

AN
INTRODUCTION TO LUTHERANISM
IN
MICHIGAN'S UPPER PENINSULA
A.D. 1600-1881

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4/27/81

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A.D. 1600-1881

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PART

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There's an old adage that reads, "Familiarity breeds contempt." This little precept may hold true in many circumstances in life, although there are obvious exceptions to this rule. One such exception is the Upper Peninsula of Michigan, where familiarity breeds appreciation. Only unfamiliarity breeds contempt when you're talking about the U.P. Due to the fact that there are very few people outside of those who have lived on the peninsula that are familiar with the peninsula, much contempt and apathy has developed concerning it. Yet this fact has always plagued the rugged peninsula--people just aren't informed about what a wonderful place it is. Examples from history prove just how indifferent nations have been toward the U.P. The Iroquois, who practically emptied the lower peninsula by their raiding war parties, rarely even set foot on U.P. soil.¹ Although three wars were fought in its vicinity (French and Indian War, Revolutionary War, and War of 1812), not one of them was concerned with the ownership of the peninsula per se. And finally, a high-point of contempt toward the U.P. came at the settlement of the Michigan-Ohio War in 1836.² It seems that President Jackson didn't want to lose the votes from Ohio, so he offered Michigan the U.P. in exchange for the Toledo/Maumee strip. The real insult to the U.P. came when the Michigan legislature voted the offer down, Ohio was pleased with the deal thinking that they had gotten the better end of the settlement, and Wisconsin (From whom the U.P. had just been taken) never even put up a fuss. The coup de grace came when Congress forced Michigan to accept the U.P. in order to become a state.³

There are many other examples where unfamiliarity of the U. P. has led to apathetic or contemptuous feelings toward this northern-most appendage into the Great Lakes. One such example is in the area of religion. Many modern theologians and church historians know very little of the religious history of the U.P. Of the churches that settled in the region probably the worst offenders were the Lutherans, with the Wisconsin Synod topping the list. It is the opinion of

this author that if the WELS had been just a little more informed of the circumstances, and had taken a little more effort, the National Evangelical Church might not have merged with the Missouri synod in 1963.⁴ Yet the action of the WELS was not exclusive of the general attitude of most Lutheran theologians, pastors, teachers, and laymen--whose only basic knowledge of the U.P. is its geographic location. The religious and especially, the Lutheran history of the U.P. goes practically unnoticed, despite the fact that there is much that we Lutherans can learn from the religious history of the U.P.

Thus, it is for the purpose of sharing some of the early religious, and especially, Lutheran history that we begin this study.

THE LAND AND ITS PEOPLE

The people and the land of the U.P. are both a lesson in contrasts, and also a lesson in reality. They are a lesson in contrast in that although we live in the space age, much of the U.P. still remains almost primitive wilderness. For example; when we take a look at a road map of the U.P., we notice how few roads there are--especially between Marquette and L'Anse in the Huron Mountains area. And also, when we take a look at a population chart, such as Figure A in the appendix, we must consider that the only area that has a population more dense than 25 people per square mile is the Houghton-Hancock-Calumet area. Compared to the eight state Great Lakes region, (with the exception of the northeastern part of Minnesota), none of these other states have a population distribution less than 3 people per square mile. On the contrary, there is at least one area per state that has a density of over 260 people per square mile.⁵ (Figure B) This contrast is particularly evident in the fact that in the lower state region, Wisconsin and the lower peninsula of Michigan; people are a very common sight. They are so much so that families living there spend hundreds of dollars each year just to, "Get away from it all." In the U.P. that money can be saved,

since your closest neighbor may be ten miles away. And even if you might live in a modern, fairly populous city or town, it doesn't take you very long for you to lose all traces of civilization. It is amazing how in these modern times, when planned parenthood has convinced us all that there's not enough of anything to go around if we don't implement zero population growth now; that in the matter of minutes in the U.P., a person can be so far away from civilization that the beaten path is only a deer trail through the forest. And that forest, the wilderness, can become an overwhelming reality, stifling any thoughts of a world beyond it.

This is the reality that I mentioned earlier: the land, the climate, and the extremes that they both can come to in the U.P. Anyone who ever fished its mineral laden rivers, or trolled in its crystal pure lakes; anyone who has spent the winter with four feet of snow on the ground and his roof; anyone who has left his carrots and beets in the ground all winter (Because the frost doesn't get down to the soil); anyone who has experienced any one of these will know of that contrast and reality of which I speak.

Yet not only is the land of the U.P. a study in contrast and reality. The people that inhabit this land are also a unique breed, with unique ways of looking at things. They are a contrast to civilization in that although TV, radio, highways, and prop jets have all brought the twentieth and even the twenty-first century into their lives; these people all retain a strong relationship with the past. Sometimes it's very difficult to distinguish the way that the modern 'Upper' lives from the way that his father and grandfather lived.⁶ The same strong cultural ties, the same Old-World customs and idiosyncrasies, and the same rugged individualism, still make the modern 'Upper' as distinct from his lower-state counterparts as they did his father. There is a unique way of reasoning, living, and acting in the U.P., and to a certain extent, this distinctive behavior is the child of both the people and the land. The 'Sugar-beeter' (lower penin-

sula resident) nor the 'Outlander' (Wisconsin-ite, or other foreigner) understand the 'Upper' and what he has to go through to survive. Nor does it seem as though they want to. That's why there's always been talk of secession from Michigan to form a new state, named Superior. To understand the difference in thought between the two cultures, let's look at a specific case--the sauna.

The sauna is the lifeblood of every faithful Finn or 'Upper'. And there are some customs in connection with the sauna which are so natural to the Finn that he doesn't give them a second thought; but which an outsider may marvel at. E.g., The customary clothing inside of a 120 degree sauna is usually only what God has endowed you with. And it does not phase a Finn one bit to be in the same sauna with married and single people of either sex. And they very seldom derive any sexual excitement from it. As one sage of the Copper Country once told me, "Did you ever try to get sexually excited at 150 degrees--it's impossible." (Chicky, 1978) Yet for someone from outside of that cultural setting to hear of such a thing, it smacks of pagan debauchery, which indeed it may be. But nevertheless, to a Finn, it's daily life.

But getting back to our thoughts about the land and its influence on the lifestyle of the residents of the U.P., let us say that this stark and sometimes cruel land has affected every group that has ever inhabited it.

The Indians, who roamed the peninsula, lived from day to day in a semi-nomadic style. And the reason for that was that there never was an overabundance of anything, except mosquitos, to allow them to stay in one place for very long.^{7,8}

The miners found that fact out also, as they followed the famous geologist Douglass Houghton to the rich copper and iron deposits of the Keweenaw Peninsula (Copper Country).⁹ The mines boomed at first, boulders of almost pure copper lay in riverbeds, and ledges of copper protruded from the forest floor in plain sight. But then, when the easy diggings were worked over, the peninsula held back her treasured gifts.

The peninsula became so stingy that most mines were closed down by the 1930's and '40's, while the sturdiest of them held on until 1968.^{10,11}

The sailors, such as Herman Melville, see the riches of the lakes--the fish in abundance, the clear and sparkling water, the fast traveling waterways.¹² But they also see the savage fury with which the lakes (Especially Superior) can strike and take all hands down to their watery graves. This lesson was learned by far too many men, such as the men of the fated 'Edmund Fitzgerald' which went down Nov. 10, 1975.¹³ And as songwriter Gordon Lightfoot put it; because of the frigid water's lack of bacteria, "The lake doesn't give up her head."¹⁴

The businessmen too, learn to be content to simply survive in a land where transportation is the determinant factor. Before the highways were built, there was very little movement. But even now, with the roads, fuel prices have cut into profit margins, and cut off the tourist industry. And whether it is 1930 or 1980, transportation is dependent on the weather. Downpours can wash out two-lane highways with ease, and snowstorms can shut down the entire peninsula for days.

The farmers scratch a ground that was once almost entirely covered by forests. They till a land that even after years spent clearing it is reluctant to give of its wealth. The years of plenty are often cancelled out by the years when the snows stay late, when killer frosts hit in mid-July, or when snowfalls and frost come as early as the end of September.

All these groups of the U.P. are dependent on the grace of God for the weather that He sends. Whether there is rain or snow; sunshine, warmth or bitter cold; it seems that this rugged peninsula goes from one extreme to another. This is a land which can be calm and tranquil one minute, yet in the next be thrashed by a major squall from Lake Superior. It is a land where the highs and lows on the thermometer for the day can be 50 or more degrees apart. Yet for all of its stark contrasts and illiberality, the peninsula allows its

inhabitants a day by day survival, which for the 'Upper' is reward enough to stay there. He will seldom reach the physical and financial security that his lower-state counterpart will; yet he stays. This is what makes a "Upper" different than an 'Outlander' or 'Sugar-beeter'; and it's also what makes him a character worth studying, and his religious history one worth gleaning.

Handwritten notes:
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END NOTES FOR PART ONE:

- ¹Michigan: A History of the Wolverine State, p.17
- ²New Columbia Encyclopedia, p.1769. It is also called the Toledo War.
- ³A Michigan resolution dismissed the area that the State was to receive as, "A sterile region on the shores of Lake Superior, destined by soil and climate to remain forever a wilderness." Michigan: A History of the Wolverine State, p.257f
- ⁴A Brief History of the National Evangelical Lutheran Church, pp.52,53.
- ⁵Medallion's World Atlas, p.189
- ⁶'Upper' pronounced, Iupper, the self-proclaimed title of a native born resident of the U.P.
- ⁷Mosquitos are commonly referred to as 'Moosquitos' in the U.P. because of their size and ferocity.
- ⁸Lifestyle: 200Yrs of the U.P. Note: in this book there are no page numbers.
- ⁹D. Houghton: geologist which first proclaimed the great extent of mineral wealth in the U.P. Great Lakes Reader, pp.55-80
- ¹⁰The Ontonogan boulder, weighing 4 ton, was discovered in the bed of the Ontonogan River, and was exhibited for many years in the Smithsonian Institute in Washington, D.C. Great Lakes Reader, p.55.
- ¹¹The Calumet and Hecla mines were closed in 1968, although there have been attempts to re-open them since then. 200 Yrs of the U.P.
- ¹²Melville: author of Moby Dick, sailed the Great Lakes in 1840, and attested to their fury in chapter 14. Great Lakes Reader, 288ff.
- ¹³World Book Encyclopedia Yearbook, 1976, p.281.
- ¹⁴Gordon Lightfoot, Capitol Records, 1976.

PART TWO: THE EARLY RELIGIOUS HISTORY OF MICHIGAN'S UPPER PENINSULA, PRIOR TO THE ARRIVAL OF THE LUTHERANS, 1600-1865

"There is little doubt that Michigan today contains far more Indians than it did at the start of the historic period. In the entire Great Lakes region, the estimated Indian population in the early 1600's is believed to have numbered approximately 100,000."¹

This negative introductory statement tends to discourage a person from accounting the religious life of the U.P. Indians in a historical introduction to Lutheranism in the U.P. Yet when we remember that for the first 200 yrs of recorded U.P. history, the Indians were the only nation present on the U.P., this story of their trek from paganism to Christianity becomes an important topic. And as for as numbers go, if we remember that the total white population of the entire state of Michigan in 1820, some 220 years later, was only 9,048, these numbers don't seem quite so insignificant.²

By 1600, the religious life of the U.P. Indians had already been well established. Sometimes twentieth century Americans tend to view the Indian as a godless pagan with no sense of values and a tremendous thirst for blood and devastation. Now while it is true that before the arrival of the Catholic missionaries, the Indians were indeed pagans; they were by no means any more godless or bloodthirsty than their white neighbors. And it wasn't until the arrival of the white man and his 'spirits' that the Indian lost that deep sense of values, and his deep sense of responsibility toward the land and his guiding spirits.

The Indians of the U.P. were all members of the Algonquin Indian Nation, and included such tribes as: (in descending order of population) The Chippewa, Potowatomi, Menomonee, Huron, Ottawa, and Iroquois.³ They were a very pious nation, however animistic they were. Each clan had its own Medicine Man, as their spiritual leader, and every Indian was expected to maintain a high level of spirituality on his own.

The most important aspect of the Algonquin worship practice is their view of the Manitou: their supernatural forces.⁴ These supernatural powers might dwell in things, such as bears, trees, rivers, or mountains; or they might also

dwell in human beings, for example the Medicine Men. The idea that the Manitou might have some supernatural powers was not inherent in their concept of the Manitou, yet most Manitous were considered to have some kind of special power.⁵ On the lowest end of the Manitou heirarchy were the spirituals, those people, usually with some type of handicap or mental deficiency, that were guided in their visions and messages by their monitors the Medicine Men. At the other end of the scale were the Manitous that included personified things such as mountains who were supposed to be sleeping giants; lake monsters such as Gitche Gumee, ie., Lake Superior; or Wolf, the demi-god controller of the underworld. And over all of these gods as the Great Manitou, Misshipeshu, the great evil lynx.⁶

There are many people who try to equate this Misshipeshu with the Christian concept of God. However, as Dewdney states, they don't understand the Algonquin concept of God:

"For those who have assumed that the God of the Christians and the 'Great Spirit' as conceived by the Amerindian are one and the same, it will come as a shock to read Tanners identification of Misshipeshu as the Kitchi (ie. Great) Manitou. By Ojibway logic, the supreme supernatural being was the most dreaded, evil and dangerous of all the Manitous, an eminence that Misshipeshu richly deserved." (Sacred Scrolls of the Southern Ojibway, p.122)

From this information; we can see that the natural knowledge of God that is in the hearts of all men has been severly clouded in the Indians heart--to the point that the Indians have degenerated from Monotheism to animism. And certainly their original knowledge that God is perfect and demands perfection from his subjects has been clouded, and they have transferred their inherent evil nature to that of their god; but the fact is that even in this most corrupt form, the natural knowledge of God is there.

In their centuries of perversion from the worship of the True God, the algonquins had followed the steps of every other heathen religion. Their Shaman, the Medicine Men, became satanistic, and often claimed invulnerability from death. They also relied heavily on dreams and visions for their spiritual direction,

and sometimes even practiced the blood sacrifice of black or white dogs to Gitchee Gumees.⁷ Later, it would be difficult for the missionaries to try to get this pantheon of gods out of the minds of the Indians.

In the end, it was this religious practice of seeking spiritual guidance from the different Manitous that led to the downfall of their nation. We see this in that before the white men, the French with their whiskey and the British with their rum, the Indians relied on visions that came after days of starvation. Thus the Indian was dependent on his own abilities to procure his visions. Even as a young boy, the Indian was supposed to seek these visions and messages. For example, when the young boy was entering manhood, he was put out of the camp, and was expected to travel the forest alone until he received a vision from a Manitou. When he returned with his message, the tribal leaders would name the boy according to his vision, and then prophesy what this would mean for the young man's future. After the white men came with their 'spirits' the Indian found an extremely easier way to receive visions from his Manitou. What happened was that the Indian began to be increasingly reliant on the white men for his Indian spirituality. And this factor led to the decay of the Indian society in that the Indian became increasingly eager to please the white men so that he could maintain his spirituality--by getting drunk. This degenerated to the point that the Indian ignored his tribal duties, responsibilities, and relationships; and even gave his choice Indian maidens to the white men in order to court the favor of the French voyageurs.⁸

The first of these French voyageurs began to arrive sometime after 1600, along with the first French Catholic missionaries. The missionaries were very apt in their use of the well-liked French voyageurs as their ticket into the Indian villages, and accompanied them at every chance. These missionaries also, received ample success with their heathen friends, since the Indians readily accepted one more 'god' into their Manitou system. The hard part for the missionaries

was to try to convince the Indians that there was only one God--an idea that seemed totally ridiculous to their native students.

The first missionaries to teach Catholic doctrine to the Indians were the Franciscans: Le Carron and Sagard, who taught in the St. Mary's river area already in 1615.⁹ Some time between then and the 1640's, permanent mission stations were built on Mackinac Island and at St. Ignace. These stations were then the starting point for mission activity throughout the U.P. They consisted of a small birch-bark chapel and house, and an enclosure made of cedar posts to surround the buildings. In 1641, Fathers Joques and Raymbault made their way up the St. Mary's River from one of these stations, and held the first Christian services in Michigan at the foot of Lake Superior. They then named the location, the Sault de Sainte Marie.¹⁰

The next one hundred years showed little change from that early pattern, as missionary after missionary made his rounds at the preaching stations scattered around the U.P. In their duties, the missionaries included translating parts of the Bible into the different Indian dialects, teaching them favorite French hymns, and tirelessly teaching, preaching and ministering to the sick. Seated in their 40' long birch-bark 'Montreal' canoes, the missionaries could make up to 80 miles a day on the Great Lakes. Some of the most notable events of this hundred year history include:

.....In 1660, the Jesuit, René Menard, was sent from Quebec to establish a mission among the Hurons. During the next fall, he made his way to L'Anse to winter here. He then proceeded to Chequamegon Bay, made his way inland to preach to the Menomonee Indians, and was never seen again.¹¹

.....In 1665, Father Claude Allouez set out to try to find Father Menard. Along the way, he became the most active of all the Catholic missionaries. He was reputed to have baptized over 10,000 Indians and instructed over 100,000. He died in 1690.¹²

.....In 1668, Fathers Marquette and Dablon founded the first permanent mission at Sault Ste. Marie. In 1670, Dablon was placed in charge of all missions in the Upper Great Lakes region, and the next year Marquette founded St. Ignace, named for the founder of the Jesuit Order.¹³

.....In 1663, Marquette heads west.¹⁴

An interesting event occurred on June 14, 1671, when Jean Talon, the Intendent of New France, invited all the Indian tribes of Michigan to an impressive ceremony. During that ceremony, he pompously claimed all lands, "bordering on the northern and western and southern seas, including all its length and breadth for the King of France."¹⁵ The Indians weren't overly impressed.

The English must not have been too impressed either, since almost 100 years later, France ceded these lands to them (1763). Perhaps the fact that until the early 1820's, the majority of Michiganders were of French descent, had something to do with the apathy of the British toward the U.P.¹⁶ In the meantime life went on as usual for its inhabitants.

The British and their English speaking cohorts didn't get too excited about settling any part of Michigan until about 1800, when the first real effort to settle the Lower Peninsula begins with the incorporation of the City of Detroit in 1802.¹⁷ However, it took 18 years for them to even send a missionary to the U.P., as the Rev. Dr. Morse, father of the inventor of the telegraph arrived at Mackinac Island in 1820.¹⁸ Two years later, he was joined by Rev. Ferry, who opened a mission school for the Indians with the help of his wife in 1823.

In 1828, Rev. Bingham, founded the first Protestant mission at the Sault with the help of an Episcopalian native convert, Rev. Mr. Cameron and another Presbyterian, Rev. Porter. The three of them used this station as a base for their work along Lake Superior.¹⁸

That same year marks the start of the Methodist efforts in the U.P., as John Sunday, a native teacher from the Wesleyan mission in Canada made his way across the U.P. By 1834 he had made his way to the Keweenaw, to preach to the Ojibways. From the other direction in '33, Rev. John Clark canoed his way from Green Bay to the Sault, as another Methodist established a mission for the Potawatomi called Hannahville between Escanaba and Menomonie. The next year, Clark joined Sunday in Keweenaw and helped him to establish a more permanent mission arrangement there--just as Clark had done at Little Rapids and the Sault.¹⁹

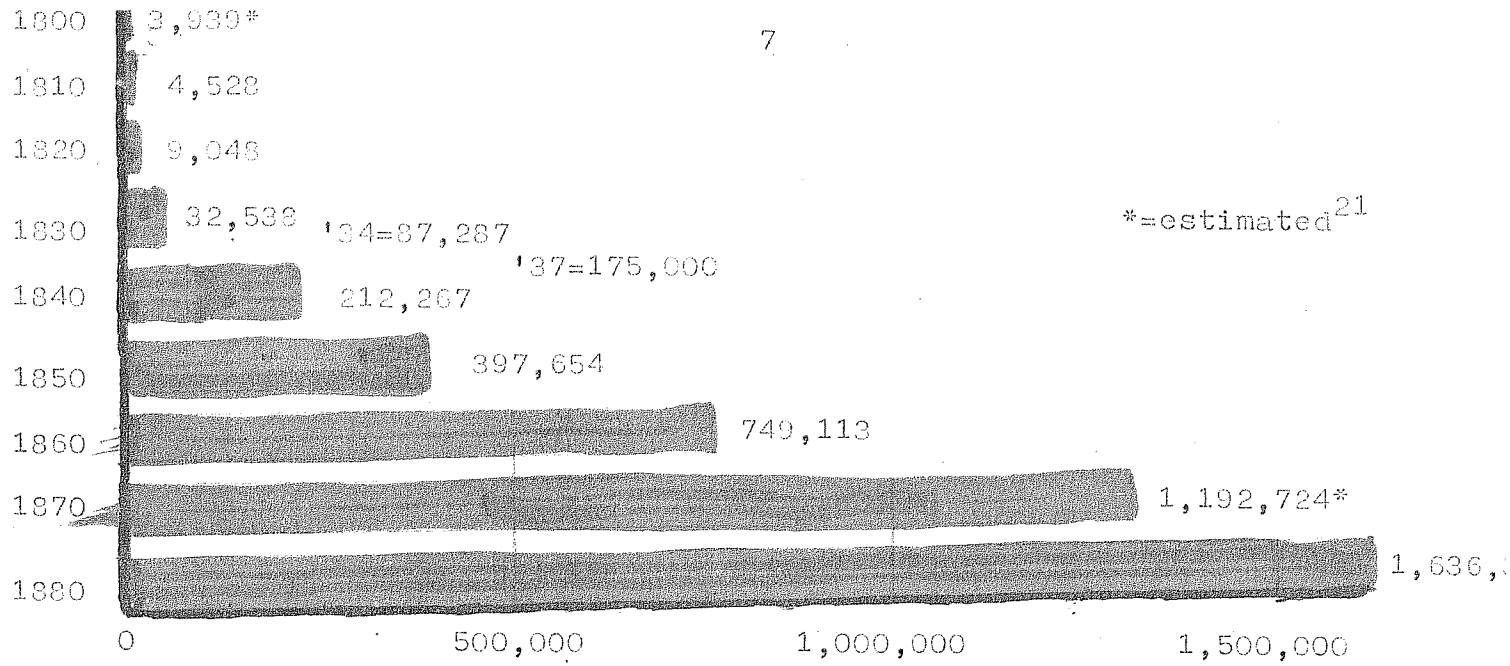
1835 marked a big year in the history of Roman Catholicism, when the dedicated Father Frederick Baraga arrived in L'Anse to begin his ministry there. His importance to the area is summarized by Havighust, when He writes:

"On Madeline Island in Chequamegon Bay Father Baraga built the Church of St. Joseph, gracing it with paintings from Austria. At L'Anse on Keweenaw Bay he established the Assinins Mission with its school for Indian children. During the Copper rush he ministered to German and Irish Catholics along with his Indian converts. Eventually he became the Bishop of the Upper Peninsula. At his death in 1868, he was buried in the crypt of St. Peters Cathedral on Baraga Avenue in Marquette." (Great Lakes Reader, p.47)

Father Baraga's importance to the spiritual lives of the people that he served is reflected by the fact that a 40' bronze statue of his likeness stands at the mouth of the Keweenaw Bay on Highway 41, in remembrance of the work that he did among the people.

Two years after Father Baraga started his work at Chequamegon Bay, a Methodist was assigned to the other bay area, the Keweenaw. This was the first assignment of the newly formed Michigan Conference of the Methodist Church, but unfortunately this first candidate didn't last long. Pastor Chandler died the next year of exhaustion. In 1838 then, Rev. W.H. Brockway was assigned to take Chandler's place. We wonder what type of man that this Brockway was since the Indians nicknamed him 'Pewabic'--the Iron Man. We're told that it might have had something to do with the fact that he had been a blacksmith, or the fact that he was vehemently opposed to any vice of any kind. Whatever the reason, he continued his work to help the Indians improve their standard of living.²⁰

During the next ten years, a movement began that would change the face and the lifestyle of the U.P. forever. This movement is commonly referred to as the Great European Influx, although only 20% of these new settlers were directly from Europe. The following chart of the population of Michigan may be of some help in seeing what a drastic change this was for the U.P.



Although these statistics are for the whole State, they show this great surge of people beginning in 1830. By 1860, there were 29,000 people in the U.P., 8,893 of whom lived in Houghton County.²² This was the start of the Copper boom in the Keweenaw Peninsula, and as the Copper Industry needed lumber to build its mines, the Lumber Industry prospered.

As more and more people arrived in the U.P., it was inevitable that the churches would grow along with the towns. Unfortunately, this great influx of caucasians spelled the final downfall of the Indian mission efforts, as the Catholics and Protestants redirected their efforts in the mission fields. From this time forward, Indian missions would no longer be of any great consequence to the religious history of the U.P.

These new churches that were springing up all over the place were very important to these early settlers if we listen to what Finlan tells us when he writes, "Churches played a significant role in the lives of the people, and ministers and priests were available nearly everywhere, once communities were established."²³ And Blois summarizes the efforts of church bodies other than the Catholics, Presbyterians, and Methodists, that worked in the U.P.:

"Lutherans, Dutch-Reformed, Seceders, Coventars, Christ-ians, Unitarians, Universalists--these are a few scattered congregations in different parts of the State, but sufficient statistical information has not been received of the number of ministers, or members. Those numbers are, however, inconsiderable."²⁴

The last large religious group to arrive in Michigan's North Country was the Mormons, under the leadership of James Jesse Strang. The Mormons took control of Beaver Island, much to the dismay of the 'gentile' inhabitants. They appointed Strang as their prophet, priest, and king, and proceeded to build their utopian land. The Islanders opposed them at every step, but eventually it was the autocratic leadership of Strang that spelled their demise. In July of 1850, things had heated up to the point that the U.S. Government Steamer 'Mackinac' came with a contingent of officers ordered to arrest Strang. Strang was removed at that time from the Island, but later returned to stir everything up again. Finally, on June 16, 1856, as he was about to board a steamer, a conspirator named Mc Culloch shot him. When Strang died on July 8th, the Islanders gave the Mormons notice to leave. On July 9th, the 'gentiles' could take the Mormons' presence no longer, so they sacked St. James (The town named after Strang, which was the capital of the island). While on their rampage, they also sacked the castle and burned the royal library. The Mormons left the next day. ²⁵

Perhaps it wasn't chance that saw the departure of the Mormons at about the same time that the Lutherans were about to arrive. It's common practice to get rid of the weeds before you plant the grain. In The History of the Upper Peninsula, edited in 1883, the writers speak toward the value of the arrival of those Lutherans:

"The German Evangelical Lutheran Church, Union Societies, and other forms of religious worship, have been introduced within the past two decades. Like the great advances in mining and other industries, religious enterprise is also progressing." (p.178)

END NOTES FOR PART TWO:

- ¹Michigan: A History of the Wolverine State, p.14.
- ²Ibid, p.191.
- ³Chippewa is French for the English Ojibway. 200Years of the Upper Peninsula.
- ⁴Sacred Scrolls of the Southern Ojibway, p.11.
- ⁵Ibid
- ⁶Ibid, p.122.
- ⁷Ibid, P. 127. Most of the time though they offered copper nails to the god by throwing them into the water. When the white men had come, they began to throw in trader's traps, guns, fire water, and tobacco, as their offering.
- ^{8^A}200 Years of the Upper Peninsula.
- ^{8^B}Voyageurs=French terms for the explorers. Great Lakes Reader, p.
- ⁹History of the Upper Peninsula, p,185. Dunbar, Michigan: A History of the Wolverine State, says 1625. (P. 15)
- ¹⁰200 Years of the Upper Peninsula.
- ¹¹Michigan: A History of the Wolverine State, p.30f.
- ¹²⁻¹⁴Ibid.
- ¹⁵Ibid, p.40.
- ¹⁶Ibid, p.74.
- ¹⁷Ibid, p.128
- ¹⁸History of the Upper Peninsula, p.185.
- ¹⁹⁻²⁰Ibid.
- ²¹Gazeteer of the State of Michigan, p.148ff.
- ²²Gazeteer of the State of Michigan, p.148
History of the Upper Peninsula, p.178
Michigan: A History of the Wolverine State, p.287.
- ²³200 Years of the Upper Peninsula,
- ²⁴Gazeteer of the State of Michigan, p.148.
- ²⁵History of the Upper Peninsula, p.187.

PART THREE: THE ARRIVAL OF THE LUTHERANS

When we speak of the 'arrival' of the Lutherans, there are some factors that must be taken into account. First, there were some Lutherans in the U.P. prior to the Civil War, including some Germans, Swedes, Norwegians, and a few Finns. However, before the Civil War, ie. 1850, there were only 12 Lutheran congregations in the entire State-- and all of these were in the lower peninsula.¹ Secondly, although the German Lutherans are the first recorded group in the U.P., we know that there were also some Norwegian Lutherans present at the same time.² However it was the Germans who received the first notariety.

In 1865-66, the German immigrants of the Houghton-Hancock area wrote to President Walther of the Missouri Synod for a properly trained and ordained minister.³ Walther passed the letter on to the president of the Michigan District, who sent Pastor I.E. Wuebben. In January of 1867, the 'Deutsche Evangelische Lutheranische Peter und Pauls Gemeinde in Hancock', was organized, and the history of Lutheranism in Michigan's Upper Peninsula had begun.⁴

The early history of the German Lutheran immigrants in the U.P is interesting, because until the 1880's and '90's they didn't seem too overly concerned with whether they got their pastors from the Missouri or Wisconsin Synod. In fact, in these Evangelical Lutheran Churches, you will find that until the turn of the century, many of them got their pastors from whatever Synod could supply them first; fortunately, and by the grace of God, both synods at this time were producing well trained, confessional men.

Another interesting fact is that historians state the the Scandinavians were immigrating to the U.P. already in the 1840's and '50's, but it isn't until the 1860's and '70's that we begin to hear of them--at least the Lutherans in their groups. A large influx of Scandinavians came during the Civil War, when some mining concerns in Copper Country paid a Swede named Silverspar to return to Scandinavia, recruit emigrants, and return them to the U.P. 100 immigrants came to Copper Country because of this agreement, but many of the original group was conscripted for service in the Union

Army as they stepped off the docks in New York.⁵

In all the groups of the U.P. settlers, there seemed to be a problem of spirituality. We noted it earlier in the fact that settlers were present as early as the 40's, but we don't hear of the churches arriving until 20 years later. F.C.D. Wynecken, a Lutheran theologian in Germany in 1841 addressed the problem before his countrymen, referring to these German settlers as "German heathen."⁶ The Swede, Haselquist, in addressing the 1869 convention of the Augustana Lutheran Church commented:

"Think of it brethren! Out of fifty or sixty thousand Swedish Nationals who have emigrated only about twenty thousand are connected with us, and a few other thousand united with other Churches, which leaves a formidable remainder of some twenty to thirty thousand countrymen who are being lost in worldliness, sin, and Unbelief." ⁷

When the Finnish settlers began to arrive in Michigan's Copper Country, they comprised one-fourth of all the Finns in the United States.⁸ Yet, there were very few, if any ministers with them when they first came. They ended up joining with the Norwegian churches, and worshiping with them until they got a pastor from Finland or they found a problem with the Norwegian's theology.

One of the earliest Finnish groups to arrive were a group of Laestadians, or Apostolic Lutherans. They joined the Norwegian Church in Calumet, but soon left it when they felt that these Norwegians weren't really in fellowship with them.⁹ Without getting into great detail at this time, let it suffice to say that the Apostolic Lutherans are very choosy about whom they consider to be Christians, and who can forgive sins. They are very Mormon-like in their church government set-up, and are almost what one would call pentecostal. This break then, came in 1871, and the Laestadians proceeded to establish the first independent Apostolic Lutheran Church in the World.¹⁰ Up to that time, they would attend services and Holy Communion with the church that they belonged to, and then meet together as a group later. In fact, as all

the Finns came over they arrived as members of the State Church, yet with their different factions.

The three movements in the Finns immigration to the United States were: The Apostolic Lutherans; the State Church group, which would later become the Suomi Synod; and the confessional group, which would later become the National Evangelical Lutheran Church. Their beginnings stem from a revival movement in Finland and parts of Sweden, and how they reacted to it.¹¹ Their grouping might be considered (From Enthusiastic to moderately liberal

Left: Apostolic Lutherans

Center: confessional group

Right: the State Church group

Alfred Backman was the first pastor of the State Church that was sent over, and he arrived Sept 10, 1876.¹² He established the congregations in Hancock, Calumet, and Allouez. He also met with the same frustration as Wynecken and Haselquist; and returned to Finland after seven years.¹³ He didn't leave the Finns without a shepherd, however. Before he left, he taught Pastor P. Wambsgans of St. Peter and Paul's of Hancock how to read and pronounce Finnish, so that Wambsgans and the Norwegians in the area could take care of his flock.

After Backman left, the Lutherans here were again saddled with the problem of many sheep, but no shepherds. This may have been one of the reasons why these Lutherans seemed so unspiritual. Between the visits of well trained and ordained ministers, they were accosted constantly by itinerants. One typical itinerant was Heikki Turunen, an eloquent tailor, who decided that he was going to be a pastor. When Backman left, Turunen arrived in Calumet, and appointed himself minister. When he was questioned as to his education, and ordination papers, he quietly fled to Minneapolis; where he took a two week theological course. He promptly returned, ordained and graduated. By the Grace of God he had enough sense to step

down when the next State pastor came, Juho Wilkander.¹⁴

The next section of the history of Lutheranism in Michigan's Upper Peninsula begins with the establishment of the Old Churches, the first grouping of these Lutheran settlers into more likeminded associations.

The congregations that were established during this period in the U.P. are as follows:

<u>Date</u>	<u>Name</u>	<u>Place</u>	<u>Nationality/Early Synod</u>
1868	St. Paul's	Marquette	German/Wisconsin
1868's	-----	Hancock	Norwegian/Eielsen
1868's	-----	Quincy Hill	Norwegian/Eielsen
1868's	-----	Calumet	Norwegian/Eielsen
1867	Sts Peter and Paul	Hancock	German/Missouri
1870	Bethany	Ishpeming	Swede/Augustana
1871	Trinity	Ishpeming	Swede/Augustana
1871	Laestadian	Calumet	Finn/Apostolic
1873	Christ	Menomonee	German/Wisconsin
1874	Trinity	Marquette	German/Wisconsin(LCMS)*
1876	-----	Calumet	Finn/Suomi
1876	-----	Hancock	Finn/Suomi
1876	-----	Allouez	Finn/Suomi
1879	Bethany	Escanaba	Swede/Augustana
1879	St. Paul's	Laurium	German/Missouri
1880	Bethany	Norway	Swede/Augustana
1881	First	Iron Mt.	Swede/Augustana
1881	Messiah	Marquette	Swede/Augustana

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For a geographical accounting of these congregations, cf. Figure C in the Appendix. 16

* cf. figure D,
Appendix

PAGE THREE END NOTES:

- ¹Michigan: A History of the Wolverine State, p.191.
- ²Historical Survey of the Finnish Lutheran Churches in America, p.3
- ³Historical sketch of Ss. Peter and Paul's Hancock, p.4
- ⁴Ibid.
- ⁵Michigan: A History of the Wolverine State, p.428.
- ⁶Lutherans in North America, p.157,8.
- ⁷Ibid, p.194
- ⁸From Sweden to America, p.246.
- ⁹Historical Survey of the Finnish Lutheran Churches in America, p.5.
- ¹⁰Ibid
- ¹¹Ibid, p.1.
- ¹²Faith of the Finns, p.127.
- ¹³Ibid.
- ¹⁴Historical Survey of the Finnish Lutheran Churches in America, p.5.
- ¹⁵⁻¹⁶From the Synodical Yearbooks, personal histories of the congregations themselves, and from the LCMS Office in Milwaukee.

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CORRESPONDENCE: *response to letter sent, Figure E, Appendix.

Skaates, H to JaaJ. February 1981.

Skaates, H to R. Siirila. February, 1979.

St. Paul's Luth, Hancock, (LCMS)*

Messiah Luth, Marquette, (LCA)*

Calvary Luth, Marquette, (CLC)*

Christ the King, Ishpeming, (LCMS)*

Christ Luth, Menomonie, (NELS)*

*By order of response

St. Paul's, Luth, Marquette, (NELS)*

St. Paul's Luth, Laurium, (LCMS)*

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Siirila, R. "40 Years of Fellowship with LCMS, the History of the National Evangelical Lutheran Church." April 1979.

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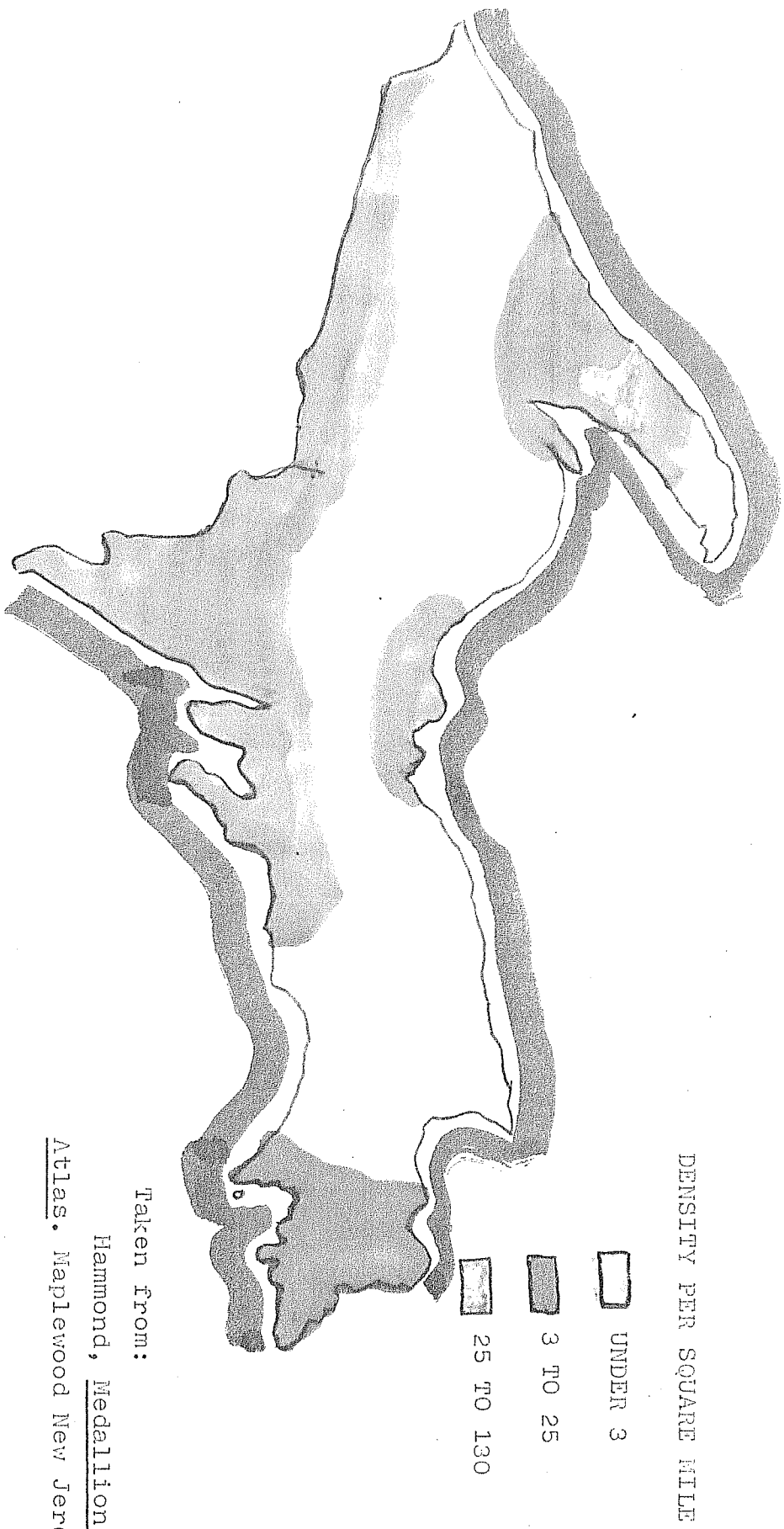
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POPULATION DISTRIBUTION CHART: UPPER PENINSULA OF MICHIGAN

FIGURE 7



Taken from:

Hammond, Medallion World

Atlas. Maplewood New Jersey, 197

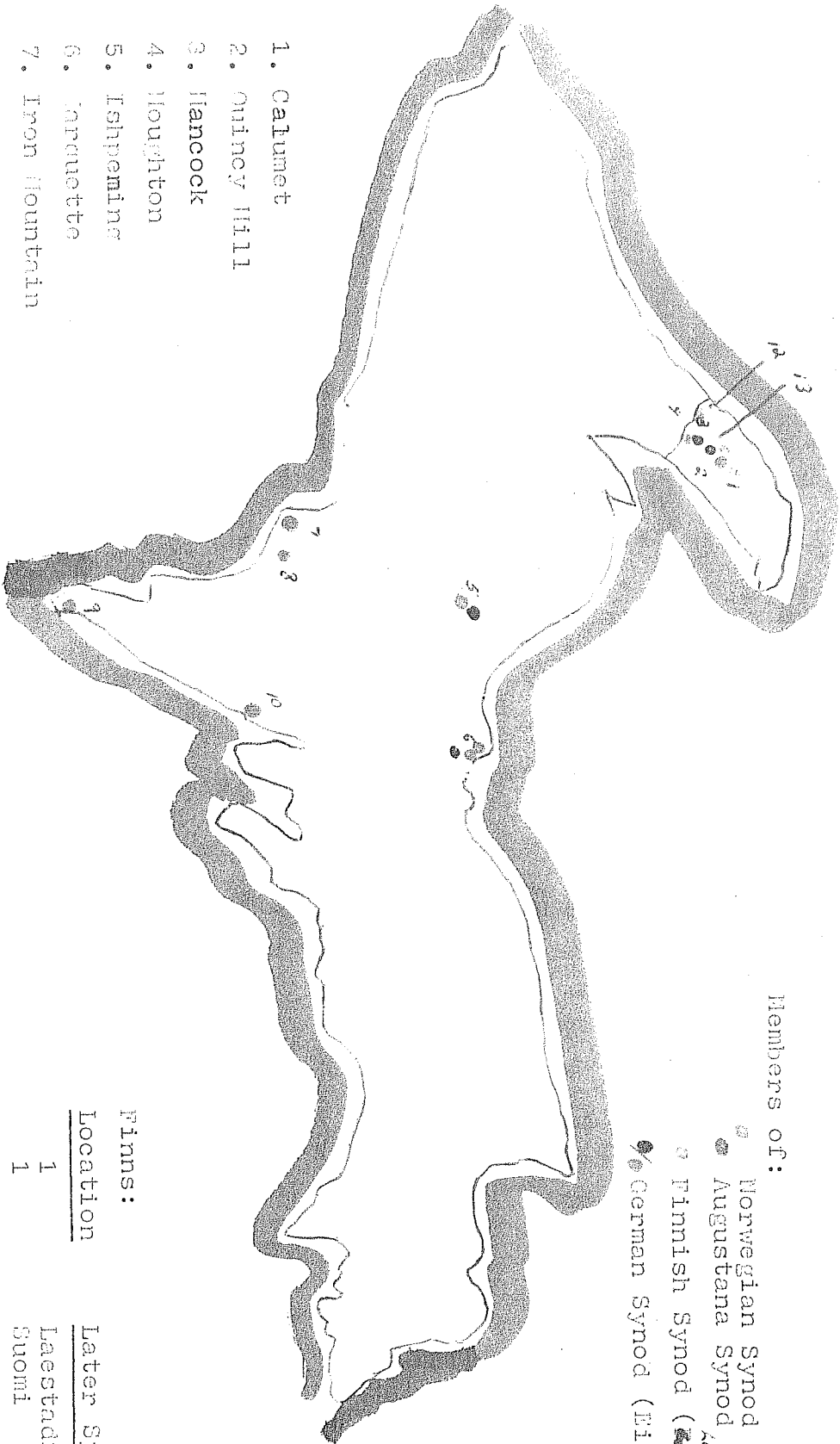
p.189

HIGH POPULATION AREAS OF THE GREAT LAKES REGION (ABOVE 200 PEOPLE PER SQUARE MILE)

<u>STATE</u>	<u>AREA</u>
MINNESOTA	St. Paul & Minneapolis
WISCONSIN	Milwaukee to Kenosha
ILLINOIS	Zion through Chicago Rock Island East St. Louis
INDIANA	Gary to South Bend Indianapolis
MICHIGAN	Grand Rapids Battle Creek to Kalamazoo Flint through Detroit Metro
OHIO	Toledo Cincinnati Cleveland to Pennsylvania border
PENNSYLVANIA	From border through Pittsburgh Erie Southeastern part of the State
NEW YORK	Buffalo Rochester New York

LUTHERAN CHURCHES IN MICHIGAN'S UPPER PENINSULA UNTIL 1881

FIGURE C



Members of:

- = ALC
- Hauge
- Kates Church Body
- ✕ Lutheran Synod (Either LCMS or WELS)

Firms:

Location	Later Synod
1	Laestadian
1	Suomi
3	Suomi
12	Suomi

1. Calumet
2. Anthony Hill
3. Hancock
4. Houghton
5. Ishpeming
6. Marquette
7. Iron Mountain
8. Horsey
9. Menominee
10. Escanaba
11. Alcona
12. Alcona
13. Laurium

St. Paul's Green Garden
1863

THE MARQUETTE MADNESS
Figure D

LCMS WELS

German

Trinity Marquette
1874 (6)

German

LCMS WELS

Sion Marquette
1898
Finn

Sisters
1881

WELS

1955
Calvary

WELS

"Synodical Conf. Luth's"

Break
1955

Trinity
LCMS

Merger
1966

1959

**

Faith Marquette
WELS 1970

**Possible charter
members?

Redeemer
LCMS

Daughter
1977

CIC

1977

Calvary (CIC)

St Paul's Faith
(WELS)

Redeemer
(LCMS)

Christ the King
(LCMS)