



Typical of the many Protestant ministers who are encouraging their flocks to do more Bible reading during Lent is the Rev. James P. Schaefer, associate pastor of Atonement Lutheran church, 4206 W. Ruby av. Practicing what he preaches, Mr. Schaefer went over Bible passages with his son, William, 4.

—Journal Staff

NOW
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EXIST !

A History of the Attitudes and Developments in the Relation - ship between the Public Press and the W.E.L.S. from 1939-1961 and the Course of Events which led to the Development of the Public Relations Department with- in the W.E.L.S. in 1961.

Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary Library
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Church History III:
April 15, 1981.

NOW THAT THEY KNOW WE EXIST.

Little did that lad of four years, sitting on his father's knee while his father read the Bible to him and the Milwaukee Journal photographer captured the moment on film for an accompanying article, know that twenty two years later he would be writing a church history paper on the subject of public relations and the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod (W.E.L.S.) But that is precisely what that lad is doing as he submits a history of the attitudes and developments in the relationship between the public press and the W.E.L.S. from 1939-1961 and the course of events which led to the development of the Public Relations Department within the W.E.L.S. in 1961.

For clarification, it should be noted that the public press will be used almost interchangeably with the Milwaukee Journal. The cross-distinction is obvious. With Milwaukee as the historic center and functioning nucleus of the Wisconsin Synod, it naturally would follow that the chief daily of Milwaukee would be the most interested in the developments within the Synod and its relationship with that Synod. It is also the most likely to report on those developments and relationships.

Further clarification is needed on the choice of limiting the scope of this history to the years between 1939 and 1961. These dates were not chosen arbitrarily.

Looking at the year 1939 from the public press perspective gives us the position of the press towards religious news which had dominated the field of religious reporting for generations, if not since Gutenberg. From that point

forward we can trace the change in attitude and consequent developments.

Looking at the year in the context of American Lutheranism, 1939 was the first time the Wisconsin Synod raised its hackles without the support of big sister, Missouri. In point of fact, Wisconsin protested an action of the Missouri Synod in its agreement on doctrine with the American Lutheran Church. It was not so much the fact that Wisconsin objected to the thought of present or future church union between the two bodies as much as the way it was established, by agreements on two documents. The *Brief Statement* and the *Sandusky Declaration*, the former, written by the Missouri Synod, was adopted by the A.L.C. and the latter, written by the A.L.C., was adopted by the Missouri Synod. The acceptance of these respective declarations by the respective bodies was thought to be sufficient basis for future union. The official reaction of the Wisconsin Synod was as follows:

On the basis of its observations, deliberation, and discussions the Committee (*Appointed by Pres. John Brenner*) is of the opinion that the doctrinal basis established by the Missouri Synod and by the American Lutheran Church... is not acceptable. Not two statements should be issued as a basis for agreement; a single joint statement covering the contested doctrines thetically and antithetically and accepted by both parties to the controversy, is imperative; and, furthermore, such doctrinal statement must be made in clear and unequivocal terms which do not require laborious additional explanations. The sincerity of any theoretical statement must also be evidenced by a clean church practice.

So the mouse roared and let it be known that it exists and is willing to stand alone.

That the year 1961 should be considered the terminus for this history is obvious: In 1961 a Department of Public Relations of the W.E.L.S. was established. I will leave the detailed history of that department from 1961 until

the present as a subject for later students of history. Suffice it to say, on the whole we have had accurate representation in the press since 1961.

The year 1939 saw the world at the doorstep of war and society, entrenched in its attitudes and traditions, unwittingly standing on the edge of change, especially as it related to religious matters. The public press was no exception.

Pre-war religious press, as a glance at any religious news page would indicate, consisted of little more than an advertising page for local churches. Who was preaching on what, where would the morning service be, bazaar notices and the like was the extent of religious news.

There was good reason for this. In an interview with David Runge, the former Religion Editor for the Milwaukee Journal, Mr. Runge explained exactly what that reason was. "Before World War II," he said, "newspapers were of the opinion, and one which was shared by most religious bodies, the Wisconsin Synod more so, perhaps, than any other, that religion was a private matter." It was not the business of a newspaper to publicize confessional stances, religious practices or matters of doctrine. For this reason the scope of religious news was limited to advertising.

Although this practice of church advertising would continue for years to come, and even exists to this day in a simplified form, following the war there was a change. After the war people began to take a fresh look at many things, one of which was religion. And since the war had brought many people back to church there was also a religious resurgence as the people's awareness and interest in other religions was heightened. Since, to quote Runge, "News is news if

if people are interested in it," the newspapers started to look into developing and expanding their religion departments.

With the aim of reflecting public interest, the Milwaukee Journal hired its first Religion Editor in 1947 in the person of JoAnn Price. Fresh out of college and interested in religious news, Price began the first serious news coverage of religious events. The relative youth and sex of Price should not be misread as indicative of a lame-duck attempt by the Journal Co. at organizing a qualified religious news department. It rather speaks to the equal opportunity hiring policy of the Journal already back in the 1940's. More than that it speaks to the advanced ability and interest of this woman in this field of work.

When Miss Price married Harry Baehr and accepted the post of Religion Editor with the Herald Tribune of New York, William Bechtel assumed the editorship. When Bechtel left in 1954 to cover Capitol news in the Journal's Madison news bureau, David Runge was transferred from within the Journal Company to the position of Religion Editor, the post he held until 1970 when he became the Journal's first "Contact Editor". Since 1970 the post has been filled by Alicia Armstrong and Dick Kenyon. Kenyon is the present Editor.

So with the change in attitude towards religious news by the public and the press, a Religion Editor became a permanent position in the public press organization, and one which was not taken lightly. Serious articles and series of articles began to appear with increasing frequency. The significance of this development as it relates to the Wisconsin Synod should be obvious. If not, it will be revealed in due time.

As is often the case, attitudes and practice relate to historical incidence.

With the increased interest of the world to religious news, the Journal broke a story on May 10, 1950 which would prove of major significance.

The date line was Princeton, Wisconsin. There, according to the article, the pastor of St. John's Congregation, Rev. Walter Strohschein refused to commune the president of his congregation, Mr. Lehner, a local attorney, because of his activity in the Boy Scouts of America program.

Since the matter involved not only a church but also the highly visible and all-American organization of the Boy Scouts - after all, every "good" American boy joined the local troupe and learned to become a model citizen - this particular dispute was treated in the news on almost a daily basis for three weeks.

Less than a month later another article appeared with the lead in "*A second pastor of the Wisconsin Synod of the Lutheran Church has banned scouting activities by members of his congregation.*" The pastor was Walter Schumann of Christ Ev. Lutheran Church in Eagle River. The issue was beginning to snowball as the frequency of news items indicates.

The September 17, 1950 edition of the Milwaukee Journal carried another story relating to the controversy. A new church, composed of disgruntled members of the Wisconsin Synod who disagreed with the synodical position on scouting, was formed in Appleton, Wisconsin under the auspices of the Missouri Synod. Part of this dispute concerned the position of two teachers who had joined this new church while continuing to teach in a Wisconsin Synod school.

These are not just isolated incidents limited to the interests of the readership of the Milwaukee Journal. They reach out and involve all members of the Synodical Conference of North America either directly or by association. And they reach outside of that circle to such an extent that the Boy Scouts of America headquarters in New York City issued the following press release on May 14, 1950:

The Wisconsin Lutheran Synod is the only religious body in the nation that does not accept scouting as part of the church program.

If the religious departments of the news media did not know we existed before the controversy which broke on May 10, 1950, they certainly knew it after that date. The problem that now faced the reporters within these departments was, "To whom can I go to get the story?"

Because there was no public relations director for the Synod at this time, nor was there any other specially designated contact man, they were forced to go to the local pastor or solicit viewpoints from various other sources. As Runge said, "The reporter has a story to get. If no spokesman comes forward, the reporter will find someone else, anyone else."

Confining ourselves to the issue of boy scouts, one can appreciate the untenable position of a reporter as he tries to get accurate and harmonious statements from responsible men in the Synod.

I cite "*Synod Seeks Peace Path*" as it appeared in the May 5, 1954 Milwaukee Journal. At a conference in which pastors of both the Wisconsin and Missouri Synods attended, no less than ten pastors (with as many opinions) were quoted by the reporter. While only six of the ten men quoted held membership in the Wisconsin Synod, those six did not necessarily speak with accuracy nor with a unified voice.

This was not an unusual situation. Other members of the Wisconsin Synod clergy would be sought out for their statements. Such is the case in a September 23, 1953 article in which Rev. Arthur P. Voss of St. James was quoted. Although Voss's statements in that article were accurate, the fact that he was sought out and spoke on the issue indicates that the reporters will go to various sources if no source is provided.

Intimately connected with the "boy scouts controversy" of the 1950's is the awakening of the Wisconsin Synod to its specific role as a confessional church. This is not to say that Wisconsin had not been confessional before this date. It had. But it also always had had Missouri in the same theological nest. When differences in doctrine and practice arose between the two synods, however, the smaller of the two was forced, by its own volition, to jump out of that nest and learn to fly on its own.

Missouri had long been of the persuasion that "cooperation in externals" with other organizations was a healthy and effective way to accomplish a task, especially when fiscal restraints would have otherwise restricted their participation in those tasks. Such is the spirit behind their participation in the chaperlaincy program. In the same way they entered the scouting program at the discretion of the local church.

One must also understand that Wisconsin's doctrinal stance on fellowship became clearer to Wisconsin itself only as time went on. As Prof. Carl Lawrenz so often points out: Our problem in the Synod during the early 1950's was that we were dealing with each case on its own merits before we dealt with the basic scriptural principle.

In such a confusion, on the one hand with the issue itself among the constituency, and on the other, with no one man to inform or interpret our position to the news media, it must have been a reporter's nightmare to get an accurate story. In scanning the stories from the roll files at the Milwaukee Public Library, this nightmare is evident by examining some of the quotes in the articles themselves.

On May 10, 1950 Lehner, the president of the Princeton congregation, then under discipline for his activity in scouting, was quoted as saying, "*While the Synod is opposed to scouting, it leaves the matter entirely to the local congregations to decide for themselves.*" This indeed was the Missouri Synod position

adopted at their convention in 1944. However, it was never the position of the Wisconsin Synod. A reporter striving for accuracy was grossly inaccurate in letting a quote such as that stand.

Another gem of a quote which is just as inaccurate was another quote of Lehner who was quoting Rev. Walter Strohschein in a May 18, 1950 article entitled, "*Lutheran Ban on Scouting Causes Split at Princeton.*" There Strohschein is quoted as saying, "*Hell will be filled with good people who were unfortunate enough not to belong to the true church, the Wisconsin Synod.*" Here again, while some ministers may hold this understanding of the church to be true, it is not nor has it ever been the official position of the Wisconsin Synod that it is the true church. It is a visible church as noted by the "marks of the church" but it is not the one true church.

A confessional church does have a viewpoint. And it has a commission to witness to that viewpoint in the world. No apology. No defense. The office of the church is to witness clearly to the gospel of Jesus Christ, testify to the testimony of Scripture.

Witness requires some organization or method. The local congregation has a witness in the person of its pastor(s). This witness may further be effected by evangelism committees and the like. Witnessing on a synodical level requires a little more organization because it is representative of a larger group. It requires a spokesman. In line with this thought Runge said, "*It's all very well to take a stand on something, but you have to tell me why you did it. If you have a viewpoint, get it out---what it is and why.*" And get it out via a spokesman.

Lest the reader suspect the only publicity given the Wisconsin Synod related to the Fellowship question, let us just mention three articles on file in the Library

of the Milwaukee Journal. Whether these are the only articles of the 1950's which do not treat fellowship is any body's guess. That can only be determined by reading the 365,000 daily papers of that decade.

The first of these articles appeared September 28, 1946 in the local edition of the Journal. With the headline, "*Synod Buys Building*" the article recounts the purchase of what is now the Northwestern Publishing House from Waldheim, Inc. It mentions the fact the building's first floor is presently an A & P Food store with warehouse space on the second floor.

The revealing importance of this pre-religion editor story is that it was not reported on the religion page. It didn't even make the local business page, unlike other transactions of this type. Rather it was relegated to the bottom of the back page, front section. It appeared under a picture of a pig, the caption of which was "*Pork Soon Returns to Area.*"

A second article to which I refer appeared on the religion page on August 12, 1950. The subject of the article was Rev. Arnold Schroeder, the new Institutional Minister for the greater Milwaukee area. By our standards it is an accurate article in its presentation of his position in serving prisoners and other institutionalized members of the Synod. From a theological perspective, the article forced the reader to answer a question raised in the interview: How do I have peace with God? A probing question indeed. One which only the church can correctly answer, especially if that church is a confessional one taking its stand on sola scriptura.

The third article, appearing as part of a Lenten series in March of 1959 was mentioned in the opening remarks to this paper. In it, Rev. James P. Schaefer exhorted Christians to read their Bible's more during Lent. That is pretty good press for a church body that holds the Bible to be the inspired and inerrant Word

of God and the sole norm and guide in faith and life.

So to this point in the paper we have seen examples of both good and bad press, accurate and inaccurate coverage of a religious news item or viewpoint. Thinking back to the articles mentioned so far, a generalization is in order. The inaccuracies which surfaced manifested themselves due to the lack of adequate sources and resources. The Strohschein and Lehner quotes moreso than any other are indicative of that. The favorable press in the personal interviews can be attributed to the communication skills of both the interviewer and the interviewed.

If the emphasis on accuracy seems repetitive, it is. For inaccuracy stems from a lack of reputable sources. The function of a public relations department is one of accuracy. To accurately inform and interpret events are its highest priority. It is that accuracy, that information, that interpretation which best serves the religion editor in reporting pertinent news.

This is not to necessarily say that all inaccuracies and "bad press" of the 1950's was the result of a lack of a public relations department. It was a time of uncertainty as a Synod had to come to the realization that it may have to separate herself from her sister Synod. Issues were at times cloudy and usually emotionally charged. Rather the inaccuracies and developments of the era displayed our need for a public relations department.

To this point we have considered the developments of the religious news scene in the formation of religion departments under religious editors, the developments in the controversies in the religious arena, and the awakening of the Wisconsin Synod in its confessional stand as factors which led to the need and appointment of a public relations committee in the Synod. There is one more development which, perhaps more than all of these put together led to the

development of a Public Relations department in the W.E.L.S. That is the office of the president, its occupants and the developments within that office.

The year 1939 saw Rev. John Brenner, pastor of St. John's Ev. Lutheran Church, Vliet St., Milwaukee, as president of the synod. At this time the position was a part-time one. Nevertheless that position held as much influence as ever over the constituency and practices of the Wisconsin Synod. As was mentioned before, it had traditionally been the opinion of newspapers that religious affairs were "private matters." John Brenner shared that traditional stance even after it was forsaken by the newspapers themselves. I quote from an interview with the present W.E.L.S. Director of Public Relations, Rev. James P. Schaefer:

John Brenner took the position that the Church's business was private affairs. And while the church operated in the public, it had no contact there. For example, Bechtel would call up in the '50's. We were having trouble with the boy scouts question at the time. Bechtel would call Brenner and say, "What exactly is your position on the Boy Scouts?" John Brenner would say, "This is a private affair," and bang, hang up the phone...

More often than not, the reporter's article would quote John Brenner with a gracious (and somewhat more neutral) "No Comment," rather than the highly inflammatory, "This is a private affair," or "We don't wash our dirty linen in public." The articles on file at the Journal library bear this point out.

As evidence that this viewpoint of John Brenner's was widely accepted (or at least shared) by the constituents of the Synod, one need only turn to one of the official organs of the Synod at that time, The Northwestern Lutheran. Whether these attitudes are justifiable ones or not is a matter of opinion. These following clippings, however, do clarify the general temperament of the Synod:

The columns of our daily newspapers are hardly the proper channels for the dissemination of God's Holy Word. The public press has no divine call to preach the Word; and the majority of the readers of the daily newspapers are agnostics and scoffers to whom no place shall be given to mock at the Law and Testimony of our Lord.

Editorial: Arthur P. Voss
NWL 1942, pg 326

Not a few congregations, synods, and church bodies have added publicity departments, which, aside from the original purpose to keep the membership informed, are more and more seeking ways and means of popularizing the church and getting the world to think well and to speak well of the church. That looks like a sensible policy, but one need only to read the uncompromising words of Jesus to learn that this is a waste of time and that it reveals a total lack of understanding of the attitude of the world toward the true church of Christ.

Sermon: Immanuel P. Frey
NWL 1944, pg 86

Publicity has to do with informing the public. It is one thing to strive to inform ones own constituency. It is right, for instance, for a church body to carefully and fully inform the members of the body on all things being done or intending to be done by that body...But if that body designedly carries this information to the world and broadcasts it through the medium of the secular press, we begin to wonder what its purpose may be. Is it designed to inform the constituents of that body or to inform, yes, impress the world? And if it is the purpose to inform the world what is the object?...If we follow the Lord's instruction to "preach the Gospel" and do this diligently and humbly, we too, will accomplish what Paul was satisfied to have accomplished - we will have walking epistles of Jesus Christ who will do all the advertising the Gospel or the church needs. That is the publicity that the church needs, and the only kind of publicity.

Editorial: William J. Schaefer
NWL 1946 pg 67.

A writer of a magazine article recently pointed out that though public relations men may not lie outright, neither do they tell the whole truth. That is also largely true of the public relations department which most church bodies have introduced. They are supposed to get favorable publicity for the church and to explain away anything to which the general public might react unfavorably. Consequently it has become the fashion to publicize only those things about the church which appeal to the world and cover up or soft pedal those things which the public dislikes. It is human nature to put the best foot forward. The church which remains true to the Truth should realize that it is engaging in a vain pursuit when it tries to make the church popular in the world. Jesus often pointed out that it can't be done...It is futile to try to remove a principle which Jesus laid down. Popularity with the world can be achieved only at the expense of the Lord and His truth.

Editorial: Immanuel P. Frey
NWL 1959 pg 403

So much for the history of the attitudes towards public relations in the Wisconsin Synod, especially external. I say 'external' because that must be distinguished from 'internal.' As W. J. Schaefer pointed out, informing the constituency of plans and activities of the synod "is right." 1953 was a pivotal year as the door was opened to public relations on an internal basis.

In that year the Synod in convention at Watertown was memorialized by the Northwest Circuit of the Milwaukee City Conference to "inaugurate a vigorous publicity - information - campaign to bring before its communicants the facts and figures of the new budget." This memorial was honored and adopted by the convention. The Board for Information and Stewardship joined the slowly growing structure of the Synod. Internal public relations was begun. It would be of historical interest to note that the author of that memorial was the current Director of Public Relations, Rev. James P. Schaefer.

1953 also saw the election of Oscar J. Naumann of St. Paul, Minnesota, pastor of St. John's Ev. Lutheran Church, as President (part-time) of the Evangelical Lutheran Joint Synod of Wisconsin and Other States.

Naumann, as compared with Brenner, was a product of a different generation. Although he was, as James Schaefer once commented, caught up in the current of Brenner's "this is a private matter," he soon abandoned that attitude as he was sought more and more, mostly by his home town newspaper, to comment on current matters. He realized that the comment "We don't wash our dirty linen in public" was a metaphore that went too far.

Naumann became even more visible in his role as President, and consequently chief spokesman, of the synod when in 1959 he left his parish to assume full time duties of President as memorialized and adopted by the 35th Biennium convention at Saginaw, Michigan. Moving to Milwaukee, Naumann

became the natural contact man for the Milwaukee Journal reporters as well as others. And as Naumann became more visible, so did the Wisconsin Synod. No longer was that body a collection of congregations. There was a locus, a focal point of administration. It was Milwaukee. It was Naumann.

Establishing the office of full-time president and establishing himself in that office, Naumann became aware of several facts.

Still battling the doctrinal controversies of the 1950's, Naumann soon realized that there was something more to the W.E.L.S. than the press it was getting. Rev. Schaefer puts it this way:

The news Wisconsin was making was always relating to fellowship which flew in the face of ecumenicity, the trend of the times. It gave us a sort of aloofness, and aloofness is basically reported negatively.

Where Brenner was public relations as an encroachment of worldly ways on the affairs of the church, Naumann actively supported public relations as a means to inform, and inform accurately, as it also interpreted the affairs of the church to the public.

Naumann also got to know himself. As Rev. Schaefer puts it, Oscar J. Naumann spoke to his own, and spoke very well. He communicated the Gospel of Jesus Christ to his own as he lived it and directed the affairs of the church in accordance with it. But he realized his own inadequacy in public relations. He did not feel he had a knack for interpreting religious news to those outside the synod constituency.

It is interesting to note that less than a year after Naumann assumed the full time presidency, the following topic appeared on the agenda of a Pastor's Institute at Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary (July 4-8, 1960) :A Theological Basis for Church Public Relations, by James P. Schaefer. The institute, as presented,

is reported in the August 14, 1960 issue of the *Northwestern Lutheran* pg.269.

Whether or not Naumann had anything to do with the scheduling of this Institute is speculative. The topics are submitted to the faculty of the seminary with the final decision resting in their hands. The notes from the faculty meetings at which these decisions are made are of any help in determining why a topic is suggested or chosen. However, traditionally the seminary is in close contact with the synod's President and treats his suggestions with great care. One can only wonder if Naumann did not strongly advise that this particular institute be chosen.

It would only seem logical that after the success of this Pastoral Institute a resolution would be presented by Floor Committee No. 15 at the 1961 convention of the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod at Milwaukee. The resolution which was adopted by the convention reads as follows:

RESOLUTION No. 5

Subject: Public Relations Committee.

Whereas, The Synod has no so-called "public relations committee at present, and

Whereas, This lack often works to the disadvantage of the Synod, therefore, be it

Resolved, 1) That a Public Relations Committee be created composed of three members appointed for six-year terms by the Praesidium, and be it further

Resolved, 2) That the Public Relations Committee be responsible for the dissemination of information on, and interpretation of, the Synod's activities to the general public through mass communication media.

In line with the resolution, the Praesidium appointed the following three men: Rev. Alfred Schewe, Rev. John C. Jeske, and Rev. James P. Schaefer. Rev. Schewe was the Chairman of the first committee as the proceedings of the 1963

Convention indicate in the Appointments of the Praesidium (pg. 27) These three names were not just pulled out of a hat. There seemed to be good reason for their specific selection.

A brief character sketch of Pastor Schewe by those who knew him, prove him to be a natural for the committee and the chairmanship. Schewe was a stalwart conservative. His unflappable manner would serve him well as spokesman. Some secondary consideration may have also entered into his selection: He was John Brenner's successor at St. John's Vliet Street; His wife was also Naumann's secretary.

Rev. John Jeske, at that time pastor of St. John's on Forest Home Avenue, was also an able man. My experience with him has proved him to be an excellent communicator who can explain things in a simple, yet complete manner. Pastor Jeske's position on the Board for Information and Stewardship would also prove to be a unifying tie between internal and external public relations.

Pastor James Schaefer, the associate pastor at Atonement Lutheran Church of Milwaukee, which he served with his father, Rev. W.J. Schaefer, came to this committee by way of the Press Committee at the synod's convention. It had long been the practice of the Wisconsin Synod, as a carry over from the Synodical Conference conventions, to have a press committee at its conventions. This committee would function as the center for dissemination of information to the press. Pastor Schaefer had served on this committee in various capacities since 1955.

Runge suggested that J. Schaefer's involvement in the press, aside from natural ability, may have stemmed from his association with his father who was, since 1938, the managing editor of the *Northwestern Lutheran*. More than one of the younger Schaefer's articles had appeared in the *Northwestern Lutheran*. In fact, he often assembled the Religious News Brief's Column. And one can well imagine the increased

work load the younger Schaefer assumed in connection with the magazine when his father suffered a massive coronary in 1955.

In addition to that , Pastor Schaefer had been the field correspondent for the Milwaukee Journal in 1957 when Dave Runge was unable to attend the convention in New Ulm, Minnesota. Schaefer's wealth of experience (and talent) would certainly be of benefit to the new committee.

This committee on public relations underwent a change in 1964 when the Praesidium appointed Rev. Schaefer as the Director of Public Relations, a position he holds to this day. Otherwise the committee remains virtually the same , having the same objectives and guidelines, though the personnel changes periodically.

Although the topic of this paper ends here we would be remiss not to add a word of the impact on the public relations committee on public relations. Since 1961 we, as a synod, have enjoyed a greater degree of accuracy in representing our position to the public through the press. Schaefer has been quoted frequently in both series and special articles, in both the Milwaukee Journal and Milwaukee Sentinel. Schaefer has also been a valuable resource person for the press as he directs the newsmen with the newsmakers.

Nor would this history be complete if we looked into the past as we did, without looking into the future. At present the Director of Public Relations is a part-time position. It is an administrative function which is added on to the duties of a called, full-time executive.

Rev. Schaefer, the present director, sees no significant change in this arrangement within the next ten years. We, as a synod of under 500,000 souls

have not reached the size which dictates the necessity of expanding the position to a full-time one.

The conception of the scope of the task within the next ten years also does not dictate any substantial changes. The committee as it was first established still continues to inform and interpret the activities of the church to the mass media.

The only foreseeable change comes in the realm of the Mass Media Ministry which was established at the 1979 Convention in Watertown, Wisconsin. The MMM, presently under the arm of the General Board for Home Missions, is just beginning to develop its programs and coordinate its efforts with the synod's Mission Outreach.

There could conceivably come a time when this Mass Media Ministry is put under the auspices of the Public Relations Department. That, of course, would change the scope of the committee as well as its function. Then our department might take on the nature of Missouri's department of public relations, where their goals include interpreting the LCMS by "identifying it in the public mind with Jesus Christ, whom we preach and in whose name we conduct all our work as a church." Activities of Missouri include programs on major T.V. and Radio networks as well as the production of the Martin Luther film in cooperation with six other Lutheran bodies.

Now that the public press knows we, the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod, exist, and why, it will pay us to cultivate friendly relations with them because they, too, are means of spreading the Gospel, just like books, the radio and television. Now that they know we exist....

Respectfully submitted,

William J. Schaefer

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

My appreciation goes to Ms. Jo Reitmann of the Milwaukee Journal, who, as the Librarian, aided me in sorting through old clippings in their file.

My thanks also goes to Mr. David Runge for the time he gave me to interview him.

My deepest appreciation goes to my father, James P. Schaefer, who provided me with a wealth of material, some printed, some verbal, in addition to giving me his time.

My gratitude is also extended to the Milwaukee Public Library Humanities desk, periodical file, and local history desk. They provided old Journal editions, clippings and microfiche which complimented the above named sources of information and research.