

A HISTORY OF THE COMMITTEE FOR THE HEARING IMPAIRED

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Church History A
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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The information for this paper was gleaned from printed materials, a personal interview with the Executive Secretary of the Special Ministries Board, Mr Alfons Woldt, and questionnaires which were sent to the various Committee Chairmen. It is for this reason then that I would like to thank Mr Alfons Woldt for the time he set aside to talk to me about the Special Ministries Board and the Committee for the Hearing Impaired. I would also like to thank all of those who took the time to answer my questionnaire and supplement it with materials pertaining to their particular Committee. I would especially like to thank Mr William Hughes for not only answering my questionnaire in detail, but for also supplying me with a wealth of material on the Committee for the Hearing Impaired, as well as a listing of where additional material could be found.

To all of these men I say thank you for your help, it was both greatly and deeply appreciated.

My deafness often creates frustration as I struggle to comprehend. Such a feeling of peace and joy filled me due to the service being interpreted. I understood the worship service last Sunday in its entirety for the first time in the seven years since I became deaf. Words cannot express all the wonderful, joyous feelings that your workshop has given me. Most of all it has strengthened my faith and given me a profound sense of belonging to a caring Lutheran Synod, one that desires for me to grow in faith through understanding God's Word within the needs of my deafness.¹

It is comments like these which come from the deaf that make the Committee for the Hearing Impaired, a Committee of the Special Ministries Board, a tremendous asset to the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod. This Committee meets the needs of those who suffer from the "blind handicap", deafness. According to Mr Alfons Woldt, executive secretary to the Special Ministries Board, deafness is the most difficult handicap to minister to. Why? Because it is the hardest to accept and to be accepted. Many people who have some type of hearing impairment don't like to or won't admit that they have a problem. Many hearing impaired people don't like the thought of wearing a hearing aid. It's sad, but what makes it even more sad is the fact that this handicap is not generally accepted in our society. Mr Woldt said the files are full of applications for volunteer signers, but many of our congregations refuse to use the service. There are a few reasons for this behavior, first, as already mentioned, the handicap of being hearing impaired, whether mildly or severely is not generally accepted in our society, secondly, many congregations feel that the use of signers would disrupt their worship, and thirdly, and perhaps most tragic, many congregations won't admit that they have any hearing impaired in their midst.

There is a definite and real need to assist the hearing impaired, a definite and real need which every pastor, teacher, and layman should be aware of. However, this paper cannot deal specifically with that issue.

This paper is not a paper on the practical and useful help this Committee offers, but rather it is a history paper, a behind the scenes look, you can call it, of the Committee of the Hearing Impaired. We will trace this Committee from its birth, to its present age, and on to its future goals, noting all along that it is there for us to recognize and to use. With this in mind let us then turn our attention to the history of the Committee for the Hearing Impaired by first of all(I), noting its place within the Special Ministries Board, and then secondly(II), tracing its history.

I

In order to better understand the history of the Committee for the Hearing Impaired, we must first understand the body of which it is a part, the Special Ministries Board. It is for this reason then that we will want to take a few minutes and briefly discuss the history and makeup of the Special Ministries Board.

In 1963, then President Oscar J. Naumann addressed the 37th Convention at Wisconsin Lutheran High School (August 7-14), by stating in his report,

In inner mission work we are active among those to whom the Savior refers when He says; 'I was an hungered, and ye gave me meat I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink; I was a stranger, and ye took me in; naked, and ye clothed me; I was sick, and ye visited me; I was in prison, and ye came unto me'(Matthew 25:35,36). In short, these are Christ's brethren who because of various circumstances, disaster, sickness, poverty, deafness, blindness, advanced age, imprisonment and other circumstances cannot come to us or take part in congregational life. We must go to them and bring the Gospel to them, very often individually. There can be little thought here of building congregations. ... I do not care to call it social welfare work, or even Christian welfare work; I prefer to recommend that we speak of inner mission work in order to emphasize the fact that our prime purpose is the mission of bringing the Gospel to these our brethren and the brethren of our merciful Savior. I prefer to emphasize that this is a mission on which the Savior has sent us and still sends us. In the past we have done this in associations formed together with our confessional brethren and this was pleasing to the

Lord our God. Now after we have had to declare with heavy hearts that the relationship of brethren in the visible church has been disturbed by error, we find ourselves torn between two responsibilities: the God given mission of serving also these redeemed of God, and the equally divine injunction of avoiding in spiritual activities those who support or condone error. ... I should like to add to the matters to be considered by the convention the recommendation that one take steps to establish a board for inner missions.²

These thoughts and statements of President Naumann planted the seed for what would one day be called the Special Ministries Board.

Work toward implementing President Naumann's request began immediately and by the next convention at Northwestern College, August 4-11, 1965, the General Board for Home Missions enclosed a Report of the Committee on Specialized Ministries. It reads as follows,

To the General Board for Home Missions

Mindful of the Word of our Lord, "To whom much is given, from him shall much be required," we humbly submit these recommendations in the hope that the greatest possible assistance be given to the individual Christian, the congregations, local groups, and Districts (to whom these calls for "specialized ministrations" are most often addressed) with a minimum of Synodical involvement and expense.

Recommendations:

- I. That the existing Lutheran Spiritual Welfare Commission be made an arm of the General Board for Home Missions and given a new assignment.
 1. That the new assignment to this arm be the Specialized Ministries:
 - A. Military; B. Student; C. Institutional; D. Inner Core; E. Blind; F. Such other ministries which may fall into this field of work.
 2. That the Personnel of this Board be drawn from the enlarged District Mission Boards wherever possible.
 3. That the present full-time office of the Lutheran Spiritual Welfare Commission be assigned to a full-time director of Special Ministries.
 4. That the Executive Secretary for Home Missions be the coordinator of the whole Home Mission Program.
 5. That the Committee on Evangelism and the Committee on Soul Conservation be given a parent within this general framework.
- II. That the Fifth Department of Synod - Benevolences and Pensions - be given the assignment of assistance in those fields which are more "welfare" in nature.

1. Since a "Bethesda"- like institution would be more Synodical than local in scope of work, that such an institution be made the responsibility of this department.
2. Since homes for aged serve primarily local areas, that these be made the responsibility of local groups (congregations, federations, etc.) with this department of Synod lending advisory assistance, and gathering records and information.
3. Since child placement is restricted by state regulations that this work be made the concern of local groups (congregations, federations, Districts, etc.) with this department of Synod lending advisory assistance, and gathering records and information.
4. That the above work and present related work be carried out with a minimum of readjustment within the department of Benevolences and Pensions.
5. That the ministry of Word and Sacrament to such above, and existing State, County and Private Institutions, be made the responsibility of the District Mission Boards.³

The work of the Commission for study and recommendation to which this entire matter regarding Specilized Ministry made its decisions known in the Reports and Memorials for the 40th Convention held at Doctor Martin Luther College, August 6-13, 1969. It states,

The Commission is, therefore, recommending the creation of a department of specialized ministries within the Division of Home Missions. The department should be under the direct supervision of an elected five-man board composed of two pastors, two laymen, and one teacher, with the President of the Synod empowered to make the appointments for the first biennium and thereafter the Nominating Committee instructed to nominate candates as the appointments expire.

The responsibilities of the Lutheran Spiritual Welfare Commission and of the Board for the Mentally Retarded would be transferred to this new board for specialized ministries. The new board shall also be responsible for counsel and service to the institutional ministry, social welfare ministries, and other specialized ministries as they may from time to time be authorized by the Synod.

The Commission also recommends that the board for specialized ministries be authorized to call a full-time director. Since the General Board for Home Missions will be the primary budgeting agency, the director should report on his day to day operations to the General Board's executive secretary who shall be for that reason an advisory member of the board for specialized ministries board shall be advisory members of the General Board.⁴

This was the birth of the Special Ministries Board. The latter recommendation of this Committee was brought before the synod in 1971 where in the Proceedings of the 41st Convention held at Northwestern College, August 4-11, the following motion was carried and passed,

Reference: BoRAM - pp. 174-175
Resolution No. 7
Subject: Full time Executive Secretary for Special Ministries Board

WHEREAS the Synod has established a Special Ministries Board;
and

WHEREAS the scope of the services directed by the Special Ministries Board has become too great to be carried out by men on a part-time basis, both because of the scope and the nature of the work (Military Services, Special Education Services, Student Services, Mission for the Blind, etc.); and

WHEREAS this board has given ample evidence of the need for a full-time Executive Secretary to implement its program; therefore be it

Resolved, That we authorize the Special Ministries Board to call a full-time Executive Secretary of Special Ministries.⁵

This resolution became a reality when on March 13, 1973, a call was extended to Mr Alfons Woldt to serve as the Executive Secretary of the Special Ministries Board, and in a letter dated March 26, 1973, Mr Woldt accepted this call.⁶

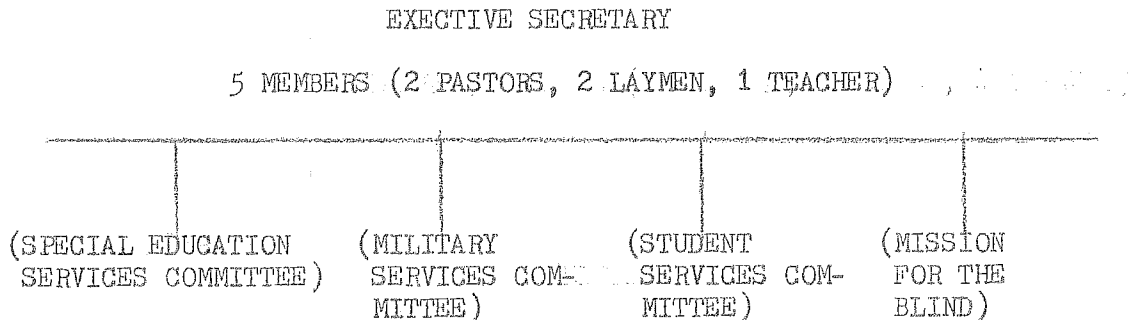
The Special Ministries Board began with four areas of responsibility as the Reports and Memorials for the 42nd Convention show,

The work of the Special Ministries Board is divided into four areas of responsibility with a committee functioning in each area in order to help reach some definitive answers. The committees and their chairmen are:

1. Special Education Services Committee -
Co-chairmen: Mr. Alfons Woldt
Mr. Theodore Zuberbier
2. Military Services Committee -
Chairman: Pastor Arnold H. Schroeder

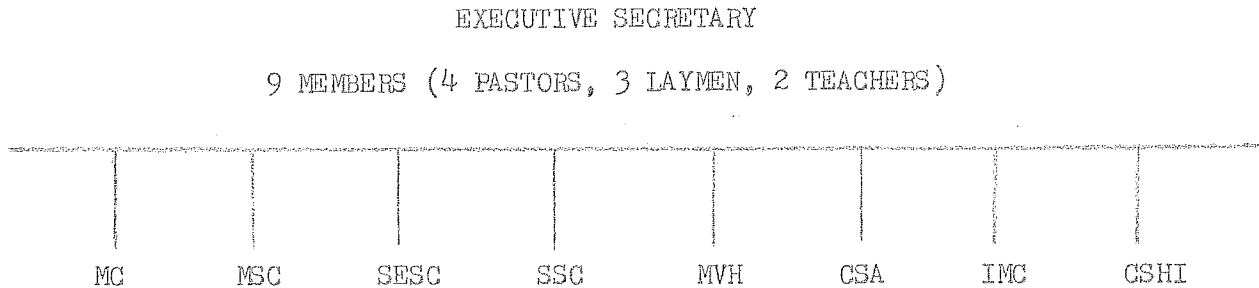
3. Student Services Committee -
Co-chairmen: Pastor Larry Pautz
Mr. Richard Raabe
4. Mission for the Blind -
Chairman: Mr. Clarence Saatkamp⁷

Therefore, we can diagram the 1973 Special Ministries Board as follows:



The year 1975 proved to be a boom year for the Special Ministries Board, for many new programs were implemented. In addition to the four original Committees, the Soul Conservation program of the synod was transferred to the Special Ministries Board. This program, in cooperation with the General Board for Home Missions, "continues to be an effective means of keeping in contact with members who move and also directing them to the nearest WELS affiliated church."⁸ The Special Ministries Board also set up study Committees to look into the needs for permanent Committees on an Institutional Ministries Committee, a Committee on Services to the Aging and a Committee for the hearing handicapped. All of these study Committees would become permanent Committees to make up the present eight Committees of the Special Ministries Board. The purposes and objectives of these Committees, (with the exception of the Committee for the Hearing Impaired which will be handled later), as well as the purposes and objectives of the Special Ministries Board itself can be found listed in the appendix. It is evident that today's Special Ministries Board differs from the 1973

Special Ministries Board in that it has expanded its services over the years. This is noted in the following diagram of the 1986 Special Ministries Board:



KEY

- MC - MEMBERSHIP CONSERVATION
- MSC - MILITARY SERVICES COMMITTEE
- SESC - SPECIAL EDUCATION SERVICES COMMITTEE
- SSC - STUDENT SERVICES COMMITTEE
- MVH - MISSION FOR THE VISUALLY HANDICAPPED
- CSA - COMMITTEE ON SERVICES TO THE AGING
- IMC - INSTITUTIONAL MINISTRIES COMMITTEE
- CSHI - COMMITTEE ON SERVICES TO THE HEARING IMPAIRED

1975 was also a big year for the Special Ministries Board for not only were new programs proposed, but the Special Ministries Board brought itself to the Districts by proposing District Special Ministries Boards. This proposal was brought to the synod's attention in the Reports and Memorials for the 43rd convention held at Doctor Martin Luther College, August 6-13, 1975. The proposal reads as follows,

The Special Ministries Board has for some time felt the need for greater participation from the districts. In order to effectively carry out programs within each district and in order to respond to the need for assisting in developing specialized ministries within the districts of the Synod, the board wishes to place the following resolution before the 1975 convention of the Synod.

WHEREAS it is difficult for a central board to adequately study the need for specialized ministries within each district; and

WHEREAS it is desirable that impetus for developing specialized ministries programs also come from within the districts; therefore be it

- Resolved, a) That each district establish a District Special Ministries Board; and be it further
- Resolved, b) That the district determine the number of men to be elected to the District Special Ministries Board; and be it further
- Resolved, c) That the duties and responsibilities of the District Special Ministries Board be similar to those of the Special Ministries Board; and be it further
- Resolved, d) That the District Special Ministries Board cooperate with the District Mission Board in all areas of special ministries, but especially in the areas of campus and institutional ministries; and be it further
- Resolved, e) That the District Special Ministries Board shall work in harmony with the Special Ministries Board and submit regular reports of its activities to the Special Ministries Board and attend such meetings as called for by the Special Ministries Board; and be it finally
- Resolved, f) That the District Mission Board appoint one of its members to serve as an advisory member of the District Special Ministries Board. 8

This resolution was passed at the Convention and thus resulted in the present day District Special Ministries Boards.

Today the Special Ministries Board is alive and well and it continues to serve the Wisconsin Synod through its various programs. Recently, a study Committee has been formed to decide the need for a Committee on Counseling Called Workers. This Committee, if formed, would handle those problems called workers would have regarding their calls and/or marriage and family.

This is the Special Ministries Board. What we have done here in part I of this paper is to take a "brisk walk" through its history in order to give us some background and insight as to where the Committee for the Hearing impaired fits into the Special Ministries Board. Let us now advance into part II of this paper, and take a somewhat detailed look at the history of the Committee for the Hearing Impaired.

II

The Committee for the Hearing Impaired found its beginning in 1975. In the Reports and Memorials for the 43rd Convention of the Wisconsin Synod, the Special Ministries Board made the need for ministering to the deaf known, as it stated in its report,

To date we have not been able to seriously study the feasibility of developing a program of service for the hearing handicapped similar to the program as we have developed it for the visually handicapped. The Board has been made aware of the fact that there are as many hearing handicapped in a given population as there are visually handicapped. We have also been made aware of some of the problems peculiar to teaching the Word of God to the deaf. Time and manpower did not permit us to study the need for a program to assist those who wish to spiritually train the hearing handicapped.⁹

The need was recognized and in September, 1975, work on the formation of this Committee began. It was at that time that William E. Hughes, a layman of Jefferson, Wisconsin, was asked to sit on the Special Ministries Board and chair a special committee that was to be formed to study our synod's needs for the hearing impaired. He was recognized for this special task when he inquired of the Special Ministries Board for materials and help in spiritual training for his deaf son and was informed that no material or program was available through WELS. Mr Hughes set about testing the needs for a Committee on the Special Ministries Board which ministered to the Hearing Impaired. In January 1977, the Hearing Impaired Committee was officially formed. The first members consisted of: Chairman, William Hughes; Mr Quentin Albrecht of Watertown, Wisconsin; Pastor Charles Learman of Jefferson, Wisconsin; and Mrs William Hughes of Jefferson, Wisconsin. This "study committee" worked hard to find out the needs of the synod's hearing impaired. The work of this committee consisted of, among other things, going to various congregations in the synod to see how many actual

deaf there were in the synod. They also contacted the families of those who had a deaf member in their family to see what their needs were. And they also contacted other agencies to search out already printed materials that were available and useful to the hearing impaired.

It was because of the hard work of this study committee that the following report stating the objectives and goals of the "study committee" was placed into the Reports and Memorials for the 44th Synod Convention. The "study committee's" report to that Convention is as follows,

The study committee was organized during the biennium. After meeting several times, and after considerable research on the part of individuals on the committee, the committee suggests the following as its statement of objective and goals:

OBJECTIVE:

To share the Gospel of Jesus Christ with those who are afflicted with a hearing impairment, regardless of age or severity of hearing loss, within our Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod.

GOALS:

A. General

to encourage, promote, stimulate, and/or help develop effective programs for instructing and bringing the Word of God to our Hearing Impaired

B. Specific

1. to initiate and develop a line of communication with each District Special Ministries Board for evaluating their needs in the area for the Hearing Impaired
2. to contact all available publishing houses and organizations which may have suitable materials for religious training of the Hearing Impaired
3. to effectively evaluate and determine which materials would be suitable and acceptable to the doctrine set forth by the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod
4. to make available a catalog with all acceptable materials listed for the District Special Ministries Boards
5. to develop and coordinate a workable advisory distribution center for materials and information for the Hearing Impaired
6. to submit regular reports of the committee's activities to the Special Ministries Board
7. to develop guidelines and policies for the programs below:
 - a. Preschool, Elementary, and High School Students

- (1) Pastor Assistance Programs
Interpreter and printed materials
- (2) Parent Assistance Program
Aids and materials
- (3) Teacher Assistance Program
Aids and materials
- (4) Printed Materials
- (5) Visual Aids
- b. Adults and Senior Members
 - (1) Printed Materials
 - (2) Visual Aids
 - (3) Group Assistance Programs
 - (a) Personnel to assist with operation of special equipment
 - (b) Needs awareness
 - (4) Church Auditory Systems

The study committee recommends that the Special Ministries Board be encouraged to appoint a permanent committee to carry out the objective and goals suggested by the study committee.¹⁰

This recommendation was presented to the Convention and subsequently passed as it was reported in the Proceedings for the 44th Convention,

Reference: BoRAM - p. 71
 Subject: Report of the Study Committee for the Hearing Impaired
 Resolution No. 7

WHEREAS the Study Committee for the Hearing Impaired reports that there is a definite need for specialized printed materials, visual aids, and programs to be developed for the hearing impaired; therefore, be it

Resolved, That a permanent committee for the hearing impaired be appointed by the Special Ministries Board to provide for the existing need.¹¹

In September of that same year, the "study committee" for the hearing impaired was changed to a "working committee" by the Special Ministries Board. The Committee for the Hearing Impaired was ready to push forward as a Committee of the Special Ministries Board.

The Committee for the Hearing Impaired looked like it would have a rocky road to travel when in September of 1977, the same month the Committee for the Hearing Impaired changed from a "study committee to a "working Committee, pastor Learmann accepted a call to Houston, Texas. His position

was filled in July, 1978, by Pastor David Sievert of St. Matthew's Lutheran Church, Janesville, Wisconsin. The Committee for the Hearing Impaired was back on track.

1978 and 1979 proved to be busy years for the Committee for the Hearing Impaired. The majority of their time was taken up making numerous speaking appearances at various schools, congregations and women's groups throughout the midwest. On February 10, 1979, the first seminar for the Hearing Impaired was held at Northwestern College. Seventy-five people were in attendance at this seminar. A report of this seminar was also made known to the synod by means of an article that appeared in The Northwestern Lutheran. The following excerpt from this article highlighted the main point of that seminar,

The one-day seminar, held at Northwestern College in Watertown, Wisconsin, on February 10, 1979, could not hope to present solutions to the special problems of communicating the Word to the hard of hearing and deaf. Nor could special programs even be offered at this time. The intent of this first WELS seminar of its kind was simply to make us aware of a real need in our churches.¹²

The year 1979 also brought the printing and distribution of a booklet called Ephphatha. This booklet was begun in August, 1978, and was written with the intent to set forth a book of guidelines for the spiritual training of the hearing impaired. A copy was then sent to every congregation and school in the synod. The hard work of this Committee was reported to the 45th Synod Convention held at Northwestern College, August 1-8, 1979. Although the report was brief in comparison to reports at the following Conventions, this Committee was laying a firm foundation upon which it would continue to build in the following years.

The years 1980-1981 proved this very point, as one could notice the increased activities of this Committee. March, 1980, found Mr. and Mrs.

Hughes addressing the newly formed sign language club at Doctor Martin Luther College. This was an exciting time for after a shaky start with this club in the past, this club was eager to learn and assist the Committee for the Hearing Impaired. The following is an article detailing the history of this club by Mr Hughes as it appeared in the May 24, 1981 issue of The Northwestern Lutheran,

The Committee for the Hearing Impaired is happy to have been instrumental in assisting the students at Dr. Martin Luther College with the Reviving and reorganizing of their Sign Language Club.

The actual beginning of the Sign Language Club dates back to November 16, 1976, when a young lady by the name of Sue Fink (nee Pavlet) wrote a very inspirational letter to Mr. Alfons Woldt, Executive Secretary of the Special Ministries Board, asking for help in organizing such a club at DMLC.

The Committee for the Hearing Impaired at that time was operating under the direction of the SMB as a "study committee" with a very restricted budget. A letter of encouragement was sent to Sue by our committee, and through her efforts she was able to generate a meeting of 65 interested students.

Prof. William Arras of DMLC consented to be their advisor, as he was knowledgeable in the area of sign language.

The Sign Language Club continued to be an active organization until the middle of 1978 and then ceased to exist. The failure of this club to continue was directly tied to the lack of materials, good lesson plans, and supporting funds. There was also a very urgent need for personal involvement by the members of our committee, but again, operating funds and lack of supportive materials made this impractical.

The history of this club could have easily ended right here, except for the hand of God intervening. New students brought new interest in the needs of the hearing impaired. The basic foundation laid by Sue Pavlet Fink and other club members was built upon by Teri Willenberg and Darci Martin, and the Sign Language Club was quickly revived.

The Committee for the Hearing Impaired was now in a position to provide a limited amount of financial assistance and other related instructional materials.

A special trip to DMLC was made by William Hughes, chairman of the Committee for the Hearing Impaired, to address the club members and to assure them of the committee's support. During 1979 and 1980, approximately \$360 in materials and other operational expenses have been directly donated to the Sign Language Club at DMLC.

The deep concern regarding this special mission field is clearly stated in the aims and objectives of this club's constitution:

- A. To bring the good news of Christ to deaf ears,
- B. To more fully appreciate sign language as a means of com-

munication, C. To obtain effective use of sign language in speaking with the deaf, and D. To be able to use sign language in the classroom.¹³

The article continues on to praise this club's involvement in working with the hearing impaired, and rightly so, for this club would be the inspiration to begin similar clubs at the other synodical schools.

It was in January, 1981, that the Committee for the Hearing Impaired purchased a TDD-TTY Telephone Communication System for the Deaf. This system, according to Mr Woldt, is set up in Mr and Mrs Hughes' home and is a visual telephone. The purpose of this communication system is to enable the hearing impaired of the synod to express their spiritual needs and concerns to the synod, and in turn direction can be given them by the pastors in their areas with the help of the Committee.

August, 1981, found the completion of a Catalog of Materials. This booklet was formulated to reach the hearing impaired with literature for spiritual growth and information, and ^rwas suggested that the materials be used with the guidance of the churches pastor, principal, or Sunday School Superintendent.

This same month was also a banner month as the Committee for the Hearing Impaired's work became internationally known, for the mission in Zambia requested materials to aid the development of programs for their hearing impaired. The ministry for the hearing impaired in Zambia ^{has} ~~is~~ an interesting history and can be found in the appendix of this paper in the form of an article written by Glenn Thompson for The Northwestern Lutheran May 1, 1982.

September 4, 1981, brought Pastor Roland G. Ehlke of Elm Grove, Wisconsin to accept the Special Ministries Board's invitation to be a member of the Committee for the Hearing Impaired. He is a ^rtemendous asset to the Committee for he is the father of four hearing impaired children. This

fact was not only made known to the members of the Committee for the Hearing Impaired, but it was also made known to the members of the synod in an article that appeared in the June 15, 1982 issue of The Northwestern Lutheran. Pastor Ehlke, in this article, made known some of the problems and needs facing the hearing impaired, however, this was not his only purpose as he writes,

I've written this article about my sons with a purpose in mind. Certainly it wasn't to invoke pity - for the problem of deafness can't begin to compare to the blessings our family has enjoyed. Nor was it to brag about our children and their school - though we're proud of both. Rather I would hope that this article might plant a few ideas among other families, churches and schools in our Synod. There are millions of deaf and hearing impaired people in our country, just as there are millions of people with other handicaps. What has been done at Christ the Lord is perhaps being done elsewhere. It can be done everywhere.¹⁴

October, 1981 was a busy and productive month for the Committee for the Hearing Impaired, it not only found Mr. and Mrs. Hughes and Pastor Sievert giving an awareness presentation in the Pacific Northwest, but it also found the publication of a new signed Bible story entitled Jesus Loves the Little Children. The text of this book is Mark 10:13-16. It is rewritten from the New International Version and has sign words accompanying the written English for a better understanding of the truth by the reader. This month also found a sign language class formed at Northwestern College as Mrs Esther Keissling instructed 30 students.

These two years were busy years for the Committee for the Hearing impaired, as well as productive years. The fact that the hearing impaired were being thought about and ministered to was made evident in the following report presented to the 46th Convention at Martin Luther Prep School, August 3-8, 1981,
of the W.E.L.S.

Monthly meetings for the Committee for the Hearing Impaired were

held in April, September, October, and December of 1980 and January, February, and April of 1981. There was 100 percent attendance at each of these meetings.

The following is a summarization of the presentations given by committee members (with approximate numbers in attendance) from April 1, 1980, to April 15, 1981.

- 4 - Christian Day Schools 407 - Students with instructors
- 2 - Hearing Impaired Seminars 134 - Members
- 2 - Ladies Aid groups 370 - Members
- 1 - Men's Club group 75 - Members
- 1 - Congregational meeting 38 - Members
- 1 - AAL Branch 32 - Members
- 2 - College presentations 122 - Students with instructors

In addition to the above activities, the Committee for the Hearing Impaired was also involved with special sign classes, hearing impaired seminars at Milwaukee, Wisconsin, and New Ulm, Minnesota, and reviewing additional religious educational materials.

From the committee schools received materials for bulletin boards and individuals received assistance and materials to arrange their own presentations for church groups relating to the work of this mission.

Signs were submitted for a song that will be used in the Synod's new Sunday school course for grades one and two. The film "Listen" was sent to four churches for viewing since December 1, 1980.

The projects completed during the last year were:

1. The hearing impaired button and name card for seminars
2. Standard logo for the Mission for the Hearing Impaired
3. Reproduction and purchasing of two copies of the film entitled "Listen"
4. Hearing impaired brochure; "That the Deaf My Hear"
5. Research and purchase of TDD/TTY system
6. Written introduction for film "Listen"
7. Purchase of filmstrip "Button in Her Ear"

The current projects being worked on by the committee are listed below with projected completion dates:

1. Guidelines for financial assistance to persons preparing to work with the hearing impaired (June 1981)
2. Signed Bible stories (July 1981)
3. Catalog of materials (July 1981)
4. Continued educational activities and schooling for all committee members (ongoing)
5. Developing source file for interpreters, WEIS hearing impaired members and current church and educational programs for the hearing impaired (ongoing)
6. Assist DMLC Sign Language Club (ongoing)

7. Articles and news releases for Northwestern Lutheran relating to TDD/TTY, Sign Club activities, and WELS hearing impaired program - past five year history (May through September 1981)

Future projects for 1981-82 for the Mission for the Hearing Impaired:

Seminar - West Coast	Oct. 1981
Seminar - Michigan	Nov. 1981
Future presentations in schools and churches	Oct. - Nov. 1981
Aid and auditory equipment booklet	1981-1982
Research for hearing impaired workshop	1981-1982
Sign language, Northwestern Preparatory School and College	1981-1982
Religious sign classes in other high schools(WELS)	1981-1982
Hearing impaired filmstrip	1981-1982
Lesson plans for teaching hearing impaired	1981-1982
Library of hearing impaired materials (research)	1981-1982
Cassette programs of sermons, TTD/TTY	1981-1982

The blessings of the Lord have been many during the past year and we pray they will continue during the coming year. We ask each of you to remember this committee and those who have joined us in sharing this mission work for the hearing impaired in your prayers.¹⁵

This report reflected the serious as well as the enthusiastic attitude of this Committee. This attitude would continue as we shall see.

The year 1982 opened with more speaking engagements for the Committee for the Hearing Impaired. However, besides this important work of the Committee for the Hearing Impaired, one cannot overlook a very special event that happened for the Hughes family. On June 27, 1982, six years, nine months since Mr Hughes approached the Special Ministries Board requesting materials for his deaf son Stephen, Stephen was confirmed at St. John's Church, Jefferson Wisconsin by Pastor Steven Staude. An article concerning this special day appeared in the January 15, 1983 issue of The Northwestern Lutheran. This article not only captured the joy of that special day, but it also made congregations of the synod aware of what can be done for the hearing impaired.

The following months of 1982, were filled with many more speaking

engagements. October of that same year found Mr. and Mrs. Albrecht as well as Mr. and Mrs. Hughes attending the annual meeting by the Humane Society of Jefferson County, Inc. The reason for their attendance at this meeting was to learn more about the use of the "Hearing Dog". Mr. Woldt informed me that these dogs are trained to alert a deaf person, for example, when the doorbell rings, or there is some type of danger. One cannot underestimate the enthusiasm of this Committee.

1982 closed with the establishment of a Financial Assistance Fund. What this program involves is to provide assistance to those who are preparing themselves for the Spiritual Training of the Hearing Impaired of WELS congregations. A letter introducing this fund was sent to all pastors and schools including colleges. They also received a copy of the Guidelines for Financial Assistance and an Application Form. A copy of this letter and the forms can be found in the appendix of this paper.

In January, 1983, the Committee for the Hearing Impaired was represented at the Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary Mission Seminar, by means of a materials display. Under the Mission Seminar's main theme, "Reaching Out to the World", the Committee for the Hearing Impaired was given a write up in session III, "Reaching out to the world as a service organization" of the seminar's booklet. This write up can also be found in the appendix of this paper.

In September, 1983, the Sign Language Class at Northwestern College was re-established after a one year absence. Professor Eichmann agreed to be the class advisor, and Shelia Hughes of Jefferson Wisconsin, accepted the position as instructor. Sheila had previously been an instructor of the Sign Language Club when she was a student at Doctor Martin Luther College.

During this month the Committee for the Hearing Impaired also wrote

a paper on "General Information and Suggested Guidelines for Congregational Special Ministries Committee" (Area - Hearing Impairment). The title the Special Ministries Board uses for this work is, "Guidelines for Establishing a Parish Special Ministries Committee". This work was made known to the synod when the Committee for the Hearing Impaired reported it to the 47th Synod Convention held at Doctor Martin Luther College, August 1-6, 1983, by stating,

We believe the most crucial need is time, as we see so many individuals with special needs still waiting to be served. If each congregation could establish its own congregational Special Ministries Committee, then all of our members who require special help could be reached in a shorter time frame. With this in mind we have submitted guidelines to assist each congregation in developing its own local program for the hearing impaired. These guidelines will be available after they have been reviewed and approved by your Special Ministries Board.¹⁶

The Committee for the Hearing Impaired also prepared a filmstrip entitled, "Ephphatha", during September, 1983. This thirteen minute filmstrip depicts the needs of the deaf and hard of hearing, and shows our opportunities to reach out to the millions of hearing impaired all around us.

October, 1983 may not have been as productive as September, however, it did find a "pilot program" Sign Language Class held at Lakeside Lutheran High School in Lake Mills, Wisconsin. Mrs. Pat Voss, who is hearing impaired, from Arlington, instructed hearing impaired adults in lipreading. She also instructed individuals in beginner's sign language. Mrs. Carolyn Hughes then reviewed the lesson with the beginners and Mrs. Voss instructed an advanced class for the remaining hour. Mr. Hughes was also present at most of the classes. He shared knowledge from some of the committee's handouts and research materials, demonstrated assistive devices for the deaf, showed films and was available to answer questions. He also documented pro-

blem areas we need to remember in order to help others. He encouraged the the hearing impaired as they asked for signed services. He contacted their pastors and relayed their requests. This program was very successful according to Mr. Woldt, and after hearing what was involved, how could it have been otherwise.

1982-1983 once again proved to be busy and productive years for the Committee for the Hearing Impaired and it could definitely be noted that this Committee was not regressing, but rather doing all it could to serve the deaf and hearing impaired throughout the synod.

1984 was a year in which members of the Committee for the Hearing Impaired devoted some considerable time to the various Sign Language Clubs and Classes. In February, Mr. and Mrs. Hughes met with students of the Sign Language Class at Doctor Martin Luther College and stressed the importance of our teachers having background knowledge in the area of the handicapped if the handicapped are to receive spiritual training through our congregations. The same message was stressed to the members of the Northwestern Sign Language Class also.

In May, 1984, the students of the Northwestern College Sign Language Class were recognized at a dinner held in their honor at St. John's Lutheran Church in Jefferson, Wisconsin. Certificates were presented in recognition of their dedication and accomplishments by Mr. Hughes, and by their instructor, Shelia Hughes. Each member also received a book entitled Ministering to the Silent Minority. Mrs. Esther Kiesling was honored with a pin from the Committee for her past efforts in conducting the class. Mr. Quentin Albrecht and Pastor Steven Staude also spoke to the students. In the same month, members of Doctor Martin Luther Sign Language Club also received Certificates and pins from the Committee for the Hearing Impaired for their efforts and achievements.

Students of the "pilot program" held at Lakeside Lutheran High School, were also given Certificates to acknowledge the time they dedicated toward learning the language of the deaf and getting an over all view of the needs and problems of the hearing impaired.

In August of 1984, then President Armin W. Schuëtze and Professor Paul Nitz of Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary met with Mr. and Mrs. Hughes to make preliminary plans for the development of a Sign Language Class on campus. Professor Nitz accepted the invitation to serve as the class advisor. This class was designed to not only provide instruction in the modes of communication used by the deaf, but also to provide an awareness of the needs and problems of the hearing impaired.

September and October, 1984, found the newly formed class at the Seminary becoming a reality, the "pilot program" at Lakeside Lutheran High School, because of its success, beginning its second year, and the Sign Language Club and Class at Doctor Martin Luther College and Northwestern College beginning their sixth and third year respectfully.

May, 1985, brought to a close another year of history for these various Clubs and Classes. All of them faired well with the exception of the class at the Seminary. Due to the heavy class schedule, changes had to be made to make it better fit the students free time. Also, a new instructor had to be found to replace Shiela Hughes due to conflicts in her teaching curriculum at North Trinity. To my knowledge, this class at the Seminary has not resumed.

On July 12-14, 1985, the first Workshop on Hearing Impairment by the Committee for the Hearing Impaired was held. This Workshop was made possible in January, 1985, when the Committee for the Hearing Impaired received a grant from the Aid Associations For Lutherans for \$11,050. This Workshop was held at Wisconsin Lutheran College with about 100 in attendance from

nine different states. Four different topics were addressed by speakers along with breakout group discussions to set aims and goals to better our ministry of the hearing impaired. The Complete program was interpreted, including the church services. A banquet dinner and sign singers concluded the weekend activities.

August 5-9, 1985, brought the 48th Synod Convention held at Michigan Lutheran Seminary. The Committee for the Hearing Impaired submitted the following report,

The Lord has *once* again blessed the activities of the committee. One meeting each month is not adequate to handle the work load. Individual members now meet with the chairman whenever it is necessary during the month to keep each project moving toward its projected completion date.

Special projects are assigned to committee members, and each member is responsible to submit his report at the regular monthly meeting. The following is a summary of activities of the Committee for the Hearing Impaired from April 1984 through March 1985:

- A. Hearing Impaired awareness speaking engagements to Lutheran elementary schools, LWMS rallies, parent organizations, church groups, DMLC Sign Club, Northwestern Sign Class, Lakeside Lutheran High School Sign Class and Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary Sign Class.
- B. Committee members were also involved with WEELS signed worship services, providing consultation services to parents and pastors with hearing impaired children or members. Special problems which were related to the added stress of hearing impairment were handled by telephone or by mail.
- C. The committee was able to locate several hearing impaired members within several of our churches and the names were directed to their pastors. This was only possible through the assistance of those deaf members already attending our WEELS congregations. Thanks to our Lord for those members who have received so little from us and yet have given so freely of their talents in this area of his ministry. What a fine example for those of us who have been blessed with the ability to hear and speak, yet fail to share the same concern and love with those afflicted with a hearing impairment.
- D. From the committee, schools received materials for bulletin boards and individuals received assistance and materials relating to the work of this mission, to arrange their own presentations for church groups.

- E. The committee continues to extend its services into the area of parent awareness and guidance regarding hearing impairment when such assistance is requested. This area continues to grow with an increase in requests for availability of education within our Lutheran elementary schools. Countless hours of research, evaluation and lengthy letters are required. In most cases the challenge to meet these Christian needs go unanswered for God's special children.
- F. There is an urgent need to serve those members already identified as having a hearing impairment within some of our WELS congregations. Congregations who are willing to acknowledge a problem exists also follow up quickly with a positive action program for their hearing impaired member or members.
- G. The new filmstrip entitled Ephphatha has been well received within our Synod. To date we have received approximately 150 requests for the filmstrip from schools, churches and other church related organizations.
- H. The signed Bible story, Jesus Loves The Little Children, is still in demand, but not at the level we had hoped.
- I. The committee has granted financial assistance to several applicants who are working with the hearing impaired within the Synod.

The projects during the last year included:

1. Assist DMLC Sign Language Club
2. Certified interpreter to assist Sign Language Club at DMLC (Jane Dorn)
3. Northwestern College Sign Class (ongoing)
4. Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary Sign Class, Mequon, WI (first Year)
5. Sign language, lipreading and special presentations on assistive listening devices and hearing aids (second and last year of pilot program) Lake Mills, WI
6. Signed church service and hearing impaired class room visitations by Sign Class and Club (ongoing)
7. Signed services listed in Synod Yearbook (additions ongoing)
8. Sign interpreters for LWMS Convention, 1985
9. Source file for interpreters (ongoing)
10. Names of hearing impaired members recorded from 1984 bulletin insert

The current and future projects being worked on by the committee:

1. Workshop and seminar (July 1985, Wisconsin Lutheran College)
2. Special letter on workshop for all WELS hearing impaired members (April 1985)
3. OWLS Convention Workshop (Sign Class July 1985)
4. Guidelines for Sunday school and confirmation instruction of the hearing impaired (first presentation at Milwaukee, 1985 Workshop)

5. Guidelines for Parish Special Ministries Committee for the Hearing Impaired (second writing)
6. Guidelines for individuals with hearing impairment (rough draft completed)
7. Guidelines for developing Local Sign and Lipreading class
8. Catalog of Materials (update - in process with special subcommittee)
9. New bulletin for hearing impaired members (being developed by subcommittee)
10. Presentations to WEIS high schools and colleges (future)
11. Promotion of seminars in those areas not yet reached by our committee
 (Note: We are ready, but we need the DSMB assistance to reach those districts which have not held a seminar on hearing impairment).
12. Add one more member to our committee

Interesting Note: The correspondence for the committee has almost doubled during the last 12 months. This increase has now required us to secure some additional outside lay members to expedite the development of some of our materials. The committee welcomes this added activity, since this shows a growing awareness within our Synod of our committee's work. We look forward to the day when a program coordinator will be available to the Special Ministries Board who will be able to assist our committee in producing materials.

In view of the above information, we must again state the most crucial need is time, as we see so many individuals still waiting to be served in this area of the Lord's work. If each congregation could establish their own Parish Special Ministries Committee, then all of our members who require special needs could be reached in a much shorter time.

We thank God for the booklet entitled "Guidelines for Establishing Parish Special Ministries Committees". We are happy to say our committee has a guideline for the area of hearing impairment. It may not be the answer to every question or area of concern, but it is a guidepost to assist you in evaluating the needs of your own congregation.

We hope and pray the needs of that one special child of God are just as important in your eyes as they are in the eyes of our Lord. God cared for each of us. His love was so great that he gave his only Son so we could have everlasting life. Do we have the right to refuse sharing this gift with his hearing impaired children?

We thank our heavenly Father for continuing to bless us with many who are willing to share their time and talents on behalf of this ministry. May he continue to lead our committee to make God-pleasing decisions for the sake of his people who cannot "hear" the word as most of us do. May he open the hearts of the members of congregations where the need is present and guide them in serving all of their members with the precious words of our Lord and his saving grace. We ask this in the name of him who said,

"Ephphatha", and the ears were opened.¹⁷

On October 17, 1985, the members of the Committee for the Hearing Impaired along with their spouses, held an informal meeting at Buehl's Restaurant in Jefferson Wisconsin to give special recognition to Mr. Quentin Albrecht, who served on the Committee since 1976, for his retirement from his position on the Committee. The Committee honored him by presenting him with a plaque and a symbolic cross in remembrance of his service.

In December of 1985, Mr. Hughes stepped down from serving on the Special Ministries Board. However, even though Mr. Hughes retired his position on the Special Ministries Board, he is still a tremendous asset to the synod by serving as an advisory member to the Board as well as continuing to serve as the chairman of the Committee for the Hearing Impaired.

We have taken a look, from past to present, at some of the significant facts which have occurred in the history of the Committee for the Hearing Impaired. However, as we now stand on the threshold of tomorrow, what are the future goals of this Committee? In order to answer this question we first of all note that the Committee for the Hearing Impaired feels it has not met some of its past goals. Mr. Hughes told me, by means of a questionnaire that,

- a. We have not met these goals since we are serving less than 1% of our total hearing impaired members and our outreach evangelism program for the unchurched deaf is still in its infancy stage.
- b. Each congregation should have its own Parish Special Ministries Committee to identify, evaluate, and serve their own hearing impaired members and to reach the unchurched deaf within their own community.¹⁸

So then, what does this Committee see as its future goals? In the same questionnaire Mr Hughes replies,

- a. Additional signed church services immediately for those (deaf) hearing impaired members who have been waiting patiently for 2-5 years.
- b. Secure and train more interpreters to assist with church services and other Christian programs.
- c. To help make available primary and secondary Christian education for all of our hearing impaired children.
- d. To make available through congregations Bible study and confirmation for hearing impaired children and deaf adults.
- e. To make our congregations aware of needed services for our elderly hearing impaired:
 - Use of assistive devices in the church, in the hospital, or in the homes
 - Use of printed sermons
 - Use of printed prayers
- f. To have a full-time pastor to assist in developing necessary hearing impaired programs for individual congregations throughout the U.S.
- g. To have hearing impaired (deaf) members more involved in church activities among the deaf.
- h. Develop needed materials for hearing impaired spiritual education.
- i. To continue to present awareness programs to districts, church groups, Lutheran elementary and Lutheran high schools.
- j. To continue to work for a total hearing impaired program which is acceptable to all WELS colleges and the Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary, similar to the one which has been so successful at DMLC
- k. To continue to seek ways to find our hearing impaired members a cooperative effort of each WELS congregation and affiliated churches, and make these members aware of our concern.¹⁹

The Committee for the Hearing Impaired has compiled a significant and interesting history since its small beginnings in 1975, and because the purpose and objectives of this Committee have never changed, it has a lot of history yet to be made. Therefore, as this Committee moves ahead, it is our sincere desire that more and more pastors, teachers, laymen and congregations will not only be made aware of what this Committee has to offer, but that they may also be willing to become a part of the history of the Committee for the Hearing Impaired.

RESOURCES

¹Hughes, William E. Personal Contact. (Handout, "Services to the Hearing Impaired").

²Naumann, Oscar J. Presidents Report to the 37th Synod Convention. (Proceedings, 1963, pp. 13-14).

³Bast, Karl G. Report of the Committee on Specialized Ministries. (Proceedings, 1965, p. 189).

⁴Department of Specialized Ministries. (Reports and Memorials, 1969, p. 119).

⁵Full-time Executive Secretary for Special Ministries Board. (Proceedings, 1971, p. 92).

⁶Special Ministries Board. (Reports and Memorials, 1973, p. 50).

⁷Ibid. (Reports and Memorials, 1973, p. 50).

⁸District Special Ministries Board. (Reports and Memorials, 1975, p. 60).

⁹Hearing Handicapped. (Reports and Memorials, 1975, p. 58).

¹⁰Study Committee for the Hearing Impaired. (Reports and Memorials, 1977, p. 71).

¹¹Report of the Study Committee for the Hearing Impaired. (Reports and Memorials, 1977, p. 71).

¹²Sievert, David. Imagine Yourself.... (The Northwestern Lutheran, April 1, 1979, pp. 102-104).

¹³Hughes, William E. DMLC Sign Language Club. (The Northwestern Lutheran, May 24, 1981, pp. 171,174).

¹⁴Ehlke, Roland Cap. Some Special Sons. (The Northwestern Lutheran, June 15, 1982, p. 185).

¹⁵Mission for the Hearing Impaired. (Reports and Memorials, 1981, pp. 76-77).

¹⁶Mission for the Hearing Impaired. (Reports and Memorials, 1983, p. 67).

¹⁷Committee for the Hearing Impaired. (Reports and Memorials, 1985, pp. 56-59).

¹⁸Hughes, William E. Personal Contact. (Questionnaire, 1986).

¹⁹Hughes, William E. Personal Contact. (Questionnaire, 1986).

APPENDIX

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Purposes and Objectives of the Special Ministries Board and Committees -

Appendix A (1-8)

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Appendix D (1-5)

SPECIAL MINISTRIES BOARD

PURPOSE

The continuing purpose of the Special Ministries Board is to assist the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod and its churches and agencies in meeting the special spiritual needs of those who cannot be served with the Gospel of Jesus Christ through the regular programs of our churches and schools.

CONTINUING OBJECTIVES

1. To provide a program of service which is designed to meet the spiritual needs of those who are away from home.
2. To develop programs of service to those who have special spiritual needs as a result of being handicapped.
3. To develop programs of service to meet the needs of those who are living in institutions.
4. To continue to study the need for an expanded specialized ministry.

GUIDING POLICIES

1. To appoint executive and study committees who shall report to the Board regarding specific areas of the Board's responsibility.
2. To receive committee reports, to react to recommendations, and to ratify committee action.
3. To call full-time chaplains, and through the Military Services Committee, appoint camp pastors to minister to those serving in the military.
4. To distribute spiritual literature to students attending non-WELS colleges, and to refer them to the nearest WELS affiliated pastor and congregation, and to serve as a resource to the Campus Ministry Committee.
5. To regularly mail spiritual literature to military personnel, students attending public and non-WELS affiliated institutions, and to those members away from home whose names have been approved by the GBHM.
6. To provide specialized materials for the spiritual training of the handicapped.
7. To develop and assist in conducting training programs (workshops, institutes, conferences) for camp pastors, chaplains, campus pastors, pastors, teachers, and laymen who need to develop special skills in order to meet the spiritual needs of those whom the Lord directs into their care.
8. To counsel and assist those within the Synod who are attempting to establish institutional ministries.

SPECIAL MINISTRIES BOARD (continued)

9. To continue to receive and study requests for specialized spiritual services and report such needs to the Synod.
10. To act as a clearing house for the membership conservation program of the Synod and report such activity to the GBHM.
11. To act as a service board to other boards and departments of the Synod who have need of and who request specialized spiritual services.
12. The SMB shall review its purpose, objectives and policies annually.
13. The SMB shall establish an office and call an executive secretary to implement these policies.

MILITARY SERVICES COMMITTEE

OBJECTIVE

To share the Gospel of Jesus Christ with God's people who are serving in the military.

GUIDING POLICIES

1. To call chaplains to serve military personnel where concentration of WELS members warrant a full-time chaplain.
2. To appoint camp pastors wherever possible when such a need becomes evident.
3. To develop and provide a mailing program of spiritual literature for military personnel.
4. To regularly review camp pastors' reports and make recommendations when necessary.
5. To submit regular reports of its activities to the Special Ministries Board.
6. To plan and conduct camp pastors' institutes.
7. To visit areas to be served when such a visit becomes necessary for the purpose of evaluation.
8. To meet with WLS graduates and meet with those who may be appointed as camp pastors and orient them to the work of a camp pastor.
9. To provide materials for those men from the field who are appointed as camp pastors which will help orient them to the work of a camp pastor.
10. To submit regular reports of its activities to the Special Ministries Board.

COMMITTEE ON SERVICE TO THE AGING

OBJECTIVE

To assist in developing programs of service that will attempt to meet the needs of the aging within the Synod.

GUIDING POLICIES

1. To study the need for developing a synodical program for service to the aging.
2. To determine the unique needs of the aging.
3. To ascertain what is being done by our congregations to meet these needs.
4. To assist congregations within the Synod to develop local programs designed to meet the needs of the aging.
5. To prepare suitable materials for synod-wide distribution as the need arises.
6. To organize those agencies within the Synod presently serving the aging into a synodical association for the purpose of sharing ideas and for mutual edification.
7. To report regularly to the Special Ministries Board regarding all committee action.

MISSION FOR THE VISUALLY HANDICAPPED

OBJECTIVE

To share the Gospel of Jesus Christ with those who are visually handicapped and others who may be unable to read due to physical or learning disabilities.

GUIDING POLICIES

1. To reproduce Christian literature and music in compact cassette form and respond to special requests for these materials whenever possible.
2. To produce various sight-saving Christian literature, and respond to requests for such materials.
3. To reproduce Christian literature in braille form and respond to requests for such materials.
4. To use a diversity of talents and resources within the Synod to assist in the production of Christian literature in the different formats.
5. To distribute materials free of charge to people who have visual handicaps, or other reading disabilities, when requested by a WELS pastor.
6. To distribute materials through the Workshop for the Visually Handicapped, located in St. Paul, Minnesota.
7. To submit a regular report to the Special Ministries Board.

SPECIAL EDUCATION SERVICES COMMITTEE

OBJECTIVE

To share the Gospel of Jesus Christ with those who have special educational needs, primarily as a result of being mentally retarded.

GUIDING POLICIES

1. To assist pastors and teachers in developing special spiritual education programs.
2. To act as a referral agency for parents and others who seek assistance in carrying out their God-given responsibilities.
3. To appoint subcommittees who will be responsible for preparing specialized instructional materials appropriate for the spiritual training of those who cannot be trained through the normal programs that are used by our churches and schools.
4. To appoint subcommittees to carry out research projects as directed by the Synod through the Special Ministries Board.
5. To develop and conduct programs which are designed to offer training in skills necessary for the spiritual training of those who have special educational needs.
6. To encourage and counsel those within the Synod who wish to establish special training programs.
7. To encourage and counsel those within the Synod attempting to provide for the physical needs of fellow Christians who are mentally retarded.
8. To gather information which may be helpful to those concerned with specialized spiritual training and share it with them.
9. To develop materials as their need becomes apparent and as the Lord gives us the ability to provide.
10. To submit regular reports of its activities to the SMB.

INSTITUTIONAL MINISTRIES COMMITTEE

OBJECTIVE

To foster institutional ministries within our Synod in the light of current needs.

GUIDING POLICIES

1. To study the institutional ministries within our Synod and to outline its future scope.
2. To encourage and assist in the establishing of institutional ministries in both congregational and associational form.
3. To develop materials for these specialized ministries for congregational and associational use.
4. To support clinical training opportunities for those who have been called to serve as institutional pastors.
5. To offer workshops for laymen, pastors and teachers.
6. To assist in developing and maintaining a clinical training program in cooperation with our Synod schools that could lead to certification.
7. To publicize the efforts of the Institutional Ministries.
8. To share ideas and materials being successfully used in the field of institutional ministries.
9. To communicate with other departments of the Synod relative to the institutional ministries program.
10. To submit regular reports to the Special Ministries Board through the committee chairman.

STUDENT SERVICES COMMITTEE

OBJECTIVE

To share the Gospel of Jesus Christ with those who are attending public and non-WELS affiliated educational institutions.

GUIDING POLICIES

A. General

To encourage, promote, stimulate and/or assist in developing an effective Gospel ministry on the secular campuses of our nation.

B. As regards our WELS students

To provide for the spiritual growth and welfare of all WELS students by:

1. referring them to the nearest WELS affiliated pastor and congregation
2. maintaining a ministry-by-mail program that is appropriate for college students.

C. As regards liaison with the Campus Ministry Committee

1. The chairman of the Student Services Committee shall serve as a voting member of the Campus Ministry Committee.
2. The executive secretary of the Special Ministries Board shall serve as an advisory member of the Campus Ministry Committee.



AND THE DEAF SHALL HEAR

First communion for the first class of nine deaf members. Missionary Thompson officiant

First ministry to the deaf in Zambia

by Glenn L. Thompson

"Oh, by the way, Pastor, he and his wife can't hear." I stopped in my tracks and was ready to get back into my car. But Mr. Makoni, the chairman of St. Matthew's Congregation, was already knocking at the door. It was too late to turn back, so I meekly followed, wondering how I would conduct this visit. Zambia's variety of dialects makes it difficult enough to talk about Christ to hearing people, but how does one communicate with deaf Zambians?

Those initial thoughts were etched into my memory in the following weeks as it became apparent that God had a special interest in that visit to two deaf people in Lusaka. Roger Schachinungo had begun school at Martin Luther School, Mwembeshi, one of the grade schools our mission operated in its early days. In fourth grade Roger went deaf and was sent off to one of Zambia's two residential schools for the deaf. Through hard work and much self-study, Roger became one of the most educated deaf people in Zambia. He never forgot, though, his early contact with the Lutheran Church. In 1968 he completed baptismal study and was baptized by Pastor Orlin Wraalstad. In the same year he married Osina Ngulube, who is also deaf. Because of their hearing problems, they soon stopped attend-



Roger



Osina

ing services. Then in January 1981, the Lord jogged Mr. Makoni's memory and led us to Roger and Osina's doorstep.

The warm reception given us by the Schachinungos quickly put my fears to rest. An interesting conversation (on paper) followed. Soon this led to a Saturday morning instruction class at their home. Fortunately, Roger and Osina had both learned to read and write English while at the deaf school. Roger was also able to talk somewhat since he had not been born deaf. The main problem therefore was how I would communicate with them.

Gradually we developed our own system. At first we relied completely on reading and writing. The deaf students would read a paragraph in our instruction book, "Go and Teach." Then, using a large pad of paper tied to the back of a chair, I would ask them questions and give simple explanations. They would answer on their papers and ask questions also in writing. To save time I began preparing my large charts on Friday evening. As the weeks went by, the students little by little taught the teacher their sign language.

But God had more than two deaf people in mind when he led us to Roger's house. The year 1981 was declared by the United Nations to be a special International Year of Disabled Persons. The deaf in Lusaka thought this an opportune time to organize their own National Association of the Deaf in Zambia. Every Saturday they would gravitate to Roger's house to discuss their plans. Roger and Osina invited them to take part in our Bible class while waiting for the deaf meeting which followed. By the end of the first month, six more deaf adults had joined our class. Eventually, more than 20 attended one or more lessons. In August, Osina and five other deaf adults were baptized at St. Matthew's. On November 1,



Bible study during pre-baptismal instruction

1981, Roger and Osina were joined by seven other deaf Zambians in confessing their faith publicly and being received as full communicant members of our Lutheran Church. It was a moving experience for all present when the nine deaf Christians received their Savior's body and blood for the first time, while the pastor used his hands to sign the familiar words of assurance: "Take eat. . . , Take drink. . . ."

The deaf members of our LCCA have truly been witnesses to their new-found faith. Even before their confirmation, they formed a signing choir. Many of our Zambian Christians thought it a miracle when they saw how these deaf people could praise the Lord with their hands.

To serve our deaf members, St. Matthew's began an English worship service. One of the deaf men signs the liturgy; another preaches in sign language. The service for hearing people continues in spoken English simultaneously on the other side of the church. During the first month of these services, an average of 12 deaf people were in attendance.

As we seek to serve the needs of our deaf members, it has become apparent that our LCCA is the first church in Zambia to offer special religious instruction and services for the deaf. The thousands of deaf Zambians have never before had the opportunity to actively participate in church life, or even to "hear" the gospel preached to them in an understandable media such as sign lan-

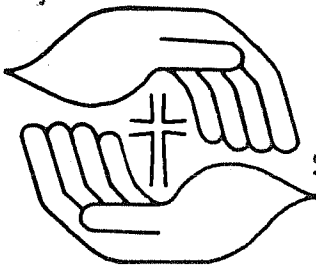
The warm reception the deaf have been given has demonstrated Christ's love to them.

guage. As a result, the interest in our work has been steadily growing. Besides continuing instruction classes with more deaf adults, we have also been able to begin an instruction class with 12 deaf high-school boys at a nearby school.

Though our work among the deaf has barely begun, the LCCA already has gained the reputation of being the church for Zambia's deaf. The warm reception the deaf have been given by our LCCA congregations has demonstrated Christ's love to them. The deaf are also very thankful for the interest and help provided by our WELS Committee on Services to the Hearing Handicapped. We have also been able to show our concern through counseling and help in obtaining employment for the deaf. Plans are underway to help in other ways: offering literacy classes for deaf adults, teaching sign language to LCCA members, teaching religion classes to other groups of deaf schoolchildren. Once again God has truly led our LCCA to an "open door" for a very special group of his lost sheep. Please remember in your prayers these deaf Christians and their efforts to reach still more of their deaf fellow countrymen with the Good News of Jesus. □

Deaf class answering questions





SPECIAL MINISTRIES BOARD WELS

3512 West North Avenue
Milwaukee, Wis. 53208



Alfons L. Woldt
Executive Secretary
Off: 414-445-4030
Res: 414-466-1732

Dear Friend of the Hearing Impaired:

Financial assistance is now available for those who are preparing themselves for the SPIRITUAL TRAINING OF THE HEARING IMPAIRED. This assistance is available to all pastors, Christian day school teachers, Sunday school teachers, students of our colleges and high schools, and any other members of our churches who are working with the hearing impaired or who anticipate doing so.

This special ministry requires special training in the area of language skills if there is to be effective communication with the hearing impaired. The language barrier is an obstacle that must be overcome if we are to reach the hearing impaired with the gospel.

The WELS Committee for the Hearing Impaired is happy to announce, therefore, the establishment of a "FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE PROGRAM" for those WELS members who desire to increase their knowledge and communication skills in this area of our Lord's work. We anticipate helping with tuition fees, book fees and travel expenses to and from classes.

Application forms may be obtained by sending your request to the address above. Each applicant's request will be reviewed and evaluated. The amount of assistance will be determined by the purpose of the additional education and the current balance of the Educational Assistance Fund. All information submitted will be held in confidence.

WELS COMMITTEE FOR THE HEARING IMPAIRED

(Please post and share this notice.)



MISSION FOR THE HEARING IMPAIRED



GUIDELINES FOR FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE

Financial assistance is available for those training for the W.E.L.S. ministry to the hearing impaired.

Guidelines for financial assistance to persons preparing to help the hearing impaired are:

1. Applicant must be a member of, or in fellowship with, the W.E.L.S.
2. Applicant may be a layman, teacher, pastor, or a student preparing for full-time work in the church.
3. The training is to make the applicant more able to help bring the gospel to the hearing impaired and to help create deaf awareness.
4. The applicant is expected to use these skills in some of the following areas:
 - a) Sunday school
 - b) Confirmation classes
 - c) Church services
 - d) Day school
 - e) Special classes
 - f) The family
 - g) Other special needs
5. Financial assistance is available for:
 - a) School tuition
 - b) Materials directly related to these classes
 - c) Materials directly related to item 3 above
6. Each request will be reviewed on an individual basis.
7. General information needed from the applicant includes:
 - a) Why applicant wants this training
 - b) Costs
 - c) Where applicant plans to attend
 - d) When applicant plans to attend
 - e) Courses applicant plans to take

For further information, please contact:

SPECIAL MINISTRIES BOARD
Mission for the Hearing Impaired
3512 West North Avenue
Milwaukee, Wisconsin 53208

FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE APPLICATION FORM

MISSION FOR THE HEARING IMPAIRED

Special Ministries Board (WELS)

1. Name _____

Address _____
street city

_____ state zip code telephone number

2. Level of Education Completed (circle one)

Elementary — 8th High School 1 2 3 4 College 1 2 3 4

Special Classes, Tech. School, etc. List: _____

3. Currently attending school Yes ____ No ____

If above answer is "Yes", complete information below

Name of school _____

Address _____

4. Are you currently involved with training children or
adults with a hearing impairment? Yes ____ No ____

Describe: _____

5. How would you use your added skills? _____

6. List name of course _____

Name of school _____

School address _____

Date course starts _____ Date course finishes _____

7. School fee _____ Book expense _____

Estimated travel expense _____

8. Added comments: _____

Signature _____

Date _____

SPECIAL MINISTRIES BOARD: THE DEAF

If you had to be handicapped, what handicap would you pick? We probably would shy away from the "worst" handicaps, such as being paralyzed from the neck down. If someone offered us deafness, I don't think many of us would consider that the worst choice. We would be wrong, though. Any handicap is debilitating, but hearing impairment is one of the worst. Hellen Keller said that of all her handicaps, her deafness was the most crippling. People can see other handicaps and make adjustments for it. Someone can see another person is blind and then make sure they don't put something in the blind person's path. A person can immediately see that another is paralyzed or crippled and understand if that person can't keep up with them. Deafness is different. People can't spot it right off. It's the hidden handicap." To everyone who doesn't know the deaf person, he appears to have no handicaps.

A deaf person is often triply handicapped. He cannot hear all the marvelous sounds in God's world; he cannot hear speech, the primary basis of communication; and he often cannot speak. This handicap shows up in other areas. Written language is based on oral language. Because of this, the deaf have a difficult time reading written communication. Even though the deaf population shows normal intelligence thirty percent are functionally illiterate, sixty percent read on a fifth grade level and three to five percent read on a tenth grade level. The deaf often feel left out or forgotten.

This is no small minority group. In the United States, there are 15 million people with hearing impairment. On a synodical level that means about 2,000 with some degree of hearing loss and 300 souls who are deaf. The preciousness of each soul multiplied by these numbers is staggering. It compels all of us to do something to bring the Gospel to them.

As late as 1975, our synod had not make a concentrated effort to help the deaf. It was then that William Hughes, a man deeply concerned about what materials the WELS had for his deaf son, Stephen, was asked to head a study committee. The objective was to find out what the needs of the synod were concerning the hearing impaired.

The study committee was changed into a working committee under the Special Ministries Board in 1977. Over the next five years, presentations and seminars to conferences, schools and special interest groups were held in Illinois, Minnesota, Michigan, and Wisconsin. A sign language club was formed in 1976 at DMLC. It was discontinued in 1978, but student interest revived it in 1979, and it is still going strong. 1981 saw a sign language class started at Northwestern College. Materials have been prepared for the deaf and members of their families, congregations, and their pastors. *Ephphatha* is a book which sets down guidelines for the spiritual training of the deaf. A film entitled "Listen" is available to be loaned out. A catalog of materials is available upon request. Bible stories in sign language have been written. The committee has sent materials for the deaf to Africa. [In 1981, nine souls who are deaf were confirmed and received communion in our African church]. Our synod has purchased a TDD-TTY telephone communication system for the deaf so the hearing impaired may contact the WELS through the Committee for the Hearing Impaired and make their needs and wants known.



There are several different ways of communicating with the deaf. One is finger spelling. Each letter is spelled out by hand. A faster, more fluent way is sign language. Each word has been assigned a hand sign. A good signer is able to speak faster than a person can talk. However, the number

of sign is legion. A third method has been slowly developed. Lip reading is good for only 25% of the time because many different consonants and vowels look the same when formed. To overcome this, "cueing" was formed. Cueing is eight hand signs used when one of the ambiguous sounds is made. The hand is held near the mouth while speaking and the position of the fingers and of the hand tell the deaf person exactly what is being said. The latter method would be the easiest way for a teacher in grade school or Sunday school to communicate with the deaf student. Samples of each of these methods follow.

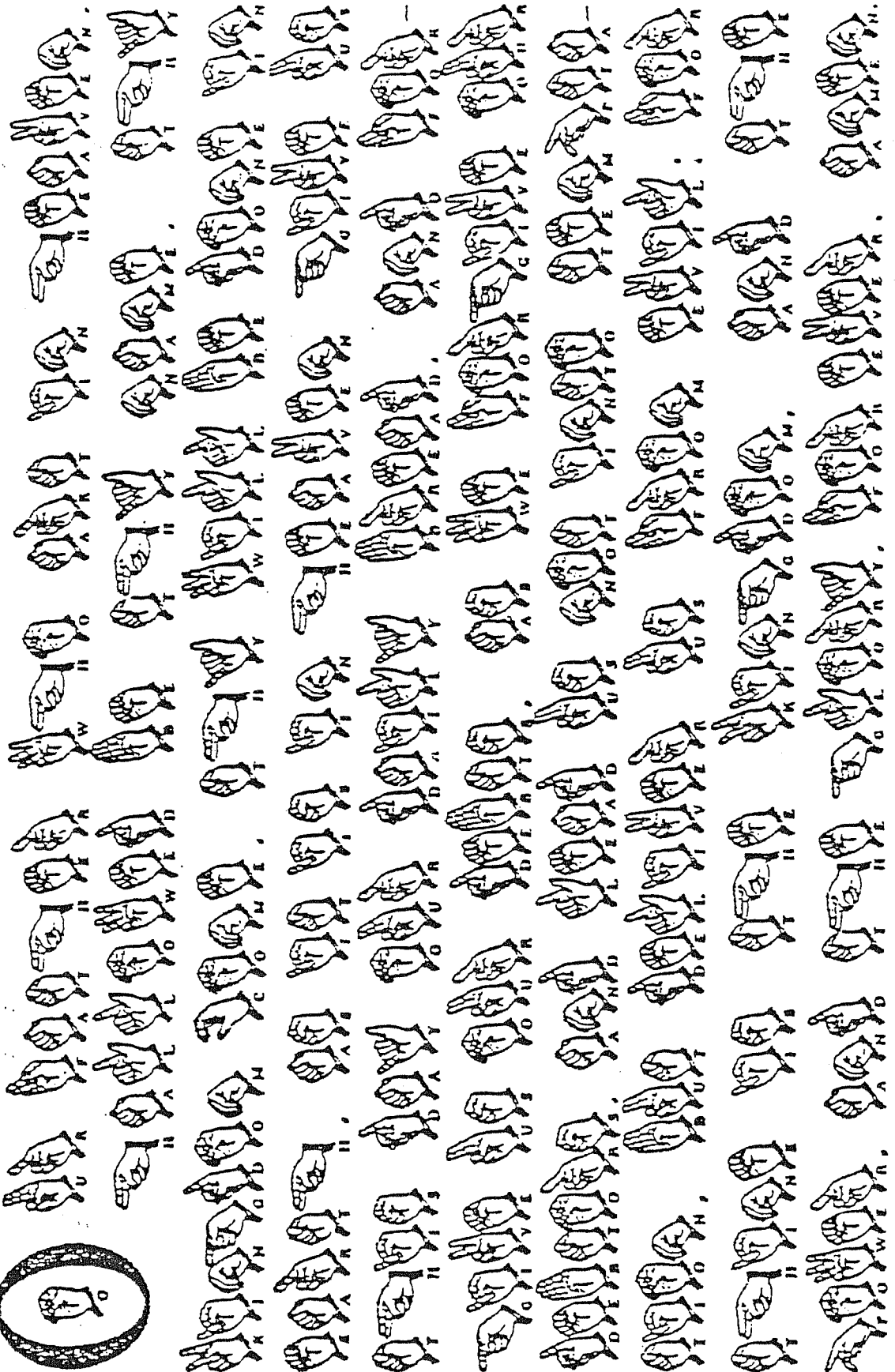
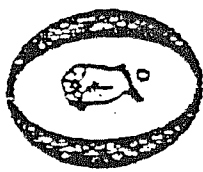
Several guidelines should be kept in mind when communicating with the deaf. Speak naturally, do not overemphasize for that only distorts the movement of your lips. Do not move around for that makes lip reading difficult to follow. Do not have a bright light source behind you for then also lip reading is difficult. Speak in a well lit area. If the person asks you to repeat, don't repeat the same words. Try to say it in a different way. Most of all, be patient. The same frustrations you feel, the deaf person feels every day.

What can we do as future workers in the church, either as pastors or wives? The biggest help is to be understanding and willing to help. That means so much for people who are often shoved aside. Work with them and be willing to make that extra sacrifice to bring the Gospel to their souls for which Jesus shed His blood.

For further information and material, write:

SPECIAL MINISTRIES BOARD
Mr. William Hughes
834 West Racine Street
Jefferson, Wisconsin 53549

The Lord's Prayer



"The Kingdom of God Belongs to Such as These" AMONG THE DEAF

Hymn 648 Miss Grace Hagedorn
Text: Mark 7:31-37 Brookfield, Wisconsin

"Ephphatha! Be opened!" So Jesus spoke to the deaf man, and the man's ears were opened. Amazing! What a wonderful life Jesus opened up for this man! He could hear and speak, gifts we just naturally take for granted.

Yet hearing impairment is the single greatest disability in the United States. There are about 60,000 hearing-impaired in the Milwaukee area alone, of which 9,000 would be considered deaf.

Meet Brad

We never really realize what a blessing we have in our hearing until we meet someone like Brad, who has a severe hearing loss and must cope with trying to understand and trying to speak clearly. God hasn't opened Brad's ears with a dramatic miracle, but He has opened many new avenues to Brad through science and through advances in the field of deaf education.

When Brad was five years old, he was fitted with hearing aids that make it possible for him to hear sounds around him. He still cannot understand conversations without reading the lips of the speakers, but at least when someone talks to him, he realizes that sounds are being made and can turn toward the speaker.

Learning God's Word Through "Cuing"

Brad is a fourth grade student at our Christ the Lord Lutheran School in Brookfield, Wisconsin, and here the world of the hearing is opening to him not only through sounds coming to him through his hearing aids, but through a relatively new way of communicating with the deaf. It is called "cuing". Since many sounds look identical on the lips of the speaker, it is very difficult to guess what someone is saying just by watching the movements of a person's mouth. Some sounds, such as "g" in "dog" are not visible at all on the lips. Turning off the sound on the TV and watching the speaker's lips for a while will give you some idea of how much guesswork there is involved in speech-reading for the profoundly deaf.

Cuing combats this problem by differentiating between sounds that look alike with a system of hand signals. The person who is

cuing to the hearing-impaired child holds his hand at the side of his mouth and uses his fingers while he is speaking to show the difference between sounds that look alike. For example, "pea," "be" and "me" look identical. So the speaker uses one finger next to his mouth whenever he says, "pea," four fingers whenever he says, "be" and all five fingers whenever he says, "me." Eight different finger positions are all that are needed to distinguish between all the consonant sounds in the English language.

Many vowel sounds also look alike, so the speaker places his hand in a slightly different position to show the difference between the various vowel sounds that look alike. For example, "met" and "mitt" look alike, so the hand is placed closer to the chin for "met" and closer to the throat for "mitt". In this way the hearing-impaired person can tell exactly what is being said instead of just having to guess.

CUED SPEECH

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
d	k	h	b	t	l	g	ng
p	v	s	n	m	sh	j	y
zh	th	r	wh	f	w	th	ch
						(thumb)	

<u>mouth</u>	<u>chin</u>	<u>throat</u>	<u>side</u>
ee (see)	e (get)	i (is)	u (but)
ur (her)	ue (blue)	oo (book)	-oe (home)
	aw (dog)	a (that)	-ah (father)

	ie (my)
	ot-ou (cow)
	oy (pay)
	oi (boy)
































































The System of Cuing

When Brad is taught a new word, such as "Samaritan," it is much, much easier to teach him to pronounce it correctly when he is watching cuing because he knows every single sound that is being made.

Even more important, when Brad is hearing the Word of God, he knows exactly what is being said instead of guessing all the time and wondering if what he thought he saw on the lips was really what was being said.

THE LORD'S PRAYER

IN THE LANGUAGE OF SIGNS / EPHPHATHA SERVICES OF THE ALC

							
OUR	FATHER	WHO	ART	IN	HEAVEN	HALLOWED	BE
							
THY	NAME	THY	KINGDOM	COME	THY	WILL	BE
							
DONE	ON	EARTH	AS	IT IS	IN	HEAVEN	GIVE
							
US	THIS	DAY	OUR	DAILY	BREAD	AND	FORGIVE
							
US	OUR	TRESPASSES	AS	WE	FORGIVE	THOSE	WHO
							
TRESPASS	AGAINST	US	AND	LEAD	US	NOT	INTO
							
TEMPTATION	BUT	DELIVER	US	FROM	EVIL	FOR	THINE
							
IS	THE KINGDOM	THE POWER	AND	THE GLORY	FOREVER	AMEN	