

WELS' Outreach  
in the Inner City:  
Challenges  
and  
Strategies

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## Introduction

There was a time when to be Lutheran also meant to be German. This generalization was especially true in our own Wisconsin Synod. In some communities the WELS Church is still referred to as the "German" Lutheran church. But in recent decades as our church body has ventured beyond the midwestern Germans this is really no longer the case. Both our home and world mission programs have enabled us to bring God's Word to people of much more varied cultural backgrounds.

Years ago the WELS churches on Milwaukee's north side were as German as any in our synod. Many of them retained German services even when the vast majority of their members spoke fluent English. The buildings of these congregations were old world in style, a reflection of the German heritage that clung so closely to those who had come to the New World.

When one looks at the WELS Lutherans on Milwaukee's north side today there are many things that have remained the same, but also many things that have changed. Some of the older members are still around, many of the church buildings still exist. But probably the changes are more noticeable. Some of our congregations no longer exist, several others migrated to the growing suburbs. Congregations of one or two thousand members have steadily dwindled to only a couple hundred today. Many white residents of the neighborhood have either died or moved away, and blacks have moved in. The neighborhood population has remained the same or even increased, and yet our congregations' memberships have decreased. The blacks have made themselves at

home in houses that whites had built and lived in, yet so many have not found spiritual homes in churches that whites built and worshipped in.

These are some of the problems and challenges that face our congregations in this part of the city. Each congregation has its own story--its own failures and successes. This paper will give a small sampling of some of our synod's work among the black community. It will by no means be an exhaustive study on the topic. We in no way intend to write the final word on the subject. This paper will look at four north side congregations--Garden Homes, Silcrah, St. Philip's, and Zebaoth. We chose these four because they are relatively close together. Much of our information was gained by interviewing the pastors and teachers of these churches. Our paper then will center on the following area: Reaching Out to the Black Community--WELS Challenges and Strategies.

#### Part One: In the Old Days

In looking at the present day situation of these congregations we found it both interesting and practical to consider where they had come from. What they have been through to a certain degree still shapes the character of these churches today. With this in mind there will follow here a short history of each of these four congregations.

##### A. Garden Homes

Although this congregation is not what one would consider to be strictly an "inner city" congregation, its neighborhood has switched from mainly white to mainly black. Its name comes from

the public housing project located nearby. In the mid 20s this part of Milwaukee was just being developed--open fields were quickly being built up, a streetcar line ended nearby. But there was no Lutheran Church in the immediate area. A few interested Lutherans began to remedy this problem. Pastor P. Burkholz and some teachers from Siloah began a Sunday School in a portable chapel. Soon the community was canvassed, and then on March 13, 1927 the Mission Board of the SE Wisconsin District established Garden Homes Congregation. The congregation began a Lutheran grade school and built a new school building the very next year. The school basement served as the place of worship for the next several years. The congregation grew quite rapidly in its early years, but the Great Depression caused distress for this young church. The school was closed in 1937 because of lack of funds and a shortage of teachers. Yet this was only a temporary setback, for in 1941 the congregation built a new church building. No longer were they forced to worship in the cramped quarters of their school basement. After the war, plans were made to reopen their school. In 1949 a new school building was completed, and the school reopened.

The congregation remained healthy and experienced continued growth until the mid 60s. At this time the neighborhood began to see signs of change, and membership numbers began to fall. In a 1977 history of the congregation one can see their commitment to remaining a neighborhood church: "During the past five to ten years, the community in which we are carrying on the Lord's work has undergone great changes as the result of a shifting

population. Hundreds and thousands of new residents have moved into the area. The Lord has placed before our congregation new opportunities to gather in redeemed souls for His Kingdom." (1)

Garden Homes did begin outreach to the new members of the community--both black and white. For the past several years they have implemented a plan of door to door contacts with their evangelism committee. Today the congregation is about 50% white and 50% black. It is interesting to note that in 1984 this congregation was blessed with 33 adult confirmations. Their grade school is still operating, its student body is 98% black. Right now the future looks quite optimistic for Garden Homes. (It is also interesting to note that Garden Homes is the home congregation of Raymond Kimbrough, who in 1985 is the first black graduate of our Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary.)

#### B. Siloah

Siloah congregation has the distinction of being both the oldest and the largest of the churches in this study. It was way back in 1893 that Pastor Bender of St. Matthew began to work in the general area of 21st and Nash streets, the present address of the congregation. A small nucleus gathered and already the next year in 1894 Siloah congregation was organized.

The early years were difficult ones for this congregation. This area of the city was only sparsely populated at the time. There were still quite a few farms in the area. The roads were so poor that the few faithful members often were forced to wade through mud to attend worship services. So, the first several years saw slow, limited growth.

By 1898 the still small congregation decided to begin a Lutheran day school. This was also the first time that the congregation had its own full time pastor, so he was doubly employed as both preacher and teacher. In order to pay this salary the congregation received financial support from the synod.

The next several years were not much easier due to the fact that the congregation experienced several pastoral changes with accepted calls and resignations. But by 1904 things began to turn around. Better roads were built in the area. Several new housing sub-divisions sprung up nearby. The congregation began to grow, and by 1909 Siloah was self supporting.

In 1919 the congregation closed its day school. One reason for this action was that more of the student-age members were attending the newly built public schools in the area. More change came in the mid 20s. The rapidly growing congregation needed larger worship facilities. In 1925 their new church was completed. And, as is often the case, once they had a nice, new building, Siloah began to grow even more rapidly.

The rapid growth brought a new challenge for their education programs. With no day school, their Sunday School began to grow by leaps and bounds. For instance, in 1939 over 500 children were enrolled in the Sunday School. They were crowded into the undivided church basement in classes of no more than 12 students each.

After WW II when the suburban sprawl began, the membership began to drop slowly. The neighborhood began to change

culturally. But Siloah was not minded to give up. At a time when other churches were closing their doors or fleeing to the suburbs, Siloah made a firm commitment to stay. They were determined to remain in their old neighborhood and meet the spiritual needs of their new neighbors. In 1962 they did something that many members had wanted to do since the old school has closed in 1919, they decided to once again support a Lutheran grade school. The school, which began with four rooms that year, quickly expanded to nine rooms by 1974. In 1984 school enrollment stood at 188. In recent years the Christian day school has proved a useful and invaluable tool for reaching out to the black community.

In 1977 the synod's only black pastor, Henry Grigsby, began to serve at Siloah. Today the black members are in the majority at Siloah. The congregation has an active evangelism committee which makes calls on visitors and prospective members. Although Siloah today may be only a fraction of its greatest size almost 35 years ago, it possesses great zeal and commitment to reach out to its changing neighborhood with the unchanging message.

#### C. St. Philip's

Unlike the other three congregations in our study, St. Philip's was begun exclusively as a mission outreach to the black community. In the early 1950s the Synodical Conference wanted to begin work among the blacks. However, at that time segregation was a tragic reality in the American mindset. So, rather than invite blacks to the established white congregations, a separate black mission congregation was begun.

After some initial canvassing work in the early to mid 50s, an old broom factory at 5th and Meinecke was purchased and remodeled as a worship facility. In 1955 the congregation was officially declared a mission. However, initially they were classified as a foreign mission. Many of the black members did not care for being regarded as a foreign mission. And who can blame them? After all, their families had probably been in the United States much longer than the families of most Wisconsin Synod members. This problem was rectified in 1956 with a switch to the division of home missions.

As the congregation grew the members wished to worship in a church building instead of an old broom factory. About this time St. Matthew congregation at 10th and Garfield (now at 84th and Melvina) was selling their old church and school. St. Philip's was able to acquire the property, and in 1958 a Christian Day School was begun. The next several years witnessed rapid growth of both the church and school. By 1963 the school numbered 104 students.

But by 1964 new problems were mounting. To repair the old building was proving too costly, and an expressway was being planned to go through the neighborhood. Once again it was time to move.

In January 1965 St. Philip's moved to the Divine Charity building at 1st and Chambers. The building was available because this congregation had recently merged with Divinity. The move was a disheartening one--their newer building did not have either an organ or a school. Classrooms were put into the church



basement, but then the teachers accepted calls elsewhere. Besides all this, a big debt hung over their heads. Some members transferred to other locations, others simply became discouraged and dropped out. Then their pastor took a call.

Yet St. Philip's did not give up. A new pastor came. A new evangelism program was begun. With the Lord's blessing they began to grow once again. New liturgies were developed, and new music was brought into the service to supplement our traditional Lutheran hymns and liturgies. 1979 saw a major change for their school. In that year they joined with Jerusalem Lutheran church to form Beautiful Savior school. The church currently receives synodical support through its school. The congregation in 1983 numbered 193 communicants, about 90% of whom are black.

In its relatively short history St. Philip's has experienced many setbacks and crises. Yet the blessing and power of God have kept his important work going at St. Philip's.

#### D. Zebaoth

Anyone who has set foot inside Zebaoth church at 6th and Melvina is not likely to forget it. The 1930 building is a remarkable structure. The square footage of beautiful stained glass windows and the height of the building are some of its more prominent features.

Despite the impressive building, the congregation had humble beginnings. In May, 1917 two missions were combined--the Elias Mission at 11th and Finn and the Good Hope Mission at 6th and Mill (now Melvina). The Good Hope Mission had been worshipping in an old Presbyterian chapel which the Mission Board had

purchased. On the wall inside this chapel was inscribed in German, Psalm 84:1, "How lovely is your dwelling place, O Lord Almighty" (in German--Zebaoth). Hence the unique name for this interesting congregation.

The early years saw rapid growth. The congregation was able to add the previously lacking luxuries of gas, electricity, and running water to the chapel. In 1921 the parsonage was completed. By July 1, 1926 Zebaoth congregation became self-supporting. Continued growth produced a serious overcrowding problem in the chapel--some worshippers were even forced to sit on chairs behind the altar. In 1929 the problem was solved with the decision to build a new church. The impressive 13th century French Gothic style building was dedicated the following year at a cost of \$110,000.

Unlike the other congregations in this study, Zebaoth has never operated its own school. It did, however, make educational arrangements with sister congregations, first in 1953 with Bethesda at 11th and Chambers, and since 1962 with Silcrah. Zebaoth currently pays the salaries of one and a half teachers at Silcrah school. Thus far Zebaoth has been able to remain self-supporting.

In the mid 60s Zebaoth's neighborhood began to change culturally. As the older white members moved away or died membership began to plummet. In the early 70s the first planned evangelism efforts were begun. Growth among the blacks has not come as quickly as hoped, but there has been growth. A 1968 pictorial directory of the congregation shows no black members,

while the church today is at least 50% black. The congregation has been working hard to survive and grow, and the Lord has provided his blessing. At the recent funeral of an older white man who had for years been the heart and soul of the evangelism program, several black members remarked that they would not have been members of Zebachth if it had not been for this man. Remarks like that serve to illustrate the joy and the importance of Zebachth's work to proclaim the unchanging Gospel to a changing neighborhood.

#### E. General Trends

In looking at the three older congregations some repeating patterns can be seen. In the early days all three churches saw quite remarkable growth. As the neighborhoods were being built up by people of predominantly German background, the churches' memberships were growing. Once neighborhood growth stopped, so did the church growth. Zebachth's membership peaked in 1940, Siloah's in 1950, and Garden Homes around 1960. Even before the neighborhoods began to see drastic cultural changes, membership numbers began to drop. This seems to be explained by the fact that the membership was aging. Young families were moving out to the suburbs, so the number of children in these three congregations began to decline. One can see this from the fact that the numbers of baptized souls and communicants gradually grew closer together in relation to each other. For instance, in 1969 Zebachth listed 500 communicants with 572 baptized, Siloah was 1104 and 1345, Garden Homes listed 807 and 1032. When the neighborhoods did change culturally the congregations were rather

slow to react to the new challenge of working among a culture different from their own. In recent years they have been intensely working to reach out to their new neighbors. The membership drop has been slowed, but in all three cases incoming new members have not quite kept pace with membership losses. Nevertheless, the important thing is that outreach is being done, and here, too, there is definite and encouraging proof that God's Word does not return without results.

#### Part Two: The Beginning of WELS Involvement with the Black Culture

For the first hundred years of its existence, the WELS was not really forced to reach out to the black community. The Synodical Conference did establish a black seminary program in the southern US, but for the most part, this work was not carried on in actual WELS congregations.

WELS mission work among the blacks in the Milwaukee area did not result so much from the synod's efforts to reach out to them. Rather, the blacks moved into areas that congregations already were serving. As the population became predominantly black, the well-established congregations began to find themselves quickly turning into skeletons. Some congregations reacted by joining the white flight to the northwest suburbs. Other times, two churches would merge in hopes that together they could keep one church going. Some simply closed their doors. But others hung on. They realized that it was time to integrate or disintegrate. In short, the changing neighborhood population forced WELS

congregations to deal with ministering to their new black neighbors.

In the 50s and early 60s most of the churches were not sure exactly how to proceed with this. For decades segregation had been the way of life. For the most part, both blacks and whites assumed that white churches were for whites and black churches for blacks. As primitive and insensitive as this may seem today, one must remember that in those days the two races used separate public restrooms, drank from different water fountains, and sat in different sections of the bus. So, most people just assumed that separate worship facilities were the way to go. Blacks felt uncomfortable in white churches, and whites were unsure about how to deal with and accept these new black members. This seems to summarize the thinking of the day. This does not always mean that the whites did not care for the blacks or want to share the Gospel with them. They simply were not accustomed to the two races doing things together. Certainly, even in the WELS congregations, there was discrimination on the part of the whites over against the blacks, but this was not always the case.

It was this way of thinking that led to the establishment of a special mission congregation for the blacks, St. Philip's. As this congregation's history shows, growth was not fantastic, but the WELS had taken a first step toward seriously reaching out to the black community. If one wants to find a negative point in connection with the establishing of this congregation, it would be that this may have slowed some of the other established congregations in opening their own doors to their new black

neighbors. After all, the thinking sometimes was, the blacks can go to the church that has been started specially for them.

With the arrival of the Civil Rights legislation reforms of the 1960s some of these segregationist attitudes in the WELS began to change. In the secular world racial separation no longer was the assumed way of life. People began to see that blacks and whites could live and function together. It was at this time that established WELS congregations in the inner city began to seriously open their doors to offer a spiritual home to their new black neighbors.

The Civil Rights legislation by no means solved all the problems for our inner city churches. The challenges were great, the frustrations disheartening. To make some progress in these areas an Inner City Pastors Group was organized in 1967. Almost from the start our synod's Commission on Evangelism was also involved. Together these groups began to plan strategy for this new outreach opportunity.

In those early years the synod recruited and trained many helpers (college students, etc.) to work with a VBS program for the inner city. They were given some educational awareness of the black culture and then they canvassed the neighborhoods and helped teach the VBS classes. Many calls were made, Law and Gospel were presented to many residents, and the VBS program saw large turnouts.

One problem which plagued these congregations was the lack of black church workers. To attempt to alleviate this difficulty a Minority Ministries Committee was developed. It was designed

to train interested black adults for part time service in the church, primarily in the area of evangelism work. The program is similar in theory to our synod's lay evangelist training among our African missions. It was hoped that these black evangelists could provide work in this much needed area. However, the program has not seen any real results. This in no way is to fault or discredit our churches' black members. For one reason or another this Minority Ministries Committee has not worked out. The paucity of black church workers can only be solved by our pastors and black members encouraging young blacks to study for the teaching and preaching ministry.

Another problem was that as a result of the canvassing and VBS programs our churches were left with too many prospects for the pastors to properly follow up. At the time lay evangelism programs were practically unknown--not just in the inner city, but throughout our synod. It was about this time that James Kennedy's Evangelism Explosion tactics were publicized. The inner city pastors took an active lead in adapting this method to meet their special situation and in correcting doctrinal aberrations. Encouraged by their work, our synod adapted Kennedy's program into what is know as TAS, the Talk About the Savior booklet. The inner city congregations began to put this into use. Most of these churches now have active evangelism programs with extensive lay involvement. It is interesting to note that our inner city congregations are far ahead of most of our synod's established congregations on this point. Again, these planned evangelism efforts have not solved every problem,

but the Lord has certainly blessed this work. It has involved many members in the joyful experience of sharing their faith with others, and has been used by the Holy Spirit to bring new black (as well as white and Hispanic) members into our inner city congregations.

One final problem involved the continuity of organization. At first the inner city work had been helped by the Commission on Evangelism. When the funds were no longer available, the GBHM came to the rescue. But still, the inner city work was not under any organizational arm of the synod that was tailor made for their particular and unique needs. After some extensive survey and study the GBHM in 1971 declared the inner city to be an official mission field. However, the inner city situation was quite different from the usual suburban or small town area where most of our synod's home mission work is going on. To deal with the peculiar problems of this unique mission field the inner city pastors were organized into the Inner City Mission Committee, which for the last several years has been a subcommittee of the GBHM. This committee was more recently renamed the Multi-Cultural Ministries Commission to more accurately reflect the scope of its work.

A major question to confront this committee has centered on how to provide the much needed financial support for these established congregations. The generally lower economic condition of the inner city has added to the necessity of outside financial support. Rather than officially put these congregations back on mission status, it was decided to supply



workers instead of directly sending money. For the past several years the GBHM has been funding the salaries of some of the teachers in the inner city Christian Day Schools. (More will be said about the importance of the Christian Day School later in this paper.) So far this arrangement has worked out well. The congregations have been able to continue paying their own pastors and operating expenses with the synod funding part of the school faculty. In addition, the synod has developed and partially funds an inner city vicar program. Seniors at the Seminary have been employed part time at several congregations to work primarily in the area of evangelism. Not only does this provide help for the congregations, but also gives tremendous cross-cultural experience to several of our synod's young pastors-to-be each year. This experience can be put to use not only among the blacks in Milwaukee, but in so many areas of our country where minority populations are increasing.

This is a summary and sampling of just a few of the challenges, problems, frustrations, blessings, and successes of our synod's inner city work. The next section of the paper will move to the more theoretical area of discussing cultural differences and how these differences need to be considered when working among people of a different culture.

### Part Three: The Black Culture

It is unfortunate and destructive when whites and blacks refer to the opposite race as "those people" or "them". As anyone will

admit, it is not very flattering to be labeled as one of "those people" or one of "them". Yet, this linguistic nuance does demonstrate a very real and obvious fact of life. There are cultural differences between certain blacks and whites. This is in no way to be understood as a racially prejudiced remark. It is a fact that there are cultural differences between certain whites and blacks just as it is a fact that there are marked cultural differences between a white living in Superior, Wisconsin and a white living in Biloxi, Mississippi. In identifying these cultural differences it is most important to be clear as to the definition of culture, so that there can be no misunderstandings. Webster defines culture as, "the concepts, habits, skills, arts, institutions, etc. of a given people in a given period."

#### A. O\_b\_j\_e\_c\_t\_i\_v\_e\_C\_u\_l\_t\_u\_r\_a\_l\_D\_i\_f\_f\_e\_r\_e\_n\_c\_e\_s

Discovering cultural differences all too often degenerates into an argument concerning which culture is better, and eventually leads to racist remarks. Let us state at the very beginning, this is not our intention here. Rather, we are attempting to demonstrate that a predominantly white church body which actively reaches out to the black community must be aware of differences in lifestyles, attitudes, family structure, and basically everything which makes up culture.

There are certain objective facts that must be considered if one is to fully understand the various ramifications of a white church body reaching out to blacks. The very fact that the black culture is a minority, is in itself, a factor that can be

divisive. For those who have never experienced the feeling of being in a minority group for a prolonged period of time, it is impossible to appreciate the tremendous influence this will have on a person's attitudes and ideologies. Probably the best and easiest example to relate to is the situation that a traveler visiting a foreign country finds himself in when he does not understand the native language and customs. There naturally is a feeling of alienation when one is not in the majority. To compound this problem in the United States, there has been the unequal black representation within the framework of the American government. Although gains are being made, the percentage of black elected officials in the government is nowhere close to matching the percentage of blacks in the total population.

Economically there are also objective differences which must not only be noted, but also will have to be dealt with. The following chart shows that in terms of percentages many more blacks than whites hold the less paying jobs. In drawing conclusions from this chart, please be aware that these particular statistics were taken by the federal government in 1975, so they do not entirely reflect the situation today, and note also that the second column of racial groups is listed as "blacks and other races". This means that the percentage blacks employed in those positions will be lower than the number indicates.

Percentage of Employed Persons Sixteen Years and Over by Occupation and Color for 1974

<u>O_c_c_u_p_a_t_i_o_n</u>	<u>W_h_i_t_e</u>	<u>B_l_a_c_k_s_a_n_d_o_t</u>
Professional	14.8	10.4

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Managers	11.2	4.1
Salespersons	6.8	2.3
Clerks	17.8	15.2
Crafts	13.8	9.4
Operatives	15.5	21.9
Service workers	16.4	34.0
Farm workers	3.6	2.7

Source: U.S. Department of Labor (2)

The problem of unemployment has also been a plague to the black community over the years. Even at the present the ratio of unemployed black males to unemployed white males is 2 to 1, while the unemployment rate for black teenagers is well over 40%. The point is simply this--the majority of the black community is much less affluent than the white community.

Such economic conditions will, in turn, naturally affect living conditions. Leo Talskey compiled some very interesting housing statistics among blacks in the city of Milwaukee. (3)

#### Characteristics of White and Nonwhite Occupied Housing

	<u>_W_h_i_t_e</u>	<u>_N_o_n_w_h_i_t_e</u>
Deteriorating structures	14.4%	44.4%
Structures built prior to 1939	69.0%	93.4%
Six or more persons in one unit	8.7%	24.1%
One or more persons per room	7.5%	23.1%

Again, one must note that these statistics were compiled in 1967. However, R. D. Washington and John Oliver updated this study in 1976, and after a great deal of research confirmed that the situation remains unchanged.

Several conclusions about black housing can be drawn. One is that there definitely is a relatively segregated black community in this city. Another is that the black community is expanding according to discern-

ible patterns due to the many restrictions on housing opportunities for blacks—discrimination and physical limitations are influencing the direction of expansion. Further, although this expansion is into newer neighborhoods with better housing, much of it is caused by increasing population, occupancy of deteriorating housing is unchanged. And finally, and perhaps most obviously, blacks in Milwaukee, for the most part, live in older, more deteriorated, less valuable, and more overcrowded housing units than do whites. (4)

In educational opportunities blacks consistently rate lower than whites both quantitatively and qualitatively. To briefly summarize the statistics compiled by Drs. Washington and Oliver, 13% more blacks than whites have less than a grade-school education, and 14.6% more blacks than whites have less than a high school diploma. Another accurate indicator is the percentage of functional illiterates among white and nonwhite men. In the 25-34 year age group 7.2% of the nonwhite men were illiterate while 1.0% of the white males could not read. Those figures jumped to 32% and 16.5% respectively in the 55-64 year age group. There was also an interesting table which dealt with the percentage of whites and nonwhites behind in Age-Grade Placement from the ages of 8 to 16. This table reflected that approximately twice as many blacks were behind as whites. (5)

It is true that economics, housing, and educational levels do not affect the Gospel message of Jesus Christ, yet we must realize that these factors will definitely affect h\_o\_w the Gospel will be presented. (Note the difference in Paul's mission methods among the different cultures he worked with.)

B. C\_a\_u\_s\_e\_s\_f\_o\_r\_C\_u\_l\_t\_u\_r\_a\_l\_D\_i\_f\_f\_e\_r\_e\_n\_c\_e\_s

-Cc

We have been dealing so far with objective facts and statistics. What we would now like to do is delve into the causes for these statistics and facts being what they are. Much of the material that will be presented is based on interviews with Pastors Rolfe Westendorf and James Aderman.

Probably the first and greatest cause for different cultures and living conditions among blacks and the majority of white WELS members is the reasons for their ancestors coming to America. The early history of Lutheranism in America shows that most Lutherans came from Germany in the hope of finding religious and political freedom, and to economically improve themselves. These German Lutherans were, for the most part, a people eager to carve out a new and better life in America. On the other hand, we know all too well the reason for the black man's migration to the US--slavery. Can anyone fully describe the negative attitudes and emotions toward America those early black slaves must have had? First, they were forced to come to a land they wanted no part of, and then they were placed into slavery. Even though it has been over 100 years since the abolition of slavery, is it legitimate to simply rule out the affect this has on the psyche of the black person today?

In our conversation with Pastor Westendorf, he pointed out that these two vastly different reasons for coming to America have a great deal of influence on the family structures of these peoples. We need only to think of the colony at Frankenmuth to see how important the family unit was to those early Lutheran immigrants. Not only were family ties close because of their

strong Christian beliefs, but also the members within the family unit depended on each other for survival. Father, mother, and children all played major roles in supporting the family. Such was not the case among the black slaves. Families were frequently torn apart, with fathers most often being separated from their families. Pastor Westendorf stated that this has had a profound affect on the black culture even up to the present. Pointing to the fact that the black children would stay with the mother when their father was sold to another owner, this practice was a key to developing a matriarchal family structure within the black race. After slavery was abolished black men still had difficulty finding jobs which would support a family. Because of this, black men married, started a family, but then would often leave because they were unable to support their families. The U.S. Bureau of the Census reported that in 1974 67% of the poor black households in America were headed by women. There can be no question that income has a great deal to do with this as the statistics also show 90% of the children in black families with an income of over \$15,000 lived with both parents. (6) Although there are various causes, the matriarchal family structure is an established reality within the black culture.

It was mentioned earlier that proportionately blacks are not equally represented within the U.S. governmental framework. This too is a result of an historical lack of representation. While German Lutherans were active in county and state legislatures, courts, and political offices, blacks were considered property until 1865 and did not become politically active until the

1960's. Although progress is being made in this area, any observant person will have to agree that such political deprivation will be influential on the attitudes and beliefs of that culture.

### C. The Result of Cultural Differences

In this part we have discussed some of the more obvious cultural differences among blacks and white WELS members, and their causes. What we now must do is apply these principles to daily life in an effort to demonstrate how culture can be an obstacle in sharing the Gospel.

A lower income level leads to a lower standard of living. Houses that are run down and inexpensive usually are found in certain restricted segments of the city. The logical development will be that poor people will congregate where the cheaper housing is available while those who can afford to move to a better house certainly will do so. Since many blacks are on the lower end of the pay scale they will tend to inhabit the less expensive homes. The end result is a natural segregation. Economics even play in with dietary habits. Greens, chitterlings, and pork hocks are all inexpensive foods which most people who are economically well off do not buy, yet these same foods are staples in poor black families.

Such segregated living conditions are also conducive to breeding various cultural traits unique to those particular people. This becomes very apparent in the language, dress, and music of the black culture. And so, because the vast majority of WELS members have had little or no contact with the black



community, it is only natural that such unfamiliarity will cause, to a certain extent, a polarization. It should also be mentioned that many blacks are just as unfamiliar with the culture of German Lutherans.

#### D. C\_o\_n\_c\_l\_u\_s\_i\_o\_n

It has been our intention here not to make cultural judgments, but rather to objectively view (if that is possible) some of the contrasting lifestyles of white WELS members with members of the black community which are served by Siloah, St. Philip's, Zebaoth, and Garden Homes. We hope that we have not offended anyone or are guilty of stereotyping. The material contained on these pages is the product of interviews with the pastors from the above mentioned churches as well as from outside reading and observation.

#### Part Four: Problems Integrating Blacks

##### into Predominantly White Churches

Taking into account the segregationist attitudes which pervaded American thinking until the mid 1960s and the economic segregation that takes place today, it should come as no surprise that the Wisconsin Synod has encountered difficulties in its efforts to bring blacks into its predominantly white churches. In this part we will deal with some of the integration problems WELS has had and the various attempts by pastors and teachers to remedy the situation.

#### A. T\_h\_e\_C\_o\_m\_m\_i\_t\_m\_e\_n\_t\_o\_f\_W\_E\_L\_S\_t\_o\_t\_h\_e\_B\_l

*Black  
Community*

There are, in certain respects, built-in problems to integrating WELS churches within the black community. With the exception of Zoar-Detroit and St. Philip's all the other churches in black neighborhoods were built by whites when they inhabited those neighborhoods fifteen to forty years ago. These buildings were constructed according to the German Lutheran style of architecture as would be only natural. Today, however, such architecture is unfamiliar to the culture which surrounds it. Several of the pastors we interviewed mentioned that although it was not a major obstacle, the architecture of their churches was a cause for blacks hesitating to visit the church.

Another problem area is the changing attitudes of these churches over against the black community. Pastor James Aderman of Silcok identified three attitude stages in a church where the racial make-up of the neighborhood is in the midst of changing. The first stage takes place when the racial make-up of the neighborhood is just beginning to change. In the churches we studied, except for St. Philip's, this took place between the years 1960 and 1970. To paraphrase Pastor Aderman, the attitude of the white people who built the church was, "This is our church and we don't want those people!" Because of the segregationist attitudes that were so prevalent at that time, most white churches wanted to remain white churches. After a mass exodus of whites from these particular neighborhoods, those whites remaining in the church took on what Pastor Aderman described as the "survival ministry". This was the realization that if the church was to survive, it must incorporate the black

people who live in the neighborhood. The third stage, and the stage which Pastors Aderman and Westendorf feel very strongly Siloah is entering, is that of the church accepting its ministry where it is at and enthusiastically sharing the Gospel of Jesus Christ with those people in the area surrounding the church.

Although the end result, the church accepting its ministry where it is at, is the ideal, the two stages preceding it can make the fulfillment of that goal extremely difficult. Both the first and second stages described by Pastor Aderman are not at all conducive to racial integration. Even the survival attitude leaves the minority culture with the bad impression that the whites are turning to them only as a last resort.

Principal Ned Goede of Beautiful Savior pointed to age differences as being another hindrance in unifying the church. He said, "On Sunday morning there are two distinct groups in the church. On the one hand you have the elderly white people who have belonged to the church for years. On the other hand, you have that small nucleus of young black families." In this case the dividing factor is not so much racial as it is just the fact that these two groups of people are, in a very real sense, foreign to each other's way of life. How much in common can we realistically hope a 30 year old black man will have with a 75 year old German white woman? Before Christ we are all one and that is what is important, yet socially and in the day to day workings of the church these age and cultural differences are going to be an obstacle to unity.

In connection with the fact that almost all the churches the WELS has in black neighborhoods were originally built by whites, we asked the pastors, "What is the commitment of WELS to the black community? Is it genuine or is it just a matter of keeping the churches already built in black neighborhoods alive?"

While most lay people in the synod may not be aware of the special work among blacks, the synod administration is showing a tremendous commitment to reach out with the Gospel to the black community. All the pastors we interviewed mentioned the favorable input and financial help they have received from the Board for Home Missions. Pastor Norman Berg, executive secretary of the GBHM was especially noted for his willingness to support WELS churches in black neighborhoods. Pastor Mark Haefner of Zebaoth said, "If a church in the inner city demonstrates a genuine willingness to reach out to minorities, it can be pretty sure that it will receive solid backing from the Board for Home Missions."

Within the GBHM there is a board headed by Pastor Howard Kaiser (St. Paul's-Milwaukee) which deals exclusively with cross cultural ministries. This board was started in the mid 1970's under the name Inner-City Mission Committee. Today it has been renamed the Multi-Cultural Ministries Commission. Several of the pastors interviewed pointed to this board as a tremendous step forward within the framework of the synod for reaching out to the various cultural groups in the United States.

#### B. R\_a\_c\_i\_s\_m

The Apostle Paul writes in Romans 7:21-25,  
When I want to do good, evil is right there

with me. For in my inner being I delight in God's law, but I see another law at work in the members of my body, waging war against the law of my mind and making me a prisoner of the law of sin at work within my members. What a wretched man that I am! Who will rescue me from this body of death? Thanks be to God—through Jesus Christ our Lord. So then, I myself in my mind am a slave to God's law, but in the sinful nature a slave to the law of sin.

These words of Paul vividly describe a root cause of racism among Christians. Racism is a horrible, misinformed attitude, yet as long as Christians remain in the sinful flesh, racism will remain. Pastor Westendorf wrote a paper he entitled "The Theses on Racism" to define and describe the results of racism. The theses listed below are those which best describe why racism is so difficult to deal with, even in the Christian who is consciously fighting this sin.

- Racism is a judgment upon all members of a given ethnic group.
- Such judgments are based on certain characteristics known or assumed to be common in that group.
- Racism may include judgments upon physical, social, spiritual, or economic elements of a given culture.
- The judgments of racism may be positive or negative.
- Racism is ubiquitous.
- Racism exists among minorities and majorities.
- Racism may be perceived where it does not exist, particularly by racists.
- You are assumed to be a racist until you have proven otherwise.

One additional thesis which one might add as a cause for many of the theses listed above, is simply that racism is so often the result of misinformation and a lack of personal contact with other cultures. It is not the purpose of this paper to deal in

depth with the matter of racism, yet it is a very real problem. And, what makes racism so dangerous is that even though it can be effectively dealt with, it is such an easy sin to fall into. Who can say, after looking at the theses listed, that he is not guilty of making those false assumptions? Who can say he has never stereotyped a person from another race or culture? Who can say he has never felt that people of another race are stereotyping him and has not experienced a bitter reaction because of it? Who has not made snap judgments on an entire race which are based on just one experience? And how many can honestly say they have tried to understand the feelings, attitudes, and emotions of people from a different culture? It is much easier to withdraw and separate from that which is unfamiliar. Yet, consider the wedge these types of attitudes create between cultures and races. In a recent issue of the Northwestern Lutheran Pastor Joel Gerlach wrote, "If caring about the truth is not balanced with caring about other people, it should come as no surprise if people ignore what we say about the truth." (7) In the same vein, sermons can be preached and Bible studies taught on Galatians 3:28, but until the people of WELS live out the words of Galatians 3:28 in their lives, there can be little hope for a truly integrated church.

In discussing racism Pastor Westendorf said that the amount of racism within a church is relative to the feeling of the community. Among whites, he explained, racist feelings can be generally traced to two sources: 1. competition for jobs, and 2. a lack of cultural understanding and desire to learn. Black

racism, on the other hand, stems from not only a reaction against white racism, but also a suspicion of white motives in dealing with blacks. Another point which several of the pastors made and warned against was the tendency for whites to work among blacks with the attitude, "I'm here to help you." It is quite understandable why such an attitude would create problems.

Racism is commonly held up as the one and only great evil which is hindering the races from living and worshipping together peacefully. It was interesting to note that with the exception of one pastor, the men we interviewed did not see racism as their biggest obstacle in reaching out to the black community. They stated it was definitely a problem that had to be worked on, but each pastor did feel tremendous strides have been made in reducing racist attitudes within their churches. When asked if he thought a fear of racism would keep a black person from visiting a white WELS church, Pastor Haefner felt this wasn't the case. Rather, he posed the question, "How would you feel if a black person invited you to attend a black church?" Such an invitation would reflect an attitude not of racism, but of concern and love. Yet, just the unfamiliarity with the black culture would probably be enough to discourage a white person from visiting a black church. This seems to be one of the major problems the pastors we interviewed are facing at this time.

C. Adapting to Cultural Differences ~~with~~

One of the big questions for our inner city churches is how well our traditional Lutheran service meets the needs of their new black members. After all, our service is quite different

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from what one usually pictures for black churches which includes spiritual hymns, emotionalism, and spontaneous "Amen's" or "Hallelujahs" on the part of many members. Our Lutheran liturgy provides quite a contrast to this. It's not often that our p.5/15 liturgy is called emotional. Does our subdued, formal German Lutheran liturgy speak the liturgical language of people from this different culture?

The pastors that we interviewed provided a variety of responses. They all agreed that the content and message of our traditional liturgy are excellent. The questions center on the vehicle for expressing that excellent message. The archaic English and chorale style music were seen as areas where slight changes could be made.

St. Philip's has made the most noticeable changes in the area of liturgy. They have more or less adapted the whole service with their own special liturgy. The basic elements of p.5 are still there, but the language has been updated and the musical setting more reflects the musical preferences of most of the black members. Garden Homes has also made quite extensive changes. A psalm is substituted for the Introit, sometimes a hymn is used in place of the Gloria. In addition, in place of the Collect the congregation uses what they call a Theme Prayer, which the pastor writes to tie the thoughts of the whole service together. Silcrah basically follows the book except for rewriting the Introits, Graduals, and prayers. Zebaoth also generally sticks with the traditional liturgy. In all cases the changes that have been made are not really to be considered drastic. The



line of thought remains the same, while the external setting has been slightly adapted to speak more relevantly to the needs of the members. In all of the churches a conscientious attempt is made--in services, newsletters, organizations, etc.--to explain the various parts of the liturgy and their function. One could add here that many of our synod's congregations have experimented with minor liturgical changes that are similar to those noted above. So, what is happening in the inner city is not really all that unusual or revolutionary.

The pastors also provided interesting comments regarding their choice of hymns for the services. Certain hymns are avoided. For example, hymn 279 v.1 ends, "Thy precious blood can cleanse us and make us white today." It was also pointed out that our present hymnal is not limited to old German Lutheran chorales. There are also many hymns of what is called "Gospel" origin. The inner city churches make more frequent use of these hymns. An example of one of these is hymn 457, "What a Friend We have in Jesus." Generally these hymns are easier to learn and sing, and are slightly more emotional than the older chorales. So the inner city pastors must be more selective in their choice of hymns.

These churches do not, however, limit themselves to the Lutheran Hymnal for their congregational singing. Spiritual hymns from other sources are also used. For instance, Siloah and Zebaoth used two spirituals, "The Old Rugged Cross" and "Were You There?" for their Lenten services this year. It is most interesting that both whites and blacks seemed to appreciate

this. At Zebaoth the loudest singer for these hymns was an 83 year old white man.

All of these churches have plans to make more than just occasional use of new spiritual hymns. Zebaoth recently began a hymnal supplement. St. Philip's is working in this area, too. Just recently Garden Homes completed a hymnal supplement entitled, "Sing a New Song." It includes 59 spiritual and Gospel hymns. Wherever necessary, slight changes have been made to remove any false doctrine. Plans are for Garden Homes to use this supplement for one or two of the four hymns each Sunday. One ought certainly to commend these congregations for their extensive efforts in this area.

Before leaving this topic, it would be interesting and informative to mention what some of the black members of our churches have to say about the Lutheran service. On March 30, 1985 an Inner City Mission Seminar was held at Garden Homes. One of the topics on the agenda was entitled, "Do Traditional Lutheran Hymns and Liturgy meet the Needs of our Cross-Cultural Congregations?" Part of the time spent on this topic was set aside for several black WELS members to express their personal feelings on this question.

One thing that almost every speaker mentioned was that initially they found our service to be a very unusual experience. One said she was in "total shock" after attending her first WELS service. Most were surprised by the number of times the congregation stands up and sits down. Another comment expressed surprise over how restrained and disciplined the congregation

was--almost no one turned around during the service, the congregation did not even look at the grade school children as they sang at the side of the church, etc. Others said they would prefer a little more fire and emotion on the part of the preacher. One lady noted that she would like to be able to react out loud a little during the sermon with a simple audible "yeah" or "Amen." Another explained her first impression of the music with, "I thought I was in a Vincent Price movie."

No doubt these cultural differences may keep some blacks away and prevent others from returning, but overall the black people themselves were in favor of generally keeping the present liturgy. None of them suggested drastic changes. The reasons they gave for their opinions were that once they understood what was happening and remembered when to sit and stand, etc., they really began to appreciate the liturgy. They felt it was almost entirely a matter of education; the important thing was to learn about the service.

One black man whose children attend Lutheran grade school remarked about his surprise over the fact that his children really enjoy singing some of the old German hymns they learned in school. There are even some black members who actually prefer the p. 5 liturgy to the new liturgy at St. Philip's. Many expressed the sentiment that they joined the Lutheran church, and they want to learn to appreciate the heritage of Lutheranism. One said, "It's a part of my church's heritage, so let's keep it." Others pointed to the importance of having a rather uniform liturgy throughout the WELS. If they move to a different area or

simply visit another WELS church on vacation, they want to be able to comfortably worship there. Also the idea was expressed that they did not want to be treated differently just because they were black.

Overall the feeling toward our services was quite positive. They especially appreciated the fact that they were able to learn something from the services, once they knew what was going on. A couple people remarked about the real contrast here with more traditionally black services which they previously had been accustomed to. They said at those services there was a lot of shouting and the emotional pitch was high, but they said there was very little learning going on there. In the WELS--while they still may prefer a little more emotion--there is, they said, a real learning experience in the service.

On the question of changes in the liturgical services of our inner city churches, the conclusion thus far seems to generally point toward keeping what we have with only moderate changes. It is with these thoughts in mind that our inner city pastors and congregations will continue to work toward meeting their special liturgical needs.

#### Part Five: Evangelism Outreach to the Black Community

The key question for WELS in its attempt to draw the black community into its churches centers on evangelism. What types of evangelism are most effective among blacks? In this part we intend to discuss four outreach methods which have been used in the past. Three are still in use, one has been put on the back burner at the present. According to the pastors, it is essential

in the upcoming years, if WELS is to establish itself among blacks, to develop an evangelism policy designed to encourage the planting of churches and the survival of existing churches within the black community.

A. T\_h\_e\_C\_h\_r\_i\_s\_t\_i\_a\_n\_D\_a\_y\_S\_c\_h\_o\_o\_l

Pastor Westendorf, in his paper "WELS in the Inner City" writes, "It was too much of a coincidence that the Lutheran congregations that were managing to survive in the inner city atmosphere were the congregations that operated a Christian day school." (8) This statement is born out by statistics. Those churches which either did not have a school or discontinued their schools, either disappeared completely or moved to another location (Bethel, Bethesda, Divine Charity, Ephrata, Saron and St. Matthew's).

In 1977 the Siebert Foundation hired the Anderson/Roethle consulting firm to study the future of WELS inner city congregations and to determine where their best potential for growth lay. Overwhelmingly the report supported what Pastor Westendorf says the pastors knew all along--that the day school is the most effective evangelism tool for inner city churches at this time. Neil Meitler, one of the consultants who was deeply involved in the report remarked to Principal Ned Goede, "To take away the day school would be like chopping off your head." Black parents who were previously unfamiliar with WELS are often attracted by the education WELS schools provide. Dissatisfied with the educational quality levels in the public schools, these parents turn to WELS day schools.

This brings us to a very difficult point--how to use the Christian day school as a mission arm, and how far does the church go in opening its school doors to non-members? For the majority of churches, policy is much the same. The children of members naturally are given the first places in the classroom, but if there are still empty seats, then non-members are allowed to send their children to the school. These non-members, however, must pay tuition and attend the Adult Information Course. If, at that time they wish to become members of the church, the tuition for their child(ren) is dropped. The time frame most of the churches followed was: one year to attend the Adult Information Course and one year to decide whether or not they intend to become members. If, by that time, the parents have not made a firm commitment, their child(ren) are, in most cases, removed from the school. So that this does not seem to be a cold and ruthless practice, not in keeping with Gospel motivation, we must add that all the pastors and teachers we talked with said that if there were legitimate conscience problems in deciding to join the church, then extra time would be provided. Yet, the problems these congregations are trying to avoid by this policy are of great concern, namely that of parents using the church to educate their children with no intention of joining the church.

Although the four churches we researched do at the present hold to this type of policy we have just discussed, Silcoah, from approximately 1978-1983 experimented with some rather thought provoking school policies. Under the principalship of Mr. Chet

Jaenig Silcrah's school opened its doors pretty much to the community. Teacher Gil Tatge said that during those years the percentage of tuition students was extremely high. At its peak enrollment Silcrah had about 220 children; today that figure is 170. The reason we used the word "provocative" earlier is that, though such policies produced many problems, they also created a new spirit within the church. The following chart illustrates some of the pro's and con's of an "open" school policy.

P\_r\_o'\_s

1. The church had the opportunity to share the Gospel with many who had never heard it before.
2. It presented a caring attitude to the neighborhood, and provided Christian contact with non-member parents.
3. Many new members were brought into the church.

C\_o\_n'\_s

1. Many defaulted on tuition payments, making finances a major concern.
2. There was a tremendous strain put on the teachers. Class sizes ranged from 30-40 children.
3. Christian discipline did not have much affect on many of the tuition students.
4. Unruly behavior became contagious.
5. Tuition students talked openly about attending other churches.

In talking with Mr. Tatge it became apparent that the unbearable pressure the teachers were forced to endure under such overcrowded conditions was the most compelling reason for clamping down on student admissions. Yet, for all the problems the "open" school policy caused, Mr. Tatge felt it significantly helped Silcrah in many respects.

To summarize the importance of having a Christian day school in the black community which is located in an inner city situation, Principal Goede admitted that there is little hope of

either planting WELS churches or the survival of an existing WELS church in such a situation without a Christian day school.

#### B. E\_v\_a\_n\_g\_e\_l\_i\_s\_m\_\_P\_r\_o\_g\_r\_a\_m\_s

Pastor Sorum of Garden Homes noted that his church is experiencing a high degree of success with personal or contact evangelism. Although Garden Homes aggressively canvasses its neighborhood, quickly following up on prospects, Pastor Sorum says the most successful evangelism has been done by members bringing relatives or friends to church. Over the last two years 75 new members have been brought to Garden Homes in this way. When asked if full time lay evangelists would be effective, Pastor Sorum said he felt that this wouldn't be the answer. Rather, he pointed to an evangelical spirit within the members of the church and the educating of his members in simple evangelism techniques. To build the spirit of mission work, Pastor Sorum tries to include something about telling others the message of Jesus Christ in every service.

Assimilation of new members is another key in the growth of any church and it is no different for the pastors of the inner city. Again, Pastor Sorum provided help in this area. During his short ministry at Garden Homes, in addition to the church groups most are familiar with, the congregation has started a single parent club, an organization for families, a couples' club, a softball team, and a board of Deacons and Deaconesses who make up to 200 delinquent calls per year. There are also future plans to organize neighborhood Bible studies. Not all of these clubs and organizations have been successful, yet groups such as



those mentioned above provide opportunities for new members to get involved.

#### C. V\_a\_c\_a\_t\_i\_o\_n\_\_B\_i\_b\_l\_e\_\_S\_c\_h\_o\_o\_l

The third evangelism tool which we want to discuss is Vacation Bible School. In the late 1960's Pastor Richard Seeger of St. Marcus proposed an intensive three year evangelism program aimed at recruiting young black children for Vacation Bible School and letting the black community know something about WELS. The Lord blessed this outreach with an AAL grant and the talents of Pastor Gary Schroeder (St. Philip's). Within a short time dozens of young people from WELS, mostly collegians, were trained to canvass and teach VBS. The early statistics were impressive. Thousands of homes were contacted, hundreds of children attended VBS.

Today this program continues to be successful. With the production of materials which have been designed to be compatible with the black culture, "Inner-City VBS" promises to continue to be a successful means of outreach in the future.

#### D. S\_t\_o\_r\_e\_f\_r\_o\_n\_t\_\_M\_i\_s\_s\_i\_o\_n\_s

In the introduction to this part it was mentioned that one evangelism method had been placed on the back burner. In 1974 the Inner-City Mission Committee was instrumental in opening the Palmer Street Mission. This mission was designed to be a type of WELS storefront church. From 1974 to 1977 this storefront mission was operated mainly by seminary students. The emphasis was on evangelism and Bible studies. Unfortunately, due to staffing problems the mission folded after a few years.

Talking with those who were familiar with the Palmer Street Mission, it is interesting to note that there are very mixed reviews concerning the effectiveness of this type of ministry. The attitude of those who viewed it negatively was, "If it had been successful, it would still be there." Pastor Westendorf, however, sees the storefront mission as a very viable outreach tool in the future. In discussing its prospects he layed down a set of guidelines for a storefront mission.

1. practical only in an economically depressed area
2. Sunday School outreach
3. constant neighborhood evangelism
4. social welfare (counseling, big brother program, food for the needy)
5. Bible studies and adult classes

Whether or not storefront missions will become a reality in the future of WELS is still open to debate. However, Pastor Mark Haefner, after hearing criticisms of the storefront mission replied, "I still would have to ask why it wouldn't be successful?"

#### E. C\_o\_n\_c\_l\_u\_s\_i\_o\_n

The pastors and teachers we interviewed all admitted that they still have work to do in perfecting their evangelism skills, yet these men feel that at this time WELS has legitimate evangelism tools for reaching the black community in the Christian day school, neighborhood evangelism programs, and Vacation Bible School. The coming years will tell how these tools can be used more effectively.

#### Part Six: Parting Thoughts

As one can easily see, the subject area of the WELS in the inner city could certainly be extended far beyond the length of

this paper. There is so much more interesting history that could be explored, so many different ideas that could be more fully dealt with. More churches could be studied. As we mentioned at the start, we by no means examined or wrote about every issue in this subject matter. The topic could be discussed ad infinitum. It was our goal to simply consider some of the facts concerning the work of our inner city churches.

Before closing this paper we will take opportunity to give special thanks to those pastors and teachers who willingly shared their time with us and provided so many interesting and informative comments. Thank you to: Rolfe Westendorf and James Aderman, pastors of Siloah; Mark Haefner, pastor of Zebaoth (who recently followed the Lord's call to our cross-cultural congregation in Decatur, Georgia); Helmut Flegel, pastor of St. Philip's; Allen Scrum, pastor of Garden Homes; Bil Tatge, teacher at Siloah, and Ned Goede, principal of Beautiful Savior School.

We began this paper more or less as two outsiders interested in this special work of our synod. While what we learned from this study probably will not be very educational for those who already are active in this field, we found it to be tremendously interesting and spiritually edifying. It is our fervent prayer that our God will continue to grant his gracious blessings to these inner city congregations.

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