

REFLECTIONS ON THE INTER-RELATIONSHIP
BETWEEN
THE THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY AND WORLD MISSIONS

Importance of the Theological Seminary

Our Wisconsin Synod has reason to thank God for more than a hundred years of sound guidance by our theological seminary. This is noteworthy indeed in the history of the modern church! The straying of formerly orthodox church bodies from sound teaching and practice is traceable in many instances to aberrations of members of their theological faculties.

The fear was expressed by some of our leaders that going into the world with the Gospel would lead to a dilution or loss of pure teaching by our synod. This danger was not nearly as great as succumbing to new notions in theology at home!

From its beginnings in 1850 our synod had to contend with heterodox influences which stemmed from our heterogeneous origins. In these struggles God always awakened strong leaders who guided the synod on a sound confessional course and into orthodox inter-synodical associations. In retrospect this development of the Wisconsin Synod into a leading orthodox Lutheran church which has not yielded to the allurements of popular doctrinal trends is nothing short of a miracle of the grace and patience of God!

Just as great a miracle of God's patience and grace is the fact that at the very time of the synod's valiant struggle to keep her orthodox Lutheran identity the Lord led the body in her 95th year to embark on a major world mission outreach! No longer would she have to suffer the slur "The Wisconsin Synod has the pure Gospel and is sitting on it!" Within a span of only three decades the synod which ranked as a poor performer in per communicant support of world missions was at the top of the list of Lutheran synods!

During these decisive years of awakening it was largely the positive influence and incentive of our theological professors who steered the synod through the theological turbulence and at the same time applauded the burgeoning mission emphasis at home and abroad. We intend to demonstrate this in the following pages.

We offer no explanation for the fact that obedience to the Word in matters of doctrine and practice did not always include compliance with the same Word in its explicit injunctions to share the Gospel with all the world. That this consistent obedience was not always practiced is a deplorable fact of our history. We thank God that our synod, like 90 year-old Sarah, finally did achieve that consistency in obedience and has borne many children of promise!

REFLECTIONS ON THE INTER-RELATIONSHIP OF THEOLOGICAL SEMINARIES AND WORLD MISSIONS
The Theological Seminary and World Missions
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THE STRUGGLE FOR GREATER MISSION EMPHASIS

There were times in our synod's history when other important undertakings repressed the zeal of the body to reach out beyond its districts or our nation's borders with its missionary activities. The small vocal group of pastors who persisted in holding the ascending Lord's Great Commission before the synod were dubbed "mission brethren" and were subjected to criticism. This is recorded by our synod's outstanding historian, Professor J.P.Koehler of the theological seminary.

He wrote, after reporting that the synod had resolved in 1883 to look for a suitable Indian mission field in response to President Johannes Bading's urging, "There was something not entirely sound about the synod's heathen mission endeavor, the idea that a church is not living up to its mission unless it engages in heathen mission work, according to the Lord's Great Commission: Go ye into all the world and preach the Gospel to every creature. That idea is dogmatism with a streak of pietism and it provoked the criticism of Professor Hoenecke. - These mistakes, outside of being a part of the general slipshod management, also arose from the lukewarm attitude of the synod's leadership that dreaded the added cost to the budget. But the constituency showed enthusiasm for the undertaking and so the "mission brethren" had to be given free rein." J.P.Koehler's History of the Wisconsin Synod, p.198 - Our first two Apache missionaries began in Arizona in 1893.

Not only the leadership of the synod was lukewarm; but it becomes evident from the venerable professor's writing that the influence of the seminary on the synod's mission enterprises was at times far from positive and in keeping with the clear mandate of the Lord. This is clear from another quotation from the same source, "In outward matters the Church is subject to natural developments like the rest of the world under God. Not all groups or organizations have the same tasks. There are organizations, like peoples, that remain small in number and in that have a token of their mission to do intensive rather than extensive work by which the world may even profit more. The Wisconsin Synod had a college that was off to a good start along fundamental educational lines. To maintain and develop that was mission enough for a while." Ibid, p.196

The response of one of his former students to the worthy professor's reasoning takes care of the matter very effectively, "One can understand that our fathers placed emphasis on the strengthening of the stakes to the virtual exclusion of the lengthening of the cords. But all Scripture is written for our learning and guidance. The Isaiah passage (54:2) does not limit; it directs us to do both and neglect neither one, as the Germans are wont to put it: "Das Eine tun und das Andere nicht lassen." Karl F.Krauss, Our World Missions, WLQ, 72, #4, p.275

Our first venture into heathen mission continued to be hampered by criticisms and attempts to abandon it at almost every convention of the synod largely because of the cost of its operation and its inability to report dramatic results. At the same time it afforded an excuse for not venturing into other world mission fields and thus deprived the synod's membership of the great joy in helping to bring in the harvest of the Lord's elect. It is interesting to note that in the same year 1893 in which our synod began its first heathen mission among the Apache Indians of Arizona the Missouri Synod sent its first missionary to Japan. In the following decades this synod advanced into more than a dozen other foreign fields.

HEATHEN MISSION ADVOCATED BY THE SYNOD'S LEADERS

To set aside the impression that the leaders of the Wisconsin Synod were not concerned about carrying out the Great Commission we turn now to the record of several past presidents.

At the convention of 1883 the "mission brethren" referred to earlier found an advocate of their position in none other than the president of the synod, Pastor Johannes Bading. Deviating from the former practice of advocating the "Sammelarbeit," that is, gathering already Lutheran, chiefly German people into the synod, he urged the synod to appoint a commission to look for an opening to preach the Gospel to people of another culture, then called heathen mission.

This commission briefly considered Japan as a possible choice, but soon concentrated on a search for an existing mission among the American Indians which the synod might support with another Lutheran body. When this was found to be impracticable for confessional reasons, the convention of 1884 concurred in the recommendation that the synod prepare to open its own Indian mission among the Apaches of Arizona. Two seminary graduates began work on the San Carlos reservation and one on the Fort Apache reservation in 1893.

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It was exhilarating for me as a pastor out of the seminary just five years to attend my first synodical convention and to hear the stirring opening address of President Gustav E. Bergemann which was based on the ascending Lord's Great Commission and His word of assurance in Mark 16:15 and Matthew 28:20. It was a great act of faith and courage for the president in the depth of the Great Depression thus to exhort the synod to greater missionary activity in the full confidence of the Lord's presence and blessing!

He said, "The preaching of the Gospel was and is and ever will be the one great and peculiar mission of the Church. Not until the Church has gone into all the world and has preached the Gospel to all creatures has it performed its mission! - It is indeed a great task. When we ponder the greatness and the difficulties of this task our courage begins to wane and delight in His work becomes indifferent. We are in danger of doing the Lord's work slothfully. It may even come to pass that the blessing is turned into a curse.

"We are standing in this danger! In effect, Jesus Christ our Savior who was with our fathers has not deserted us. He has fulfilled His promise, "I am with you always." Even this day He is among us. He blessed our institutions and made them instrumental in giving us messengers of the Gospel. Again and again He opened doors for us. - Every door opened, every blessing received, every victory won ought to give us new courage for our task and increase our joy and pleasure in the work of our God. - Is this our attitude?

We are in danger of losing both. We look upon our assigned task - it has increased; upon the field - it has expanded; upon the possibilities of other missions - they are at hand; upon our budget - it has grown and passed the one million mark; upon our treasury - it is depleted, worse than that, there is a large deficit. More

depressing is the fact that this deficit, keeping pace with the work and expenditures, has increased year by year. - Our hearts are heavy and our vision is blurred. We have become weak. We have begun to do the Lord's work slothfully. - We have said that the deficit must be wiped out. For this reason the budget must be reduced and correspondingly the extent of our work must be curtailed. We cannot undertake additional work in new fields. According to this program we worked during the past biennium.

"What has been the result? Through our institutions the Lord gave us a large number of laborers; He has not withheld blessing. But we were not in a position to make full use of this blessing for the building of the Kingdom. To but one-half of the candidates for the ministry we could say, "Go and preach the Gospel!" To the others we were obliged to say, "For the present you must go to seek labor elsewhere." To this end our program has brought us.

"No, this condition cannot be explained as coming from the enduring Depression. In the years of **prosperity** we embarked upon a course which led to this end. Our condition is indeed a precarious one! - Having not cherished the blessing we must suffer the curse! God keep us from such an end! -

"Let us then take Him at His Word, "Lo, I am with you always!" - Our heart must marvel and be enlarged until it breaks forth and courageously proclaims, "With God we will perform our deeds." We will cover the deficit and the necessary budget with commensurate contributions and sacrifices. - We will miss no opportunity to expand our borders in the full confidence of His promise, "Lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the world!" and in obedience to His command, "Go ye into all the world and preach the Gospel to every creature!" - 1931 Proceedings.

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During another time of national crisis, the Second World War, President John Brenner addressed the convention of 1943 with a similar strong appeal for reaching out with the Gospel on the basis of Ephesians 5:15-17 - "Wisdom demands that we hold fast to the Gospel as our most precious possession and permit no one to take it from us. - But the Lord is also still continuing the existence of the world today only for the sake of the preaching of the Gospel, which is therefore the most important thing for us to do in our life. If we ourselves employ our time in hearing and teaching the Word at home we cannot be neglectful of the souls of others. This is still the time of grace **for the entire world** and "God wants all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the Truth." - 1943 Proceedings.

But these same presidents also turned to the theological seminary to request these leaders to present timely essays and Scriptural exhortations at synodical conventions to arouse the synod from its lethargy to an awareness of the Lord's will with regard to the unfinished task of calling the Lord's elect from the far corners of the earth into His Kingdom. This we will trace in the next pages.

HEATHEN MISSION ADVOCATES AT OUR THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

There must have been strong advocates of world missions at the theological seminary before my time at the seminary, 1923 to 1926, but my personal reflections reach back to only one of these. Just before I entered Northwestern College in 1920 all of the Wisconsin Synod's congregations had been made aware of the essay which had been read at the convention of 1919 at New Ulm, Minnesota by Professor August Pieper of the seminary on "The True Reconstruction of the Church."

President G.E. Bergemann had assigned this essay to Professor Pieper and the delegates at the convention had resolved to make it available to the conferences and congregations to counteract the demoralizing effect of the First World War. This had been a shattering experience for all of humanity! It had come to an end in November of 1918 after ten million young men had come to an untimely end, most of them on the bloody battlefields of Europe. Millions of others, combatants and noncombatants alike, men, women and children, had been maimed, driven from their homes, deprived of all their possessions and of hope.

By far the most devastating aftermath of the first global war was the unleashing of hatred and brutality, a loss of decency and morality, and a deepset disillusionment and loss of religious moorings.

Professor Pieper carried out his assignment in his masterful German prose, admonishing and encouraging the convention delegates in three morning sessions. In soul-searching rhetoric he exposed the ingrained insularity of our German Lutheran churches which blinded our spiritual vision until now and stifled any serious endeavor to share the Gospel with those of other cultural origins with whom we lived in this country and in the world. True reconstruction in the Church can only come with a repentant admission of our flagrant failings and a resolute determination with the Spirit's help to reach out to all the other lost souls whom Jesus has laid upon our hearts and consciences in our time. Even though it cannot do justice to Pieper's powerful German a translation of some of his words will serve to illustrate:

"Our missionary activity, the Indian Mission, Reisepredigt, even our educational institutions, until now has been but a miserable, pitiful bungling, a botchery lacking both fire and force. At every convention we seem to be asking ourselves, Do we actually want to do this work or do we not? Half a heart, half a job and half a result! We worked as though we were dreaming. Mary has become a poky dreamer sitting at the Lord's feet. She has developed the habit of only listening until her hearing has become dull, her heart languid and her feet and hands leaden and lazy. Wake up! wake up, Mary! Rub the sleep out of your eyes and shake the lethargy from your limbs! It is time to get to work!

"Don't you see the vast throngs of English people milling about your house, crowding around your open door, - the unnumbered multitude of those who would like to hear something of the glorious Good News which the Lord has poured into your heart? Don't you see the millions of children who are waiting for you to take them also on your lap in the Christian school to tell them, too, about this wonderful thing that has entranced and enraptured you? Oh, don't you see the

shining eyes of the thousands of darkhaired lads and the shy, yearning glances of the blondhaired maidens, intrigued by your own beaming faces, who are eager to learn the good tidings of God's grace and also to place themselves into the Lord's service in church and school to shout it loudly to those others, the multitude who are even now crowding about your house?

"It is high time! The sun is still shining and daylight is still with us; but it is already toward evening and the day is far spent!" 1919 Essay, Professor August Pieper, Proc. 1919

The effect of the essay and the manner of its delivery had a profound effect on the convention delegates! They resolved to have it read, preferably by the author himself, to all the conferences and to have it distributed in print to all congregations. Its effect was felt long after we completed our training at the seminary and began our own work in the ministry, as we shall demonstrate.

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Ten years after August Pieper had read his essay President G.E. Bergemann again found reason to request a similar essay in English to be delivered by another seminary faculty member, Professor August Zich. This was in the dark days of the Great Depression in 1933. Two days after his first inauguration President Franklin Delano Roosevelt had declared a "bank holiday" to stem the tide of bank failures. But the economic depression raged on and it took years before the confidence of the American people was restored. This defeatist attitude was also sharply reflected in the financial condition of the synod.

Because recurring annual shortfalls in contributions had accrued over the years to a debt of \$ 752,649 on December 31, 1931, the banks began to call in their loans and our trustees were reluctantly compelled to apply the second 20% cut in all salaries paid by the synod. An Every Member Canvass, begun in early 1932, failed to produce a significant return and at the same time had a negative impact on regular contributions.

President Bergemann sadly reported, "Under existing circumstances there has been no thought of expanding into new mission fields or parish schools. We have again not been in a position to issue Calls to most of this year's graduates! - The harvest is so great, but it must go to waste because the workers whom the Lord has given to us, also some from last year, cannot be put to work!" Proceedings 1933

This was a sad finale indeed for the career, 1917 to 1933, of a conscientious Christian gentleman who had valiantly led the synod during the post-war period of turmoil with a firm, evangelical spirit.

Professor August Zich attacked his assignment with courage and faith, first showing the cause of defeatism, its devastating effect on the work of the Church and its only cure. The remedy can be found only by returning to the Holy Scripture, to the story of God's gracious intervention through the sacrifice of His Son for sin, also the sin of doubt, and the host of assurances and promises of His continued presence and help, especially when our own weakness and helplessness become as painfully apparent to us in times of great crisis.

The Zich essay was also distributed to all congregations and special meetings were held to encourage our membership to greater confidence and response. The effect was good while it lasted, but the debt had not been materially reduced and the interest on it "continues to devour no small part of our receipts," as President John Brenner reluctantly had to state in his first biennial report. 1935 Proceedings.

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A Welcome Change of Direction

During the 1933-1935 biennium a new influence was being felt in the synod, beginning in Southeastern Michigan. It was destined by God's grace, finally, to lead the entire body in a new direction away from depression and defeatism over poor fiscal performance to the happy assumption of a work program, especially in missions at home and abroad, which was as unprecedented as it was unexpected in a church body now approaching its 85th anniversary without a single independently financed heathen mission program abroad!

The beginnings of this change must be traced back to the theological seminary, specifically to the fiery lectures on mission outreach by Professor August Pieper. This worthy professor had fired his students with the clear words of Holy Scripture to inspire them with a "first love" for the Gospel and the sinner's joyous response to his Savior's exhortation to share the Good News with all the world.

From my class note book of 1925/26 let me quote just one of Professor Pieper's memorable remarks to our class in Isaiah, "Above all else, the study of Holy Scripture demands a truly sanctified attitude of heart from you which is summarized in Luther's "Oratio, Meditatio and Tentatio," because it knows of nothing more urgent and sacred than to want to serve the Lord in His Kingdom. If I knew that I had imbued you with this spirit, if it is indeed the only right one, then I would also rest assured that the cause of the Lord's Kingdom is secure. To share the Gospel of Christ is the one all-surpassing purpose of our being!"

Disturbed over the continuing financial shortages and inability of the synod to rid itself of its paralyzing debt and the resultant rejection of all proposals to move forward on especially the mission front, a small group of pastors in southeastern Michigan began to discuss ways and means to do something about the irritating impasse. One of the pastors began to circulate simple dittoed folders which contained cartoons and graphs of performance for the synodical budget and a few well-chosen tips and squibs for the conference pastors. This led to a one-sheet monthly bulletin which presented synod information and short articles based on Scriptural exhortations.

At the 1933 convention President John Brenner became aware of this informal effort in Michigan and authorized its publication upon request to any congregation in the synod. In his 1935 presidential report he attributed much of the 14% improvement in offerings to the "Michigan Plan" bulletins and encouraged its continuation. Professor

Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary
11831 N. Seminary Drive. GSW
Madison, Wisconsin

John Meyer of the seminary wrote a pithy article for the "Michigan Plan" bulletin a month before the convention of 1935. His remarks deserve our serious consideration.

He wrote, "Until very recently there was always a shortage of men for our work. Why? Because many people withheld their sons because there was more material success luring them to other professions. What did God do? When we withheld our sons from His service He sent us the First World War and we had to let our sons go to the shambles of foreign battlefields! God showed us that He **can** - very painfully, too - take our sons if we refuse to give them to Him willingly. - After the war we gradually got more men. Yet, although our country, our Christians with the rest, was practically wallowing in money, contributions toward missions were far from keeping step with the general prosperity. We withheld our money from God! He then sent us the Great Depression and many lost practically all that they had. God **can** get at our money! - if we withhold it from Him, get it so that it hurts, while we might have enjoyed the pleasure of giving it for His saving cause!" Bulletin 20, July, 1935

The Synod Debt Must Be Retired!

President John Brenner had stated in his report to the synod in 1935, "Although our debt has not increased (it still stood at \$ 638,067 on July 1st!), the interest on it continues to devour no small part of our receipts." - "Our task as Church demands that we restore the cuts in salaries and **expand our missionary endeavors.**"

This was the mood of the entire convention in 1935. With irritating regularity every proposal which involved any addition to the budget for institutions or missions was met with the sobering objection, "We cannot afford any increase in the new budget. Only once during the past biennium were we able to pay salaries on time. And to maintain our credit rating we must give priority to the interest payments on the debt which still amounts to almost \$ 30,000 a year!"

After six days of this frustrating activity it should have come as no surprise when, on the last morning of the convention, a young pastor submitted the motion from the floor, as follows. "Inasmuch as we have seen from the opening of this convention that our debt and its interest payment are standing in the way of progress in every area of our synod's work and, as our president stated in his opening report we ought to expand our mission program to place the workers whom the Lord has given us, I submit the motion that we take steps to retire our debt without delay!"

The president smilingly said to the speaker, "I appreciate your spirit, but it is too late for this convention to take any action on your motion." Near the rear door of the large auditorium Mr. Frank Retzlaff, a respected New Ulm businessman and member of the Martin Luther College of Regents, stood ready to leave for lunch with his hat in his hand and asked for the floor. He said, "I like what that young man has proposed and I second the motion." When the motion was called it was passed with a large majority and another debt retirement program was under way.

Man Proposes, but God Disposes

We all left New Ulm in 1935 with the determination to do our utmost to help retire the debt and to move our synod to undertake a greater mission outreach. We were deeply moved by President Brenner's opening address in which he had again voiced his concern about "so many idle candidates standing idle in the marketplace."

In the discussion following the debt retirement resolution there was an expressed consensus that a concerted effort with God's blessing could accomplish the job in two years. The debt retirement effort was placed into the able hands of a committee under the chairmanship of Professor E.E.Kowalke.

This committee went to work with a will. The "Michigan Plan" bulletins were used to disseminate the appeal to all congregations. Prompt action was taken by over one-half of the congregations and there was a steady flow of money for the debt retirement program. However, because a large number of churches had not participated this flow became only a trickle when some congregations held back what they had raised until all took part in the special offering.

At the 1937 convention the president registered his disappointment over the performance during the biennium, only \$ 98,000 of the \$ 249,000 subscribed having been actually remitted! He wrote, "every congregation was left perfectly free as to the choice of a plan. And let us not say that this was not the right time for such an undertaking. This is refuted by the gratifying success they had who went to work wholeheartedly. No, we failed because there was a lack of brotherly cooperation! What lay behind that lack in the individual case only God can know; But He does know! - Everyone will know that our synod has suffered hurt and harm through this failure of achievement." 1937 Proceedings

The committee recommended "that the effort to retire the synod's debt be continued for one more year." When this was discussed on the floor a resolution was submitted and passed "that the debt retirement program be continued until it has been brought to a successful conclusion." At the next convention all but 38 congregations were active in the program; \$ 249,000 had been received by the synod treasurer and the resolution of 1937 was reaffirmed by a large majority of the delegates who were eager to see their synod embarked on a positive program of Gospel outreach. Fifty candidates were still reported to be without calls! 1939 Proceedings

The Second World War Intervenes

There had been rumblings and dire forebodings of evil days to come when the demented diatribes of "Der Führer" were heard on our radio and TV sets. A month after our 1939 convention England and France declared war against Germany. Within less than a year the terrorizing German "Blitzkrieg" had subdued Europe including

France and in September of 1940 President Franklin Delano Roosevelt had persuaded Congress to pass the Selective Service Act to draft our young men into military service. Just before Christmas of 1941 we were engaged in the war with Japan and Germany!

The effect of the imminent war was deeply felt at the 1941 convention! As President Brenner expressed it in his address, based on Isaiah 30:15 - "There was fear in the land. - A mighty upheaval in our days is shaking the world to its very foundations. - The future is dark and no one is able to foretell what the conditions will be like when this bloody conflict is ended. - The Lord has not lost His power; He still rules the nations! - God still governs the universe for the good of His Church. - Then let us return to Him and rest! This is His promise, "In returning and rest shall ye be saved; in quietness and confidence shall be your strength."

Referring to our program of work and our contributions for it he said, "Let us repent and bring forth fruits of repentance! - We have closed our books with a balance for which we have reason to thank God. - It is a comparatively small sum that is still needed to wipe out all our debt; now is the time to do this!" 1941 Proc.

"Two years later, in August 1943, the president reported that 15,000 of our members were absent from their homes and home churches, drawn into the Great World War. He said, "It is not necessary to go into details picturing the destruction and horrors of the war for there is no one on earth that is not affected and moved deeply by it." - He based his opening address on Ephesians 5:15-17 - "See then that that you walk circumspectly, not as fools, but as wise, redeeming the time because the days are evil. Wherefore be not unwise, but understanding what the will of the LORD is."

Those were sobering days indeed! The outcome of the horrible global bloodbath was still uncertain. Many of our members would lose precious brothers, sons, fathers on the high seas or foreign battlefields. Many would come home maimed and changed, possibly to spend their remaining years as government wards.

It was a time when people gave heed to the admonition, "See then that you walk as wise people, understanding the will of the Lord and redeeming the time!" The admonition took effect and people talked and walked more soberly in keeping with the Lord's Word and will. We were all being conditioned for the fruits of true repentance with many a solemn prayer and vow to make up for lost time, if the horror of the war would only be brought to an end by almighty God!

But the war and slaughter were to rage on over two agonizing years longer until it was brought to a crashing conclusion by the dropping of the first atom bomb on Hiroshima, Japan, on the sixth of August, the closing day of the synod convention of 1945!

Precious young men, precious amounts of money and still more precious years had been squandered in senseless murder and destruction which should have been employed in saving lost souls for Christ and for eternal life. We were determined under God to do the will of the Lord at the 1945 convention at New Ulm!

President Brenner had chosen a fitting text for the wartime convention of 1943, "See then that ye walk as wise men, redeeming the time because the days are evil!" - We took to heart what he had said, "Wisdom demands that we hold fast the Gospel as our most precious possession and permit noone to take it from us. - But the Lord is also still continuing the existence of the world only for the sake of the preaching of the Gospel which is therefore the most important thing in our life. - If we ourselves employ our time in hearing and teaching the Word at home, we cannot be neglectful of the souls of others. This is still the time of grace for the entire world and God wants all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the Truth!"
1943 Proceedings

The Happy Convention of 1945

With these encouraging words of our honored president in mind we went to work during the 1943-1945 biennium. The Lord faithfully heard the prayers of His people for an end to the terrible war and also to the hampering synod indebtedness. In this happy frame of mind we prepared our various reports for the convention of 1945.

In May of 1945 these reports of the various divisions were submitted to the Synodical Committee for possible revision. The very optimistic report of the Board of Trustees was also heard. It projected a balance in the budget and the retirement of our entire debt by June 30th! This was good news indeed after ten years of struggle!

The report of the Indian Mission executive committee was also heard, discussed and approved for presentation to the convention in August. The General Mission Board had not only approved but urged its presentation with its hearty endorsement. We were all confident that the proposal which it contained to request the synod seriously to consider reaching out into the heathen world with the saving Gospel would be welcomed enthusiastically. We felt that the prospect of war's end and the return of our American fighting forces to their homes which was palpably in the air in the early summer of 1945 would lift all our hearts with an irrepressible desire to bring offerings of thanksgiving to the Lord which could finance a worthy mission outreach.

Listening to our president as he read his opening address, we were greatly encouraged in our mission outreach thinking: "During the past biennium the offerings of our Christians increased to such an extent that our books today show a sizeable surplus." He warned against improvident enthusiasm but added, "Yes, we should expand. God forbid that we deny our faith by becoming stagnant; but let our expansion be a quiet steady progress in which the available manpower and the means to employ it keep pace with each other." Referring to our missions he said, "Until now we have not been planning to enter into foreign fields, but the Lord may call us into such at any time. May we then be ready to respond to His call, willing to work and sacrifice!"
- Proceedings 1945

This was already reason enough to remember New Ulm 1945 as

"the happy convention." Our trustees reported: "All accounts and requisitions could be paid as presented! The budget reserve fund now amounts to \$ 350,000! All professors and missionaries are now being paid 25% above their base salary! And the entire debt has been retired!" 1945 Proceedings

The Mission Outreach Resolution of 1945

The stage was set for the supreme moment of this convention, the presentation, discussion and adoption of the resolution, "that the president appoint a committee to gather information regarding foreign fields that might offer opportunity for mission work by our synod."

The same proposal of the Indian Mission executive committee which had been heard with the approval of the General Mission Board at the May meeting of the Synodical Committee was presented before the convention as a part of the mission board report. Its Scriptural basis was Isaiah 49:6 - "I will also give thee for a light to the Gentiles, that thou mayest be my salvation unto the end of the earth."

The chair now declared, "You're out of order!" - Now the convention became alive! Requests for the floor were so numerous that one man said later that he thought it had been staged. Actually, it was simply the spontaneous reaction of the delegates who were ready for some positive action after the many years of frustration and restraint. It was not, as someone said, "ill-advised enthusiasm so characteristic of our day." Rather, it was the proper, God-pleasing response, too long repressed, to the blessings of peace and fiscal solvency which our God showered on our synod for His saving purpose.

The fascinating story of the slow, but steady, progress of the synod from 1945 to the opening of our mission in Central Africa in 1953 is wellknown and not germane to our present purpose. Our concern is the important inter-relationship between the theological seminary and our world missions.

In August of the same year, 1953, Pastor Oscar J. Naumann was elected to succeed President John Brenner. This was of significant importance for the cause of world missions. President Naumann was not only personally dedicated to the new global outreach of his synod with the saving Gospel, but he inspired and encouraged all of us, especially those who were entrusted with the administration of the world mission program. Many appeals reached his desk from all over the world for help in proclaiming the pure Word. These appeals he not only forwarded to my desk but urged me to follow up on them and whenever he could personally accompanied me on visits to these new fields. He also gave his full approval and full support to our program to enlist the theological faculty in our program. This had the double goal of encouraging a mission-oriented training program at the seminary as also giving our mission fields the benefit of sound theological guidance in the important work of setting up theological training programs in our world mission fields.

Synod and Seminary Presidents for World Missions

President Oscar Naumann and President Carl Lawrenz of the seminary were good friends. This stemmed largely from sharing the same convictions. Both men were dedicated to the preservation of sound Lutheran teaching and practice. Both realized that obedience to the Word of God in doctrine has as a God-given corollary also unquestioning compliance with its many explicit exhortations to share the saving Gospel worldwide. Holy Scripture speaks not in a vague, general way about this seeking and saving will of God, but in most distinctly explicit statements.

Our Lord Himself left His followers these final instructions at His ascension, "All power is given unto Me in Heaven and in earth. Going therefore, make disciples of all nations, baptizing them into the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you. And, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world!" Mt.28:18-20

The text, Isaiah 49:6, on which the 1945 mission exhortation was based, states clearly what St. John is shown in a vision: "I saw another angel flying in mid-heaven with the everlasting Gospel to proclaim to them on the earth, and to every nation and kindred and tongue and people!" Rev.14:6

To think that obedience to such explicit commands of our Lord was ever described as being "dogmatism with a streak of pietism" is very difficult to understand. In any case presidents Naumann and Lawrenz were agreed on the urgency of carrying out the synod's 1945 resolution for greater mission outreach. Out of their conviction came also their inclusion of an essay on The Extension of the Mission Endeavor in the agenda of the worldwide Conclave of Lutheran Theologians which they invited to be held at Mequon in July, 1960.

The reading of this essay on a practical aspect of the program of the Church was questioned by some who thought the meeting ought to be restricted to a discussion of Scriptural doctrine. For this reason the following statement was presented in the mission essay. After its reading it found staunch support from the assembly.

"This essay is not merely an interesting digression from the chief topic of this conclave of Lutheran theologians. It is the end-topic, the practical application to their God-given purpose of the Scriptural truths which are here being expounded. It is important that the learned leaders of the Church recognize the fruit of this fact on their deliberations. Otherwise, the disputatious dogma may degenerate into the sterile discourse of a debate and the Church would merit the slur that her meticulous attention of doctrine is merely a quibbling over words and phrases."
- Extension of the Mission Endeavor-, E.Hoenecke

In 1978 when this essay on Mission Reflections was presented at the Mission Seminar just before my retirement, Pre

and President Lawrenz observed anniversaries in office, Naumann his 25th as synod president and Lawrenz his 20th as president of the theological seminary. What a force for good these two men have been! Under God's grace this leadership also contributed immeasurably to the Wisconsin Synod's outreach with the pure Word to the world.

Under this leadership the entire seminary faculty was ready and willing to share their expertise and experience with the new world mission administration. They cooperated with alacrity in providing for special emphasis on training men for service in foreign mission fields by surrendering precious scheduled time for programs which would help that cause.

Annual World Mission Seminars

Already in the first years of our expanded world mission activity, from 1955 to 1960, it became apparent to us that provision would have to be made for more orientation, information and practical preparation of candidates for work in foreign mission fields. The very sketchy training we of the world board could give them and their wives was grossly inadequate. When we appealed to the seminary faculty for some time in the already crowded schedule, the faculty agreed to set aside a full week for a world mission seminar which would be a joint venture, the students and faculty taking part with the world board.

The first mission seminar featured a series of daily presentations by missionaries and members of the world board. The insights gained into the requirements for service and the activities of a foreign field made continuation of the program quite self-evident. The Epiphany season was chosen to avoid breaking into the seminary schedule too seriously because of the semester break. The practical suggestion was adopted to involve the students themselves much more actively in the various studies and presentations, such as in the preparation of statistical, historical and geographical information with the help of graphs and maps. The students also gathered the material gleaned from the seminar into loose-leaf folders for later study and reference. A new feature, slide and film presentations, was made available to the seminary family and to interested visitors from the Milwaukee area.

The mission seminar produced such good results that in 1964 the Board for Home Missions was brought into the program. This reduced the time for concentrating on the unique problems involved in world missions, but it served to bring the two mission boards into a closer contact with one another to share consideration of matters shared by both in the training of theological candidates and in the conduct of missions, especially in crosscultural situations such as the Hispanic work carried on by both boards.

Although the goal of both home and foreign missions is the winning of souls for Christ with the Gospel, there is a vast difference between the programs at home and those in foreign lands. This fact made it necessary for the world board to provide for more care-

ful screening and training of candidates for world mission service than was possible in the annual mission seminar. Unique gifts of adaptation to a strange culture and the ability to acquire fluency in a foreign language are requisite for effective work among the people of another race. These gifts are not per se associated with intellectual competence. It is, rather, a part of warm personalities who are sincerely interested in the wellbeing of others, sensitive to and accepting of people of other races and social levels.

The one extreme of "going native" or "going bush" actually may be the height of offensive condescension which which might repel, instead of attract, another person who is well aware of the cultural difference between himself and the American missionary. At the same time the opposite extreme must also be avoided, lest the missionary and his family give the appearance of belonging to a "Herrenvolk," a superior people.

As much as possible these problems of understanding and adjustment must be dealt with during the screening and training period of both the mission candidate and his wife. For this reason the world board was concerned about having as much time as possible in the selection and preparation of missionaries for foreign service.

Chair of Missions at the Seminary

In suggesting that a professor might be called to the seminary who would make missions his discipline the world board sought to be able to carry out a more thorough screening and training of future missionaries. It was thought that this man might be called from a list of candidates who had served in one of our foreign fields.

After careful deliberation the seminary faculty pointed out a weakness in our proposal which we were happy to acknowledge. In the prevailing order of things, we were assured, each professor made it a point to integrate concerns about sharing the Gospel worldwide in his lectures, whether they be exegesis, homiletics, church history, liturgics, catechetics or any other discipline.

The calling of a mission specialist thus might result in a net loss rather than a gain for our world mission program.

The faculty's counter proposal found ready acceptance with the world board. It encouraged a policy of including the names of experienced missionaries who were engaged in theological training in the mission fields on the roster of candidates for the next vacancy to be filled in the seminary faculty.

This has now been done with very gratifying results!

Seminary and Mission Conferences

As early as 1965 the possibility of such conferences on some of our foreign mission fields which would be attended by members of

our seminary at Mequon had been discussed. This would afford our entire foreign mission personnel also an opportunity to keep in closer touch with the theological leaders of the synod. Again we found the faculty receptive to the suggestion although it involved evening classes for the professor and students and considerable changes in the regular class schedules.

One of the chief concerns which motivated our request for these conferences on foreign soil was our memory of the dire predictions which had been made in the early Forties that we would lose sound teaching if we went out into the wide world with the Gospel. We were keenly aware of this as we were bringing national churches into being on our mission fields with ~~no~~ possibility of regular contact and friendly surveillance.

It is one thing to keep our churches at home from straying into heretical doctrine and unionistic associations and quite another to expect the same religious awareness of new Christians who do not have the same background of orthodox identity. At the same time they feel a kinship with Christians of other denominations and the desire for extending the hand of fellowship. In some way it is incumbent upon us to provide a healthy outlet for this need.

Since my repeated urgings for some form of intersynodical association of orthodox Lutheran church bodies to replace the Evangelical Lutheran Synodical Conference could not be acted upon without long negotiations this series of conferences on our mission fields with leaders from the home church could supply the need temporarily.

The ever present lack of the money to carry out the plan was providentially solved in several ways. When it was mentioned at a Coordinating Council meeting a lay member of the Board of Trustees took note of it and offered to supply the necessary funds. Another conference was funded by the Lutheran Women's Mission Society.

Before we were able to call the first missionary conference the two presidents, Naumann and Lawrenz, supplied the need by making a visit to our Central African field en route to the Republic of South Africa for a meeting with the Lutherans in that country. The happy results of this visit for both our own mission personnel, the national pastors and evangelists as well as the church in Zambia and Malawi, encouraged us to continue with our plans.

The first formal seminary conference was held at Hong Kong in 1971, another at Lusaka, Zambia in 1972, in Mito, Japan in 1974 and by far the largest at our Mequon seminary in 1976. The first mission conference, devoted especially to administrative and church organization, was held at West Allis, Wisconsin, in 1975. Since then a number of seminary and mission conferences have been held, mostly at a motel at Leland in northern Michigan. All of them have been funded by money raised outside of the regular budget for missions.

During the Easter recess of 1978 the seminary conference was attended by three of our professors, all of whom presented valuable essays for the consideration of men from our theological facul-

ties of the mission fields on five continents. The benefits of the El Paso seminary conference were of enduring value to the teaching staffs on our mission fields. But this conference had also drawn together representatives of our worker-training division, the home mission board and the executive committees in charge of our five world mission enterprises. This mutual understanding was of great importance to our expanding program.

The Faculty Exchange Program

As early as 1965 we had made another suggestion to the faculty of our theological seminary which had never been acted upon because of the lack of funds. It was our wish that professors from our seminary might spend a semester or part of a semester in rotation at our Bible institute and seminary ventures in foreign fields. While we hoped that these professors might teach a few classes at our schools, we were far more concerned about the value of enough time with our staff to discuss matters of attainable goals, the range of subjects and the other practical things necessary for sound theological training schools. One must remember that many of our own teachers had been called without the benefit of extra courses in theological disciplines.

As always our primary interest was our concern that, despite the distance from our home base, our schools on the field would remain on target and on course doctrinally and that we would "all speak the same thing and that there be no divisions among us; but that we would be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment." 1. Cor. 1:10 and Phil. 3:16

Professor and Mrs. Carl Lawrenz accepted our invitation to spend three months on our African field over the long Christmas holiday in 1975. They would spend some time on both our fields, Zambia and Malawi, but Professor Lawrenz would also teach two short courses at our seminary and Bible institute. This visit was of great value to all concerned. Whenever possible, our missionaries would join the seminary students for Professor Lawrenz's classes. The evenings were often spent in discussing mission matters in a more relaxed setting, the worthy professor admitting later that he and his wife received more than they gave when the missionaries related their experiences and shared their problems.

Our board had the intention of continuing this exchange program by asking our professors to visit our other worker-training schools on the other fields. It is deplorable that this plan was frustrated for a lack of the necessary funds. What stands out in our minds is the attitude of readiness to make such exchanges possible on the part of our seminary faculty. It always involved changes in the seminary schedule and evening classes for both the professor and the students, a matter which was very difficult to arrange without sacrifice of precious time.

Only one similar exchange program was carried out. This came as the result of our negotiations with a group of conservative theologians and their lay adherents in Sweden. But we will do well to set aside a separate section for this report.

The Sweden Counsel and Aid Program

During the spring and summer of 1966 I had been asked by the Board for World Missions and the Commission on Interchurch Relations to take care of problems which had arisen in the Church of the Lutheran Confession. Our synod had supported this free church since 1924 and we were very much interested in helping this church become an independent free church.

Our Wisconsin Synod was also concerned about a number of conservative Lutherans in Scandinavian countries and Finland and the possibility of establishing fellowship relations with them. I was instructed to visit these people with whom our leaders had been in correspondence. I visited Denmark, Norway, Sweden and Finland after making appointments to confer with these theologians.

At Uppsala Dr. Tom Hardt suggested that I run up to Uppsala to pay a visit to Dr. David Hedegard, an outstanding Swedish Lutheran theologian who had just completed a translation of the New Testament into modern Swedish. He had retired from the theological faculty at Lund University and had come to Uppsala as a member of this very old university's theological faculty. This faculty ignored him, however, because, in the words of his friend and biographer, Dr. Seth Erlandsson, "he held a "false" view of the Bible; he believed it!"

My visit with Dr. Hedegard was very enlightening. He told me that there were thousands of Bible-loving leaders and people in Sweden who had encouraged him in his publications for a return to a truly confessional Lutheran position and had supported his Bible translation work. But he replied to my question about the formation of a Swedish Lutheran free church that this was most unlikely because for most Swedes membership in the state church was almost inseparable from citizenship.

Two years later, in 1968, a group of conservative Lutherans with Dr. Hedegard founded **Stiftelsen Biblicum**, a biblical research institute, at Uppsala near the university, supported by voluntary gifts from all over Sweden. Its objective was to foster conservative research, to publish Bible-believing books and articles and to provide a center for Bible scholars at the Uppsala University. When Dr. Hedegard died a year later, his friend and colleague, Dr. Seth Erlandsson, pastor of a large congregation in Old Uppsala, was elected as his successor.

It was Dr. Erlandsson who received copies of our synod's doctrinal statement, **This We Believe**, and requested permission to translate it into Swedish for his correspondents. At the same time he asked Dr. Siegbert Becker, professor at our seminary, to come to Sweden for a series of lectures in several places, including Uppsala, where the conservative group had begun to conduct church services. Dr. Becker expressed his willingness to accede to this request and received permission and funds for the visit.

Before making the trip Dr. Becker took a course in Swedish

to enable him to work without an interpreter. He and Mrs. Becker spent the month of August, 1972 at Uppsala. His report was entirely favorable and recommended our synod's continued contact with a view to establishing fellowship with the Swedish group. Hundreds of people had listened for hours while he presented our doctrinal stance and matters concerning our synod to them in gatherings all over Sweden. His doctrinal lectures were even covered by the newspapers in Sweden as refreshing signs of a revival of true Lutheran religion.

With synodical authorization the **Sweden Counsel and Aid Fund** was created to finance further negotiations and visits. The committee comprised President Oscar Naumann, Professor Carl Lawrenz, the undersigned, and Professor Siegbert Becker as liaison and correspondent because of his fluency in Swedish.

Another visit to Uppsala was authorized during the Easter break. Dr. Becker and the undersigned made this visit. Several important things were accomplished on this 1973 visit. The meetings were held daily in the newly acquired **Biblicum Center** near the university. Dr. Erlandsson formally severed his membership in the state church, the group organized **The Confessional Lutheran Free Church in Sweden**, a monthly periodical, **Lutersk Sändebrev**, was founded and a bulletin, called **Upprop**, Challenge, was mailed to all known persons interested in a return to sound Lutheran teaching.

At the 1973 convention of our synod formal confessional fellowship was declared with the new Swedish free church and authorization was given to carry on the work of informal, nonbudgetary support. This support has always remained very modest because many of the Swedish pastors declined outside help, choosing rather to find jobs to support themselves.

This rather lengthy report has been made to demonstrate the extensive, time-consuming involvement of the seminary in this program. The dedicated services beyond the call of duty of Professor and Mrs. Siegbert Becker are especially noteworthy because most of the work and success in creating this promising free church in Sweden is the result of their dedication under God.

The Seminary and the Interim Committee

An almost direct result of the work of the seminary faculty in connection with the Swedish free church was the creation of the Interim Committee by the Board for World Missions.

Appeals which reached the synod president for counsel and assistance from isolated Lutherans or Lutheran groups were usually assigned to the world board for investigation and preliminary action. At first this could be handled by the officers of the board. But when several appeals were in the process of temporary action and support, it became necessary to assign a special committee to the matter. Because it was thought that such administration would be only for an interim until the appeal was either denied or the

field could be assigned to a standing executive committee, the name **Interim Committee** was chosen.

Because such appeals always involved an examination of the confessional position of the applicants for help, the world board quite naturally turned to the seminary faculty of the Commission on Interchurch Relations for counsel. This led to the inclusion of a seminary professor on the committee.

The interim committee has been so successful in its work that it has now been given status as one of the committees which comprise our Board for World Missions. Most importantly, it has resulted in a closer relationship of the world board with the seminary than we had dared to hope back in 1955.

The Quarterly and World Missions

During the same years our seminary faculty has also become closely associated with world mission through a number of articles and studies on mission matters which appear in the seminary's organ, **The Wisconsin Lutheran Quarterly**. Some of these articles have been written by faculty members. They show the keen interest which prevails in the faculty for the worldwide Gospel outreach which has been given to His Church by the Savior. Others were contributed by members of the world board upon request of the seminary faculty. They have been of immeasurable help in keeping this cause before our churches.

Several of these articles come to our mind:

Luther's Practical Mission-mindedness	-	by Prof. Dr. Paul Peters
Missiology and the Two Billion	-	by Prof. Ernst H. Wendland
The Great Commission	-	by Pastor Robert James Voss
Our World Missions	-	by Pastor Karl F. Krauss
Home Mission Moods and Modes	-	by Pastor Norman Berg
Theological Education by Extension	-	by Prof. Ernst H. Wendland
The Mission Mandate in Isaiah	-	by Pastor Edgar Hoenecke
Mission in the 1980s	-	by Prof. Ernst H. Wendland

Acknowledgment

With deep gratitude to our God we acknowledge the many years of faithful counsel and active cooperation of our theological seminary for the cause of missions! Humanly speaking, without it we could not have carried out our heavy responsibility. We recognize the fact that we have not been charged by the Lord and His Church to proclaim the Good News of Christ without also carrying out His earnest injunction to "teach them all things, whatsoever I have commanded you!" This involves that we also "Hold fast the form of sound words in faith and love which is in Christ Jesus!" 2.Tim.1:13

For this especially we record our sincere thanks!

Edgar Hoenecke, 1988