

The Wisconsin Synod in Illinois  
1938 - 1980

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Dean A. Gunn  
C.H. Sen. Sec. A  
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In the closing decade of the nineteenth century the Wisconsin Synod entered upon an age of expansion that would take us into fields we would not have considered probable in the beginning. At the time we were by no means large enough to keep up with our energetic Missouri brethren; in fact, often it seemed as though we were having a hard enough time just keeping our own men out of Missouri's way. Nevertheless, God saw fit to use us as His instruments to gather His people together through the spread of His Word.

In this work it is my intention to focus upon a small part of that expansion, namely, as it was manifested in Illinois. There early expansion efforts near the turn of the century had produced a handful of congregations, most of which are still with us today. However, most of our story there takes place later, beginning perhaps in the late 30's.

In the convention proceedings for both the Western and Southeastern Wisconsin districts of 1938, there are listed five member congregations in Illinois: Immanuel in Waukegan, St. Matthew's in Town of Maine (today=Niles), Jerusalem in Morton Grove, St. Peter in Savanna, and St. Matthew's in Washington Township. All of these were long-standing congregations (see chart on last page), and the fruits of early mission activity near the turn of the century. Of interest perhaps is the Morton Grove congregation, about which J.P. Koehler writes in his History of the Wisconsin Synod,

By 1897 Synod was within hail of Chicago,  
at Morton Grove, and in '98 the Lithuanian

pastor Keturakat offered his Jerusalem congregation in Chicago to Wisconsin... In Chicago the Jerusalem congregation called Pastor W. Herrmann in 1898, but the following year the commission recommended to Synod to recall him, because the congregation was in dissolution and unable to hold its property. Herrmann was called to the Missouri high school in Chicago, and Pastor Buenger served the remnant from Morton Grove. After 1900 it also disappears from the record. 1

Jerusalem must have been a persistent mission, for in 1902 we find it again under the leadership of Karl Buenger and persisting to this day.

Aside from these five congregations, two non-members were present: St. James of Evanston and St. John's of Libertyville. St. James was a Missouri/Wisconsin mission for campus ministry at Northwestern University. St. John's was a contributing Missouri congregation who attended SE District Conventions. Apparently there was a problem in the congregation at Evanston that needed clarification before it could be officially received into the district. The problem was later resolved and Herbert Wackerfuss was installed in 1940 as campus minister for the small congregation. Missouri funded a good portion of the support there.

It hardly seems like much of a harvest for the Wisconsin Synod in view of our present-day activity in the entire United States; however, we must keep in mind the Synod's foreign mission work at the time in Poland and Apacheland, as well as its work within the Wisconsin, Minnesota, Nebraska, and Michigan borders. Bear in mind also the impending change of relationship with Missouri, which was cropping up already in '38 when Pfotenhauer lost the presidential election in Missouri to Behnken. Their gradual shift toward a more relaxed

position on ecumenism from that time spurred Wisconsin on to more dedicated mission mindedness, although not without problems (e.g. money and manpower). Finally, we had not yet fully recovered from the sting of the Protestant Controversy nor the \$750,000 debt from the Depression, neither were we able to see the trauma of the World War of the 40's. With all these obstacles in the path, it appears to be nothing short of miraculous that we had any congregations outside Wisconsin! Nevertheless, our presence in Illinois became known more and more during the next forty years.

Between 1938-44 there was little activity in Illinois, at least as far as the two districts were concerned. In 1940 Zion Ev. Lutheran Church was received into the SE district, a congregation that had formed in 1909 as the result of discord within the LCMS congregation (Trinity) in Crete. According to some sources, the feelings had become so bitter in 1909 that members who had remained with the original congregation moved their church building during the night to another location closer to town. Whether that was the actual case is not important. The more interesting fact was the determination of the dissenting group to remain on the original site and become members of the Wisconsin Synod. Unfortunately, it seems the reasons were not necessarily doctrinal as much as they were personal.

In the same year(1940) the Western Wisconsin District reports no activity in Illinois besides noting the 50th anniversary of our oldest congregation in that state, St. Peter's of Savanna. General missionaries Stern and Frey, having been commissioned in 1937, were at work in the West, and our Synod was encountering friction with the Northern Wisconsin

District of the Missouri Synod right at home. Perhaps a feeling of restlessness had begun to stir our expansion desires, for some delegates and pastors expressed their desire for a roaming missionary closer to home.

The 1944 District Conventions, however, had some exciting news to report in both SE and WW districts. The previous year candidate Irwin Weiss had been assigned as missionary to Worth, Illinois near Chicago. He had begun work in Atwood Heights and Palos Heights at the suggestion of G. Redlin, pastor at Zion church in Crete. At the SE Convention it was reported that Palos Heights was an especially "promising field...We know this work will be hard and slow in this territory. Nevertheless, we felt the Lord had called us to this field and we shall try to do our best. The future will dictate our policy here." <sup>2</sup> In the WW district, equally promising news came from Moline, where W.F. Wegner had been busy establishing a mission on the west side. The congregation, St. Paul's, had a nucleus of fifty souls. The report concluded, "The field gives promise". <sup>3</sup> A note of interest- this mission was not far from Andover and Bishop Hill, the first two sites of importance for early Swedish Lutheran immigrants to Illinois (1840's). From Brodhead there also came word from Pastor E. Toepel that some outreach had begun in Orangeville when fifty-five souls had turned to us for pastoral assistance. With an encouraging word the district concluded that, because of canvassing by groups of missionaries serving other missions in the district, "our District has now established itself in the Northern and West-Central part of Illinois, and in Iowa, and the prospects for continued growth in these sections are most promising." <sup>4</sup> Synod-wide growth from 1928-44, in fact,

was in the neighborhood of 37%.

I believe that at this point in our history we had not yet fully realized the complications that we faced in Illinois. We were accustomed to the rapid growth of missions within our own state as well as in Michigan and Minnesota where we were well-known. No doubt we were careful not to be overly optimistic in our expectations. Illinois was already quite sprinkled with Lutheran churches of Swedish, Danish, and Norwegian backgrounds, and Missouri was strong all over the state. Included among these churches were several types of Reformed and Evangelical groups, something we were not used to dealing with in such concentrated amounts. To this day Illinois is a type of melting pot of religions, including nearly every sect from Mormonism to TM and any number of other cults. Perhaps this has something to do with its relatively diverse population and location at the hub of the Midwest. No matter what our expectations may have been, it is certain we have learned much about mission work from our experience in this state.

In 1946 we continued our efforts in the Chicago and Moline areas. In 1948 we had to discontinue the Atwood Heights mission ("We always felt that this field was not too promising"), although the Palos Heights mission was stable. The only real news to report in that area was that "our mission at Palos Heights, Chicago, is desperately in need of a chapel." In addition to this mission, a new outreach from the Wilmot congregation in Wisconsin resulted in a nucleus in Antioch, Illinois.

In 1948 the WW District reported that Moline had built the basement for its chapel, and we had acquired a new mission in McConnell which was served by Pastor E. Toepel from Brodhead/Monroe. This was an LCMS group who had split in the 30's from

the original congregation in the area and now sought pastoral assistance from our nearby churches. Its location in a rural area did not promise any real numerical growth, nor was any expected. Also, this was not the most friendly territory for a Lutheran church. Reports in later years indicated: "Growth in this Reformed stronghold will be slow" (1950); "This will always remain a small, faithful remnant in God's kingdom" (1956); "Work is slow and difficult in this predominantly Swiss Reformed community" (1960). By the late 60's this mission was down to less than sixteen members, and in January, 1979, the congregation was peacefully dissolved with only seven members remaining.

The reports in 1950 from the SE Convention show that Palos Heights was proving to be a good choice for Wisconsin: "The congregation is growing and the prospects for the future are good." Along with this news came the report of their new chapel, a public testimony to the power of God's Word in an area that Missouri had left behind in disappointment. Two years later the good news would come, "This mission is over the hump." As for the WW District, 1950 brought frustrating news of manpower and financial deficiencies that would be a thorn in our flesh for several years to come. "Because of the lack of man power, not a few prospective and promising fields had to be left uncarred for," they said.<sup>5</sup> Two years later, for example, came an enthusiastic report that Loves Park in Rockford had been canvassed. The field was ripe for mission work; in fact, a new mission was sure to open in April of '53. But that is the last we hear of anything in Rockford until 1972.

In an interview that was sent in February of this year to our pastors in Illinois (cf. sample, end of paper), two of the most noted obstacles to growth in any given area were

the mobility of the population and the equating of conservative Lutheranism with the LCMS. In general it was noted that WELS is not known very well in the state, a fact that shouldn't surprise too many people; but when it is known, there is often a lack of understanding about our stand on fellowship and several other doctrines. Perhaps the fellowship teaching is our most difficult to deal with. When someone cannot agree with us, there is always a Missouri congregation nearby who will not be so insistent on this point. If they are assumed to be the conservative Lutherans, then we become the "legalists". Add to this the mobility of the populace, and we have a situation where people are willing to tolerate or even prefer less rigid confessional loyalty in order for easier transition to take place in the move from one location to another. If we look back to the 50's, we see that then was the time when people were really beginning the move toward the suburbs. The nation was on a post-war emotional upswing and life promised to get better and better. Progressive thinking was the trend. We had to get rid of the vestiges of wartime depression, make the most of the peacetime, and make life for our kids better than we ever had it. Now this is purely speculation on my part, but it seems that Missouri had timed its ecumenism just right to absorb a good number of people in that progressive frame of mind, yet kept its image as the conservative Lutheran Church.

In the 1954 SE District Convention it was reported that the Palos Heights congregation had suffered a blow from LCMS. It seems that in 1952 there arose a dispute in the congregation over the women's role in the Church. Within a short time several members left the young mission and appealed to Missouri for pastoral assistance. Missouri encouraged them by assigning them a full-time pastor from its English District. The report



goes on to say, "Nearly all Lutherans who move in are of the Missouri Synod and naturally will be drawn to the Missouri Synod church." A struggle for survival seemed imminent. Happier news came that year from Zion, near Antioch, Illinois, when the mission we had started there (Our Savior) was received into membership in the District. Here, too, there was a struggle: "very many religious sects are represented in the city...This is a very difficult field...much indoctrination is necessary," said the reports. Yet, within two years the congregation there became self-supporting.

The year 1956 marked an interesting year for Missouri-Wisconsin relations, for it came between two years of decision on our part to break relations with them. In 1955 we had decided to wait for Missouri's action on ALC's proposed Common Confession. In 1956 the districts met in recessed sessions to discuss Missouri's fellowship stand. By 1957 the general conclusion was to confront Missouri and, of course, in '61 our fellowship with them ceased. In 1963 we left the Synodical Conference completely.

In view of these tense relations between '55 and '61, it seems there was both a resurgence of interest in our home mission program in Illinois as well as a cautious observance of the events going on within the Synodical Conference. One wonders if there were not plans for the future in case we should see our protesting fellowship terminate in a complete break with LCMS. How would our efforts in Illinois change? How could we best be prepared to serve the needs of LCMS congregations who wished to join us in such a break? Already in 1956 Trinity in Mt. Carroll had left the LCMS, coming to WELS for pastoral assistance. They became members of the WW District

and have been served by the Savanna congregation since 1972. A vicar assigned to Savanna each year assists with Mt. Carroll.

The 1958 District Conventions for both SE and WW reflect some of the growing awareness of our position in Illinois. The state that had for so long been a secondary concern, even though it is highly-populated and close at hand, had by now become a very prospective venture: "In the Northern Illinois area alone there are vast housing projects under construction and these will be occupied by thousands of families." <sup>6</sup> The Palos Heights mission was now referred to as a "mission outpost", for it was the farthest south of any mission in the district. The SE District had much more area to cover in its area of responsibility ( see map). Proposals were set forth to expand our efforts in the Chicago area. In fact, "the General Mission Board has agreed...that we MUST get started in Chicago soon. The area has been canvassed." <sup>7</sup> The word MUST was a voice of urgency, but the execution of the plan to enter Chicago was not without problems: "The hands of our local mission board have been tied and bound because of dangerous deficits in the maintenance treasury and the Church Extension Fund."<sup>8</sup> How frustrating it was to have mission prospects and a wide-open area of mission outreach before them, yet to have neither the manpower nor funds to carry out the obvious work. In the WW District similar financial problems were felt, but again the proposals for the Northern Illinois region, particularly the Rockford area, were urgent: "Need: a re-awakening of the field area." <sup>9</sup> Fourteen years after its establishment their Moline mission to the south was still without a superstructure. They had been worshipping in their basement since 1948. Now they realized the need for

public exposure more than ever; consequently, an above-ground addition was erected in 1959. Pastor R. Hilleman, serving from Brodhead, had been called to begin exploratory work in Beloit. In 1956 a strong congregation was established (Good Shepherd), and in years to come Hilleman would use this Wisconsin mission as headquarters for mission work in Belvidere, Illinois.

1960 brought disappointing news to those who had hoped for big things to happen in Chicago. The SE District Proceedings read: "We have been unsuccessful in calling a man into this field as general missionary. We lost one good field through delay, and would like to have the man we call survey several promising areas before we make a definite beginning." When one has an extremely tight budget, he uses it as judiciously as possible; yet Chicago was approaching a state of emergency. A "definite beginning" could be scrutinized, but the money had to be positively available for instant transaction whenever land could be obtained for a mission. Hence, \$15,000 was budgeted for this purpose as CEF's top priority that year. As for the WW District: "The year 1959 might best be characterized as the quiet year in the history of missions in the Western Wisconsin District." 10

"The quiet year" may be a way to describe mission reports from Illinois during each of the early years of the 60's. It was as though we were adjusting our strategy to allow for impending changes brought about by the split with Missouri. This is not to say, however, that our mission activity had ceased; rather, we apparently had not yet decided just how committed we were going to be to expand that activity. In 1962, for example, the MUST condition in Chicago had not improved from 1960: "The problem which faced us two years ago still

faces us today...The new fields proposed in Chicago...Brown Deer...and Waukegan...have encountered difficulties because of the shortage of workers and funds." <sup>11</sup> A new mission, however, was added to the list- St. Mark's in Sauk Village. Likewise, the WW District reported another slow year in missions: "In the field of missions, our District being what it is, mainly a rural district, with but a few industrial areas, we have nothing spectacular to relate...however, ... our missionaries are deeply conscious of their heavy responsibilities and are faithfully going about their work in the vineyard of their Lord." <sup>12</sup>

One question that must have been on the minds of many people in these districts was the number of former LCMS members and/or congregations who would come to us for pastoral assistance. The next decade tells much of the story in answer to that question. Our merger with FAL, for example, brought in a few congregations and missions in Illinois; yet the survey that was mentioned before (sent out in preparation for this assignment) reveals an on-the-scene opinion closer to our present time that is worth noting:

One observation I can give you is this; When our Synod became involved in Illinois approximately 10 years ago they thought they would reap an easy harvest of disgruntled Missouri members. However, most "conservative" LCMS members that were really conservative had either left by the mid-60's or stayed with Missouri and became indoctrinated with their liberal ways. Today there are very few crossovers from the LCMS. By the way, new missionaries to this area still like to use the arguments of concerned LCMS members to begin exploratory work here and there- but it never pans out. <sup>13</sup>

Experience, it seems, has taught us that an LCMS influx should no longer be the number one guideline ( if it ever actually

was) for approaching our Illinois mission program.

Now getting back to the 60's, by 1964 we had begun another mission in Flossmoor, i.e. Tinley Park (Gloria Dei). The city of Palatine was being considered as a potential mission, and from Evanston we received the not-so-surprising news that the LCMS had withdrawn its support of the joint mission project there.

In 1966 the SE District received a former LCMS pastor A.T. Kretzmann and the congregation he served, Trinity in Crete, as members. Calvary in Libertyville was received, also, but was later dissolved in 1972. St. Mark's in Sauk Village was having some "internal problems" that were hindering growth at the time. The WW District received a former LCMS pastor, also (Bartling). With him was welcomed Our Savior in Freeport, a congregation formed by ex-LCMS members.

In 1968 the SE District listed three Illinois missions which it was supervising: Sauk Village, Tinley Park, and Evanston. Of the three, Evanston was the only one that was not expected to grow because of its unique set-up as a student outreach service. Joliet had been investigated by the Tinley Park mission, but that area was abandoned for future efforts. This year brought a revived mission spirit, and along with it came a resolution that each new mission from then on strive to become self-supporting within fifteen years. The same year the WW District received word from Pastor R. Hilleman of Beloit that exploratory services had begun in Belvidere the previous year. No doubt this mission was guided by insight into the future, for he reports: "The Belvidere area is a fine mission field because of the many factories in and near the city. Recently Chrysler-Plymouth built a large plant here

which employs many workers." <sup>14</sup> This report, though, did not indicate the large LCMS congregation in the town (complete with school), nor did it indicate the fifteen Reformed churches, the large LCA church, nor the Catholic church. These, in a town of approximately 15,000, were not going to make this the easy mission it may have appeared to be at first; still, there was a nucleus of WELS people who were determined to grow. Along with this report there also came the long-standing hope "that later we can expand into Rockford, 15 miles away."

As we look back over the 60's, we can safely say that these were the years that Synod used to lay its groundwork for the blossoming expansion we encountered in the 70's and continuing until the present. In 1970 alone the SE District received applications for three congregations: Resurrection in Aurora and Christ the King in Palatine (missions) and Our Redeemer in Grant Park (LCR). The interesting thing about the Grant Park congregation is that in 1963 the group had broken from St. Paul's in Grant Park under the leadership of Reimar Frick. Now seven years later they were received as members by colloquy at the same time as did Henry Behrens, who was then pastor at their former church (St. Paul's). In 1974 St. Paul's then became an official member of our Synod, once again united in fellowship with their former members. As for the two missions, "the state of the CEF and the number of requests made upon it did not permit the purchase of land needed in Aurora and Palatine." The WW District received Marquette Heights as a new mission. Although this was intended to be a Peoria mission, Pastor Ahlswede came down all the way from Moline to begin exploratory work in this suburb. They soon began worship in a building that had

abandoned by the LCMS after 10 years of effort that came to nothing.

In 1972 the Chicago area had grown large enough for the SE District to designate it the "Chicago Conference". The only Illinois congregation remaining in the Southern Conference now was Faith in Antioch. This year also marked the dissolution of Calvary church in Libertyville and St. Matthew's in Savanna. ( this was the old church designated "Washington Township" in years past). Mission reports from the WW District show three new members: Peace in Loves Park, Faith in Elizabeth, and Mt. Zion in Jacksonville. The long-awaited Loves Park mission (remember the 1952 expectations) was started by a nucleus of members from the Belvidere mission( Hope) who had been commuting from Rockford. The congregation, served by Hope's pastor (Gast), continued to be served from Belvidere until they were assigned their own pastor from the Seminary in 1974. Faith in Elizabeth was founded by former LCMS members who had left the Missouri congregation in their town. Mt. Zion in Jacksonville was started by a group of Lutherans seeking sound doctrine. They soon found a place of worship in a beauty parlor and later moved to the oldest church building in their county (1830 vintage). Nearby, Springfield was being eyed as another potential mission. Champaign/Urbana was another potential area. In fact, President Mische of the WW District saw potential all over the state: "It would appear that much of the future work of our district lies in the state of Illinois." 16

The year 1974 brought a mixture of joy and sadness to the SE District when it received three members and one new mission, yet lost two previous missions due to doctrinal errors. Received as members were St. Andrew's of Chicago,

a former FAL congregation who had turned to us for pastoral assistance when their pastor (Cunningham) returned to the LCMS in 1974; Resurrection in Aurora; and Christ the King in Palatine. The new mission was founded in Crystal Lake by the Palatine church. As for the sad news, both Gloria Dei in Tinley Park ( Pastor Shekner) and St. Mark's in Sauk Village (Pastor Popp) were suspended from membership when both pastors charged WELS with error in using any modern translation instead of the King James Version. Unfortunately, both congregations elected to keep these men as their pastors, thereby forcing us to suspend fellowship with them. Aside from these reports came a resolution " that our District Mission Board not overlook the judicious placement of missions in the metropolitan areas so that a strong base of support may be maintained." <sup>17</sup> There was also an encouragement for our established congregations to seek more earnestly the establishment of daughter congregations wherever possible. In the WW District three congregations were added to the membership: Bethlehem in Urbana and St. Mark in Normal (missions), and Trinity in Mt. Carroll (former LCMS served by WELS since 1956). Peace in Loves Park reported land purchase in nearby Pebble Creek subdivision. The following year they would receive a portable chapel as a temporary worship facility, which they would continue to use even until the present year (1981).

We could sum up the years between 1974 and 1981 by briefly mentioning the added congregations, even though a brief mention does not do justice to the work and dedication of all who have been involved in their founding and maintenance. By 1976 our look into Springfield had produced a base congregation (Christ Our Savior). This church, according to sources, is the only



one in Illinois which our Synod began without a nucleus of interested Lutherans. Needless to say, we face strong obstacles in that area because of Missouri's popularity there and the association many people make about Missouri by identifying it with conservative Lutheranism. In this same year we received into membership St. John's of Libertyville, a former FAL congregation that was well-known to us as a long-standing church friend in the SE District. Added also were a West Chicago mission (Hope) and a newly-founded mission in Downers Grove (Good Shepherd). West Chicago was started with a nucleus from Aurora, and Downers Grove began as an "instant mission" of 108 members who had come together due to doctrinal concerns.

Aside from these additions, 1976 brought news of the truly frustrating experience of the congregation in Normal. There land was very difficult to find and unusually expensive. This congregation would have to wait six long years before land could be found and purchased. Also, in Evanston the congregation was considered too small to need a full-time pastor. It was brought to the attention of the SE District that we should consider this more ~~of~~ a mission outreach home base rather than a church that would grow within its own area.

In 1978 we received one new mission, Divine Savior in Belleville, about twelve miles from East St. Louis. Also received was another FAL congregation, St. Paul's in Round Lake.

Although most of its growth has taken place within the past twenty years, our Illinois mission field has grown from the five congregations listed in 1938 to thirty-three in 1981. Certainly this is growth to be excited- and

thankful- about. Too often we look at the state of the Lutheran Church in America and tremble a bit at the humanism, pessimism, and near agnosticism within it. This is not to say we should ignore it...it won't go away. Instead, we could all use a good dose of godly optimism in view of the wonders God is working in spite of such deplorable, outright defiance of His truth. We have a message that is worth spreading, one that supercedes and overpowers even the most attractive "messages of light" from Satan. It is truly a wonder that we have as many congregations as we do in Illinois or anywhere. That wonder alone should tell us Who is behind the action, so much so that we can be encouraged that He will complete the work that He has begun in and through us. Sola gratia Dei!

Statistics for Illinois - 1981

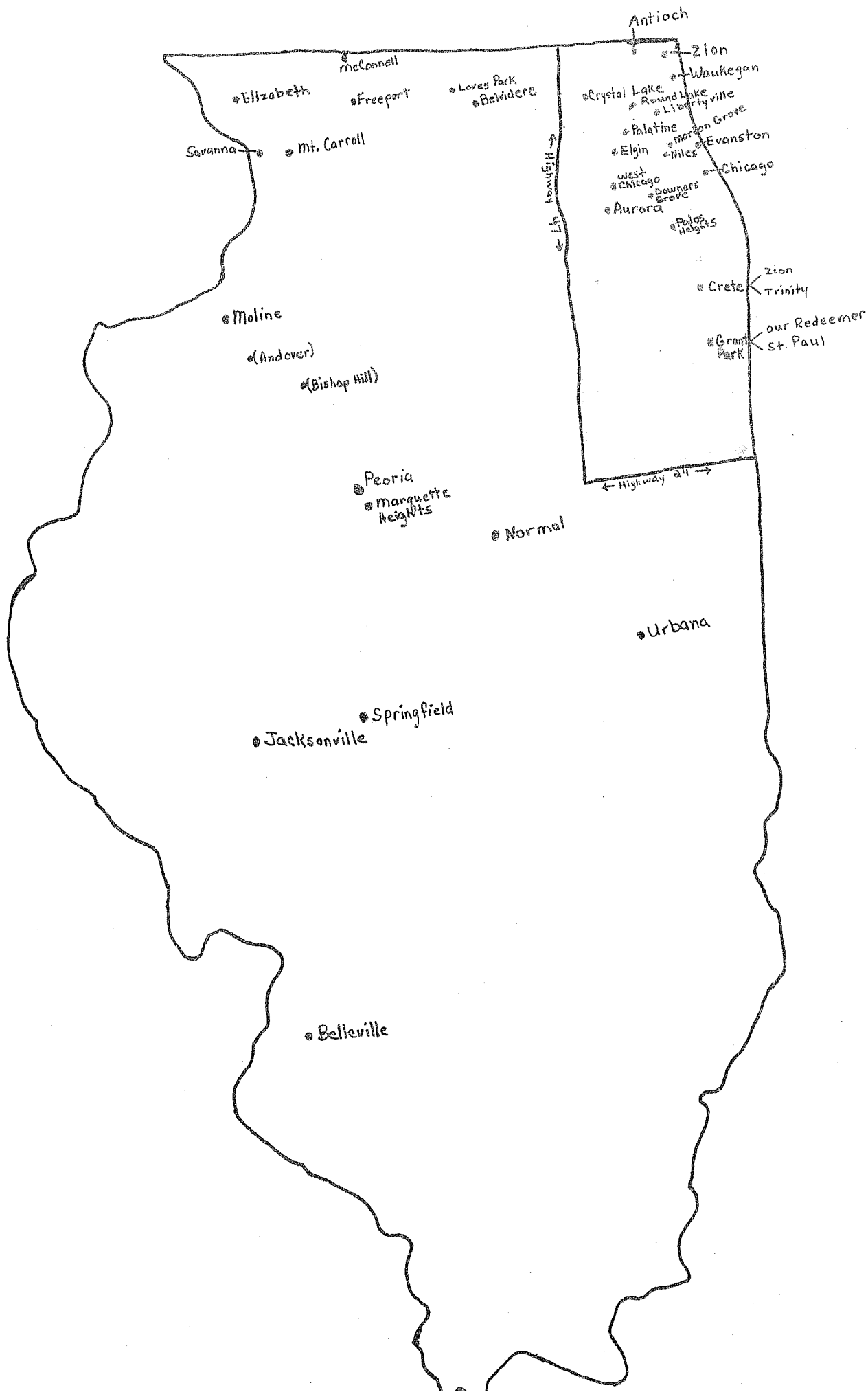
| Location                                | Dist. | Founded                 | First Pastor | Present Pastor       | Souls | School                   | Area Pop. |
|---|-------|-------------------------|--------------|----------------------|-------|--------------------------|-----------|
| 1. Antioch<br>(Faith)                   | SE    | 1951<br>(WELS)          | R.P. Otto    | D. Gruen             | 717   | 103<br>(founded<br>1970) | 3700      |
| 2. Aurora<br>(Resurrection)             | SE    | 1969<br>(WELS)          | J. Raabe     | M. Bode              | 260   | 48<br>(founded<br>1976)  | 80,000    |
| 3. Belleville<br>(Divine<br>Savior)     | WW    | 1977<br>(WELS)          |              | R.A. Kogler          |       |                          | 41,500    |
| 4. Belvidere<br>(Hope)                  | WW    | 1967<br>(WELS)          | R. Hilleman  | J. Mattek            | 180   | -----                    | 15,000    |
| 5. Chicago<br>(St. Andrew)              | SE    | 1888<br>(LCMS)          |              | D. Semenska          | 704   | 95                       | 3.5 mil   |
| 6. Crete<br>(Trinity)                   | SE    | 1849<br>(LCMS)          | Anton Weyel  | H. Lyon              | 1133  | 165<br>(founded<br>1850) | 10,000    |
| 7. Crete<br>(Zion)                      | SE    | 1909<br>(WELS)          | Dr. H. Wente | R. Pasbrig           | 643   | 66<br>(founded<br>1910)  | 5,000     |
| 8. Crystal Lake<br>(Lord and<br>Savior) | SE    | 1974<br>(WELS)          | R.W. Mueller | R. W. Mueller        | 145   | -----                    | 17,000    |
| 9. Downers Grove<br>(Good Shepherd)     | SE    | 1975<br>(WELS)          | E. Mahnke    | D. Rutschow          | 255   | 24<br>(founded<br>1979)  | 40,000    |
| 10. Elgin<br>(St. Andrew)               | SE    | 1973<br>(FAL)           | Cunningham   | P. Prange            | 69    | -----                    | 125,000   |
| 11. Elizabeth<br>(Faith)                | WW    | 1965<br>(ex-<br>LCMS)   | Zittlow      | M.T. Bradtke         |       |                          | 710       |
| 12. Evanston<br>(St. James)             | SE    | 1932<br>(WELS/<br>LCMS) | (Blume?)     | M.G. Plagenz         | 32    | -----                    | 76,200    |
| 13. Freeport<br>(Our Savior)            | WW    | 1964<br>(ex-<br>LCMS)   | Bartling     | S. Radunzel          |       |                          | 27,000    |
| 14. Grant Park<br>(Our Redeemer)        | SE    | 1963<br>(LCR)           | R. Erick     | H. Schwert-<br>feger | 108   | -----                    | 1,050     |

Statistics (cont.)

| Location   | Dist. | Founded        | First Pastor | Present Pastor       | Souls | School                  | Area Pop. |
|--|-------|----------------|--------------|----------------------|-------|-------------------------|-----------|
| 5. Grant Park<br>(St. Paul)                      | SE    | 1869<br>(LCMS) | K. Barth     | J. Zickhur           | 269   | -----                   | 1,050     |
| 6. Jacksonville<br>(Zion)                        | WW    | 1972<br>(WELS) | A. Zahn      | D. Stern-<br>hagen   | 35    | -----                   | 30,000    |
| 7. Libertyville<br>(St. John's)                  | SE    | 1897<br>(LCMS) |              | R. Voss<br>O. Cullen | 822   | 98                      | 13,500    |
| 8. Loves Park<br>(Peace)                         | WW    | 1972<br>(WELS) | K. Gast      | A. Schultz           | 94    | -----                   | 13,500    |
| 9. Marquette<br>Heights<br>(Beautiful<br>Savior) | WW    | 1969<br>(WELS) | E. Ahlswede  | P. Krieger           | 56    | -----                   | 360,000   |
| 10. Moline<br>(St. Paul)                         | WW    | 1944<br>(WELS) | W.F. Wegner  | J.G. Wille           |       |                         | 42,000    |
| 11. Morton Grove<br>(Jerusalem)                  | SE    | 1902<br>(WELS) | C. Buenger   | G. Boldt             | 590   | 45<br>(founded<br>1906) | 23,600    |
| 12. Mt. Carroll<br>(Trinity)                     | WW    | 1880<br>(LCMS) | L. Schwartz  | W. Schneider         | 105   | -----                   | 2,500     |
| 13. Niles<br>(St. Matthew)                       | SE    | 1896<br>(WELS) | F. Detzer    | G. Schaum-<br>berg   | 441   | 42<br>(founded<br>1898) | 150,000   |
| 14. Normal<br>(St. Mark)                         | WW    | 1974<br>(WELS) | Rutschow     | P. Schupmann         | 55    | -----                   | 90,000    |
| 15. Palatine<br>(Christ the<br>King)             | SE    | 1969<br>(WELS) | R. Raabe     | N.T. Paul            | 195   | 25<br>(founded<br>1977) | 100,000   |
| 16. Palos Heights<br>(Palos Ev.)                 | SE    | 1944<br>(WELS) | I. WEISS     | D. Dolan             | 366   | 39<br>(founded<br>1955) | 10,000    |
| 17. Round Lake<br>(St. Paul)                     | SE    | 1940<br>(LCMS) | R. Eissfeldt | M. Lopaha            | 496   | 57<br>(founded<br>1940) | 15,000    |
| 18. Savanna<br>(St. Peter)                       | WW    | 1890<br>(WELS) | C. Trappe    | W. Schneider         | 360   | -----                   | 5,000     |

Statistics( cont.)

| <u>Location</u>                        | <u>Dist.</u> | <u>Founded</u> | <u>First Pastor</u> | <u>Present Pastor</u> | <u>Souls</u> | <u>School</u>           | <u>Area Pop.</u> |
|--|--------------|----------------|---------------------|-----------------------|--------------|-------------------------|------------------|
| 29. Springfield<br>(Christ our Savior) | WW           | 1976<br>(WELS) | D. Sternhagen       | D. Sternhagen         | 36           | -----                   | 100,000          |
| 30. Urbana<br>(Bethlehem)              | WW           | 1973<br>(WELS) | R. Raabe            | M. Lenz               | 130          | -----                   | 100,000          |
| 31. Waukegan<br>(Immanuel)             | SE           | 1891<br>(WELS) | J. Koch             | K. Gawrisch           | 650          | 85<br>(founded<br>1966) | 65,000+          |
| 32. West Chicago<br>(Hope)             | SE           | 1975<br>(WELS) | Mahnke              | J.R. Ziesemer         | 61           | -----                   | 13,200           |
| 33. Zion<br>(Our Savior)               | SE           | 1954<br>(WELS) | C. Leyrer           | V. Vogel              | 378          | 57<br>(founded<br>1961) | 15,000           |



## Bibliography

- Koehler, J.P., The History of the Wisconsin Synod, ed. L. D. Jordahl, Faith-Life, 1970, pp.194-198.
- Nelson, E. Clifford, The Lutherans in North America, Fortress Press, Philadelphia, 1975, pp. 147-209.
- District Convention Proceedings- Western Wisconsin District, 1936-1978.
- District Convention Proceedings- Southeast Wisconsin District, 1938-1978.
- Statistical Reports- WELS, 1936-1979.

Included also in bibliographical material is the interview sent to all the pastors of our synod in Illinois. Most of these were returned with more than ample material. A copy of the interview is attached at the end of this paper.

## References

1. J.P. Koehler, History of the Wisconsin Synod, pp.196-197.
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11. " , SE, 1962.
12. " , WW, 1962, p.13, Dist. Pres. R.W. Mueller.
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14. Proceedings, WW, 1968, R. Hillemann.
15. " , SE, 1970.
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17. " , SE, 1974.

Dear Pastor,

My name is Dean Gunn, a senior at our Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary in Thiensville, WI. I am presently working on a church history project in which I hope to summarize our synod's activity in Illinois over the past forty years.

I will need your help to do so. I realize this is about the worst time of the Church year to interrupt your schedule, but could you take a few minutes to fill in this brief interview? I will be glad to receive any information you may wish to include. Enclosed is a self-addressed, stamped envelope to simplify things.

Please return the interview by March 30. Your help is greatly appreciated. God bless your work during this Lenten season!

P.S. I'd like one of your bulletins, too!

In Christ,  
*Dean A. Gunn*  
Dean A. Gunn

Pastor: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of Congregation: \_\_\_\_\_

Location: \_\_\_\_\_

Size of congregation: \_\_\_\_\_ (souls) \_\_\_\_\_ (confirmed)

If school, enrollment: \_\_\_\_\_ Begun in: \_\_\_\_\_ (year)

Area population: \_\_\_\_\_

Congregation Founded When?: \_\_\_\_\_ Pastor: \_\_\_\_\_

Interesting or unique features in your congregation's history:

Factors contributing to growth in your area:

Factors presenting obstacles to growth in your area: