

The Life and Ministry of Robert Louis Schumann

Bradley Taylor
Senior Church History Thesis
James F. Korthals
12.11.06

Introduction

If you have ever visited Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary and walked its halls, there is no doubt you saw the class portraits of past graduates. Maybe for the first time you saw your pastor, your teacher, or your father as a young man in the prime of his life. Many thoughts may run through your mind as you look at those youthful faces. You might be shocked at what you see and say, "That's Pastor? He looks so different today!" You might stare with silent awe at a current leader in our church body, the WELS, and think, "I wonder if he ever imagined that he would serve as a synod president, a district president, or a seminary professor." You might smile as you gaze upon your father and think, "Did he ever think he would be a devoted husband to my mother, a loving father to me, and even a caring grandfather to my children?" There are many thoughts that run through my mind too, but the thought that I have the most is this: I can only imagine the stories that each one of these men has about his life and ministry.

In order to meet the requirements of a class, I have the privilege of documenting the life and ministry of one those men pictured in the halls of the Seminary. He is my grandfather through marriage and is pictured at the bottom right hand corner of the portrait of the Seminary's Class of 1951. His name is Robert Louis Schumann.

The Early Years (1925-1939)

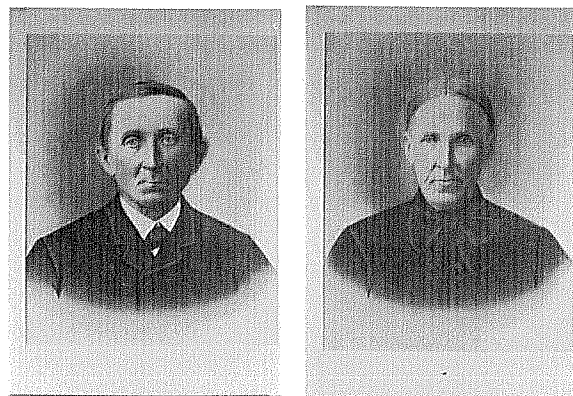
Robert Louis Schumann was the second child born to Walter August and Irma Helen Schuman (nee Schultz) at 1:25am on May 24, 1925 at St. Agnus Hospital in Fond du Lac, Wisconsin. About two weeks later, Robert Louis Schumann was born a child of God when he was baptized in the home of his grandmother, Otilie Schultz, on June 10, 1925. The baptism is recorded in the books of St. John's Lutheran Church in Markesan, WI where Robert's father, Walter, served as pastor. Robert had an older brother, Walter Jr., who was five years older than

he. The brothers were blessed with a sister, Gena, who was born two years after Robert on December 5, 1927.

The Schumann family traces its ancestry back to Germany. Robert's grandfather, August Schumann, was born in Pomerania, Germany. When August was 17, he joined his parents, William and Caroline Schumann, and set sail for America, the Land of Opportunity. On April 12, 1877 they arrived in New York and eventually settled in Lowell, Wisconsin.

There August met Emily Neumann, whose family had a similar history. August and Emily were married on December 14, 1884. Their first house was built by August. It still stands at 301 College Avenue in Watertown, Wisconsin, although it is not owned by any member of the Schumann family now.

August and Emily had two sons, Walter (Robert's father) and Harold. Walter attended St. Mark's Lutheran School for grades one to six followed by No. 4 School (current location of Trinity Lutheran School on the corner of Western Avenue and Fifth Street) for grades seven and eight. Upon graduation Walter entered Northwestern Prep in 1906 and graduated from Northwestern College in 1912. He then served as an instructor at Northwestern College for one year before entering the Wauwatosa Seminary. After completing a three year course, Walter graduated from the Seminary in 1916. After a short time serving as Assistant Inspector of the



William and Caroline Schumann



August and Emily Schumann

dormitory at Northwestern, Walter received his first call into the parish ministry in 1917 to serve St. Paul's Lutheran Church in North Fond du Lac, Wisconsin.

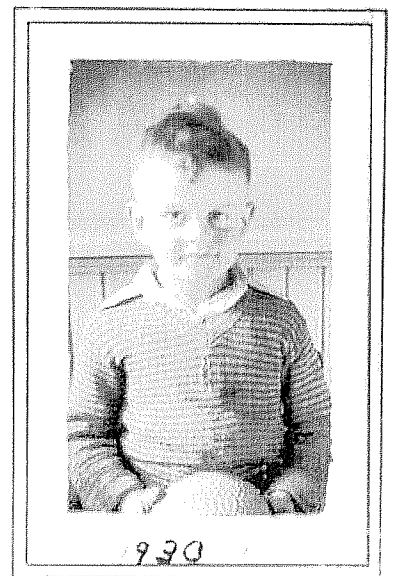
There Walter met Robert's mother, Irma Bertha Helen Schultz. On January 1, 1919 Pastor John Brenner married the young couple in Milwaukee, Wisconsin. The parsonage of St. Paul's Lutheran Church in North Fond du Lac was their first home. After a short time in North Fond du Lac, Walter accepted a call to serve St. John's Lutheran Church in Markesan in 1921. Following his time in Markesan, Walter accepted a call to serve at Northwestern College in 1925. Walter and his family became members of St. Mark's Lutheran Church in Watertown. Robert was a newborn when his family moved to Watertown and his father did not accept another call until Robert's first year of high school, so all of Robert's childhood memories are from his days in Watertown.



Walter and Irma Schumann

Even before entering Kindergarten, Robert recalled some education he received as a young boy:

I had been chasing robins across that vast expanse of lawn which existed alongside of the old gym and stretched in front of the long old dormitory and I hadn't caught even one after much effort. Two of the college janitors spotted me and they must have smirked at my fruitless efforts. They called me over to them and imparted a piece of wisdom and advice which stays with me to this day, at the age of 80 years. They said, "You'll never catch any of those robins that way. Go home and tell your mother that you need some salt and then go and put it on their tails." Would you not remember such sage advice too? But I did what they said and learned that it's best to think carefully about the advice anyone, friend or foe imparts. Evaluate all of it! ¹



Robert in Kindergarten

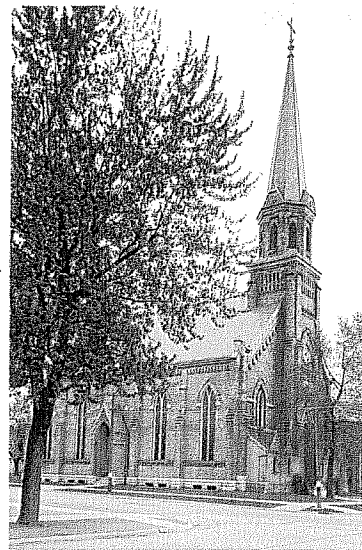
¹ Robert L. Schumann, Letter to Bradley Taylor, 28 November 2006.

Robert attended Kindergarten at Webster School, which was called No. 4 School in his father's day. His Kindergarten teacher's name was Miss Wegemann, who was also a member of St. Mark's Church. Robert told this story about Kindergarten and Miss Wegemann:

My folks had gotten me some nice long underwear to keep me warm on the walk to school and back again. But they were designed with a flap in the back which needed to be unbuttoned, preferably by an adult, when necessary. This necessitated a service stop at Miss Wegemann's desk on the way to the Boys' Restroom. When attending church at St. Mark's during my prep years, I would sometimes meet Miss Wegemann on entering church and we always had a big smile for one another.²

Robert continued his grade school education at St. Mark's Lutheran School for all eight grades. Here are Robert's teachers and the grades they taught him:

Miss Reich – 1st
Miss Fenske – 2nd
Miss Hertha Siefert – 3rd & 4th
Miss Zahn – 5th
Mr. Bartels – 6th & 7th
Mr. Bergemann – 8th



St. Mark's Lutheran Church

Robert's grade school years were filled with many wonderful memories but coupled with those memories were a few regrets. One of the biggest regrets Robert shared had to do with piano. Beginning in third grade, Robert took piano lessons from a man named Mr. Reichart at a downtown music store in Watertown. As a young boy Robert recalled being greeted by Mr. Reichart's painful smiles, not really grasping the fact that his piano teacher was suffering from and would later die of stomach cancer. After Mr. Reichart died, Robert took piano lessons from Miss Zahn, his fifth grade teacher. Robert said, "All went well until I had to endure a little razzing about 'being a teacher's pet.' For a time I fell victim to the psychology that no 'he-man'

² Schumann, Robert L.

ever takes piano lessons from a woman, and I quit to my later life-long regret that I did not keep at it.”³

It should come as no surprise that another memory Robert had of his childhood had to do with discipline. Who of us doesn't remember the first time we broke the rules, were caught, and had to bear the consequences? Robert, who was otherwise a very well-behaved boy, remembered this event:

The incident involved Rudy Hackbarth, my bosom buddy and myself. On a warm sunny day in the spring or early fall, the two of us were sitting side by side along the fence encircling the playground. One of us lamented that he sure did not feel like attending school that day and the other quickly agreed, saying that he didn't feel like it either. I do not remember who said what, but we both were in perfect agreement, so we walked off the playground. I did not remember what we did that day, but it must have been more to our liking than sitting in a classroom. My excuse the next day to Miss Siefert was that I had to go to the dentist. I cannot recall what Rudy's excuse was but I know that it did not hold any more water than my own. Hertha met my dad on the street the next day and asked him about my tooth trouble. Fortunately, when I got home that next day we had guests or company in the house and I was given strict instructions to go up to my bed and rest my tooth till further notice. I do not recall ever playing hooky again.⁴



Robert's Confirmation Picture

Robert kept all his report cards from his years at St. Mark's School. A quick look at his grades showed that Robert was an above average student. However in the first grade his teacher, Miss Reich, placed a check mark on Robert's report card in the column "Whispers too much." Needless to say Robert never again received a check mark in that column the rest of his time at St. Mark's and he went on to graduate from St. Mark's on June 13, 1939. Just prior to graduation, Robert was confirmed in the Christian faith on Psalm Sunday, April 2, 1939 at St. Mark's Lutheran Church by Pastor William Eggert. His confirmation verse was Psalm 16:1, "In thy presence is fullness of joy; at thy right hand there are

³ Schumann, Robert L.

⁴ Schumann, Robert L.

pleasures for evermore” (King James Version). This passage still holds a special place in Robert’s heart and has been and continues to be a constant comfort during difficult times in his life.

While some of the more lasting memories are regrets and humorous stories, Robert summed up why his years at St. Mark’s served as the foundation for the rest of his life:

As I look back through the years, I find that I have a great appreciation for the education received at St. Mark’s Christian Day School. I realized that I came out of St. Mark’s School with a tremendous knowledge of Bible passages, hymn verses, and Bible stories of both Old and New Testaments which served me well in later life and even now in retirement. When we are young there is a tendency not to fully appreciate what we have received but it may not be true when we are older and we see the sunset of our own life.⁵

The Northwestern Prep Years (1939-1943)

The fall of 1939 was filled with changes. Robert’s father, Walter, after serving as a vacancy pastor at First Lutheran Church in La Crosse, Wisconsin, received and accepted a call to serve as its fulltime pastor. The family moved to La Crosse, but Robert, after spending a short time in La Crosse, had to come back to Watertown to enroll at Northwestern Preparatory School.

The first year at Northwestern Prep was quite an adjustment for the young Robert, and he struggled with homesickness. He said that classes on Saturday made it difficult to justify coming home regularly on the weekends, especially considering his father, who would have to pick him up, had a sermon to prepare for Sunday. Robert was also a bit too young to hitchhike. Yet Robert did not spend the weekends sulking but finished his assignments early, easily met project deadlines, and read all the assigned readings. That feeling of satisfaction eased his homesickness.

Most homesick children miss their family and the comforts of home. While that was certainly the case with Robert, another thing he missed was his father’s preaching. Robert

⁵ Schumann, Robert L.

commented on his father's preaching: "My father's preaching would hold my interest and attention from beginning to end. It impressed indelibly on my mind that eternal life, salvation, is not by works but purely by the grace of a wonderful God." ⁶

Young men sometimes do not consider the pastoral ministry or consider themselves having the gifts to be a pastor because they can not picture themselves ever doing it as well as a veteran pastor. That was the case with Robert. Robert said:

While still in my prep years, I began to entertain doubts about entering the pastoral ministry. I did not want to become a pastor who could not preach well. I looked upon preaching as an extremely important function and I began to doubt that I had that particular gift. ⁷

Doubting his gifts to be a pastor, Robert spoke to his father after graduating from Northwestern Prep and tried to convince him to allow him to go to New Ulm to become a teacher. Walter persuaded him to first finish Northwestern College before making a final decision. Robert lamented, "He [Walter] tended to be an over-powering persuader but did not remove my doubts about ever becoming an effective preacher. I knew at that time that four years of Northwestern College were before me but felt I lacked some of the important gifts." ⁸



⁶ Schumann, Robert L.

⁷ Schumann, Robert L.

⁸ Schumann, Robert L.

Northwestern Prep School's Class of 1943

Robert spoke highly of all his teachers at Prep but enjoyed Professor Ernst Wendland the most for his warm, father-like personality, which was just what a homesick boy needed. Robert was also fond of Professor Blume, who was his father's replacement on the faculty and who went out of his way to be friendly. Overall Robert had this to say about his time at Northwestern Prep: "My prep years were a time of adjustment and change, but also of happy remembrances, except for the bouts of homesickness."⁹

The Northwestern College Years (1943-1947)

The adjustment to Northwestern College was not bad at all for Robert. Most of his classmates, himself included, did not even have to change their rooms from the year before. Everything would have gone smoothly except during his first year the government, due to the war, ruled that schools like Northwestern would have to hold mandatory summer school to speed students through to graduation. It was an unwelcome change for the students and the faculty. No summer break meant no summer job, so Robert and his classmates were forced to work part-time jobs during the long school year to pay for tuition. Robert's part-time jobs included being an assistant to the college janitor, a bellhop at the Washington Hotel on Main Street, a coal delivery boy for Watertown Coop, and a taxi driver.

The job as assistant janitor afforded him his first real encounter with his future wife, Doris Jungkuntz. One day, Robert was working at pulling weeds from a gravel road that ran alongside the tennis courts on campus.

The girl I wanted to become my wife, Doris Jungkuntz of Jefferson, and a friend of hers approached the tennis courts with their rackets in hand. At that time they were not obligated to attend summer school as we were. I knew Doris by sight at the time and decided I would have some fun by telling them that I had been put in charge of the tennis courts and that I did not want anyone to use them that day. Fortunately, my boss, Mr. Bilse, College Steward, was not around. Unfortunately, my future wife did not take

⁹ Schumann, Robert L.

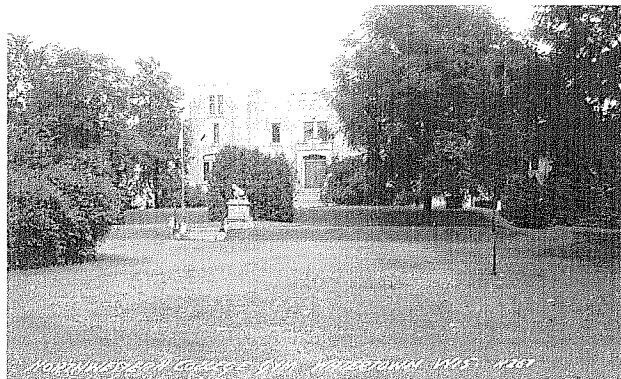
kindly to my approach, but I think they used the courts anyway. In later years, I smoothed the relationship over.¹⁰

As Robert looked back on college at Northwestern, his sophomore year was not a good year academically. Instead of making excuses about it, Robert called that year “the lost year” and described his attitude at the time as IMMATURE [emphasis his]. Robert said, “This experience would later contribute to the struggle I would have with the question as to whether I had the qualifications for the pastoral ministry.”¹¹

In October of Robert’s senior year, his father received and accepted a call to return to Northwestern College to teach Greek. By December, the family moved to a home on Harvey Avenue. For the last semester at college Robert decided to save money and move home, because after all, he would be back with all his friends next year at the Seminary.

On June 12, 1947 Robert graduated from Northwestern College, and as he looked back on his years on the campus of Northwestern, Robert commented:

One of the most enjoyable times at Northwestern, both in prep and college, were the evening devotions. Church services in the area in those days were still quite common. Our evening devotions in the dormitory chapel were conducted in the English language, but the hymns used were sung from German hymnals which, I suppose, congregations had donated. The student body singing was lusty and moving.¹²



Postcard of NWC

¹⁰ Schumann, Robert L.

¹¹ Schumann, Robert L.

¹² Schumann, Robert L.

The Seminary Years (1947-1948, 1949-1951)

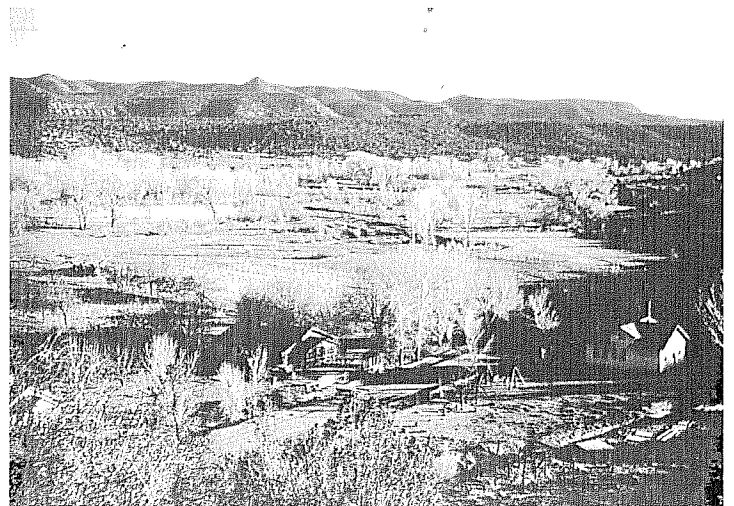
Robert's first year at the Seminary in Thiensville was the first of three wonderful years. At the end of his junior year, Professor Reim, the Seminary's president, held a meeting with the junior class and informed them there was a need for two men to fill a vacancy at a mission church, which was located in Lower Cibicue on the Fort Apache Indian Reservation in Arizona. Two men were needed to teach at the school and preach on Sundays for one year. Robert and Henry Juroff were chosen from a list of volunteers to serve.

The Year at Lower Cibicue (1948-1949)

Traveling by train, Robert and Henry made their way to Arizona. Once in Arizona, they got on a bus that took them to the Fort Apache Indian Reservation. They stopped at a place called Carizo where they met Pastor Schiesser, the pastor at Upper Cibicue and Robert and Henry's "bishop" (advisor) for the year. Robert talked about his first impressions of Lower Cibicue:

As Pastor Schiesser drove us in [Cibicue] I felt as though we were leaving the United States and were now in some foreign country. We drove within sight of Indian camps with campfires burning in the early evening and it was somewhat eerie to us. Most of the Indian clans still preferred living in wickiups at that time. Lower Cibicue had an adobe church. In addition to that building there was a three-room schoolhouse with a wooden frame with two classrooms side by side in the front of the building and a shower room stretching across the rear, which was used also as the lunch or dining room.¹³

Picture of Lower Cibicue



Indian's home, Parsonage, Church, and School

¹³ Schumann, Robert L.

As I listened to Robert recall stories from his year in Cibicue, this experience was like none other in his life.

Robert spent his weekday mornings teaching thirty children of Lower Cibique and preparing and serving them lunch. Robert used his weekday afternoons to prepare for the next day of class. In addition to his school work, Robert and Henry worked on a water system for the little community by dredging out a well and fixing the water pipeline. Robert and Henry didn't finish this project until May of 1949, a full ten months after they arrived. After a long week, the weekends were not necessarily for relaxing. On Saturdays Robert and Henry drove to Upper Cibicue where there was a small trading post owned by Boyd Knapp. Boyd was a white man from Kentucky who came to Cibicue because he cared deeply for the Indian's well-being and wanted to help them by bringing his business to the area. Boyd also understood Robert and Henry's situation and always provided them with the best meat for the school. Sundays, of course, began with worship, where Robert and Henry switched responsibilities. One preached; the other played the organ and drove to Upper Cibicue to pick up the translator for the service. And besides all these responsibilities, once every three or four weeks Robert and Henry made a longer drive to Globe, Arizona, to pick up supplies they couldn't get at Boyd's trading post. This trip also gave the men a taste of civilization and a home cooked meal with Pastor Norman Berg and his family.

The days were long but very rewarding. Robert recalled that the most rewarding day was Christmas Eve. The preparation for the service was intense. Robert and Henry requested special assistance from Pastor Francis Uplegger, who worked with the group for a full day. Pastor Uplegger also taught Robert and Henry the Apache version of the English hymn, "From Heav'n

Above to Earth I Come.” Robert can still sing the hymn in Apache today. Robert talked about his preparations for the program:

We drilled the children in songs and recitations in preparation for the Christmas program. The Christmas Eve service that year of 1948 I shall never forget. That adobe church building was filled to capacity with pure Indians except for ourselves and there were Indians looking through all the windows. After it was over and as we were distributing gifts to the children, we found that there were many gifts for the adults present that night. We were expected to distribute these also. This part of the activity took us completely by surprise. It was a heart-warming experience for us, to say the least.¹⁴

Besides serving God’s lambs at Lower Cibicue, Robert also had wonderful experiences serving God’s sheep. One of those sheep was Robert’s neighbor, an Indian man who was found guilty of murdering his wife. This Indian man spent some time in prison, but was released early because he had advanced tuberculosis. He would live out his days as Robert and Henry’s next door neighbor and receive steady treatments of God’s Word from them. There was a memorable incident Robert recalled about this Indian man’s funeral.

I was due to drive the box and body to the cemetery the next day for the rite of burial. His friends and relatives promised that they would carry him in his wooden coffin to the parsonage pickup. When the agreed upon hour for the burial arrived and passed and no one had showed up, I walked over to the place and saw that his body was a little longer than the wooden coffin. The lid was off and one could see his head popped up at one end. I got a hammer and loosened up the ends and managed to squeeze him in and move forward with the burial.¹⁵

There was another experience that was quite a surprise for Robert. Robert told the story:

An Indian whom I had never seen before came to me with the request to be taught about the Christian religion. As I recall, he had recently returned from serving in some branch of the Armed Forces and was now living in a wickiup in our valley. I told him I would be glad to tell him about Christianity. I set dates with him and had a set of about six or eight lessons I planned to go through with him. When I stooped to walk in thru the entry, I found a room with one chair, a chair with twisted wire legs and seat, the kind you I had seen often in drugstores. He indicated that I was to sit in the chair while he sat on the ground. I had some very interesting meetings with him in that wickiup, but I do not

¹⁴ Schumann, Robert L.

¹⁵ Schumann, Robert L.

know what the final results were. He was very grateful for my visits and I was happy for the opportunity. The talks I gave concentrated on the message of sin and God's grace, extended to sinners as a free gift in the suffering and death of His Son, our Lord, Jesus Christ, for the forgiveness of sins. ¹⁶

Roberts spoke of his overall time in Cibicue by stating, "I think both of us, Henry Juroff and myself, had a deep sense of satisfaction and gratitude toward the Lord for completing our tasks." ¹⁷

The Seminary Years continued (1947-1948, 1949-1951)

After a year on the Apache Reservation, Robert returned to the Seminary in the fall of 1949. While the year in Lower Cibicue was enjoyable, Robert commented that that year allowed him another year to decide his future. One might think that preaching every other week with the occasional funeral sermon would give confidence to a person who struggled with public speaking, but Robert said:

I knew well enough that a year in Cibicue, Arizona, among the Apaches could be entirely different from service in a white congregation. No interpreter will be on hand to give you time to think of your next sentence or sentences. Arizona, in short, gave me another year for deciding my future. The old problem of public speaking still confronted me. I diagnosed myself as afflicted with some phobia of some kind and could not see myself as a public speaker as long as that problem existed. ¹⁸

Despite the indecision about the future, Robert still worked hard, preaching at every opportunity and teaching Sunday School. A lasting memory from Middler year at the Seminary was working on one of his first sermons. Robert's homiletics teacher was the Director of the Seminary, Professor Adalbert Schaller. The text was Matthew 20:1-16. Robert remembered he had a tough time figuring out his theme, so he decided to go with the first verse of a hymn, Thy Works Not Mine, O Christ! The parts Robert developed after much discussion with Professor Schaller were these:

¹⁶ Schumann, Robert L.

¹⁷ Schumann, Robert L.

¹⁸ Schumann, Robert L.

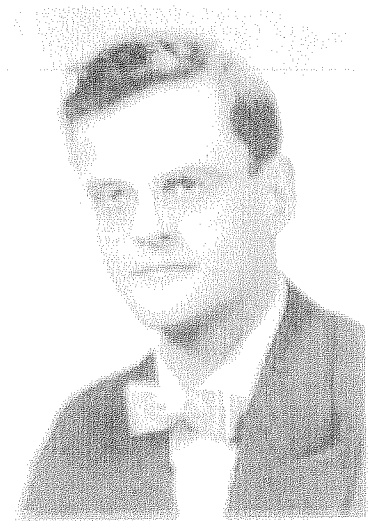
1. It is by God's grace that we who had been lost are invited into the labor of his vineyard, and
2. It is again by God's grace that we, expecting nothing, are rewarded.

Robert preached this sermon all around the Milwaukee area during his Middler year.

Yet the confidence did not come. Looking back on it, Robert said that his growth in public speaking was suppressed because of a word by word type of memorizing, which made for a mechanical delivery without emotion or feeling. He memorized word for word because he feared slipping into some false doctrine. He commented that in those early years he never really "preached" his sermons.

Time continued to pass and in the months before Call Day, Robert's decision about his future affected more than just him. Robert spoke with a professor from the Seminary, and this professor could tell Robert definitely did not want a call at graduation. The professor said, "Don't you think that the eleven years of training you have already received are sufficient?" With that comment, Robert sat silent and was dismissed.

Robert's father, Walter, no doubt remembered the conversation he had with his son back in high school and talked to his son about his future. Walter did not want Robert to push his decision farther into the future, so he encouraged him to enroll at the University of Wisconsin-Madison and concentrate on lectures given by a recognized authority on the economic situation in the world at the time of Luther and the Reformation. Robert accepted his father's plan but still had other ideas about his future. Those plans included him and his future bride, Doris Jungkuntz. They would live in Madison, both work to support Robert's



ROBERT SCHUMANN

Seminary Graduation Picture

education, Robert would eventually finding a profession, and both would live happily ever after...a perfect plan in Robert's opinion.

Still unsure about his future, Robert graduated from the Seminary on May 31, 1951 and was not assigned a call. The first part of Robert's plan went as anticipated, but little did he know that the rest would fall apart.

A month at the University of Wisconsin-Madison (1951)

The rest of Robert's plans seemed to fall apart during the summer. After enrolling at the University of Wisconsin-Madison, Robert discovered that Doris would not marry him until he was working. Robert said, "My future bride, Doris Jungkuntz, had made it clear to me that she would not want us to marry until I was through with school and ready to settle down (in a church)." ¹⁹ If that was not bad enough, the lecturer scheduled to teach the economics course had some disagreements with the authorities at the University and would not be teaching the course. Saddened by all these developments, Robert still attended the University of Wisconsin-Madison, determined to find his future.

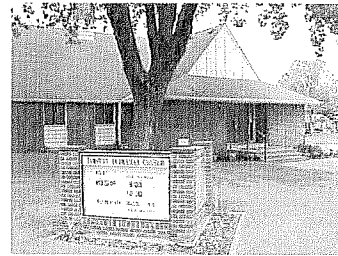
Little did Robert know that the Lord of the Church would come calling. In the beginning of November, after a month of school at the University, Robert came home for the weekend. His life would be forever changed. Waiting for him in his family's living room was Pastor Karl Gurgel Sr., chairman of the Synod's Mission Board. He wanted Robert to consider a call into the ministry, serving a small organized group of Wisconsin Synod Lutherans in St. Louis Park, Minnesota. The group called themselves Park Lutheran Church. As Robert recalled, he accepted the call that evening.

The next months were busy. Robert and Doris were married the day after Thanksgiving, November 23, 1951 at St. John's Lutheran Church in Jefferson, Wisconsin. Pastor Mueller

¹⁹ Schumann, Robert L.

performed the marriage. After a short honeymoon in Madison, the young couple traveled to St. Louis Park by train because they did not have a car.

Ministry at Park Lutheran Church (Timothy) in St. Louis Park, Minnesota (1951-1955)



Park Lutheran conducted their worship services in an old farmhouse on the corner of Minnetonka Boulevard and Texas Avenue. The members were slowly converting the rooms of the house into a worship sanctuary and Sunday school classrooms. Up until Robert arrived at Park Lutheran, Pastor Robert Preuss, a leader in the Evangelical Lutheran Synod who was attending the University of Minnesota, served this little group. At Robert's ordination-installation service Pastor Preuss preached and Robert's father, Walter, served as liturgist.

The mission zeal of the Minnesota District was becoming very evident at that time. There were missions started and supported in the Bloomington and Shakopee area and all around the Twin Cities. Robert also had his mission work to do in St. Louis Park. Having no real evangelism training at the Seminary, Robert went out on his bike with the saving message of Jesus, talking to people and inviting them to Park Lutheran.

As Pastor Robert Schumann was "pounding the pavement," much work was being done by volunteers on the little house of worship. Just when the work was nearly done, news came that a loan of \$20,000 was approved for the purchase of property. Soon after the purchase of land on Minnetonka Boulevard was approved, the construction of the church began and was completed mostly by the work of volunteers, Robert included. The church is still located at this very spot.

As the church was being built, the congregation held meetings to adopt a constitution. During this process the church's name was changed from Park Lutheran to Timothy Lutheran.

The name was changed, as Robert remembered, because one of the members had just named their new baby boy Timothy.

During this busy time Robert also had the opportunity to serve two of the new mission groups in the area, a daughter congregation called Pilgrim Lutheran and a small group meeting in Shakopee. It was a pleasure serving these little groups of Christians with the gospel of Jesus. Both congregations are flourishing today.

Early in 1955 Robert received and accepted a call to serve St. Peter's Lutheran Church in Balaton, Minnesota. Robert accepted the call chiefly because of the manual labor which still had to be done for Timothy Lutheran. This manual labor did not allow much time for personal growth and preparation for the Sunday worship service. Going to St. Peter's, an established congregation, afforded Robert this opportunity. After preaching his farewell sermon on April 17, 1955 Robert was installed at St. Peter's April 24, 1955.



Ministry at St. Peter's Lutheran Church in Balaton, Minnesota (1955-1961)

“Pastors usually agree that no congregation here on earth can be considered perfect, but sometimes one find one that seems to come close.”²⁰ That was the way Robert described the members of St. Peter's, a large group of Christians most of whom were farmers.

For example there was a lady named Mrs. Schentzel who baked bread for Robert and his family. On her way to deliver the bread she picked up butter at the store and said to Robert, “You can't eat bread without butter on the pieces!” Robert and his family never had to worry about a lack of food in the parsonage. Another man, after listening in a Bible study on the book of Acts that whenever there was a need, people who had more blessings sold their property and

²⁰ Schumann, Robert L.

gave the money to the poor, said to Robert, “Pastor, I want to do as those early Christians did. This year I shall give my oat crop for the relief of the poor.”

Robert also recalled the superior quality of his Confirmation classes. Coming from solid families, the confirmation examinations were the best Robert ever had in the ministry. Throughout Robert’s ministry and even today, he still hears about faithful members in churches across America who were part of his confirmation classes at St. Peter’s.

Robert remembered the sad episodes in the lives of this farm congregation as well. One of the events he recalled was a time when a young boy, son of Rude Mitzner, went missing. The boy’s father was shelling corn, and the corn was funneling into his pickup truck. He did not notice that his son climbed in the back of the truck, got stuck, and was smothered to death. This was especially sad because the family was still coping with the death of a daughter who died just prior to Robert’s arrival. Robert commented, “The Mitzner family was typical in that area; they bore their suffering and sorrows well and I think they taught me a few things in the process, for I was still a young and green pastor.”²¹

Robert also remembered a delinquent member who did not like him at all. The elder’s report stated that this man would not come back to church until “Daddy Longlegs leaves Balaton.” Robert never knew why this man did not like him and soon after this meeting Robert received and accepted a call to serve St. Luke’s in Kenosha, Wisconsin. Years past and Robert found out that the man kept his word and was attending church regularly, a happy conclusion.

Ministry at St. Luke’s Lutheran Church in Kenosha, Wisconsin (1961-1974)

Throughout the years of ministry, many people enter a pastor’s life and leave wonderful memories. It happens that many of these people become more than just members of the

²¹ Schumann, Robert L.



congregation but true friends. In Robert's life one of those friends was a man named Fred Damaschke, a member at St. Luke's Lutheran Church.

Fred was an elderly man from Germany who had a son who died in World War II. Very early in Robert's ministry at St. Luke's Fred's wife also died. Fred's nearest family was on the other side of the world in Germany, so many of the members of the congregation filled the void, Robert included. With time on his hands and no family, Fred volunteered much of his time to the church by assisting at shut-in and hospital calls. Near the end of his life, Fred asked Robert to help him write his obituary and will. Robert recalled not really wanting to schedule a date to do this for a man who seemed to have much more life to live. Robert later did accept. Fred stated in his will that he wanted his home sold, bills paid, and the remaining money given to the church and some close friends. Robert and his family were included. It was no more than three weeks later that Fred was called home to heaven. The funeral was packed with people who called Fred their friend. After Fred's house was sold and his bills were paid, each of those individuals, Robert included, received \$1,700, quite an amount of money then and now.

The other memories of St. Luke's have to do with the school, which was one of the main reasons Robert accepted the call in the first place. Robert wanted a Christian Day School for his children. During his years at St. Luke's all seven of his children attended the school. There they were given a foundation of Jesus they would carry with them the rest of their lives. That school was a wonderful blessing for Robert and his family.

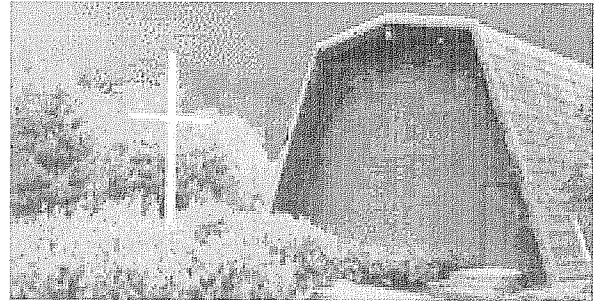
The school was also a great challenge. Robert never served a congregation that had a school, much less beautiful new school, so during his ministry at St. Luke's Robert had the opportunity to begin a special program to promote good stewardship. With no real stewardship

training at the Seminary, Robert saw these years as a great benefit to him spiritually, teaching and promoting good Scriptural stewardship principles in himself and his people.

The years of service came to an end when Robert accepted a call to Shepherd of the Hills Lutheran Church in Duluth, Minnesota in April of 1974. Robert accepted this call because he felt it was time to move on, a move that benefited the congregation and himself.

Ministry at Shepherd of the Hills in Duluth, Minnesota (1974-1984)

On June 2, 1974 Robert was installed as pastor at Shepherd of the Hills. Pastor Herbert Muenkel, a member of the Minnesota District Mission Board, preached the sermon.



The situation at Duluth was similar to his first call at St. Louis Park. Shepherd of the Hills was also dealing with a new beginnings and a new church. These things were very appealing to Robert and were the main reasons he accepted the call. Like the group at St. Louis Park who met at a church-house, the congregation at Duluth met for worship in the basement of the parsonage. When they had a full-time pastor, the funds for the new church would be released. Only two months after Robert accepted the call to be its first full-time pastor, the congregation held a ground breaking ceremony on August 4, 1974.

Robert said that Duluth was sometimes referred to as “the air-conditioned city.” In ten years as a pastor there Robert said that only once he experienced hot and humid conditions. Robert loved the long winters and short summers, but not all the people liked the weather and left the church because of it. It was incredibly frustrating to have people leave Duluth and transfer out of the congregation due to the severe winters. It was especially difficult to watch as the majority of those who left were those who were influential in starting the congregation.

The fluctuating membership did not stop Robert from working hard. In the days before an organized system of tracking Wisconsin Synod college students, Robert spent many days canvassing and seeking out Wisconsin Synod students attending college in the Duluth-Superior area.

Sometimes Robert received free publicity. For example, one December a local television station wanted to air a Christmas Eve children's program on Christmas Eve. Believe it or not, Shepherd of the Hills was the only church to have theirs on Christmas Eve. Robert could not really say he gained any members through this experience, but the children and Robert were excited to rush home that night and see themselves on television.

Near the end of Robert's ministry in Duluth he began to notice pain every time he sat down in a chair. Robert recalled that the pain was not too severe, but he thought he should see his doctor anyway. He spoke to his doctor who was very surprised there was not much pain and, after an exam, found a large growth on his prostate that needed to be removed as soon as possible. The surgery came at a pastor's busiest time, Holy Week. Many prayers later, the sermons did get written and preached by the elder and the surgery was successful.

During the recovery process, Robert was given an opportunity of a lifetime. His son, Robert, was a Seminary student and told him about a study trip to Luther land that qualified as post-graduate work towards a Seminary degree. Robert was placed on the list and was actually chosen. He was given aid, so he could do it financially. To earn credit for the experience Robert conducted devotions and presented papers. It was a wonderful experience.

Soon after the trip Robert accepted a call to serve Christus Lutheran Church in Richmond, Wisconsin.

Ministry at Christus Lutheran Church in Rimond, Wisconsin (1984-1986)

If you were to look for the city of Richmond, Wisconsin on a map, Robert believed you would not find it. The church's address today is in Delavan, Wisconsin. This was an ideal location for Robert given his uncertain condition physically, because the doctors and hospitals in Madison had a great reputation for dealing with prostate cancer.

Robert ministered faithfully to the members of Christus but his attention was on a matter closer to home. Doris, Robert's wife, suffered from a mental and emotional illness. It had gotten to the point that the best solution for the family and for Doris was that she move back home with her father, a widower who lived in Jefferson, Wisconsin. While this was the best solution for Robert's family, his church family became bothered that their pastor and his wife were not living together. Their words gave Robert the impression that they felt that true Christians do not suffer from mental and emotional illness. Even some of Robert's brothers in the ministry were not sympathetic. So, after two years at Christus Lutheran Church, Robert made the tough decision to retire from the ministry and moved in with his son, Daniel, and his family in Oak Grove, Wisconsin.

A Year of Healing (1986-1987)

Living in Oak Grove gave Robert the opportunity to continue treatment for his prostate. He spent six weeks taking daily trips into Madison. Some of those trips he took with his son, Daniel. These long trips allowed Robert to keep himself busy as he simply trusted the Lord to sort out his life.

After these treatments, his eldest son, Robert, invited him to Los Alamos, New Mexico to live with him and his family doing odd jobs around their new house. When the work at their home was done, a position became available that interested Robert. The Methodist Church in

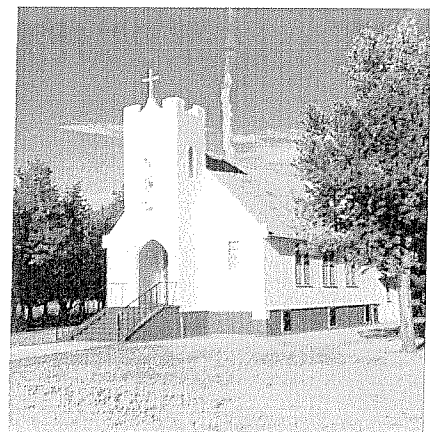
Los Alamos was hiring a janitor for their large congregation. They hired Robert on the spot when he told them, “I had been a Lutheran pastor for many years and I knew where the dirt was.” Robert commented on his time working at the Methodist Church this way:

It was a welcome relief for me to have work of that type. A kind of healing process had begun to take place in me. Prior to that it sometimes seemed as though my personal world was collapsing around me. The healing process of mind and soul was taking place. To this day I have a soft and grateful spot in my heart for those Methodists in Los Alamos. To me they were high class people and contributed much to my recovery.²²

One day on his way back from work Robert received a letter informing him that he was called to serve a small congregation in Brewster, Nebraska. It would be a semi-retired called. Before Robert accepted the call, he called a church leader at Brewster to make sure they knew about the condition of his wife. He did not want to go through what he went through before. He recalled that as he was on the phone with the church leader, he heard in the background someone saying, “Tell him to come anyway!” It excited Robert to return to the pastoral ministry, so he accepted the call and ended up spending eleven wonderful years at St. John’s in Brewster, Nebraska.

Ministry at St. John’s Lutheran Church in Brewster, Nebraska (1987-1998)

The majority of the congregation at St. John’s was older members, many of whom became wonderful friends. It was a joy bringing God’s Word to them. Through the years Robert noticed that his health was gradually worsening, so he informed the congregation that he would be retiring permanently. It saddened him that he did not make it to fifty years in the ministry, but for the good of the Kingdom, Robert had a farewell and thanksgiving service at St. John’s on July 26, 1998.



Robert moved to an apartment in Fond du Lac, Wisconsin near his daughter, Sarah.

²² Schumann, Robert L.

The Retirement Years (1998-present)

Robert did not spend much time relaxing in retirement. Three weeks after moving to Fond du Lac, Robert was called to help out at Our Savior Lutheran Church in Hendersonville, North Carolina. It was only a three month commitment, so Robert accepted the call, excited to visit North Carolina for the first time. Serving the little congregation was a joy for both the people and Robert. Robert even stayed an extra few weeks to celebrate Christmas of 1998 with the congregation.

Robert took his time on the way home spending time with Robert, his son, and his family in Ohio, and Gina, his daughter, and her family in Illinois. By the time he arrived back in Fond du Lac, he still did not have much time to relax, because he accepted a call to serve Alpine Lutheran Church in Alpine, California in 1999.

After serving in California, things seemed to settle down back in Fond du Lac, so Robert spent his time exercising to keep up his strength, walking about two miles a day. In the early summer of 2000, Robert noticed that walking even one mile on the treadmill became difficult. Robert saw his doctor assuming it was his lungs because of years of heavy smoking. His doctor found that it was actually his heart and the decision was made that Robert go to the Mayo Clinic in Rochester, Minnesota and have them examine him. Robert stayed with his son, Daniel, and his family in Prior Lake, Minnesota. The doctors at the Mayo Clinic found that his heart was fibrillating and it needed to be shocked to restore its regular rhythm. After shocking his heart, it did return to its regular rhythm, however after three days at Daniel's house, the fibrillating came back. The doctors determined that the mitral valve needed to be replaced, which meant heart surgery. Taking a month to prepare for the surgery, Robert returned to the Mayo Clinic and had surgery on August 9, 2000. The surgery went well and there have not been any complications

since. Today, Robert walks daily about half a mile and knows he could increase it without any problems.

During the next five years, Robert spent time at home in Fond du Lac and at the homes of his children. After spending a considerable time with Mary, his daughter, and her family in Brewster, Nebraska, Robert longed to come back home to Wisconsin. Robert began writing the Dodge County Housing Authority, and they found a nice apartment in Hustisford, Wisconsin which is about 10 miles away from Watertown, where Robert grew up. Robert has called it home ever since.

Pastor Karl Gurgel Sr. came as the messenger of Robert's first call. His son, President Karl Gurgel was the messenger of Robert's final call in the early part of September, 2004. The call was to assist the newly elected District President of the North Atlantic District, Pastor Joel Petermann. Pastor Petermann was the pastor of St. Paul's, a congregation located in Amherst, New Hampshire. He was elected District President after the Seminary's Vicar Call Day, so Pastor Petermann needed Robert's assistance for the next 10 months. So after five years away from the ministry, Robert was excited about the opportunity and accepted. Pastor Petermann told him that he needed him as soon as possible. With the assistance of his daughters, Gina and Peggy, Robert made it to New Hampshire and was installed as "Assistant to the Pastor" on the final Sunday in September. Overall, Robert has said that at times the mind was willing but the body was weak, but when the ten months started going, they flew by. Robert said, "With the passing of time, my confidence grew and it became a very happy time for me."²³

Today as Robert looks back he wishes he could have served his Lord as a pastor for 50 years, but God's will was that it was just under that milestone. Either way, Jesus will be waiting

²³ Schumann, Robert L.

for Robert in heaven some day will say to him, "Well done!" Robert reflected on his thoughts entering the ministry initially and his thoughts now that his service as a pastor is over.

As to the congregations I have been called to serve, my objective has always been to strengthen the faith of Christian believers among them and to quicken the hearts of others. To accomplish this I determined to preach and teach, in short, Law and Gospel, the message of sin and grace. I have never had the urge to preach the social gospel to make this world a better place in which to live. Our Savior was God made manifest in the flesh to accomplish our redemption, to bless us with forgiveness of sins. It's the resurrection and the life which is to come which we have in Him, and that is what we want above all.²⁴

While he did not reach the 50 year milestone in his ministry, Robert has reached that milestone in his marriage. Today after a little more than 50 years of marriage, Robert commented on the relationship he enjoys with his wife, Doris, right now even though they have not lived together for more than twenty years.

I do not want to write any further on this subject [Doris' illness], nor am I fully qualified to do so. I would assure everyone, however, that my wife and I are greatly in love with each other, correspond faithfully and have never been unfaithful to our marriage vows.²⁵

Currently, Robert writes poetry that he sends his wife. The content of the poems includes passages from the Bible and the thoughts of the perfect bliss they will share together in heaven because of their Savior Jesus.

Besides being blessed with a long ministry and marriage, Robert and Doris have seven children. Robert still takes his responsibility as a father very seriously, always remembering the promise he made at each of their baptism. For the rest of their lives Robert will continue to encourage them in the one true faith. Robert spoke of his children this way:

I also have a great concern for the well-being of my children from the day each one was born. The first three were boys, Robert, James, and Daniel, and I was overjoyed at having them carry on the family name. After the boys, I was blessed with four girls,

²⁴ Schumann, Robert L.

²⁵ Schumann, Robert L.

Gina, Margaret (Peggy), Mary, and Sarah (Sal). These children with their mother have been the joy of my life. They have also been my concern in life.²⁶

Robert's concern is a spiritual one. He said, "When I'm in heaven, I want my children there with me, standing together clothed in the perfect robe of Jesus' righteousness. That is why my children's spiritual welfare will be a concern of mine until I die."²⁷

Listed here are the children, grandchildren, and great-grandchildren of Robert L. and Doris Schumann:

- Robert, born September 12, 1952, married Jana Hintz.
They have four children: Brittany, Miranda, Stephanie, and Robert.
 Miranda is married to Matthew Plaughter and they have a daughter named Alexis.
- James, born February 19, 1954, married Sandra Oswald.
They have five children: Joseph, Heidi, Jennifer, Samuel, and Isaac
- Daniel, born February 18, 1956, married Deborah Fricke.
They have four children: Molly, Aaron, Gina, and Hannah.
 Molly married Bradley Taylor and they have a daughter named Aryana.
- Gina, born April 1, 1957, married David Dunham.
They have two children: Rachel and James.
- Margaret, born May 4, 1959, married James Hanke
They have three children: Willis, John, and Gretchen.
She married Vern Witherill.
She married Timothy Melberg.
They have one child named Meghan.
- Mary, born March 9, 1963, married Jerry Pickering.
They have four children: Maria, Emma, Benjamin, and Leah.
- Sarah, born January 19, 1965, married Howard Burgess.

Instead of asking Robert to speak about special moments of each of his child's lives, I asked each of Robert's children to recall their memories of Robert L. Schumann: the pastor, the preacher, the teacher, and the father.

²⁶ Schumann, Robert L.

²⁷ Schumann, Robert L.

Robert L. Schumann, the Pastor

As Robert's children commented on their father, the pastor, I noticed many similarities. I did not know Robert as a pastor, but after reading his children's comments there were a number of words that described what he was like as a pastor.

One word was evangelical. Robert's sons had very similar things to say about their father. Bobby said, "The key word that I would use to describe my memories is EVANGELICAL [emphasis his]. His evangelical nature came across in his preaching, teaching, and practice."²⁸ Jim remembered, "My memory of him as a pastor is his evangelical, gospel-centered approach to everything. His sermons in church, the instruction in Catechism class, the Bible classes I attended – everything always centered in the cross of Jesus and the forgiveness of sins."²⁹ Dan said this: "He would be the first to tell anyone that he was a sinner in need of his Savior Jesus."³⁰

Another word was humble. Gina wrote, "No task seems "beneath" him to perform. It has always been a routine scene around church to see my father shoveling heavy snow to clear the church's sidewalks on a Saturday night, mowing the church lawn, scrubbing the church's basement floors on his hands and knees to get rid of the stench after a sewer backup, vacuuming the church before a service, or catching annoying bats that had gotten trapped in the building."³¹ Dan stated, "His humility was and is evident in every aspect of his life, personal and professional. As a pastor, preacher, and teacher he carried out his callings with all humility."³²

There were also memories of Robert doing the work of a pastor. Sal wrote, "I remember how he would hold appointments, classes, and meetings with various members of his

²⁸ Robert J. Schumann, "Your Church History Paper," Email to Bradley Taylor, 17 November 2006.

²⁹ James Schumann, "Your Paper," Email to Bradley Taylor, 4 December 2006.

³⁰ Daniel Schumann, "Brad's Paper," Email to Bradley Taylor, 7 December 2006.

³¹ Gina Dunham, "Robert Schumann – Brad Taylor's Paper," Email to Bradley Taylor, 8 December 2006.

³² Schumann, Daniel.

congregation in order to provide guidance to their spiritual needs. My father was, and still is, a great listener, advisor, and counselor.”³³ “I remember my father typing up his bulletins and sermons on Sunday night on an old typewriter that would click away late into the evening...I remember my father receiving members of the congregation in his study when announcing for communion used to be done in person,”³⁴ stated Peggy.

Robert may not have the title pastor today, but that does not stop him from sharing the message of Jesus. Gina said it well, “The Lord is still using him as an instrument to spread the Gospel. Today, I see him sharing the Word eagerly and regularly with other residents in his apartment building. And I am certain that God will continue to use my dad to spread the Gospel until he is called home to heaven.”³⁵

Robert L. Schumann, the Preacher

Robert went through high school, college, and the seminary thinking that he was not given the gift of preaching a sermon. He never thought he could preach as well as his father. Knowing how he felt about his preaching abilities, it was interesting to read Robert’s children comment on their father, the preacher.

Two children commented on their dad’s voice. Peggy wrote, “I remember my father’s booming voice during sermons even though my mother always sat with us in the furthest back pew.”³⁶ “My dad has an extremely low bass voice, which sometimes frightened me when I sat in the pew as a child,”³⁷ Gina remembered.

As a child Robert enjoyed his father’s preaching, and it was actually one of things he missed while he was at Northwestern. It was no different for Robert’s children. Bobby wrote, “I

³³ Sarah Burgess, Letter to Bradley Taylor, 6 December 2006.

³⁴ Margaret Melberg, “Dad’s Bio,” Email to Bradley Taylor, 8 November 2006.

³⁵ Dunham.

³⁶ Melberg.

³⁷ Dunham.

remember him as being an interesting speaker without being theatrical or contrived. I know he always got a lot of compliments on his sermons. Even as a kid I enjoyed listening to his sermons.”³⁸ Gina commented, “But today, I am always comforted by that deep, firm voice. It may not “thunder” like it used to, but his words are more powerful than ever.”³⁹ Sal wrote:

I remember my father as a preacher who could maintain his congregation’s attention throughout his entire sermon without having to shout or motion with his arms. He would have both of his hands on each side of the pulpit, very seldom looking downward, unless reading a passage from the Bible. He spoke clearly and looked directly at the entire congregation. I can remember that it very seldom seemed that the members, or even young children, would get restless. His sermons were never too lengthy where your mind would wander. He never preached in a manner in which you could not understand the point that he was attempting to get across. His sermons were very meaningful.⁴⁰

While Robert’s gifts and abilities at preaching changed and developed over time, his message was always the same. Jim and Gina said it best. Jim wrote, “That [his father’s ministry] made an impression on me – how everything centered on the cross and the forgiveness of sins that Jesus won for us there.”⁴¹ And Gina wrote, “I heard the solid hope and joy of the Gospel from a man who has weathered numerous physical and emotional storms during his 80-some years on this earth.”⁴²

Robert L. Schumann, the Teacher

Two of Robert’s children, Bobby and Peggy, told stories about their dad, who taught them Confirmation class. Bobby remembered:

Best story is of my buddy Al Waldow, who used to make disruptive animal sounds during class to get a laugh. After several warnings, my Dad stood over his desk and threatened to "hang him from the light fixture" if he made one more "Meow". I remember that Confirmation instruction became the only class where Al never again made any noises.⁴³

³⁸ Schumann, Robert J.

³⁹ Dunham.

⁴⁰ Burgess.

⁴¹ Schumann, James.

⁴² Dunham.

⁴³ Schumann, Robert J.

Peggy wrote, "I remember my father, teaching us catechism class. I remember that he asked me what I thought was a trick question on Confirmation Day which was "how many days did God take to create the world?" I answered "seven" and he said no, "six" because on the seventh day he rested." ⁴⁴

Again, Robert was not remembered just for these funny stories but mostly for his message. "Aside from all the memorable worldly experiences, my dad's greatest priority has always been to teach us about our greatest treasure—a Savior from sin. He is firm in his foremost desire that we stay close to our Lord in His Word and that we all enter eternity with him as members of God's family,"⁴⁵ wrote Gina. Sal commented:

My father was a wonderful teacher. He knew how to explain the Lutheran Catechism in a manner in which you would understand and remember. He was a teacher who taught me the importance of becoming a confirmed member of the church and remaining a faithful member of the congregation in which I belonged. As a teacher, my father, has taught me the importance of having Christian values, a good work ethic, and living my life according to God's Word. ⁴⁶

Robert L. Schumann, the Father

Robert's children had the most to say about Robert Schumann, the father. Robert's children love their father very much, and that love poured out in their comments.

"He's got such a big heart" is something you say about a very kind, loving person.

Robert also had a big heart, literally. Dan and Gina both wrote about their father's big heart.

Dan wrote:

His heart is very big. In fact it is oversized. Dr. Zehr of the Mayo Clinic, the surgeon who performed my father's open-heart surgery, told me so. He said Dad's heart was abnormally big. He said it was the biggest heart he had ever done surgery on. What the

⁴⁴ Melberg.

⁴⁵ Dunham.

⁴⁶ Burgess.

doctor told me was not something new. I've known it for years—so have my two brothers and four sisters—ask any one of them.⁴⁷

Gina wrote:

I have always felt that we had the BEST father in the world. My dad had to have heart surgery in his 70's. His doctor at the Mayo Clinic remarked that because of the rheumatic fever he had as a child, Dad had a very enlarged heart—in fact, one of the largest atriums the Mayo Clinic had ever seen. I'm sure my brothers and sisters would agree that this is not surprising. We've always known our dad to have a "big heart." He is the most loving, gentle, patient, and forgiving person I know.⁴⁸

A number of the children also spoke of the sacrifices their father made. Peggy wrote, "I remember my father using some of his vacation time to pick apples in Mequon for 2 weeks every fall so that we could go to parochial school. I remember him coming home with his arms all scratched and bloodied – a true sacrifice for his children."⁴⁹ Gina remembered the same sacrifice, "He used vacation time to make extra money for bills, tediously picking apples at an orchard near Milwaukee. Sometimes he would take us along to enjoy the adventure and satisfaction of a hard day's physical labor. He looked at the hard work as a welcome opportunity, never complaining."⁵⁰ Dan recalled:

My father is a man of sacrifice. Other people's needs and wants always came before his own. In a one-income family with seven children, a wife, and on a pastor's salary he managed to send six out of seven children to Lutheran prep schools. In addition to providing the essentials of food and clothing for his family he made sure there was always enough for lessons in piano and violin and enough baseballs and mitts, footballs and basketballs to go around. There are many fond memories of happy Christmases and birthdays all due to his selfless sacrifice of his own needs and wants.⁵¹

Sal summarized this well by writing, "My father never put himself first."⁵²

⁴⁷ Schumann, Daniel.

⁴⁸ Dunham.

⁴⁹ Melberg.

⁵⁰ Dunham.

⁵¹ Schumann, Daniel.

⁵² Burgess.

Christmas was a special time in the Schumann house. Jim remembered, "He always made Christmas a very exciting time by locking up the tree and presents behind closed doors until Christmas Eve."⁵³ Peggy said more about this tradition:

I remember my father role-playing as Santa by entering our dark living room behind closed french doors that were covered with newspapers. We used to bring other kids from the school to our house to show them the doors on Christmas Eve day that were all newspapered with a big sign that said "Keep Out, By Order of Santa." We had every kid in the school believing that we were such good "preacher" kids that Santa only came to our house.⁵⁴

"As we got older, we did very simple things, but these simple things brought the happiest memories,"⁵⁵ James stated. Some of the simply things that Robert's children talked about were family vacations.

Peggy and Jim recalled:

I remember my father taking us to a family-owned cabin in Minocqua, Wisconsin every summer for two weeks. We would leave late Sunday night and he would drive through the night. When we got there early Monday morning he would cook breakfast of eggs and bacon. He would take turns allowing 1 or 2 of us to go fishing with him every morning. I remember him helping me catch a fish that was bigger than my brother Bob's. – Peggy⁵⁶

Every year he always made sure that we took a family vacation together – either camping in our big family tent that he got with S&H green stamps or spending a couple weeks at a cottage in northern Wisconsin. He would get up early in the morning to take us fishing in a rowboat when we were young. He rowed the boat while we fished from the back. He would take us on camping trips out west and hikes in the woods. He equipped our Volkswagen van with bunks to sleep on and cupboards to hold canned foods. Sometimes at home he would get the whole family up early and take us out to a beautiful park for a big family breakfast in the outdoors and fresh air. – Jim⁵⁷

The best way to close this section on Robert, the father, and this entire section is to close the way Robert's children ended the emails I received from them.

⁵³ Schumann, James.

⁵⁴ Melberg.

⁵⁵ Schumann, James.

⁵⁶ Melberg.

⁵⁷ Schumann, James.

Bobby closed by stating, “For me he was the image of unconditional love and a picture of Christ.”⁵⁸

James ended this way:

Probably the best compliment that could be given to my father is that he was a very faithful model and reflection of the heavenly Father. When I hear the word “father,” I think of love, and that’s what the heavenly Father is – love that caused him to give up his own Son so we could live forever. I thank the Lord for giving me the father he did.⁵⁹

Dan wrote this, “Thankful! That is a word that best describes how I feel about my father. I am thankful to my Heavenly Father for giving me and my siblings such a special gift of an earthly father. Thank you Dad for everything! You’ll always be my hero!”⁶⁰

Gina concluded by saying this:

As a child, I would study the well-known picture entitled “Grace” by Eric Enstrom in my dad’s office. I remember asking him once if that was a picture of my Grandpa (Walter) Schumann, his father. He explained that it was not, even though it looked exactly like him. Now that my own father has white hair, I choose to believe it is him in that picture. How often have my brothers and sisters and I seen our father in that same pose when we were growing up. When I see him now at his desk or table, white-haired, with head resting in folded hands as he’s meditating in his Bible or Catechism, I feel great comfort in knowing that I will never lose this lovely Christian man whom I call “Dad”.⁶¹

Peggy said this about her dad, “He has been an incredible inspiration to me as both a loving parent and Christian role model.”⁶²

Finally, Sal wrote this:

I remember that my dad was, and still is, a loving and caring father. He was a father, who during my childhood years, would joke and tease, but also be there when I needed comforting...Even today, at the age of 81, he would drop whatever he may be doing at the moment to be there for me and my siblings if we needed him. His children meant everything to him. My father, as a Christian man, brought my siblings and me up in a

⁵⁸ Schumann, Robert.

⁵⁹ Schumann, James.

⁶⁰ Schumann, Daniel.

⁶¹ Dunham.

⁶² Melberg.

Christian home with Christian values. He is a father who lives his life according to God's will.⁶³

Conclusion

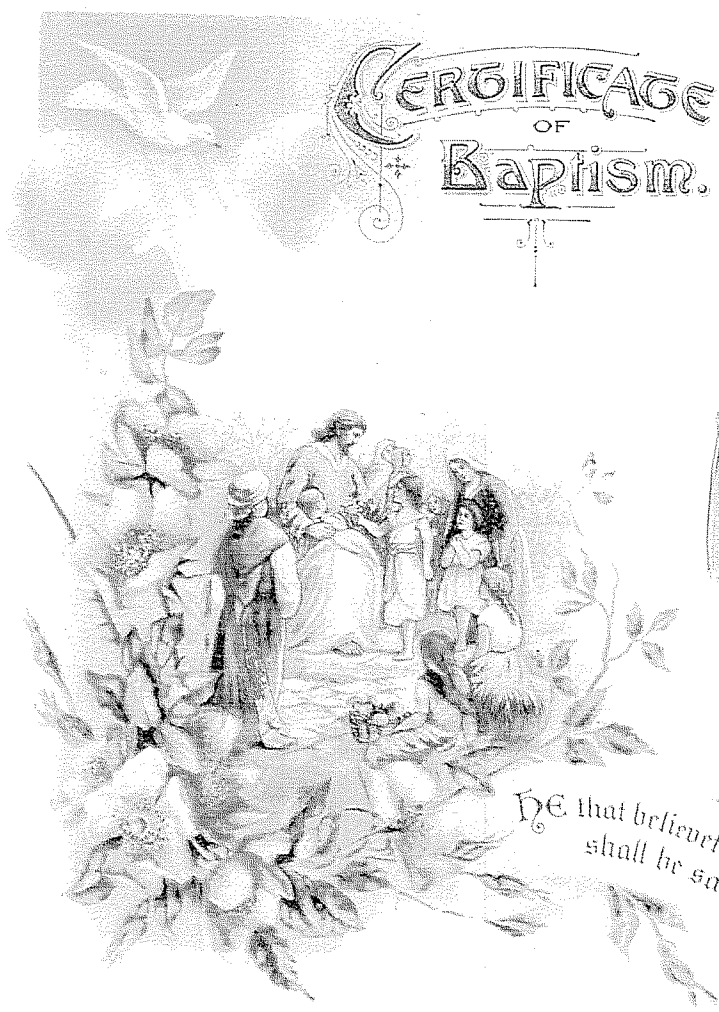
One of the reasons I chose the topic, The Life and Ministry of Robert Louis Schumann, was that I wanted to get to know my wife's kind, soft-spoken, humble grandfather a little bit better. I recall a few times having a conversation with Robert at family functions, and somehow he would always change the subject to center around me. He was never one to talk about himself, but was more interested in learning about me. He never wanted to be the center of attention. So I would like to thank Robert for the special privilege of learning about him and documenting the stories of God's goodness and guidance in his life and ministry.

There are certainly many more stories in Robert's life that could be told, but these stories pale in comparison to the real story of Robert's life: Jesus, his Savior. Robert became a pastor, and a wonderful pastor in many of his members' eyes, because his message was Jesus and what he did for all people. Motivated by the love of Jesus Robert is also a loving husband and caring father to his children. And because of Jesus, Robert's story does not end here on earth but will last an eternity with his Savior, Jesus in heaven. To Him be the glory!

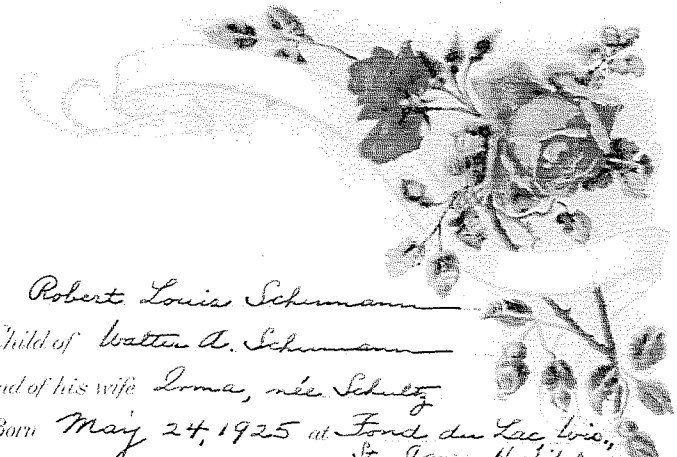
⁶³ Burgess.

Bibliography

- Burgess, Sarah. Letter to Bradley Taylor. 6 December 2006.
- Dunham, Gina. Email to Bradley Taylor. 8 December 2006.
- Melberg, Margaret. Email to Bradley Taylor. 8 November 2006.
- Schumann, Daniel. Email to Bradley Taylor. 7 December 2006.
- Schumann, James. Email to Bradley Taylor. 4 December 2006.
- Schumann, Robert J. Email to Bradley Taylor. 17 November 2006.
- Schumann, Robert L. Letter to Bradley Taylor. 28 November 2006.



**CERTIFICATE
OF
BAPTISM.**



Robert Louis Schumann
 Child of *Walter A. Schumann*
 and of his wife *Lorna, nee Schultz*
 Born *May 24, 1925* at *Fond du Lac Wis.,*
St. Agnes Hospital

**WAS BAPTIZED
 IN THE NAME OF THE FATHER, AND OF THE SON,
 AND OF THE HOLY GHOST,**

On the *13th* day of *June* 19*25*.

Sponsors: *Mrs. Otilia Schultz*
August J. Schumann
Julius E. Kospenski

Walter Schumann,
Rev. Luth. Pastor

*He that believeth and is baptized,
 shall be saved. Mark 16, 16.*



Memory Verse

In thy presence is fulness of joy; at thy right hand
there are pleasures for evermore.

PSALM 16, 11.

Launch out into the deep,
And brave the foaming sea;
Fold not thine arms to slothful sleep,
When duty calls to thee.

Certificate of Confirmation

This certifies
that

Robert Louis Schumann

Born May 24, 1925

was received into
full communion with

St. Mark's Ev. Luth. Congregation

by the solemn rite of
Confirmation

on the Second

day of April A.D. 1939

J. A. Eggert
Pastor

Text: Matthew 20:1-16

First Middle Sermon
(October 25, 1949)

Theme: Thy Works, Not Mine, O Lord!

Preached at:
Savannah Oct. 1949
Saville St. Marie Church
M. W. W. (20th) 11/23/50
West Allis (Wauwatosa) 5/1/50
Wauwatosa 5/1/50
Neenah 5/1/50
Wauwatosa 5/1/50
Jefferson
Iowa
Hillsdale
Aurora 1/1/52

Hymns: 374
390-377
378

Matthew 20:1-16

In Christ Jesus, the Savior of Sinners, Dear Fellow Christians,

The parable we have just heard is the answer given by our Lord to a question raised by Peter in the Gospels. Peter had asked, "What shall we have therefore?" Today one would say, "What will I get out of it?" or "What will God give me for being a good member of His church?" A Christian should never voice a question such as this. And yet there is danger that similar thoughts at times rise in our minds. (The question occurred to Peter when he saw the rich man leave in sorrow, because he was unable to part with his wealth.) His love for the things of this world still held the upper hand in the rich man's heart. Peter it was who wondered how the Lord would reward the other Apostles and Peter himself. Had they not given up their possessions, their families and all just to follow Him? They had done just what the rich man had failed to do. It is then that the Lord relates the words, (which we have just read) the parable of the vineyard, which stands both as an answer and warning to Peter's question and also as a warning to all true believers in Christ. It is the answer to the question, should it ever enter our minds; it is a warning not to let the thought of deserving a reward even dwell in our hearts, as we carry out the work our Lord has so graciously permitted us to do.

As we study this parable we will see that there is an entirely different feeling from that of deserving a reward in the hearts of those who truly belong to the Lord. This feeling expresses itself, not in the question, "What?" or "How much?" but rather wants to voice itself in the cry, "Thy Works, not mine O Lord!" (Such we will want to make our cry also.)

1. It is by God's Grace that we who had been lost are invited into the labor of His vineyard. (1-7)

AND second, that,--

2. It is again by God's Grace that we, expecting nothing, are rewarded. (8-16)

"Thy works, not mine, O Lord!" For it is by God's Grace that we who had been lost are invited into the labor of His vineyard!

A parable is an extended comparison used by our Lord to make something clear in His kingdom.

As we look at this parable we hear the story of a man who is a householder. We think of him as a great and wealthy lord, for he has a vineyard and a steward. We know he could hire many labourers to work for him. We know too that he has a great interest in his vineyard. It is perhaps the time when the fruits of the vineyard are ripe and ready for harvest. This would mean that there was much work to be done, for as we read, he went out early in the morning to hire labourers into his vineyard. We learn further that this householder went out again at the third, sixth, ninth, and eleventh hours. It was indeed a great interest he had in the work in his vineyard. He furthermore did not entrust someone else with this mission, but he went out himself.

Like unto such a one and to such activity, we read in verse 1, is the kingdom of heaven. In the picture of the householder we see God. Is not He, too, great and wealthy? He, too, has a vineyard, a place in which there is much work to be done. It is His wish that as many workers as possible come into His vineyard to do the work that is there for them. Where does God get these workers? He gets them here on earth, for His invitation is constantly going out to all people, it is going out to all sinners; it is going out to you and me. This invitation is one that He Himself has made possible, which He Himself is bringing to our ears and planting in our hearts. It is an invitation which He has made possible through the redemptive work of His only Son Jesus Christ. It is an invitation which He Himself has made possible through the gift of His Word, without which we would remain in fatal ignorance an invitation, the acceptance of which He has also made possible for us through the work of His Holy Spirit in our hearts.

"Yes," our old Adam likes to ask us, "but is there not something you can do to help yourself into His vineyard?" If such were the case, God certainly would have told us about it in His Word, the Bible. As it is, the Bible tells us just the opposite. It is not we who accept Christ but He who comes and accepts us, as He Himself tells us in the words written by John, "Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you."

We at one time were just as the labourers before they had been hired by the householder. They were non standing idle. As they themselves say in verse 7, "No man hath hired us." So it is with all who

Many are invited to labor in God's vineyard, but there are also many who forget that it is His undeserved love, His free Grace which permits them to do so. In their self-trust, their demand of a reward for their labors they deprive themselves of eternal life. It is then that God will say to them the words that the householders spoke to the dissatisfied labourers, verses 13 and following, "Friend, I do thee no wrong: didst not thou agree with me for a penny? Take thine hire is, and go thy way: I will give unto thee that which is just. Is it not lawful for me to do what I will with mine own? Is thine eye evil, because I am good?"

May God grant that we constantly keep in mind that He has accomplished all things where we could accomplish nothing. This He does purely out of fatherly, divine goodness and mercy, without any merit or worthiness in us. May such words as those spoken by our Lord on another occasion be a guide to us, when He says, "So likewise ye, when ye shall have done all those things which are commanded you, say, We are unprofitable servants: we have done that which was our duty to do." It is then, too, that our cry will be, "Thy Works, not mine, O Lord!" For we will see that it is His Grace that enables us to work in His vineyard, that it is His Grace again that rewards us who expect nothing, and deserve nothing, as has been so simply and beautifully stated in the words of one of our hymns:

All that I was, my sin, my guilt,
By death, was all mine own;
All that I am I owe to Thee,
By gracious God alone.

All that I am, O' on here on earth,
All that I hope to be,
When Jesus comes and glory gains,
I owe it, Lord, to Thee.

"Amen!"

What therefore God hath joined
together, let not man put asunder.

St. Matt. 19:6.

This Certifies

That on the *twenty-third* day of
November in the year of our Lord

1951

Robert Schumann
and

Doris Jungkuntz
were by me

United in Marriage

at *St. John's Ev. Luth. Church*
Jefferson, Wisconsin
Walter A. Schumann

according to the ordinance of God
and the Laws of *Wisconsin*

Witnesses: *Betty Anne Wendland*
Walter A. Schumann, Jr.

Picture Bibliography

- p3 – Pictures from Robert L. Schumann.
- p4 – Pictures from Robert L. Schumann.
- p5 – Picture from Robert L. Schumann.
- p6 – Picture from Robert L. Schumann.
- p8 – Picture from Robert L. Schumann.
- p10 – Picture from Robert L. Schumann.
- p11 – Picture from Robert L. Schumann.
- p15 – Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary, Graduates, Class of 1951. [online image] http://www.wls.wels.net/pages/Students/Graduation_Pictures/1951.jpg Accessed 9 December 2006.
- p17 – Timothy Lutheran Church. [online image] <http://www.timothy-wels.org/> Accessed 9 December 2006.
- p18 – Picture from Robert L. Schumann.
- p19 – St. Luke's Lutheran Church and School. [online image] <http://www.stlukeskenosha.org/> Accessed 9 December 2006.
- p21 – Shepherd of the Hills Lutheran Church. [online image] <http://www.dulutheran.org/> Accessed 9 December 2006.
- p24 – Picture from Robert L. Schumann.
- p38 – Document from Robert L. Schumann.
- p39 – Document from Robert L. Schumann.
- p40 – Document from Robert L. Schumann.
- p41 – Document from Robert L. Schumann.