to be the servant of all for Jesus' sake. In our text He charged the Corinthian to do the same, to give themselves fully to their work. And thru this verse, your class verse, God is charging you to do the same. Always give it your all.

If your work will be in the classroom, give yourself fully to it. Every gift you have God has given you in connection with Christ and He expects you to use them all in the work to which He has called you. He expects you to give it your all and not only in your classrooms, but in every phase of your life. Even teachers have a life outside the classroom, at least after your first year or so. Not only when you're preparing for your classes and teaching them, but when you eat or drink or whatever you do, always give yourself fully to it to the glory of God.

If the call you have chosen to answer will be leading you not into the classroom but into marriage, give it your all, give 100% of yourself to making it a successful marriage and establishing a truly Christian home which can be a model for others to follow.
If the path of your life will lead you into secular employment give yourself fully to that. Most of the Corinthians to whom this text was originally addressed were involved in what we call secular employment, but they too were charged to give themselves fully to that work.

That's page two of God lesson plan for your life.

PART THREE On page three He reminds us that in our work in the church, home or wherever, we should always remember that we are workers for the Lord. In our work in the church we receive a divine call from the Lord to serve Him. But in His Letter to the Romans Paul calls civil authorities ministers of God and in Ephesians He tells us that people in secular employment are also working for the Lord. We're not working for ourselves but for the Lord. That's how Paul felt about His call. One time while he was in prison some hotshot evangelists were out attracting a lot of attention for themselves as they preached the Gospel. Some of Paul's friends were concerned that this might be detracting from Paul's reputation, but Paul said, "That really doesn't matter. The important thing is that the Name of Christ is being proclaimed. Paul eventually became more famous than all of them, but that wasn't what he set out to do. He was working for the Lord, not for Himself. John the Baptist became a rather famous evangelist during his ministry in the wilderness, but that was never his goal. His goal was to work for the Lord, to direct people to Christ. He expressed that well when he said, "He must increase and I must decrease."

Certainly Jesus Himself had that attitude towards His work. He said, "I came not to do my will but the will of Him who sent Me." Again He said, "I came not to be reserved but to serve and to give my life in the service of my Father, and as a ransom for those people my father sent me to save.

Some people might say that you're beginning your careers today and might even express the wish that you would rise high in your field and gain a lot of honor, fame and recognition. But that's not what God has written here on page three of his lesson plan for you. He tells you to always remember that He has called you, you are workers for Him, not for yourselves. You're serving not for your own good but for the good of His people, especially those children whom He's entrusting to your care.

PART FOUR Finally on page four of his lesson plan for you He tells you that you can always be confident of success as you stand firm and give your all to the work He has given you. Know that your labors in the Lord will never be in vain.

Paul learned that truth not only from the Holy Spirit but also from His own personal experience. There were times when his work didn't always seem all that successful. He'd come to a new town intending to preach to large crowds and would end up in prison. He'd expect people to welcome the Gospel with eager hearts and they'd treat it with hatred or indifference. But he gradually began to see the fruit of the Gospel won by the Gospel and the number of people he could call brothers and sisters in Christ begin to grow, and the
he had started grow into established churches, and there were many of them. He knew that his labor in the Lord was not in vain.

By God's inspiration He tells you that yours won't be in vain either. That's quite an assurance. It's the same assurance He gave in regard to His word. "My word will not return to me empty," He says and assured you that your labors in the Lord will not be in vain." You may never have the visible results Paul had. Few people ever do. But your labor will not be in vain. He'll use your labor to nurture saving faith in the hearts of your students, to shape their character in a way which is pleasing to Him, to prepare the for useful life and service to God and to their fellowmen. You may not see many of the fruits of your labors because those fruits will continue in the hearts and lives of your students long after the Lord has called you to glory. You have His guarantee and promise of this.

When you gather one day for that great reunion, not the 40th or 50th reunion of the class of '94 but for that eternal reunion in the Communion of Saint, you will know and rejoice that your labors in the Lord were not in vain.

Go then Class of '94 - Go to where the Lord is calling you and go with His blessing. Go and always stand firm in His Word and on Christ, always give your all as you work for him and not for yourselves and always be confidant that your labor in the Lord is never in vain.

That's God's Lesson Plan for you, a Lesson Plan for Success.
### Our Growth at a Glance

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*1 Includes Reaching Out offerings

*2 Does not include special offering
"MALE AND FEMALE HE CREATED THEM"

GENESIS 1:27

THE SPIRIT IN WHICH WE APPLY
THE SCRIPTURAL ROLES OF
MAN AND WOMAN
IN THE HOME

There probably isn’t a better place to go to begin to understand the Scriptural relationship of man and woman than to your own church where a bride and groom are standing before the altar and are about to be joined together in marriage. The pastor reminds them, from God’s Word, that marriage is a loving companionship created by God Himself, a companionship which He promises to bless and for which he gives His own counsel and direction. The pastor reminds the husband of God’s specific direction to him; that He is to love His wife as Christ loved His bride the Church and even laid down His life for her. "In this same way, husbands ought to love their wives," Ephesians 5:28. The husband is the head of the wife and will exercise that authority to love, cherish, protect and support the wife the Lord is giving to him and to see to it that the home they are establishing is a truly Christian home in which Christ is always the unseen head and where the Word is taught to all in love and in truth.

The pastor then reminds the bride, from the same Word of God, that she is to submit to her husband as Christ’s bride, the Church, submits to Him. She is to live to her husband who is ready to die for her. She is to be a God-pleasing helper working with her husband to establish a Christian marriage and home.

Since both husband and wife have their sinful human natures, they will at times fail in their marital responsibilities and fail to always show each other the love and respect they should. To keep this from tearing apart what God has joined together they will daily turn to God’s Word for forgiveness and for the strength to improve their own marital commitment and to forgive each other for Jesus’ sake. Strengthened by that Word they will live together as heirs of the gracious gift of life (I Peter 3:8) and their home here on earth will become, more and more, a blessed foretaste of our eternal home in heaven. They will realize how true that catechism verse really is:

"Let each his lesson learn with care,
And all the household well shall fare."
IN THE CHURCH

It really should come as no surprise that when Christians leave their homes and gather for worship, fellowship, and instruction in God’s House, God doesn’t abandon or reverse the order He has established for the home but prescribes it also for the Church. (I Corinthians 14:33-35). Those who have been given headship and responsibilities in the home have that same position in the church - under Christ, of course. Christian men consider their church to be their spiritual family. They regard the female members of their congregation as their sisters in Christ. If there is a considerable age difference, they will even treat them with the love and respect which a Christian son ought to show his mother (I Timothy 5:2). In that loving spirit, they will assume their God-given responsibility in the church for the good of all the members. They will cheerfully, even sacrificially, give of their time and energy to oversee the business of God’s House, to see to it that God’s Word is taught in truth and that programs of Bible study and instruction in sound doctrine are made available to all members of their spiritual family. They will foster good stewardship and fellowship, promote and participate in energetic programs of outreach and evangelism, and be lovingly concerned about the physical and spiritual welfare of every member. They will strive to be men full of the Spirit and wisdom (Acts 6:3) and will seek that Spirit and wisdom from the Holy Scriptures.

Just as Christian husbands strive to bring joy into the lives of their God-given wives, so Christian men in the congregation will consider the spiritual needs of their sisters in Christ and will strive to do all in their power to make their worship and fellowship edifying and delightful. They will also do all they can to recognize the gifts of their spiritual sisters, seek their input, develop programs in which those gifts can be used in a God-pleasing way in the service of the Lord and of His Church, and encourage them to joyfully participate in such service.

Just as in the Christian home so also in the Christian Church, Christian women will recognize the headship of their brothers in Christ. They will cheerfully help and serve in any way they can and, in loving obedience to Christ the true head of the church, accept the Scriptural restriction that they are not permitted to teach or have authority over the man. (I Timothy 2:11-12). For the strength to do this they too will turn to Christ, to the Word and to the Spirit.

As Christian men and women worship and serve together in this way in the church they will experience what Paul speaks of in Ephesians 4:16 - “From Him the whole body, joined and held together by every supporting ligament grows and builds itself up in love, as each part does its work."

IN THE ORDER OF CREATION

As brothers and sisters in Christ, we also realize from God’s Word that our roles in the home and in the church rest upon God’s ancient order of creation. (I Timothy 2:13, I Corinthians 11:8-9). That order was perfect. It was created for our good, and if man and woman had not fallen into sin and lost the image of God, they would have been able to live according to God’s order. Sin, however, destroyed their perfect relationship with God and with one another. When the Holy Spirit, by the power of the Gospel, brings us to faith He also begins to restore that lost image of God in our hearts and lives. By the power of the Gospel we also begin to grow in the ability and desire to live in our God-assigned roles for Jesus’s sake.

IN THE WORLD

Unlike the Christian home and the Christian Church the unregenerate world is not an environment which is motivated by the Gospel or guided by God’s will. In fact, to the world that all seems rather foolish.

Our great commission regarding the unregenerate world, which is lost in unbelief and living in spiritual darkness, is that we first of all go into all the world and preach the Gospel to every creature, to seek thereby to win them for Christ and for salvation. Accepting God’s will regarding Christian living and role
relationships is not something which can precede saving faith but must come as a result or a fruit of it. Therefore, we do not try to force our morality upon the world (I Corinthians 5:12), but will seek to influence the world by being witnesses for Christ and by letting the light of our good works shine. Just how do we as Christians allow our light to shine before the world on this particular issue? The Table of Duties in our Catechism reminds us that we do this by submitting to all civil authorities which God has placed over us and by obeying all who are over us in the work place just as we obey Christ. When we, as Christian men and Christian women, are placed into positions of authority in the world, we will try to administer that authority in Christian love and concern for those who are under us always remembering that the Lord and Master of us all is in heaven and has told us that the humble, loving, serving mind which was in Him should also be in us in all our relationships with one another.

Since it is a cruel, sinful, self-centered and often even godless world in which we live, Christian love will keep us from imposing undue restrictions upon Christian women as they live and work in an unregenerate environment in which they do not have the protection of the Gospel's influence as they do in the Christian home and in the Christian Church. (We wouldn't expect a Christian law enforcement officer to bring a service revolver to the family dinner table or to brandish such a weapon in the Christian Church service, but we wouldn't want to forbid that officer to use one in the line of duty out there on the street. That could be a fatal mistake.) By the same token we must be very careful not to unduly bind a Christian woman's conscience as she goes out to live and work in a sinful hostile environment. In another document on this subject we state that, "We reject the opinion that all women are always subject to all men as an exaggeration of what the Scriptures teach." The roles of man and woman is an application of God's Law, but it is an application which must always be made in love, for as Scripture clearly teaches, "Love is the fulfilling of the Law."

Finally, there's a way in which we Christian men in particular can allow our light to shine. The love and concern we show for the women in our homes and churches, the love and concern which we show to all people with whom we come into contact in every way in our daily lives, is a love and concern which we should always strive to show towards all women. We should be concerned about their feelings and well being, always striving to do all we can to keep them from being used and abused in this sinful world.

This is the spirit in which we apply the roles of man and woman in the various phases of our lives. May God give us all that spirit for Jesus' sake.

Walter F. Beckmann

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(Proceedings - Page 55
Resolution 12, Resolve d)

For further information and further study on this subject cf.

1) The Scripture Roles Of Man And Woman - COP
2) Study Guides By Prof. John Brug
"An Anecdotal History of the North Atlantic District"

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"An Anecdotal History of the North Atlantic District

The assignment of this paper coincides amazingly with the arrival of the author's 60th birthday. It doesn't take a lot of imagination to picture a meeting of the steering committee and a conversation which may have gone something like this - "He's starting to get up there in years. He doesn't have all that many holes left to play yet on the back nine of his career. We'd better get him to put some of this stuff down on paper before he starts to forget it." Well, hopefully this assignment was not given too late, because in the words of one of my contemporaries, "The things I'm starting to remember most clearly are things which never happened." But maybe that's what an anecdotal history really is. I checked the meaning of the word, anecdote, in my Funk and Wagnalls Dictionary and it is defined as, "a short story." It also says, "See synonyms under story," and this is what I saw under "story" - "a narrative or recital of an event or series of events, whether real or fictitious." I realized immediately that with such parameters I was probably equal to the task, so here it is, "An Anecdotal History of the North Atlantic District," or perhaps a more accurate title might be, "It May Have Been Something Like This."

How It All Started

All events which transpire here on earth, of course, are known by God from eternity and that is true also of the history of our North Atlantic District. But the first inkling we had that the WELS might have a field in the Mid and North Atlantic region of North America came in 1962 when the Michigan District Mission Board received a request from several families living in the Northern Virginia suburbs of Washington, D.C., to come and meet with them to consider the possibilities of starting a WELS mission in the DC metro area. This was one of many such requests that the WELS would receive during the 60's and 70's from every state of the United States and several provinces of Canada. Members of the Michigan District Board made a visit to Arlington, Virginia, met with the interested families at the Robert Geweke residence, were impressed by the dedication of the people they met, and were determined to serve them as quickly as possible. Pastor Leonard Koeninger was given a 6 weeks leave of absence from Emanuel Lutheran Church of Lansing, Michigan, and on March 31, 1963, conducted a service for 28 worshippers in the Churchill Road School in McLean, Virginia. Calling upon tutors, professors, and retired pastors, the mission board was able to offer its new Virginia mission effort regular Sunday services until a resident pastor could be called and installed.

That is about where I first began to appear in the picture. I was about half as old as I am today and was serving a congregation in Battle Creek, Michigan. We had a critical shortage of pastors in our synod at that time (75 vacancies as I recall) and I had received at least half a dozen calls, all of which I turned down because we had a very active neighborhood
outreach program in operation at the time and I didn't feel I could abandon it. I first heard about our new field in Virginia at our district convention in June of 1963. Pastor Hilbert Engel, chairman of the Michigan District Mission Board, presented it to the convention delegates in his usual glowing terms and also shared with us the exciting news that the district board had just been granted permission to call. I had gotten to know Pastor Engel quite well from discussing my past calls with him, so I felt comfortable about asking him a dumb question when I was sitting next to him at lunch that day - "Wow! Whom do you put on a call list like that one to Virginia?"

Perhaps I should explain my reason for asking that question. When we terminated our fellowship with the LCMS, I was worried that we were too small and too concentrated in the Midwest to be able to survive on our own. I don't remember where I said it or even if anyone was listening when I said it, but I do remember that I said, more in fear and frustration than with courage and dedication, "Well, now we'd better be ready to go and serve our people when they move into those places where we don't have churches." So that sort of explains why I was so excited to hear that our synod was planning to start a church way out east in the Washington, DC, suburbs.

But getting back to my dumb question about which names were on that call list - Pastor Engel, with a twinkle in his eye because he knew I was about to be embarrassed, told me, "Oh, we have Harry Scheile, Waldemar Pless, Corky Koeplin and - Walt Beckmann on the list." I was not only embarrassed, I was scared. Then I was relieved, but I guess also a little disappointed, a few weeks later when I learned that Pastor Scheile had been called. He turned the call down. I heard later that he felt a younger man should take the call. Pastor Kurk Koeplin was then called. He was very excited by it and I thought he had accepted it, but apparently he hadn't, because I was called next. At the time I received it I had two other calls, but I knew I should take it. In the years since, I've often advised pastors and teachers, "If you're so excited about a call that you can practically taste it, you ought to accept it." I could taste that call. Unless my memory fails me, though, I believe I accepted it with the feeling that I'd spend about five years serving in that mission we ought to start out East and then I'd accept a call back home to the Midwest.

*How It Was In Those Days*

Things were different back in 1963. The Mission Handbook was church bulletin size and about 8 pages long, three of which were blank and reserved for additional notes. About the only regulation I remember was that a mission congregation was not allowed to pay its pastor's health insurance. When I arrived at my first congregation they were paying my health insurance so, in the interest of truth and fair play, I told them I would have to refuse this extravagant benefit and pay the $120 myself. About
a month later I received a letter from the mission board stating that mission congregations were being asked to pay their pastor's health insurance. That's the last time I looked at that handbook. I have no idea what I ever did with it. I suppose if I still had it, it would be practically worthless by now.

With a smaller handbook there was also less supervision by the mission board. During my first year in Virginia I assembled a file of about 50 parcels of land and asked the board if they wanted to come out and check them out. They told me to use my own judgment. Within a year we owned a piece of land - five acres for $28,500. The ceiling on parsonages at the time was $17,000. Since we were in a high cost area, the mission board authorized us to go as high as $19,000 and to build something nice with pillars in front so that it would blend in with the neighborhood. We were finally able to purchase the home we still live in for $25,000.

Since we were to be the first WELS church in our area, the mission board felt it should be a showplace. Original plans were to spend about $60,000 on our chapel. The low bid came in at a little over $70,000 and it was approved without complaint. The only revision the mission board suggested was to put the pastor's office in the back of the lower level instead of off the narthex. It was a good suggestion.

Just to round out the financial picture at that time. Mission code was $335 per month, plus $35 per month car allowance and $1 per month for each year in the ministry.

Another benefit offered to home missionaries at that time was an interest free car loan. I believe it was about $600 at first and eventually grew to about $1,000 before the program was discontinued. CEF loans, too, were written up differently at that time. The concept of interest subsidy had not as yet been introduced. A mission congregation was only required to pay a modest rate of interest on a portion of its loan which was determined by the size of a mission and its financial strength. As the congregation grew, it was required to pay interest on a larger portion of its total loan. The interest subsidy system was introduced in the late 60's.

The Early Years

When I accepted the call to Northern Virginia, it was with the understanding that I would organize a Virginia mission, and within a year or two start work across the Potomac in Maryland. While Pastor Koeniger was conducting the original services several Maryland families had become part of the nucleus and since the Capital Beltway was not yet finished it was not an easy commute for them. I once made a "delinquent" call on one of our Maryland members. It took me an hour and fifteen minutes to get there. By the time I got there, I realized why the person was a delinquent. Another reason for wanting to start a second mission
as soon as possible, was the belief that it was not good to leave one man all by himself in a remote outpost, a lesson which had been learned by the world mission board. My nearest WELS neighboring pastor, at that time was in Toledo, Ohio, over 500 miles away. But when the time came to begin our Maryland mission, the Maryland families decided that they weren't quite ready to go it alone, but preferred the fellowship of the larger group for a bit longer at least. That was just as well for it gave me time to check out possible fields in New Jersey and Norfolk, Virginia. Our original nucleus included families from New Jersey and Norfolk. Our parish from north to south was a little over 400 miles long. But it wasn't as wide as some people thought. I got a letter one day from a Pastor in southeastern Wisconsin who tried to send me a transfer for one of his members who had moved to Kentucky. I refused the transfer on the grounds that this member still lived closer to his home church than he did to ours.

In the summer of 1964, I was given the help of two summer vicars, Kieth Kruck and John Henning. One of the tasks I assigned to them was to check up on leads we had received from the greater New York City area. One family, the Kenneth Sholes family had been worshipping with us once a month up until Christmas of 1963, but the trip became impossible after that, and I can best explain the reason why by mentioning that right after Easter I went up to their home in Matawan, New Jersey, and baptized their daughter. Vicars Kruck and Henning used their living room that summer to hold an exploratory service for WELS people who might be interested in starting a WELS mission in the New York City area. For the next 10 months I held once a month Sunday evening services in the vicinity of Exit 9 of the New Jersey Turnpike, most of them in the music room of the Highland Park High School. There was a little mom and pop grocery store across the street from the Catholic Church's bingo sign a few blocks from the high school. The store had two tables in the back and served the world's best ravioli's. I was back there a few years ago and the store has been replaced by a fast food place. The Catholic Church still has the same bingo sign. During the months I held services in New Jersey, our attendance ran from 14 to 21. The mission board decided that this would be the place to put our second man and, on Call Day 1965, CRM Gary Baumler received the call. The following week all but 6 members of the New Jersey mission informed me they were being transferred out of the area. Pastor Baumler had to start from scratch.

Also during January 1965, I began holding services for our families in Norfolk and for other WELS service families which had been referred to us. While I was driving down for the first service, it started to snow. There were about 4 inches on the ground by the time I got to Richmond and almost 8 when I arrived in Norfolk. The people didn't think I would come in such weather so they weren't at the base chapel where we had planned to meet but we called them by phone and they all came to the Richard Cordner residence where we held our first Norfolk service. I probably wouldn't do something like that today, but at that time
I was only about 16 months removed from the midwest and 8 inches of snow didn't seem like that big of a deal. We met once a month for about nine months until most of the Norfolk group got shipped out and we terminated our services until several years later when we got a new batch of referrals and Pastor Luther Voss was assigned to the area after his return from Viet Nam.

By the fall of 1965, we had two little mission outposts - Falls Church, Virginia and East Brunswick, New Jersey. Pastor Baumler and I had volunteered to follow up a few leads in the Philadelphia area and possibly conduct some exploratory services if the results would warrant it. The mission board agreed to the idea and even decided to begin to call. Pastor Ronald Uhllhorn accepted the call even before we had gathered a nucleus, but it was slow going. By the end of 1967 we had only 11 communicants. Anyone else might have given up but not steady Ron. If you've ever met him, you know that he never gets very excited, but he doesn't ever get depressed either, and what a gift that was at that time and in that place. I might just mention that in those early missions in the 60's and early 70's we always felt that if we could get attendances of 25 to 30 we had our critical mass and would "get the green light" from the mission board.

In those early years when there were only a few of us east coast pastors, separated by hundreds of miles from the rest of the synod, we were considered to be members of the Southeastern Conference of the Michigan District. We were allowed to attend one conference each year, plus the district convention, with our expenses covered by the mission board. Pastors of the Southeastern Conference were always ready to meet us at the Detroit Airport, welcome us into their homes and provide ground transportation for us. I have one fond memory of Pastor Hugo Hoenecke of Detroit. He picked the three of us up at the Detroit Airport and treated us to a ferry boat excursion. We spent the afternoon on deck playing quite a few intense games of pinochle. We welcomed such opportunities for fellowship.

Also, once we had grown to three missions, we began to hold our own conferences which we began to informally call the "Colonial Conference." The host pastor would usually conduct a communion service and the other two would prepare papers, an exegetical paper and a practical paper. This was in the days before computers and photocopy machines so we usually typed our papers and made two carbon copies. As the senior member, I always received the original copy. We also had a priority rating for first and second carbon copies, but I can't remember if it went according to time in the ministry or time in the Colonial Conference. Our conferences were usually also family-get-togethers. For a few years we also held annual family camp outs. Most of us owned tents or had access to campers. Those get-togethers and camp outs produced some fond memories which it might be best to share off the record so as not to embarrass sons and daughters who have since grown up and become respected teachers and pastors in our synod.
The beginning of our Baltimore mission was a great milestone in the history of our North Atlantic District. It filled a vacuum in the middle of our three original congregations and was also an enjoyable joint effort by all three of our pastors. For sometime we were aware of the Martin Horneber family in Baltimore and eventually got one or two other possible leads, but were still missing that one family we felt we needed for a realistic beginning. Then one Sunday we had some visitors in Falls Church, the Donald Schuppe family who had just been transferred to Baltimore. I didn't remember saying this, but at the 25th anniversary of the Baltimore congregation, Don said that when I first met them I said, "We're glad to see you. We've been praying for your arrival. We didn't know who you were going to be, but here you are," or words to that effect. With our team of three pastors we were able to give our Baltimore nucleus weekly services and instruction classes until CRM Carl Pagel was assigned to the field in 1967.

With the arrival of Pastor Pagel we were now free to investigate some inquiries we had received from several families in Connecticut. "As a show of strength" all four of us held a meeting with them in a private home in Avon, Connecticut. Pastor Baumler then served the group until CRM Karl Gurgel was assigned from the class of '68. Our district president and other members of the COP always assured me that Baumler, Pagel and Gurgel were all "top draft choices." I could check it out in old COP minutes, but why tamper with a good legend?

Pastor Karl Gurgel always has had more energy than the average person so it didn't take him too long to check out some new leads in Pittsfield, Massachusetts. In the meantime, Pastor Luther Voss was starting to gather a nucleus of WELS service families in the Norfolk area. He was almost 75 at the time and was sort of on loan to us from the Spiritual Welfare Commission after his return from Viet Nam. His age didn't keep him from putting on hundreds of miles each week traveling to military bases in the Carolinas and as far away as Mississippi, or from competing in our clergy get-together touch football games. He probably would have stayed with us even longer but the Norfolk nucleus requested permission to call a full time pastor and with all his driving, sometimes in the style of Jehu of old, Pastor Voss had just about run out of points on his driver's license. What a man and what a man of God he was.

While Pastors Gurgel and Voss were busy up north and down south, Pastor Pagel and I began to offer weekly services for "my" Maryland families. On call day of that year, 1970, three graduates were assigned to our conference: Paul Kelm to Pittsfield, Mass., and Paul Ziemer to Norfolk, Virginia, and John Mittelstaedt to Largo, Maryland. We were assured that they were all "top draft choices." In addition to our three graduates our Colonial Conference clergy roster was also swelled by the addition of two colloquy men and their congregations who came to us from the LCMS -Pastor Thomas Pfotenhauer of Ottawa, Ontario, and Pastor
Otto Zeeb of Dover, New Jersey. I'll always remember the way Pastor Fred Zimmerman, the after dinner speaker at the district convention, introduced them - "We have at our convention this year two pastors who have come to us from the Missouri Synod and brought their congregations with them. I have met both of these men and I'd like to say how happy I am to receive their congregations." Not only did they receive a warm welcome into our fellowship but a quick introduction to Fred's off beat style of humor at the same time. Anyone who remembers Otto Zeeb will remember his gift of humor, especially with various dialects. It was a sad day when our paths eventually parted. But what a year 1970 was, the year in which our clergy roster doubled to 10. That pretty well brings us to the end of the early years, for in the 1971 statistical report for the first time our congregations have their own special grouping as "The Colonial Conference." That report also lists our first vacancy, King of Prussia (Philadelphia area.) Pastor Uhlhorn had taken a call to Wisconsin. Others would eventually follow. What I believe to be a fairly accurate time chart of our churches and the pastors who have served them appears as an appendix to this paper.

A Political History of The North Atlantic District

1963 - East Coast pastors and churches are members of the Southeastern Conference of the Michigan District. We began to unofficially call ourselves the Colonial Conference. I served as visiting elder. We had no doctrinal problems so my chief duty was to report our missions subscriptions at the annual meeting of the district council.

1971 - Statistical report lists us as "The Colonial Conference"

1975 - We became the Colonial Mission District

1983 - We became the North Atlantic District

The Intermediate Years

Neither time nor common sense will allow us to give the history of each one of our congregations in this paper. Besides, much of this has already been done in the 25th anniversary booklets of our older congregations. I might suggest, though, that for the sake of posterity, we might wish to make a collection of such booklets while they are available, and keep them together with this paper and a few other papers I plan to suggest so that our successors might have access to this history, if they should desire it. When it comes to the intermediate years from about 1970 to 1983, I can't speak as an eye witness of each field. While we were still a very small group of scattered churches we used to try to be present at all installations and dedications. I remember scheduling one vacation so that I would be near Pittsfield, Mass., to attend an installation and on another occasion driving all Sunday afternoon and early evening to arrive at South Windsor, Conn., by 7:28 PM for an installation set for
7:30. During the intermediate years this became impossible. I never did see the barn in Bethel (aka Danbury) Conn., which Pastor Knupeppel was able to use as his personal gym. I heard about the person who claimed he saw the devil in Pastor Knupeppel's parsonage but I never saw it. I did have the privilege of being present for the ordination and installation of Pastor Paul Schmiege in Raleigh, North Carolina. This was the 1,000th congregation in the WELS and a picture of it made the cover of the Northwestern Lutheran. It was held in the Raleigh Women's Club Building so Robert E. Lee, whose picture was on the wall, also made the cover of the Northwestern Lutheran. Each one of our missions had its own exciting beginning but the excitement didn't always come on the first try. I can still remember back in the mid 70's when Pastor Mac Kain from King of Prussia assured us that he knew of a group of people in Harrisburg who were interested in starting a WELS congregation. Our mission board was planning to spend a few days meeting with our mission congregations in Pennsylvania and Delaware, so we agreed to get together with all these prospects for a noon luncheon meeting. Frank Stauffer, a fellow about my age, and his mother were the only two who showed up, but they pleaded that there were others who were very interested and we should try again and preferably in the evening. I don't recall in whose home we held that second meeting, but I do remember how excited I was by the size of the group. We certainly did have an open door into Harrisburg and God blessed our efforts to call by sending us Pastor Daniel Luetke. He and the Stauffers, who are still members of the congregation, can fill in the rest of the details.

It was during these years that we also started to meet as northern and southern conferences so we didn't get to make the rounds anymore as we had done in the past. It was during these years that Paul Kelm made our first attempt to start a mission in Vermont. Things didn't go too smoothly. The group split and the majority joined the ALC. We hope that Pastor Kelm will always have the distinction of being the only WELS pastor to start an ALC mission in Vermont.

Not All Successes

Our Colonial Conference and North Atlantic District has been blessed by the Lord with many exciting success stories. You see them before your eyes and you meet the pastors of these churches at conferences. Just so that some of our other attempts which didn't always succeed aren't forgotten, we might just spend a few moments reviewing them.

We already mentioned the first attempt in Vermont. The mission in Danbury, Conn., didn't even get off the ground and later when we wanted to start a mission in Trumbull, Conn., we were very careful not to present any information to the GBHM which would show how close Trumbull was to Danbury. We lost the church in Dover (aka Randolph), New Jersey but a good percentage of that congregation became the nucleus for our Long Valley church.
Poughkeepsie, New York, Mississauga, Ontario, and Holland, Penn., only lasted for a few years each. Allentown (aka Lehigh Valley), Penn., didn't survive either. Its Pastor, Dennis Valleau almost didn't survive either. In an attempt to give it one last try, he went out canvassing one day in a blizzard. Our mission which lasted the longest before it finally was closed was in Ramsey, New Jersey. We tried Roanoke, Virginia, for about 2 years and are still serving the remnant of the nucleus as a once a month preaching station.

In 1979 when it looked as if we would be short about half a dozen calls for our seminary graduates the GBHM decided to extend itself financially and open six new missions. Hendersonville, North Carolina, and Greensboro, South Carolina, were two of them. The respective district boards agreed that if one of the two didn't show promise for self support it would become a dual parish served by the other. Greensboro showed greater promise so Hendersonville eventually was served by the South Atlantic District.

We had a few other fields that didn't make it. Pastor Ziemer from Manassas served a group in Richmond, Virginia, for awhile and eventually discontinued his efforts. Our present Richmond mission was started with a different nucleus some years later. For awhile we thought we might have an opening in Winchester, Virginia. A Mr. Shinleber, a member of our Manassas congregation but living in Winchester, planned a big WELS Christmas extravaganza, but a blizzard wiped it out.

We had another field once which looked to be a sure thing but wasn't and that was Goldsboro, North Carolina. A number of WELS and LCMS families from Watertown, Wisconsin, were transferred to Goldsboro with the Square D Company. I got wind of this some how when I was in the Midwest on vacation and called Pastor Daniel Gieschen, our district mission board chairman and we flew down to Goldsboro as quickly as we could. They were glad to see us. It was a great meeting. I wrote an article for the Colonial Crier stating emphatically, "We'll be starting a mission in Goldsboro. There's no question about that. The only question is how soon we can get started." Exactly one week after Pastor Gieschen and I had flown to Goldsboro the same Piedmont flight crashed. At least that fared better than our Goldsboro mission. That never got off the ground. All the Square D people got homesick and took other jobs in the Midwest. I suppose it was experiences like that which moved Pastor Gieschen to say, "I've found that when I say, 'I can say without fear,' that's when I should have been afraid." I'm afraid I was too optimistic about our field in Goldsboro.

**Mission Boards**

Referring to Pastor Daniel Gieschen, and earlier to Pastor Hilbert Engel, makes me realize that not all of you knew these men who had so much to do with our early missions. Pastor Hilbert Engel was the chairman of the Michigan District Mission Board my
first years in the ministry and when I got the call to Virginia. He was a relatively short, slight fellow, with a sort of evangelical mischievousness about him. I knew him for five years before I knew his name was Hilbert. Everyone called him, "Dutch." He expected you to. He introduced himself as, "Dutch," the first time I met him and insisted I call him that even though I had only been in the ministry a few months at that time. I would listen in amazement to his mission board reports as he described in glowing terms how his board could go into any town in the nation and be given an audience with the local planning board. I learned later that planning boards are ready to meet with almost anyone, but that didn't diminish my love and respect for "Dutch," in any way at all. He was a wonderful gentlemen who had three, maybe four, loves - his Lord, his family, and mission work, and probably in that order too. I think his fourth love was in being able to get one step ahead of the people in Milwaukee. In those days, we had a mission policy of not jumping over a state to start a mission. This was to ensure an orderly expansion. In spite of this rule, his Michigan District Mission Board was able to start missions in Florida and Virginia, and Pastor Engel loved it. Eventually he became chairman of the Synod's GBHM. Some years ago when he died I happened to be in Michigan on vacation and was able to attend his funeral. I was glad to be able to pay my last respects to the man who had done so much for me and for our missions.

Pastor Daniel Gieschen succeeded Pastor Engel as the Michigan District Mission Chairman and eventually as the GBHM chairman. Big and authoritative as he appeared to be was always ready to listen and help. It was a pleasure to serve on the GBHM with him for 8 years. I think it was his great heart for missions even more than his impressive stature and booming voice which commanded respect from all who knew and worked with him. He was famous for his spoonerisms like, "Letting that opportunity go up the drainpipe," and, "Don't get your shackles up," but they didn't detract from his leadership and he was good natured enough to enjoy them himself. God grant Dan an enjoyable retirement.

The Executive Secretary of the GBHM when our first "Colonial" missions were established was Pastor Raymond Weichman. He preached for our church dedication in Falls Church in November of 1966, just after he had accepted a call to Florida. The board would soon be calling to replace him. My name was on the call list. You can imagine how shaken I was when I opened the door of our hall closet and found that Ray had left his top coat there. Was this Elijah's mantle? Was I to be Elisha? NO! He had left it there by mistake and Norm Berg was called to succeed him and that pretty well cured me of any inclinations towards Pentecostalism, Pietism or any other isms which looks for signs and wonders.

Pastor Norm Berg was an active executive secretary who was involved in many of our North Atlantic District missions. He liked to be on top of every project and visit each one in person.
He believed in efficiency. He once said, "If I can cut 10% off the cost of each of 9 parsonages, we can build 10 parsonages." Norm tried to retire a few years ago but couldn't do it. None of us thought he could. He's back in the ministry serving a congregation in Texas and I'm sure he's loving every minute of it.

Two years before we became a mission district the Michigan District asked us to form a local mission committee. Pastor Baumler, Mr. Donald Ruffer and I served on it. Pastor Baumler acted as chairman.

When we became a mission district I was elected chairman of our board and held the position for 8 years until we became a district. At that time, Pastor Paul Schmiege replace me until he accepted a call out of the district in 1988. Pastor Schleicher has chaired the board from that time until now. I could write a lot about our mission board experiences, but I think it would be better if the mission board itself would do this and make it one of the contributions to our district archives for the benefit of posterity. I'll be happy to work with the board on this history.

District Presidents

In our early colonial days Pastor Norman Berg was president of the Michigan District. He was also first vice president of the synod, just one heartbeat away. His closest friends always assured him that they prayed daily for President Naumann's health. Pastor Berg always has been a person who's up on and interested in just about everything, especially if it has anything at all to do with the WELS! He took a very keen interest in our eastward expansion and was very ready to come out and install me on September 27, 1963. At a recent installation in Columbia, Maryland, where we had 18 pastors involved in the installation and at least 2 more in the congregation, I couldn't help but reflect on that September Sunday in 1963 when Pastor Berg had to do everything except the final prayer and benediction which he turned over to me, or that service in Highland Park, New Jersey, where I assisted Pastor Gieschen at the installation of Gary Baumler.

When Pastor Berg accepted the call as executive secretary of the GBHM, Pastor Waldemar Zarling succeeded him as district president in Michigan and served us until we became a district in 1983. I had the privilege of accompanying him at meetings in the Dover case which was settled before we became a district, in attending district council meetings under his presidency and in serving briefly with him on the COP. He was also a friend and neighbor and I clearly remember a discussion we had in which he advised me to take the call to Virginia. It was a feeling of deja vu when 25 years later I found myself giving his son the same advice. Pastor Zarling was an approachable, evangelical, reasonable man. Pastor Daniel Luetke must also remember some meeting we were attending in Lansing, Michigan. We were staying at a motel and Dan had some questions he wanted to ask him. We called his room and he said that he and his wife had already
turned in but wasn't asleep yet, so come on up. We did. She pulled the covers over her head and said, "Make believe I'm not here." We sat on the foot of the bed and discussed whatever that urgent issue was. What a father figure! My son-in-law later vicared for him so we often share our fond memories of him.

**Colloquy Men**

As an outpost of the WELS, we have often come into contact with pastors of other synods who have discussed the possibilities of a colloquy. To the best of my recollections, at least seven men actually followed through and passed their colloquies. All seven of them have either served, or are presently serving in our district. They are:

- Richard Mac Kain (from LCMS)
- Otto Zeeb (from LCMS)
- Thomas Photenhauer (from LCMS)
- Erich Waldek (from LCA)
- Frederick Archer (from CLC)
- James Shrader (from LCMS)
- Douglas Priestap (from LCMS)

Also by way of contact with other Lutheran pastors, in May of 1974, our Colonial Conference hosted a Lutheran Free Conference in Hartford, Conn., at the airport Inn. As visiting elder, I was asked to chair the conference. It wasn't an especially large group. District President Norman Berg was there acting as WELS PR man. Professor Siegbert Becker and Armin Schultze presented papers for the WELS.

**Vicars and Summer Vicars**

In the summer of 1964, I was able to get away on vacation because of two summer vicars which were assigned to assist me for about 6 weeks. They were John Henning and Kieth Kruck. I don't have a record of all the summer vicars who served our district during our "colonial" days, but there would be quite a list of them. Their services were most appreciated. They did some great canvass work for us, were a source of fellowship and often the key to our summer vacation plans. Of all our summer vicars the one I will probably always remember most clearly is Paul Schmiege, not only because of the years he spent serving our congregation in Raleigh and on our district mission board, but also because of an experience during his summer vicarage. We had been doing some door-to-door canvassing near our church and it was getting close to quitting time so I drove to about where I thought he would probably be and got there just in time to see him clearing a hedge just inches ahead of a bulldog which didn't seem to take too kindly to strangers.

At one time, during the mid 70's, a vicar, Nathan Pope, was assigned to work under Pastor Mac Kain in developing a nucleus for a Wilmington, Delaware, mission. Pastor Thomas Photenhauer has had vicars as long as he's been in the WELS and even before that
when his congregation was in the LCMS. I believe that Pastor Allen Zahn was his first vicar and, therefore, also the first vicar for the North Atlantic District. As district president, I've had the services of a vicar since 1985. Pastor Schleicher, as mission board chairman, has had the services of a vicar for a little over a year as part of our synod's new effort to assist mission board chairmen in their ever increasing work loads.

North Atlantic District Lutheran Elementary Schools

I believe that St. Paul's congregation of Ottawa operated a school years ago before they affiliated with the WELS. Our first North Atlantic District WELS Lutheran Elementary School was began by Grace of Falls Church back in 1973. Miss Susan Westendorf was called as the first teacher and still serves the school today. In 1976, two new schools were begun in South Windsor, Conn., and Baltimore, Maryland. Miss Susan Haar was called as the first teacher in Baltimore and still serves the school today. The South Windsor school operated for 6 years and closed in 1982. In 1977, our Virginia Beach, Virginia and East Brunswick, New Jersey, congregations both opened schools. The Virginia Beach school closed in 1987. The East Brunswick school is still in operation today. In 1982, a new school was begun in Largo, Maryland, and is still in operation today. Our newest school in Christiana, Delaware, has been in operation for several years as a pre-school operation and is in the process of adding grades and expanding to a Lutheran Elementary School.

God willing, our North Atlantic District Lutheran Elementary School system will peak at sometime in the future, but our peak to date was in 1983 when we had a total of five schools, 10 teachers, and an enrollment of 112 students.

The chief obstacles we face in our North Atlantic District Lutheran Elementary School system is the size of our congregations, the travel time and distances, and the difficulty in gathering and holding that critical mass needed to present a marketable product.

One of the memorable activities of our North Atlantic District Lutheran Elementary School system has been the annual spring sport competition traditionally held in Largo, Maryland.

At this point I could once again say, this is another phase of our North Atlantic District history which might be the subject for an archives paper which our teachers conference might wish to undertake.

Closing Remarks

How far should I range? What should I still cover? It seems that much of what still could be said is still taking place. Tom Pfotenhauer and Al Lindke can tell you more about Canada than I could. Dan Krause and Dave Rosenbaum know all the New York City
anecdotes. Maybe I'm almost finished with this paper except for a few closing comments such as, I hope you'll all stay in this district as long as I have so that you can sit in the shade of trees you've planted, and watch the birth of missions which grow up to give birth to other new missions.

There are just a few memories I have which didn't seem to fit anywhere else - that conference we held in the Army Navy Club in Manhattan in the early 70's with over 20 pastors and lay delegates present. What an exciting experience that was compared to our old "one original and two carbon copy" conferences of only a few years earlier. There was also the time the Southeastern Conference of the Michigan District came and met at our church in the late 60's. There was the Colonial Conference Crier which some years ago just gradually lost its voice. There was Paul Ziemer, the only pastor to take two calls out of one district and miss both of his farewell parties. There was that great audio visual aid we produced - "Go to Those Great Cities." Don't fail to miss it if you ever have the opportunity.

Finally I'd like to dedicate this paper to Earl and Elaine Cooper who were part of the nucleus waiting for me when I arrived in 1963 and are still members of our church today. And a special word of thanks to our secretary, Shirley (nee' Popp) Schuler, who's going to have to type and copy this paper. I mention her maiden name because that's how she was listed in our 1963 annual report. We give all glory to God for all the success we've enjoyed in the Colonial Conference and the North Atlantic District. I've tried to share some of my impressions of people and events from years ago. I've tried not to damage anyone's memory or reputations in the process. If I have, I ask their forgiveness and your help in editing any such offenses out of this paper before you accept it with thanks. If any historical inaccuracies have crept in, what can I say except, "If it didn't happen, maybe it should have," and remember the alternate title I have proposed, "It May Have Been Something Like This."

Walt Beckmann
The Robert Geweke living room, with Earl & Elaine Cooper, where the mission board first meet in 1962

First church service held at Churchill Road School
WISCONSIN SYNOD LUTHERAN MISSION
Churchill Road School
March 31, 1963
VOL I No. 1

Order of Service
(Judica, the fifth Sunday in Lent)

PIANO PRELUDE

OPENING HYMN - No. 7 "As We Begin Another Week"

THE LITURGY - (Page 5 in the Hymnal)

Epistle: Philippians 2, 5-11
In the epistle Paul speaks of the two
States of Christ, humiliation and ex-
altation. When Christ came to earth
He "emptied" Himself of the divine
honor and glory which was bestowed
upon His human nature in order that
He might be able to die for our sins.
Wherefore He has received the
praise and honor of God that every
knee should bow before Him.

Gospel: John 1, 6-14
In the Gospel, John speaks of the re-
ception which Jesus received in the
world, rejection by some, but accept-
ance by others who recognized Him
truly to be the very Son of God made
flesh.

THE SERMON HYMN - No. 360 "Oh, For A
Thousand Tongues to Sing"

THE SERMON - I Timothy 3, 16

"The Greatest Sensation In History"

THE OFFERTORY

THE PRAYERS

CLOSING HYMN - No. 361 "O Jesus, King Most
Wonderful"

PRAYER & BENEEDICTION

THE DOXOLOGY - No. 644

THE POSTLUDE

WELCOME
In the Name of Jesus Christ we welcome you to
the first service in this area under the auspice
of the Wisconsin Ev. Lutheran Synod. We hope
you have not experienced undue difficulty in finding
our place of worship and now that you have
found it, will return every Sunday.

PASTOR KOENINGER
conducted the services this morning. He is on
leave of absence from his congregation in Lan-
sing, Michigan, and will be in the area for the
next five weeks, seeking to contact all who have
expressed an interest and desire for a Wisconsin
Synod church in this area. In the event his serv-
ces are required, he can be reached at 5818 Van
Fleet Street, McLean.
Tel.: EL 6-4795

A BRIEF MEETING
explaining the hopes and plans of the Mission
Board of the Wisconsin Ev. Lutheran Synod for
this area will follow after the close of the service.
Thereupon will follow an informal coffee hour to
give opportunity to become better acquainted with
your fellow worshippers.
A MISSION IN PROFILE

How long will it take for our mission to get a building? Until we ask our friends and neighbors to join with us in the work of building our church, it will be difficult to answer.

1965 August
Wisconsin Synod received an appeal to begin work in the Washington, D.C., area.

1965 August
Synod representatives met with five interested families.

1965 March
Twenty-eight people attend first worship service. Services conducted by Synod pastors from the area.

1965 April
Five children attend first Sunday School classes.

1965 December
Resident pastor installed.

1966 December
Average attendance for first year = 21.

1966 February
Church site purchased (five acres for $28,500.)

1966 April
Architects' services are engaged to draw up plans.

1966 September
Funeral service held for our first Worshipper (Allan T. White).

1966 December
Statistics at the end of second full year (Average attendance = 84, Sunday School = 41).

1967 January
Chapel construction begins. (Does a long legal battle involving water drainage.

1967 November
Three hundred twenty-nine people attend two dedication services. Without adequate drainage, we may have a temporary occupancy permit.

1967 December
Statistics after one full year in the church building: (Average attendance = 98; Sunday School = 41)

1968 December
Congregation goes self-supporting and returns all synod subsidies received during 1966. Due to ordination of first Synod minister, 1966.

1969 December
Statistics for the year: (Average attendance = 137; Communicant members = 153)

1970 January
First services are held for our families in the Maryland suburbs.

1970 September
Legal matters settled. Site work completed. Permanent occupancy finally granted.

1970 December
$35,000 budget adopted for 1971.

1971 April
263 worship on Easter Sunday.

1971 June
Statistics for first half of year: Average attendance = 157; Communicant members = 159.

1971 July
Building Committee authorized to engage architect to draw up plans for expansion.

VISITING ELDER'S REPORT

During the year 1974 our Colonial Conference congregations have raised nearly $70,000 in offerings to the mission work of our Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod. For one who can recall our first subscription of $500 in 1966, this certainly reflects ten years of rich blessings and properly grants our confidence by the hand of the Lord. For this incentive, we shall continue to give generously and to pray for God from whom all blessings flow.

1977 THE COLONIAL CONFERENCE

1. ABEINGWOD, OREGON, ORLANDO, CANADA
   Souls: 52 Comm.: 74
   Organized mission. Founded: 1974

2. ST. PAUL, OTTAWA, ONTARIO, CANADA
   Souls: 83 Comm.: 560
   Organized mission. Founded: 1974

3. OUR SHEPHERD, POINTE-NOIRE, QUEBEC, CANADA
   Souls: 10 Comm.: 23

4. NEW MISSION, HORSESHOE, VIRGINIA
   Souls: 10 Comm.: 8

5. KING OF KINGS, STEELTON, NEW YORK
   Souls: 2 Comm.: 9
   Rev. David Clark, Self-supporting. Founded: 1970

6. CRESSKIRK, LAKEPORT, CALIFORNIA
   Souls: 1 Comm.: 12
   Rev. Dennis Vlaalaa, Self-supporting. Founded: 1967

7. CRUCID OF GOD, LAFAYETTE, LONG ISLAND, N.Y.
   Souls: 1 Comm.: 79

8. EASTERN, ALLENTOWN, PENNSYLVANIA
   Souls: 1 Comm.: 13

9. OUR SAVIOR'S, EAST BRUNSWICK, NEW JERSEY
   Souls: 1 Comm.: 124

10. NEW MISSION, HARBORGE, PENNSYLVANIA
    Souls: 1 Comm.: 10
    Rev. Dennis Vlaalaa, Self-supporting. Founded: 1966

11. KING OF PRUSSIA, PENNSYLVANIA
    Souls: 4 Comm.: 34

12. ST. JOHN'S, WILMINGTON, OREON
    Souls: 5 Comm.: 36

13. BAINBRIDGE, BALTIMORE, MARYLAND
    Souls: 1 Comm.: 120

14. DIVINE PEACE, LARGO, MARYLAND
    Souls: 1 Comm.: 71

15. GRACE, BALTIMORE, MARYLAND
    Souls: 3 Comm.: 183

16. NEW MISSION, WESTPORT, NEW HAMPSHIRE
    Souls: 1 Comm.: 20
    Self-supporting. Founded: 1967

17. RESURRECTION, VIRGINIA BEACH, VIRGINIA
    Souls: 1 Comm.: 120
    Organized mission. Founded: 1966

18. GETHSEMANI, ALEXANDRIA, VIRGINIA
    Souls: 3 Comm.: 57
"And ye shall be witnesses unto me" 

Vol. 1, March, 1867, No. 2

A LETTER MEDITATION

"The next day John seeth Jesus coming unto him, and saith, Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world." John 1:29

"The Perfect Sacrifice"

If someone were to see pictures of Jesus’ suffering and death without knowing anything of Jesus’ life, he might easily conclude that Jesus was a violent criminal. For look at the way the people treated him. The very fact of his birth, the very fact that he ever lived, perfect and without sin. He died willingly for your sake and for mine. No man has ever suffered or died for another man. This Lenten season as we behold Jesus Christ willingly going to Calvary’s cross, it tells us that God loves us and cares for us. Though we are unworthy sinners God provided a sacrifice, the Lamb of God, for that altar on Calvary.

Jesus is the Lamb of God for He is the chosen of God to take away sin from the world. God sent His only Son, His only Son He provided the Lamb, none other than His own Son, Jesus Christ. Now was God glorified in this thirteen days of our Lenten sacrifice? Had He carried it out? In choosing His own Son to be the Lamb of God, He chose the Lamb of God, who would sacrifice Himself. Since this Lamb is both true Man and true God, He is the perfect sacrifice. Only He could have really paid for all our sins.

In His capacity as the Lamb of God, Jesus takes away our sins. That is why a Lamb is sacrificed. In the Old Testament lamb was sacrificed as symbols of the coming Savior who would take away all sins. Jesus is the Lamb of God who takes away all our sins. That is the purpose of His coming into this world. May we ever look to Jesus Christ for our eternal salvation and for our spiritual sins, and for our sins.

In Jesus you and I can be absolutely certain of eternal salvation. Our sins as all sins deserve God’s wrath and punishment, for the transgression of God’s Holy Will. There is only one sacrifice that pays for sin that is the sacrifical lamb of God’s Holy Will. For the Lamb takes our sins upon Himself. On the cross Jesus became the greatest murder, the greatest sacrifice because He bore all sins. And He paid for those sins with His innocent suffering and death and with His holy, precious blood. He is the perfect sacrifice.

No other name of Jesus is more precious to us than the title Jesus the Baptist gave Him: the Lamb of God. Either we pay for our sins or God removes them through the Lamb of God. He cannot pay for them. But here is good news! Behold, the Lamb of God! He takes away the sins of the world. He is our perfect sacrifice.

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EDITORIAL

"Welcome Readers"

Welcome readers, of the first edition of The Colonial Crier, a bulletin to be published cooperatively by the pastors of the Colonial Conference of the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod. From this edition forward The Crier will be published every few months carrying news of events of interest in your sister parishes. We hope that The Crier will be a helpful resource of interest to all of our members. It is our hope that The Crier will become a regular and regular reader of The Crier.

We certainly are working together in a rich new experience in the Kingdom of God and Our Synod. It’s fitting that we should try to share each other’s joys and bear each other’s burdens. We’ll certainly enjoy talking about your growth, your ministries, and your stories.

As you face frustrations in dealing for real estate and in trying to keep your building budgets stable and balanced, we hope that you’ve grown from this experience. When we all are able to grow, we’ll be able to share in this mission colonization which is opening for us in such cities as Syracuse and Hartford, and second fields already beginning to develop near our congregations in Washington and New Jersey. At the moment these new fields are only ideas, but if and when they develop, they’ll be our new missions and our sister congregations, and you’ll read about them in The Crier.

In coming editions we also hope to take a few backward glances at what’s been happening in our conference since the first service was held in Virginia on March 31, 1968. We’ll try to acquaint you with the faces and places of the Colonial Conference through a series of articles on our existing congregations:

Grace of Falls Church, Virginia - Our Savior’s of North Brunswick, New Jersey - Peace of King of Prussia, Pennsylvania - Our new mission in Oconomowoc, Wisconsin.

As you look back and consider the blessings of the Lord to date, you can’t help but wonder what greater victories He’ll be granting to us in the future. In 1968, the thought of a Wisconsin Synod congregation on the Eastern Seaboard, life, might seem to be a far away dream. But today, just four years later, the horse is standing solidly on all fours with west coast in a great big way.

1976 will mark the 13th anniversary of our work out here on the East Coast. If we only continue to add one new field a year as we have been doing, this would still give us 13 mission colonies by 1976. Now’s the time for a spirit of colonizing! I rather suspect, though, that when the Crier readers of 1976 read this article in reprint all that will remain is the story say, Our founding fathers certainly underestimated the Lord’s plans for the East Coast.

If I sound a bit overly optimistic, I’ve caught it from the Apostle Paul who looked out across the Mediterranean Sea one day and said, “If God is for us, who can be against us?”

W. Beckmann

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AROUND TNC CONFERENCE

On January 30, 1967, the three pastors presently representing the Colonial Conference met at Pastor Ullhorn’s in King of Prussia, Pennsylvania (Philadelphia), for fellowship, study, and an exchange of ideas. Pastor Ullhorn preached on the importance of following and receiving God’s directives in our lives based on 1 Kings 2:1-4.

Pastor Beckmann presented a summary and survey of the life and writing of the Prophet Hoseas. Pastor Beaumer gave a detailed study of James 1:18-27.

The reports of all three missionaries are optimistic under God’s guidance for 1967. At Grace in Falls Church, Virginia (Washington D.C.) where having a new church will soon become old habit, the membership grew from 400 to 500 in the course of one year. Our mission at Orange, New Jersey, seems to be growing. Another pastor will be joining us for another great event coming on April 4, 1967, at Grace is the Spring pastoral conference of the Eastern District called the 13th Annual Pastoral Conference.

Over 50 congregations will be represented. This is the first genuine pastoral conference in the history of the Synod. It reflects the intense interest our brothers and sisters in the faith have for our mission thrust in the East.

At our Baltimore mission enthusiasm is running high. Attendance at the 25s and 30s has hit 50. Our Synodical Board and Catechism Class are operating. This should be the next eastern mission to receive our full-time pastors.

At Peace in King of Prussia, Pennsylvania, the members spent a part of the first two months of 1967 uncertain from Sunday to Sunday where the next service would be held. Fire damage forced them temporarily out of their meeting room in the Valley Forge Shopping Center. Since then they met once in the personage and in three different rooms of a motel. Back in the bank again, the average Sunday attendance continues at an encouraging 70% of the total membership. The voters are presently adopting a constitution for the congregation.

At our Savior’s in North Brunswick, New Jersey, where dealing for land is becoming a fine art, the possibilities for a piece of land in the presents at the new site. Meanwhile, an increase in communicant membership and interested souls has given the members cause to rejoice. Our Savior’s looks eagerly ahead to when she can report her first attendance of 50 or more souls.

Elsewhere in the East calls have come to the Wisconsin Synod to provide services. Let us pray that we can continue to expand our mission work and enter the doors the Lord holds open for us.

G. Beaumer

Page 4

NOTES & NEWS

We’ll use this column each time for a pertinent quote, or a newsy note that didn’t fit into the other articles. A comment or thought from one of our readers might fit here too. The pastors

The latest information coming our way tells us that there are 57 pastoral vacancies in the Wisconsin Synod involving 75 pulpits. The Colonial Conference is one of the five districts that are using the District Mission Board to call a full-time missionary to the Baltimore area.

The Colonial Conference Crier will be distributed to everyone in our mission congregations as well as to other friends on our mailing list. Around 170 copies will be distributed this first time as well and an even bigger will go out at our Spring conference in Falls Church, Virginia.

Did you know that two members of our Colonial Conference are preparing to become Christian Brothers? These teachers at our Synod’s normal training college. Mr. Edward Boiling of Our Savior’s in North Brunswick, New Jersey, and Mr. John Nelson of Peace in King of Prussia, Pennsylvania, attend Dr. Martin Luther College in Iowa, Minnesota. May we remember these young people in our prayers and ask the Lord to lead men of our young men to take up this work. The harvest truly is plentiful, but the laborers are few.” - Matthew 9:37.

R. Ullhorn

The Colonial Conference Crier (Vol. 1, No. 1, March 1967)

This newsletter is printed quarterly in the interest of Wisconsin Synod missions in the Eastern part of our nation. The editorial is the responsibility of the Colonial Conference pastors. You can reach us at 622 West Main Street, 5th floor, in our office as our office.

Communication concerning The Crier or inquiries about our mission work should be directed to one of the pastors.

Conference Directory

Grace Lutheran Church Walter Beckmann, Pastor 254 Main Street Annandale, Virginia Peace Lutheran Church Ronald Boiling, Pastor 204 Heather Road King of Prussia, Pa.

Our Savior’s Lutheran Church Gary Beaumer, Pastor 206 Main Street North Brunswick, New Jersey

Baltimore Lutheran Mission Served by the 3 pastors Service every Sunday in the Park Tower Hotel, Towson, Md.
DISTRICT STATUS: DELEGATES DECIDE AGAINST IT

Should the Colonial Conference of the Michigan District of the Wisconsin Synod become the "Colonial District?" The question has been discussed formally and informally for at least a few years.

In October, 1979, pastors and congregational delegates met at Good Shepherd Lutheran Church, Randolph, N.J., to discuss district status for our Conference. A special committee had gathered pertinent information and presented it to the conference.

There was agreement that Colonial Conference congregations have needs which are difficult for the Michigan District to meet. However, many delegates expressed concern that there is not yet adequate manpower or experience to staff the positions of a new district. A motion in favor of district status stipulated that a two-thirds majority would be needed for approval. When a vote was taken, the delegates split 50/50 on the question.

If the delegates had decided to request district status, the request would have gone to the 1980 Michigan District Convention for approval and then on to the 1981 Synod convention. Undoubtedly, the issue will come up again as the Conference grows and develops under the Lord’s blessing.

A BRIEF HISTORY OF OUR CONFERENCE

1952 - Several families in the Washington, D.C., area requested a meeting with the Michigan District Mission Board.

1953 - Services were begun in McLean, Virginia; 28 people attended the first service. The first resident pastor was installed in northern Virginia.

1954 - Land was purchased in Virginia. Monthly services were begun in New Jersey. Monthly services were begun and later discontinued in Norfolk, VA.

1955 - A resident pastor was installed in East Brunswick, N.J. A pastor accepted the call to begin work in the Philadelphia area. The first "conference" was held.

1966 - A mission was started in Baltimore, MD. A resident pastor was installed.

1967 - The Colonial Conference Crier was begun. Expository work was begun in Hartford, CT.

1968 - Grace congregation of Falls Church became self-supporting.

1969 - Norfolk-Virginia Beach received mission status. The Crier personnel: "...attend Easter Services in Colonial Conference. Exploratory work began in Pflugfeld, MA.

1970 - Two former Missouri Synod congregations from Dover, NJ, and Ottawa, Ontario, plus three seminary graduates double our Colonial pastor roster. Work was begun in Danbury, CT. This mission eventually closed, but we are back on the scene again in Trumbull, CT. East Coast congregations form the Colonial Conference.

1970-1979 - We'll omit mention of all the new exploratory work, dedications, etc., and look at the highlights of the Conference.

1973 - The first Pastor-Lay Delegate conference was held in New York City.


1975 - District Mission Status was approved at the Synod Convention. The Colonial Mission District Mission Board was elected.

1977 - Pastor-Lay Delegate Conference tabled the district status discussion until 1979.

1978 - Hudson (north) and Chesapeake (south) Conferences formed within Mission District.

1979 - Decision to postpone request for District Status at least two more years and enlarge the Mission District Mission Board from three to seven members.

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Pastor Beckmann, Marilyn, Laurel, James & Deborah

Pre - 1970
Colonial Conference

Michigan District
Southeastern Conference
meets at Grace
Late 60's

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First Teacher
Graduates
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God’s teachings, an acquired taste

Walter F. Beckmann

We hear many Catholics want to be “Smorgasbord Catholics,” free to choose from the Vatican’s doctrinal menu. If their church’s stand on abortion, birth control, or women’s ordination isn’t their taste, they’re not going to put those papal offerings on their plate of personal beliefs.

No surprise. The Catholic Church itself has accepted only what it wanted from the menu of God’s Word. If the recipe, “There is no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus,” seemed too sweet, they replaced it with a sour dish called, “Purgatory.” If the words, “There is . . . one Mediator . . . between God and man,” didn’t offer enough variety, they added a few specials, “the mediation of the saints and the blessed virgin.”

Human reason led them to such changes. One adult instruction manual explains, “Common sense proves the existence of purgatory.” Why, then, shouldn’t their members use common sense when selecting from the church’s menu?

Not only Roman Catholics decide doctrine by taste. One poll reported that 51 percent of Christians feel their salvation depends upon how good they are. The scriptural teaching, “By the deeds of the law no flesh shall be justified,” seems to be too self-effacing for many tastes. And why shouldn’t church members pick what they believe, if their churches tell them the Bible is only a human concoction, flavored by personal tastes and opinions?

As a church body, we have to make sure we offer a proper doctrinal menu. If you go into an ethnic restaurant, you want to be served authentic ethnic cuisine. The same goes for our churches. We must always serve only authentic scriptural fare, unseasoned with human opinions.

As church members, we should appreciate the spiritual food Scripture sets before us. In Lent, for example, our churches serve large extra portions of the passion history. It’s often a bitter message, but rich in the spiritual protein through which the Holy Spirit adds strength to our faith.

As we appreciate that main course, let’s develop a taste for all of God’s great side dishes, every doctrine of Scripture. Sometimes when you first taste a recipe, it may not agree with you—you have to acquire a taste for it. Likewise with many scriptural recipes. They may not be pleasant to our spiritual taste buds, because they are flavored with God’s wisdom—not ours. Don’t push them aside saying, “I don’t think I care for this.” Study God’s own recipe book, and see if you don’t agree with the prophet Ezekiel: “This tastes sweet as honey in my mouth.”

The Holy Spirit must give us a taste for doctrines, but we can do some things to try to acquire a taste for them. We can study Scripture passages, sit in on Bible information classes, read and study The People’s Bible Teaching*, the coming companion series to The People’s Bible.

Before we swallow any study, we should make sure it’s based on Scripture alone and not mixed with any human opinions. Then pray the Holy Spirit will teach us to enjoy the taste and benefits of it in all of our churches.

Many scriptural recipes may not be pleasant to our spiritual taste buds, because they are flavored with God’s wisdom—not ours.

*The first volumes of this series are due at Northwestern Publishing House in June 1996.

Walter Beckmann is pastor at Grace, Falls Church, Virginia.
Blessed fellowship

Walter F. Beckmann

Fellowship is a beautiful, positive, exciting, appealing word. It means a group has found common views and opinions, tastes and interests. Because of this, they enjoy each other’s company, welcome opportunities to get together, and work toward common goals.

We enjoy family fellowship, where we are of one blood or have been joined by marriage. Families work, play, and pray together. If one falls on hard times, the others pull him through.

We develop fellowship with co-workers. We have a common goal to make our companies succeed. Our livelihoods depend on it. We feel so “in it together” that we may get together after work. Colleagues in the military or in law enforcement feel a bond of fellowship, an esprit de corps, because they realize their lives may depend upon each other.

We enjoy church fellowship, too, with people who share our religious beliefs. Paul gives us God’s ideal church fellowship: “I appeal to you, brothers, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that all of you agree with one another so that there may be no divisions among you, and that you may be perfectly united in mind and thought” (1 Corinthians 1:10).

When others share our religious beliefs, we offer the hand of fellowship to them. We enjoy such fellowship in WELS. By God’s grace we share the same doctrinal beliefs such as divine inspiration of the Bible. When many claim the Bible is a fallible human document, we hold that it is the inerrant Word of God. Without apology, we confess our belief in creation, original sin, the doctrines of Christ, and especially the belief that faith in Jesus’ life, death, and resurrection is the sinner’s only hope of eternal life. We profess our agreement in doctrine and practice by our WELS membership and by declaring ourselves in fellowship with Christians who hold the same Scripture-based beliefs.

This fellowship brings joy each time we worship and confess our common faith with our congregation. When we’re away from home, we worship in one of our sister congregations and hear the same scriptural message we hear in our home church.

To foster a greater appreciation of the fellowship WELS members enjoy, the Conference of Presidents has commissioned a Bible study on church fellowship. We’re striving for a scriptural, instructive, positive, and encouraging presentation, one that makes us thankful of our fellowship and eager to practice it.

For proper balance, we will show times when a lack of agreement in doctrine and practice makes expressions of fellowship inappropriate. Love for God’s truth causes us to refrain from expressions of fellowship that could encourage someone to hold to a false doctrine that could be harmful to his faith.

This document will not anticipate every fellowship question or give detailed prescriptions for dealing with them all. It will present scriptural principles and emphasize each situation must be handled with humility, patience, love, and concern for souls. We encourage each other to sound scriptural practice, but we also remember that love keeps us from being too quick to judge each other as we apply this doctrine with patience in our lives and ministries.

We have a blessed fellowship. Let’s work together to strengthen it, defend the scriptural truths it rests on, and proclaim those saving truths to all the world.

We encourage each other to sound scriptural practice, but we also remember that love keeps us from being too quick to judge each other as we apply this doctrine with patience.

Walter Beckmann is pastor at Grace, Falls Church, Virginia.
It's a shame

Walter F. Beckmann

A number of television documentaries and talk shows deal with AIDS. Two I saw made me stop and think about the shame of it all.

On the first show, Maury Povich interviewed guests who innocently contracted AIDS. A young girl told how her mother, a hemophiliac, contracted the AIDS virus through a blood transfusion and passed it on to her. When asked how she felt about being HIV positive, the girl said she wasn’t going to feel ashamed. Maury assured her, and rightly so, that she had no reason to be ashamed. Those who would shun her should feel ashamed.

Most of us know of hemophiliacs who have become HIV positive from contaminated blood or of others who innocently contracted the disease from an unfaithful spouse. Fear of contracting the disease might make us avoid them. But in love and faith, we ought to learn about the disease, what precautions to take for our protection, and how to help such victims. We ought to be ashamed if we pass by instead of stopping to help. We should encourage them. God has not abandoned them. And we won’t either.

But shame on the person who contracted the disease by sharing a needle while doing drugs, or through illicit sexual or homosexual activity. What a shameful desecration of a body the Holy Spirit wants to use as his temple. That’s a reason for shame, the kind of shame the Bible calls contrition, the first step in sincere repentance. Without contrition and repentance, saving faith cannot endure, and without faith, there is no salvation.

Further shame on the person who has the disease and knowingly transmits it to others. Such a person is as much a killer as the terrorist who plants a bomb in a suitcase on an airplane or in a crowd at the Olympic games.

Let me tell you about the other TV program. One guest had been raped by a gang of men, one of whom had AIDS and transmitted it to her. He was caught and given three years in prison. The day he got out, he raped another woman, and now she too is HIV positive.

That makes me ashamed, ashamed we allow this to happen to an innocent woman, ashamed we don’t do more to raise a great cry of moral outrage. Our government must use the power God has given it to punish the wrongdoer.

At times I’d like to write off those who contracted the disease by sinful living. It would be easy to say, “They disobeyed God’s law. They brought his judgment upon themselves. Now let them suffer and die in it.” But then I think, “How thankful I am that God doesn’t deal that way with me and my sins. I bang my head in shame and pray, ‘Let me be like Jesus.’

It’s a shame if we ever become so disgusted with people who have sinfully contracted this disease that we won’t take the time to point out to them that though their sin has been shameful, the blood of Jesus Christ cleanses them from all sins. It’s a shame whenever blood becomes contaminated with the AIDS virus, but it’s a far greater shame when, through a failure to repent, the holy precious blood of God’s Son has been shed in vain.

That’s the greatest shame of all.

Walter Beckmann is a pastor at Grace, Falls Church, Virginia.
A time to celebrate

Walter F. Beckmann

People are becoming more conscious of the approach of the year 2000. For many, that year holds a special fascination. Many wonder if it’s when Christ plans to return. The closer we get, the more such speculation will increase, and the more such prophecies will multiply. Jesus told us that people will say, “Look, here is Christ.” or “Look, there he is.” I have no authority to tell you he won’t return in 2000, only that he will return when people least expect it. We should be ready for him at anytime.

The approach of the year 2000 reminds us WELS members that there is something for which we can and should prepare—our 150th anniversary.

I’m the chairman of a committee President Gurgel appointed to make plans for a sesquicentennial celebration. We’ve met several times and discussed anniversary publications, videos, rallies, and mission opportunities. We’re ready to suggest a 150th anniversary building project—a chapel for Martin Luther College. We’re also attempting to set up a timetable of events to present to the 1997 synod convention.

In preparation for our first meeting, I asked committee members for their ideas. One pastor encouraged us to emphasize the blessings of membership in our synod. We have many blessings to be thankful for—the Bible and that WELS still regards it as God’s divinely inspired and inerrant Word. We still confess the three ecumenical creeds without any reservations. We still subscribe to the Lutheran Confessions as a correct exposition of God’s Word. We have churches, schools, mission programs, 150 years of history, and the fellowship of 415,000 members who are one in faith and doctrine.

All this is God’s work, not our own. We have no cause for boasting but feel thankful that God has blessed us. Let’s be glad for our blessings, eager to celebrate this milestone, and poised to participate in the work and opportunities he sets before us.

Our anniversary committee wants input from fellow WELS members. We’re inviting people from various organizations and age groups to our planning meetings to try to get involvement from every corner of our synod. We can’t invite all of you, but we want your suggestions. Tell us how you feel we should be thanking and praising God for 150 years of WELS and 2,000 years of the New Testament Christian Church. What should we be doing to promote a positive attitude about our synod in the minds of our members and the world, and to give glory to God?

Time and resources may not permit us to implement every suggestion, but we will consider them all. They’ll expand our thinking. Your warnings will keep us on the right track. Suggestions we may not adopt on a synodwide level may adapt well for your local area. By offering your suggestions you’ll be taking the first step in getting involved in this celebration, and that, in itself, will be a valuable contribution. We’re all in this together. Let’s do all we can to celebrate 150 years of God’s grace and continue to serve his church together.

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Send ideas to Ron Roth, 150th anniversary committee, 2929 N Mayfair Rd, Milwaukee WI 53222-4398; fax, 414/256-3899; e-mail, usr52@sab.wels.net.