DR. HENRY AUGUST KOCH

by
Henry T Koch
Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary
Senior Church History
Professor Fredrich
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FOREWORD

The history of Lutheranism in America can be told by using dates, names and numbers. A student with a good history book can piece together a well-knit skeleton of pivotal events and general trends. History comes alive, though, in the personalities that help structure the events. It is hoped that this biography will "flesh out" both a man's life and the Germany-America transition of Lutheranism.

Dr. Henry A. Koch's life, spanning ninety-five years, can be divided into four parts. The first division leads from his birth through pastoral studies at the Wauwatosa Seminary. The next twenty-five years are spent as a student, professor and pastor in Germany. The third and fourth parts cover public ministry in the United States and retirement years.

I

On August 26, 1889 in Hadar, Nebraska Rev. Frederick Koch and his wife Wilhelmina (Damler) were blessed with their first child, Henry August. Only eight years earlier, when Frederick was twenty and single, he had emigrated with his parents, George and Barbara (Kropf) Koch, from Mansbach, Hessen, Germany. (1) Frederick's parents settled first in Milwaukee before moving eighty miles north along the Lake Michigan shoreline to Two Rivers. Here the young Frederick planned to settle and pursue his chosen career as a carpenter. The Lord had different plans.

The pastor at St. John Lutheran Church in Two Rivers, Rev. J. P. Koehler, urged Frederick and his brother Henry to help answer the cry for pastors in the young Wisconsin Synod. The synod that had begun thirty-one years earlier with three pastors in Milwaukee was growing steadily, but in 1880 the numbers for pastoral candidates were lagging behind. In ten years of rapid synod growth the entire seminary enrollment had grown only by two, from four to six. (2) The seminary had disappeared from Wisconsin to St. Louis for eight of those years (1869-77), and

was now struggling to be a viable supply for synod needs. Rev. Koehler succeeded in recruiting and tutoring Frederick Koch, a teaching job he would later continue for twenty-nine years as a seminary professor, including teaching this recruit's son.

Frederick followed the standard course of instruction, first at Northwestern University in Watertown, then at the Evangelical Lutheran Seminary in Milwaukee. When he graduated a hundred years ago in 1888 he had enjoyed the rare opportunity to study under two synod greats, J. P. Koehler and Adolf Hoenecke.

Following the summer of 1886 Frederick ("Fred") began a year and a half of correspondence with Wilhelmina ("Minnie") Damler of Two Rivers. By the time Frederick received his assignment to northeastern Nebraska, Minnie was ready to accompany him as his wife. Their first child was named after Frederick's younger brother, (Rev.) Henry, and was baptized in Immanuel Ev. Lutheran Church September 8, 1889.

Frederick and his family remained in Hadar until he accepted a call to Randolph, Wisconsin in August 1891.

Rev. Koch was only the second resident pastor at the three-year-old Friedens Ev. Lutheran Church and split his time serving two additional congregations: Cambria and St. Stephen's in Fountain Prairie. Hearing of scattered Lutherans living in the Springvale area, Pastor Koch canvassed the territory and conducted services in various homes. By Nov. 17, 1895 Frederick had gathered a large enough congregation to organize as St. John's Ev. Lutheran Church of Pardeeville. By 1898 the

congregations had grown large enough so that Cambria, Doylestown and Pardeeville could form one parish and call its own pastor. (3) His energetic service among four congregations would provide a strong role model for his son.

In 1902 Frederick, now also with three daughters, accepted a call to Caledonia. He served as Trinity's pastor until his retirement in 1928. During that time he oversaw construction of a new church and school in 1900. The church's dedication celebration was large by today's standards--all three seminary professors were included, and the church was filled. Prof. Koehler preached at the morning service, and Professors A. Pieper and J. Schaller officiated at the afternoon service. (4)

Pastor and Mrs. Koch retired to Manitowoc after forty years in the ministry. They celebrated their golden wedding anniversary before Minnie's death in 1938 and Frederick's in 1939.

Frederick's zeal carried into raising his son, Henry. School would continue after classes and during the summer as Frederick prepared his son for studies at Northwestern U. and beyond.

Henry spent two years at Concordia in Milwaukee, then followed his father's earlier lead through Northwestern. He attended Northwestern for five years and graduated June 22, 1909. The graduation service gives a clue to both the school's thorough training and to Henry's diligence as a student. The graduation included three essays in three languages. Following orations in

Latin and English, Henry presented the German oration "Schiller und Goethe: ein Dichterpaar," and was honored with presenting the valedictory. (5)

That fall Henry continued his training at the seminary, now in Wauwatosa. He missed having Prof. Hoenecke by two years, but learned from a famous three: Koehler, Pieper and Schaller. Students and classes seem to have been much like today, but the lack of photocopiers and easy, overnight printing made shorthand popular for notes, even diaries. (6)

The students reacted about the same then as today when Henry announced his plans to defer his call for further studies in Germany. Dr. Koch later recalled his friends' baffled surprise that someone would still want to study more. The decision was not entirely his, though.

Henry's father always wished he could have had more education. The reader need not conclude that Frederick was upset with his teachers, Koehler and Hoenecke, or now with Pieper and Schaller too. Realize that Frederick Koch had left the academic center of the world at the intellectually impressionable age of twenty. He knew what was possible there. Once he was in America, his role model became the gifted Rev. Koehler, while he might see himself as a converted carpenter. Combine his own zeal that the Lord's work utilize all one's ability with the blossoming talents of his son. German university study was the logical conclusion, and the best university was at Leipzig.

II

The year 1912 was a pivotal year in Henry Koch's life. It signalled a big step as he parted with the rest of his graduating class. He moved from America to Germany when the tide of immigration was carrying ship after ship of families in the other direction. He was returning to the German language when American Lutherans were quickly abandoning German for English. He was stepping back into another culture, and aging Lutheranism. When he would permanently set foot again in America twenty-five years later he would be changed: no longer single, but a husband and a father; no longer a student, but pastor and professor; no longer Mr. Koch, but Rev. Dr. Koch. Beyond his personal transitions he would bring back a fresh, sharp perspective on the developing Lutheran churches in America.

German graduate academies share the title "university" or "Universitat," but other similarities are few. In place of a prescribed course and regular testing the German universities stress individual initiative and innovation in learning. Henry's course record for his studies from 1912 to 1919 simply show seminars attended and work requirements satisfied.

In preparing his PhD. in classical philology and ancient philosophy Henry developed skills in Latin under Professor R. Heinze, Greek under Prof. E. Bethe, and philosophy under Prof. J. Volkelt. He continued studying theology as well under Prof. Albert Hauck. Hauck was renowned as the main authority on German church history and as editor of the third edition of

"Realencyklopadie fur Protestantische Theologie und Kirche." When Dr. Koch later described the lectures of Prof. Hauck he offered a glimpse of university study at its finest--respect earned by the professor, respect shown by the students, and valuable immpressions made:

> [Prof. Hauck] always had the first lecture in the morning at eight o'clock. It was unusual for many students to appear for lectures at such an early hour. The classes of Prof. Hauck, however, were always well attended. He would always appear in an immaculate Prince Albert, was greeted with thundering applause by the students and, as soon as he began to speak, absolute silence would reign. One could hear a pin drop. He lectured without any manuscript in hand, offering minute details without fail. His lecture on ancient church history was so valuable to us [me] that we repeated and heard it for a second time, receiving a new approach and new light shed on the same church historical events. His lectures made an unforgettable impression on us. He was conservative and biblical in his presentation and a sincere Christian. (7)

Such an outstanding professor was not the exception at Leipzig before World War I. Leipzig was the oldest German university and had prospered with a rich past. Four hundred years earlier it had sponsored the debate between Luther and Eck. Later Leipzig had trained Wolfgang Goethe, who honored it through Faust, "I have great praise for Leipzig. It is a small Paris and truly educates its people." (8)

One of the famous professors before the war was Rudolph Kittel. This Old Testament scholar and editor of the Biblia Hebraica lectured on the history of Israel and interpretation of historical books of the Old Testament. Dr. Koch recalled his lectures as "brillant...a master in letting one relive with him those days of the tribes of Israel and Judah, their rise and fall

and cause or decay." (9) Some of Kittel's words could probably be heard in Dr. Koch's later sermons and articles which urged Christians to learn from the mistakes made in history.

Probably the man who had the greatest impact on the student Koch was Caspar Rene Gregory. Dr. Gregory, professor of New Testament theology, followed the lead of his own professor at Leipzig, Constantin von Tischendorf. Tischendorf had devoted his life to finding ancient Greek New Testament texts to combat the negative textual criticism which was sweeping the universities in the mid-nineteenth century. He found success first with the discovery of a fifth-century palimpsest (C) in Paris' National Library and later with the opportunity to spend forty-two hours in the Vatican Library pouring over Codex Vaticanus (B). Without a doubt his greatest achievement was his 1844 discovery of a fourth-century manuscript (ℵ) in the cloister of St. Catherine at the foot of Mt. Sinai.

Dr. Koch caught Tischendorf's excitement over this find through their common link, Gregory. As a professor Gregory not only echoed Tischendorf's fame, but achieved honor in his own right. He became best known through his acclaimed introduction and editing for the great eighth edition of Tischendorf's Greek New Testament. In that work Tischendorf and Gregory set the standard for all other Greek New Testament texts and demonstrated how faithfully the New Testament has been preserved. After Tischendorf's death Gregory continued his teacher's work defending Scripture through sound textual criticism and teaching

his skills to his students.

From this man and through many hours of studying ancient manuscripts Henry Koch learned textual criticism. Sixty years later Dr. Koch wrote in Christian News to keep their memory alive, summarizing:

> A text critic very soon reveals his inner attitude by his choice of readings. Tischendorf and Gregory were leaders in the field of textual criticism and put to shame many critics whose sole aim it seems to be to discredit the Bible as the authentic Word of God. (10)

The reader who knows this background can then understand Dr. Koch's tenacity to the Scriptures and his confidence to take on the challengers of Scriptural inerrancy.

Two other famous professors were Karl Lamprecht, one of the last representatives of universal history, and Wilhelm Wundt, professor of philosophy and psychology. Both had to deliver their lectures in the Auditorium Maximum to accomodate the students they drew from Europe and around the world.

These foreign students, many dressed in their native clothing, learned as much about their own culture as they did of Germany. Lamprecht contended that history is shaped as much by cultural and social influence as it is by political events. He emphasized persons over events. Wundt compared the philosophy and psychology of the different nations. The United States he termed "pragmatic." (11) By the time Henry Koch received his doctorate in 1920 he had been challenged to view America and Lutheranism from a distance and to analyze its strengths and weaknesses.

Henry's studies leading to his doctorate were hampered two years after his arrival by the outbreak of World War I and the sudden involvement of the United States at the sinking of the Lusitania. For over four years he was nominally and virtually a prisoner of war, though he claimed to have suffered no hardships beyond what the average German endured. A loaf of bread was rationed to one per person per week. Since Henry could receive no mail or money from home he earned his living with a Leipzig publisher by reading proofsheets for books of English literature.

Ironically, while Americans painted fellow Americans' houses yellow or otherwise harrassed their own citizens for once having been Germans, the Christians in Germany called an American, Henry Koch, to serve as their pastor in Leipzig and Dresden. Though he could not be called officially until after the war, Rev. Koch began his ministry among the Ev. Lutheran Free Church of Saxony in 1914. In this strange but simple way the Lord provided for the needs of two congregations and a student. Dr. Koch could recall that in his seven years of service among them his American citizenship was never held against him or allowed to interfere with his ministry. He commended those congregations "who kept church and state separate in their way of thinking and dealing and proved that a Christian draws no line in cases of real emergencies, and that brotherly love knows no boundaries and limitations in the service of the Gospel." (12)

Before Rev. Koch finished his own studies he began teaching at the newly founded Theological Seminary in Leipzig. He put his

specialties to use: teaching New Testament Greek and lecturing on New Testament exegesis, on philosophy, and theology.

Although the war did not seriously interrupt Rev. Koch's work as pastor and professor, his studies at the university were sidetracked. His professors encouraged him to continue attending their lectures and seminars, but he refused. Other students might not be so accepting that an American be allowed in their classes. The professors responded by teaching Henry privately and opening their homes to him for advice and consultation. They even included him in the social gatherings at which students met with professors at their homes. Dr. Koch remarked about his extracurricular learning:

> We could observe and study German social life in the intellectual circles and received a very favorable impression. We learned to know German life and thought at its best and shall ever remember those gatherings gratefully. (13)

Henry finished his studies in 1919 and presented his dissertation on the philosophical sources of "The Nature of Man" by Nemesios, bishop of Emesa, Syria. This work, like his seminar work, was presented in Latin.

The pressures of a doctoral exam were compounded by extra social and political unrest that followed Germany's embarrassing defeat in World War I. As the Communist party struggled for power, protests and shooting became common in the streets. On the way to his first oral exam Henry heard shooting and had to wait for police to clear his route to the university. The main examiner, Prof. Heinze, could not get to the university at all

from his part of Leipzig. Even the rescheduled exam was delayed by similar street clashes. On July 12, 1920, though, the American's efforts were officially recognized with the title "Doktor der Philosophie."

Dr. Koch had but nine months to settle into full-time work as a pastor and professor. On January 19, 1921 Dreieinigkeit [Trinity] Lutherische Kirche in Berlin extended a call to him to be their pastor. Dr. Koch accepted this call and was installed February 27, 1921. The service doubled as his official ordination, though he in fact had been serving in the ministry for six and a half years.

In the German capital Dr. Koch continued to balance his parish ministry with a professorship in Greek and philosophy, now at Berlin-Zehlendorf. This theological seminary had recently been built by the Free Church and tenured one of Dr. Koch's Wauwatosa classmates, Dr. Paul Peters.

Berlin University also drew Dr. Koch to hear some of its professors. He heard two noted dogmaticians, Adolf Harnack (author of "The Essence of Christianity") and Reinhold Seeberg, as well as Greek scholar Wilamowitz von Mollendorf. Von Mollendorf and Harnack, as perhaps the representatives of Greek culture and a rationalized Christianity, drew audiences that could be contained only in the Auditorium Maximum. Dr. Koch also mentioned hearing Albert Einstein, but was more interested in the work of Luther scholar Karl Holl.

A discussion between Dr. Holl and Dr. Koch provides a

glimpse of America's developing Lutheranism as it was perceived in Europe. After Dr. Holl presented a special lecture on Luther in Wittenberg, Dr. Koch took the opportunity to thank him for his "objective presentation." Holl, in turn, questioned Dr. Koch about American Lutheranism, particularly about the extent and influence of Lutheran theology in a land of religious liberty and separation of church and state. Dr. Koch would summarize Prof. Holl's interest:

> [Prof. Holl] underscored the limitations placed upon Luther in Germany with its system of state churches. He wanted to know more about the way the ideas and ideals of Luther were carried out in our United States, where such fetters did not exist. It became very apparent that he was quite informed as to the Lutheran chruch in general in our country. He was especially interested to know more about the nature and influence of Lutheranism in our conservative Ev. Luth. Synodical Conference, which he too considered to be a core of sound Lutheranism and more in keeping with the ideas and ideals expressed by Luther himself. (14)

Today when a person recalls that Germany considered separating the church from the state as part of its reconstruction after World War I, he might pause to consider what Germany could now be like if more leaders like Holl and members of the Synodical Conference had pursued that separation.

In spite of Dr. Koch's involvement at Berlin University and teaching at Berlin-Zehlendorf, he led his church to incredible growth. In his fifteen years he built four churches, and his original congregation more than tripled in size, to over 900 by 1928!

Dr. Koch would object to the praise that he was responsible for this incredible growth. As he chronicled the history of his

Berlin congregations over forty years later, he repeatedly pointed the readers to the Lord. Quite correctly he acknowledged, "Ihm allein die Ehre" [The praise belongs to Him (God) alone]. Yet when we say that the Lord has accomplished this growth, we can acknowledge that God is pleased to use both individuals and world events to effect his will. We can better appreciate God's handiwork, then, if we examine the individual(s) and events he has used.

In Berlin the Lord used Dr. Koch, in particular his diligence and pastoral leadership. Earlier Dr. Koch's involvement at Berlin U. and Berlin-Zehlendorf were mentioned. He even served as the seminary's president for a time. Perhaps Dr. Koch's achievement as a pastor should not be considered "in spite of" his outside studies and professorial work. Certainly every hour of his time was scheduled full and had the potential to overtax him. However, by combining the ministry with the stimulation of studying and teaching Dr. Koch reaped rewards in both fields. He stayed sharp for his parish ministry and had practical, real-life applications for his class lectures.

Dr. Koch's work was also based on the relationship he cultivated with his members. One of his top priorities was making home visits. Some pastors might consider those personal visits to be a time-consuming, expendable section in a packed or overcrowded schedule. Dr. Koch likely remembered Jesus' example of spending personal time with the woman at the well, with Nicodemus, and with Zacchaeus. Rev. Koch's father, Frederick,

had also shown the value of home visits as he canvassed, and established congregations in Pardeeville and Fox Lake, Wisconsin.

A second priority in Dr. Koch's relationship with his congregation was respect for his office. German society, and older European society as a whole, honored the fourth commandment highly: children toward parents, citizens to government and laymen to pastor. Dr. Koch worked so as not to betray this esteem. He combined an intellect that could exhort and convince opponents with an enthusiasm and love to preach Christ the Savior -- he earned his people's respect.

Pastor Dr. Koch's dedication to spiritually feed, protect and guide his flock matched the requirements for a pastor laid down by Jesus and outlined by the apostle Paul. God has promised to bless those places where His Word is faithfully taught, but in Berlin the Lord went even further to multiply the success. With the advantage of hindsight we can see how God used world events, particularly disaster, to draw more people to hear this gospel.

In the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries Berlin was politically the capital of Germany, but to the Lutheran Free Church it was an undeveloped mission field. Dr. Koch's father and grandfather had trekked west to get away from the Prussian union (away from Hesse's draft and land shortage as well). Now the grandson was returning. Fifty years of unionism had produced a city of well over a million, of whom 235 belonged to a single, confessional Lutheran congregation. Materially Berlin was at its peak. Spiritually it was struggling.

Actually 235 souls represented a steady growth compared to the first years in Berlin. The earliest records of a free church in Berlin indicate a following of fifteen to twenty people in 1888. (15) For most of the time before 1895 the confessional Lutherans would meet in each other's homes. Pastors from Dresden or Niederplanitz assisted several energetic, capable laymen in serving and building the congregation. In 1897 public services were begun when Berlin's mayor granted the Lutherans use of a school building. Within two years they had collected enough money for a parsonage.

The Missouri Synod took Berlin-Steglitz under her wing and sent Rev. Herman Amling as their first resident pastor October 1, 1899. Amling served for twenty-one years until poor health forced him to retire. The congregation numbered thirty-one members in 1900, but with a full-time pastor it jumped to 124 by 1916 and nearly double that by the time Dr. Koch replaced Rev. Amling.

In the year or two before Dr. Koch arrived in 1921, Trinity began to see its time of heady growth turn into trying times of disappointment and hardship. The years of rationing during World War I were only the beginning.

As Trinity doubled its size from 1916 to 1921 it began to gather money to build its own church. It sent Pastor Amling to America to gather mission contributions from among the Synodical Conference. A businessman in their own congregation donated a substantial 30,000 marks toward the building.

In the decade between World War I until the depression of the 1930s America roared successfully through the 1920s. But in Germany the war was immediately followed by inflation and depression. The German mark that is worth about sixty cents today became so inflated that people were seen carrying mark notes in wheelbarrows to buy groceries. Prices would change overnight as the mark's value tumbled. So worthless was the money that Dr. Koch put aside a million-mark note as a souvenir. Trinity saw its successful fund drive decimated, and the plan to build had to be scrapped.

Dr. Koch reports that even as the congregation saw its plans, what it also believed to be the Lord's plans, shattered, and as Germany's most destitute thronged to the big cities like Berlin, still the congregation's zeal was not chilled. He comments, "The Lord wanted to help his flock in a different way. The Lord does not lack for ways and means to accomplish his work." (16)

Looking back we can see some of the ways the Lord worked results better than what humans could plan. The money that Trinity could protect in real estate eventually was used to fund the free church's seminary, the Hochschule at Berlin-Zehlendorf. In the end this money stretched to help produce pastors for the entire German Free Church.

Trinity was granted the use of a famous state church building for Sunday services. Paul Gerhardt Kirche had been built, supported and attended by Frederick the Great. The

church, named after the famous Lutheran pastor and hymn-writer of the Thirty Years War, was also distinguished for its organ with reversed black and white keys and for a previous organist, Philip Emmanuel Bach. Trinity used this church beginning in 1919, for Dr. Koch's installation, and for seven more years until Trinity dedicated its own building (1928). (17)

By far the most trying (and subsequently, most rewarding) hardship was the poverty throughout Germany and concentrated in the cities. Dr. Koch's congregation wanted to help, but its families were struggling to simply feed and clothe themselves. Skeptics might have concluded that the Lord had abandoned his people.

The Lord was at work though, first in America. Members of the Missouri and Wisconsin Synods were alerted to the plight of their brothers and sisters across the Atlantic. Dr. Walther Meier in particular had a place in his heart for the Germans. As leader of the Walther League he sparked Missouri's youth groups to gather food and supplies. The young people responded so enthusiastically that Dr. Koch spoke of every last spot in his parsonage frequently being filled with supplies to be distributed: "Thousands were equipped with precious clothing and provisions which they could otherwise never have acquired and went home satisfied and smiling." (18)

The relief work quickly attracted people from farther and farther away. Soon new distribution points had to be established around Berlin. The people began to ask who these generous donors

were and at the same time asked that God's Word be preached for them. School halls had to be rented for worship services. As Dr. Koch travelled between the various preaching stations, Trinity's choir accompanied him to beautify the services. Other laymen were busy distributing the aid at the preaching stations. Soon there was a service in a section of Berlin every day of the week but Saturday.

While Meier and the Walther League concentrated on relief for Berlin, Missouri's Lutheran Laymen's League sent packages to other cities and regions that were hardest hit. The effect was that the Americans through their gifts gave the Free Church the opportunity to expand its reach and to show true doctrine and practice.

The distribution of gifts went so well that a number of well-to-do people in the German government gave the churches supplies to distribute for them. Through such a donation Dr. Koch got to know and visit with Field Marshal von Mackensen. (19)

As the relief work continued Dr. Koch traveled to the United States to report to Lutherans in the Synodical Conference and to encourage them to continue their effective giving. At Concordia, St. Louis he met with Dr. Franz Pieper and Dr. Dau. In Cleveland he got to know Dr. C. M. Zorn, whom he credited with an exceptional knowledge of and sincere concern for conditions in Germany, as well as being a first-rate Lutheran theologian.

More than any other person it was Dr. F. Pfotenhauer, President of the Missouri Synod, who ensured that Dr. Koch could

make his presentations throughout the United States. Dr. Koch wrote of him:

> Without his valuable recommendation so many doors would not have been open to us. He held a warm interest in the old country, particularly for the dear Free Church of the day. We also repeatedly enjoyed a cordial hospitality at his home. (20)

Within the Wisconsin Synod there were similar warm receptions, especially among those whose forefathers had come from Germany.

Dr. Koch returned to Germany thankful for the many opportunities he had to speak. He also enjoyed exchanging ideas with the pastors on the present and future work in the Free Church.

The poverty and disappointment which the Lord permitted for a time made it possible for his people to reach many more prospects than would normally be possible. In a revision of his feeding of 5,000 God offered hungry people bread, then added the Bread of Life. People learned stewardship, fellowship, evangelism and God's providence, all by example and vivid experience. Dr. Koch summarized:

> The great trouble in Germany and the charitable help of the American brethren proved to be a great blessing for all. Many souls were added to the congregations. The Lord continued faithfully as the difficulty diminished. God's Word proved itself on their hearts as a power of God to bless. Our heart becomes warm when we think of these unexpected blessings. We consider these years of the springtime of the gospel to be the most richly blessed and the most beautiful in our entire life as a pastor. (21)

The preaching stations quickly developed into independent congregations. A congregation formed in Berlin-Neu Koln and

called Pastor Schlottmann from California. In Berlin's north several preaching stations combined to form Trinity. Besides preaching stations in Moabit and Weissensee a congregation and orphanage were established in Potsdam.

When Dr. Koch wrote about the congregations for an anniversary, he lamented that Potsdam had been oppressed and separated from the rest by the Berlin wall. Now as one reads about the doctrinal deterioration of the German free churhes, the "severe test" of the East German church may become another hidden blessing as the Lord preserves his gospel.

One of the least expected fruits of the Germany-America fellowship was the meeting and eventual marriage of Dr. Koch and Marie Friedrichs. Normally a man born in Nebraska and living in Berlin would not expect to find a wife from San Francisco. As it happened, Marie came to Berlin because her family had donated the money needed to build the church in Neu Koln (1925). This enthusiasm for the Church might be traceable to her great-grandfather and Missouri pioneer, Rev. Frederick Wyneken.

Henry and Marie went one one date (a museum) while she was in Berlin. When she returned to San Francisco their relationship had no other course than to develop through the mail.

A couple of these letters answer why Dr. Koch was still single after thirty-eight years. They also reveal the thoughtfulness that one might suspect is lacking in a one-date marriage. They are not fluffy notes of trivia, nor romantic poetry. In content they address the relation of husband and

wife, the special nature of parsonage life and potential problems to iron out. In length they are 1200 to 1500 words long.

Without the speed of airmail the letters were spread out so that in half a year, from October 1927 to February 1928, two letters could be sent and answered. Henry begins apologetically that he is "so wahlerisch und so kritisch" (choosey and critical) about marriage. He jokes that the women of the congregation tease him that he is a misogynist, to which he always smiles amusedly and says nothing. He then explains, "Man is a product of his environment, and the same holds true for me." In part he has been fully occupied with his ministry in Leipzig and Berlin. He also has been soured to marriage because so many pastors' wives have hampered, if not ruined, their husbands' ministry. Frequent cases of a wife's gossip, meddling or dissatisfaction with the prestige of a congregation or of a husband's ministry itself have harmed other pastors. Now Henry is skeptical about his own chances for marriage. (22)

This background helps explain Henry's cautiousness and his lengthy dissertations on marriage and parsonage life. The words that follow, though, will also provide a foil against which to compare modern dating, marriage and parsonage life.

Henry begins letters of December 1927 and February 1928 with thanks for Marie's latest letter and happiness that they see eye to eye on previous topics. He then outlines the quiet contentment a pastor's wife needs, recognizing the leadership of the husband who himself is neither a tyrant nor hen-pecked. He

warns Marie that he will be gone most of the day, and the few hours he has at home will be for sermon study. Their home will be an example for the entire congregation, so they will need to communicate well with each other. So often he has seen families where a person sulks or holds a grudge for days on end, putting all the blame on the other character.

In reading this letter one can easily sense a frustration from counseling experience, yet Henry balances frustration with his happiness that Marie has agreed with him so far. He encourages her to be perfectly candid and prays that the Lord will continue to lead them together.

After his third letter listing his concerns and warnings Henry again asks Marie for her frank opinions on what he has said and concludes:

> You're going to think that I am the most thorough-going preacher of morals. But that can be good. I am speaking this way because [I've seen] so many muddied experiences. I could not go through now what I find is so unedifying with others. Better to tell right away what one is like and what one expects. Then a person can later be peaceful and enjoy life together. (23)

Apparently Marie and Henry saw eye to eye, if not in person, then in regard to marriage. That summer Dr. Koch let out the secret of his romance and travelled to San Francisco to propose and marry Marie. On Sept. 11, 1928 the thirty-nine-year-old Henry married the twenty-seven-year-old Marie at St. Paulus Ev. Lutheran Church, San Francisco.

The couple did not have the intimacy before marriage that modern couples rate as essential in order to judge if their

marriage will work. The two did not consider marriage's success to depend on feelings of love or on an artificial trial period of living together. Henry and Marie believed that marriage is best (and God-pleasing) when it is based in commitment, and that a meaningful commitment comes not from fickle feelings but from thoughtful discussion. When they found that they shared the same goals, they could responsibly promise to share the same pathway as husband and wife. The rest of their lives, fifty-five years together, testified to that wisdom.

Immediately after the wedding Marie moved with her husband to Berlin, where they stayed for seven years. In that time they were blessed with a son, Henry Fredrick (1929) and daughters Elisabeth Katharine (1932) and Ruth Wilhelmina (1933).

The Koch family life could be summarized as loving, but strict. As a Lutheran pastor, Dr. Koch was well aware of I Timothy's requirements that a minister be a congregation's example and "must manage his own family well and see that his children obey him with proper respect." Add to that principle Dr. Koch's own upbringing in a parsonage, the European reverence for the fourth commandment, and the glass-house visibility of a Berlin parsonage -- a strict family could only be expected. All three children understood the meaning, if not the term for the Bible's "ὑπακούω" (obey; hear and act). It was a discipline in which the children did not always agree with parents (nothing new), but which led them to honor and care for their parents through old age.

Dr. Koch continued his pace of church work, including the construction of church buildings at Neu Koln (1925) and Steglitz (1928) and the purchase of buildings for an orphanage and hospital in Potsdam (1927). When he was at his parsonage his study was more his home than the rest of the house. The parents used dinner and supper time to teach good manners and the ability to speak English. The children in this way grew up bilingual. (When they moved to the United States German became the language at the Koch's dinner and supper.)

By the mid-1930s Dr. Koch recognized that serious trouble was brewing with Hitler. Nazi flags became common in all buildings, including churches, and Nazi "visitors" started monitoring pastors and church services. Dr. Koch had been trapped once by a sudden outbreak of war. For the sake of his family and to preserve their American citizenship he made plans to return to America.

Mrs. Koch and the children went ahead to San Francisco through Panama. Dr. Koch stayed several more weeks to see that Trinity-Steglitz and the new congregations were provided for. With a sad heart Dr. Koch left his congregation of fifteen years and his home country of twenty-five years.

III

In the United States Dr. Koch continued his work as a pastor and professor, but no longer concurrently. This second part of his ministry, lasting thirty-three years, involved four years as a professor then twenty-nine years pastoring two Wisconsin

congregations. When fifteen years of retirement are included, 1936 marks not only the division of German and American life, but also one half, forty-seven years, of Dr. Koch's long life.

Dr. Koch did not have to wait long after his move to receive another call--Concordia Collegiate Institute at Bronxville, N.Y. called him to teach Greek and Latin.

As a professor Dr. Koch approached his classes with enthusiasm and expected his students to apply themselves to their work diligently. He urged the students to excel and be able to pass the tough New York regents' exam. With his learning he could blend wit: In a students' gathering while he was still teaching at Berlin-Zehlendorf, a student prepared a speech to honor him. To add a special touch the student presented it in Latin. Not to be outdone, Dr. Koch graciously responded in Greek.

Unfortunately the Concordia of the east coast was beginning to show signs in the 1930s of Missouri's doctrine and practice problems exposed in the 1950s. Dr. Koch did not back down in his defense of Scripture and alerted the school to the warning signs.

Although the Atlantic separated New York from Berlin, Dr. and Mrs. Koch continued to correspond with members of the Berlin churches. Besides showing the close bond that had developed between pastor and congregation, the correspondence also reminded Dr. Koch of the joy he found as a pastor. When a mission congregation in Manitowoc extended its first call to Dr. Koch on October 2, 1940, a door to parish ministry again stood open

before him.

Dr. Koch accepted the call to Grace and was installed at First German Ev. Luth. December 1, 1940, two and a half months after the congregation was founded. (24)

Grace had been started by about thirty Lutherans who wanted a Wisconsin Synod church on the north side of Manitowoc. Immanuel Lutheran had been the northside Wisconsin church until pastor Uetzmann led the church out of the synod for two decades in the Protes'tant conference.

Dr. Koch was previously aware of this trouble through his father, who had retired to Manitowoc and had even chosen the site for his house in order to be near a church, Immanuel. Already in a letter dated March 24, 1936, Frederick tells his son about the problem developing at Immanuel. While Frederick wants to ease Henry's concerns over leaving his call in Germany, he has to inform him of Manitowoc's trouble. Pastor Uetzmann has announced that he wants to remain in the Wisconsin Synod and at the same time be one of the Protes'tants. The church council realizes this is unacceptable and places the matter before the conference of pastors. (25) Frederick observes that the council is not yet convinced by the pastor, though some younger people are. He leaves the end to the Lord and remarks what his tack will be as a retired pastor, "I shall keep silence about the whole affair and observe strict neutrality until the end has approached." (26)

Between Dr. Koch's arrival in the United States in 1936 and his parents' death in 1938 he and his family vacationed in

Manitowoc. He became more familiar with the needs on the north side, and people came to know him through his preaching and in person.

When Dr. Koch arrived in Manitowoc in 1940 his ministry emphasized the same gospel message that had born fruit in Germany. Under Dr. Koch's leadership Grace grew to fifty members by April 1941, 114 by December 1943 and 300 by the end of 1945. Dr. Koch held before his members mission work as the work of the Church -- in his sermons, in private visits and in his stewardship. The annual treasurer's list of offerings showed members that their pastor put his words into action, not only as an example of tithing, but also in placing mission support ahead of local needs or building projects. (27)

The congregation that started as a handful meeting in Lincoln Park Field House had a loan, then property and a church building two and a half years later. Three and a half years after that their original membership had multiplied tenfold, and Grace became self-sufficient. At the congregation's thirty-fifth anniversary Dr. Koch wrote of Grace's success:

> It was the work of the Holy Spirit, who inspired all of the members to cooperate with their pastor in the winning of souls for Christ. The fine mission spirit was an inspiration to all of us. To God alone all glory! With Balaam of old we have to confess: `This God has wrought.' (Numbers 23:23). (28)

Dr. Koch directed away credit for his success, just as he had done before in Berlin. His wish for Grace's future was similarly familiar to all whom he served:

May purity of doctrine and proper church discipline be

> preserved in our midst. May we all join hands in fostering the spirit of missions in our midst.... May we all meet once again before the throne of the Lamb and rejoice over his rich grace toward our congregation and each of us. (29)

As Dr. Koch worked on founding the congregation he also began writing articles for the Northwestern Lutheran. One of his longest running series was "In the Footsteps of St. Paul," which appeared regularly from March 21, 1943 to July 31, 1960. For these articles Dr. Koch thoroughly researched available history so that he could defend and bring alive the biblical accounts of the man he revered most. Dr. Koch's research and reverence for Paul made Greece and Asia Minor some of his favorite places to tour after his retirement.

Although the Rev. Dr. Koch was fifty-seven years old by the time Grace became self-sufficient in 1946, retirement was not part of his plans, nor would it be for more than twenty years yet.

In 1947 he received a call to Zion Lutheran Church, about thirty miles north of Manitowoc in Morrison. In a sense Morrison represented a step into something new for Dr. Koch, into a peaceful country parish, not the intensity of a city like Leipzig, Berlin, New York or even Manitowoc. In a very real sense, though, Dr. Koch and his family were stepping back, back to Germany in the form of a German-American church community.

The atmosphere of Zion, the congregation that Dr. Koch helped to mold and maintain for twenty-two years, is definitely German. Yet this atmosphere is difficult to condense or fairly picture for an American who has known only the newer, amalgamated

congregations of America's cities.

Perhaps the one who can most clearly note the distinguishing marks of the vanishing German-American churches is a German himself. A. E. Wollschlager, an author and a member of Dr. Koch's Berlin congregation, toured the United States and wrote a travelogue of his journey. In one of his books he included a chapter on the Germans in Wisconsin, and used Morrison as a typical case. (30)

Wollschlager comments on the central setting of the church, parsonage, school and cemetery, "They tower proud and tall like a manor among old, great trees." The church is in the middle section, where the farmers wanted it. "Here the churchly gathering is not only the spiritual but also the cultural center of the community, as was the case with us in times long past." Cars swarm around the church on Sundays. Children attend the parochial school without exception. The original one-room school was built to last for etermity, with walls a meter thick. Now it has been extended from one to eight classrooms, yet its architet has blended the modern to look like all is part of the same foundation. (31)

In the cemetery tombstones still testify for the forefathers who built this congregation. The grave markers invariably speak German, with names like Rosenkranz, Neuhoff and Huelsebeck.

The Sunday services are easily the highlight of the week. An English service is held at ten o'clock; German at eleven. One of the old members tells Wollschlager (in German) his own

rationale for continuing German services in modern America, "Finally, Luther certainly knew no English." (32)

Sons may have their offices in the city, daughters may marry in the city, "yet they remain faithful to the congregation--every Sunday that they come to church, they come here." (33)

Wollschlager cannot help but notice the similarity here to the church he and Dr. Koch knew in Germany:

> Over this great unmoveable congregation hovers, it seems to me, a whiff of the past centuries. Here one still lives in the time before the world wars.... Here in distant Wisconsin the old tradition holds true, here it is still clothed with high values. Here the youth step as a matter of course into the roles of the aging, and the aging change with time into the grouping of honored and cared for elders. (34)

The congregation takes the substantial financial load of supporting church, pastor, teachers, school and all, and the children take up the load in the same matter of course as others have done for centuries. [The load seems even more substantial to a man used to government-paid churches].

As Wollschlager sees the unique atmosphere disappearing he concludes:

> The congregation was as essential to one's existence as is food and drink, as is father and mother, as is birth and death. What still lived here, I discovered, was something which was already essentially gone in Europe, but which was still here, an Old World community in itself. The people and surroundings of this congregation have drawn me more than once. I found the peace, the sobriety and stability, and the great calmness which rules here to be a reprieve. This reprieve was hard to find in Europe; if indeed it once could be found, it is now long gone. Here in America it still lived. (35)

It lived in Dr. Koch's Morrison.

A bit of Germany was just as alive in Morrison's parsonage.

A visiting pastor naturally became a lunch or dinner guest. When Dr. Koch was chosen to head a 1956 revision of Luther's Small Catechism, Mrs. Koch regularly prepared the meals for the committee of pastors and teachers. In late afternoon visiting family or friends would be offered cookies, and tea or milk. So well did these amenities blend with Dr. and Mrs. Koch's entire home that their grandchildren were later surprised to learn that European teatime and hour-long suppers were not standard in other grandparents' homes.

Dr. Koch's knowledge of Germany's free churches served the Wisconsin Synod well in the 1950s. He was asked to accompany synod representative Alfred Maas to Germany in April 1951. The synod archives contain dozens of letters between Dr. Koch and Rev. Maas, mostly concerned with preparations for and results of this visit to the German churches.

The German churches were now struggling as refugee missions following World War II's devastation. Unfortunately, their chief supporter, the LCMS, was erring in its fellowship and discipline practices. Dr. Koch went intending "to serve as a good will ambassador and discovered that Missouri's officials either do not inform their own brethren objectively or not at all. They were left in the dark and begged me to give them more information." (36) Dr. Koch, aware of the Synodical Conference's problems, tried to build harmony with the Germans and the Wisconsin Synod. He found that most brethren felt as Wisconsin did, especially deploring Missouri's entrance into union with a German church

without first agreeing on doctrine and practice.

Dr. Koch's backround qualified him as a known and knowledgeable person on both sides. He could understand the rationale each side used to approach problems and could help clear up needless misunderstandings. A less happy, but equally important function was evaluating erring brethren and knowing what questions to ask them. Confessional theologians know that furtive silence about error is as dangerous as an easily seen denial of truth. Dr. Koch knew the Europeans and how they thought -- he could press the points that some might have preferred to leave untouched. (37)

After Dr. Koch's return he offered presentations on the German Refugee Mission and again rallied support for its churches. Although his time was limited by his call in Morrrison, he spoke whenever and wherever he could.

Dr. Koch also accepted the position of editor for the Gemeindeblatt, the synod's German Northwestern Lutheran. He served as its editor until his retirement and its last issue in 1969. Although some pastors have scoffed at the Gemeindeblatt for "outliving its usefulness," Dr. Koch saw its value from a broader perspective. Lutherans in Germany and South Africa wrote to Dr. Koch requesting subscriptions. He,in turn, approached the magazine with them in mind, "[The Gemeindeblatt] clarified things in the minds of many over there.... I view it as a fine aid to our mission and to the spreading of the truth." (38)

Obviously Dr. Koch's ministry brought an American flavor to

Germany and a German flavor to America. He wrote of his dual interest to Rev. Maas in 1952, "I am still in the work across the seas with my whole heart. It is so vital for our whole Lutheran church. Their pioneer work casts its shadows on our own." (39)

Dr. Koch's concern was also drawn to the split that developed between the Wisconsin and Missouri synods. Dr. Koch was staunchly opposed to tolerating error, yet he urged patience in trying to correct Missouri. He thought of the Lutherans in Germany who relied on Missouri to survive. If Wisconsin hoped that conservative German churches would boldly separate from big sister Missouri, it would have to inform, if not financially support, the German brothers.

Zion in Morrison also asked Dr. Koch to speak for it at convention and urge caution. When Wisconsin broke with Missouri in 1961 Dr. Koch did not immediately sever Zion's close ties with a Missouri congregation in nearby Wayside. He seems to have preferred to work on an individual congregational level and proceed slowly. When Wisconsin officials stepped in Dr. Koch relented, but not before he warned the officials about the dangers of hierarchical rule. He knew the WELS and LCMS from within and from without, and when he perceived that either had stepped away from the Bible, Walther or Hoenecke, he was not afraid to tell them so.

Throughout his years in the Wisconsin Synod at Grace, at Morrison and in retirement, Dr. Koch prepared essays for district and Synodical Conference conventions. Among them are essays

titled: "The Church: Its Essence and Its Marks, Its Weapons and Its Enemies," "The Formula of Concord," and "My Kingdom Is Not of This World." These works are marked by thoroughness ("The Church" and "My Kingdom" are each seventy pages long), historical research, prominence of the gospel, and practical applications. Pastors around the country wrote to thank him for his 1949 essay on the Church. "The Formula of Concord" was translated and used by the confessional Lutheran church in Sweden. (40)

IV

In 1969 the eighty-year-old Rev. Dr. Koch retired after fifty-five years in the ministry. In retirement he undertook some of the personal activites for which he had not taken time as a pastor. When a man has devoted his life to the ministry, though, he looks for ways to use retirement for the church, too.

For a year and a half Dr. and Mrs. Koch lived and travelled in Europe. He returned refreshed and with the beginning of a substantial slide collection for lectures. Each time Dr. and Mrs. Koch travelled to Germany, Greece, Israel or Egypt, they returned with more slides for church history presentations. People became amazed at his detailed lectures from a collection of literally thousands and thousands of slides.

As certainly as Prof. Hauck's impressive lectures in Leipzig had taken careful preparation, so Dr. Koch's lectures did not slip out of his sleeve. His stacks of typewritten 4x6 and 5x8 inch index cards witness to the effort he put into these lectures. He presented history as moral lessons to learn and as

testimonies to God's grace for his church.

Ironically, in Dr. Koch's many travels he never was able to see one of his main goals, the monastery at Mt. Sinai, but he did become an expert on Asia Minor. A Chicago travel agent, Clifford Gotaas, hired the aged scholar to lead several tours tracing the missionary journeys of St. Paul.

Dr. Koch would tease his "better half" that the reason he travelled so often was simply to please her. She enjoyed accompanying her husband, but it was not hard for his family to see his own not-so-well-hidden enthusiasm. Old legs became dramatically stronger and steadier at the mention of travel. Dr. Koch considered travel important enough to take his son and his young family on several trips to historical sites of the United States.

Eventually Dr. Koch did not need to urge his family to learn history -- his slides, if not his genes, programmed them to travel at just about any opportunity. His son had already taken two years after seminary graduation to study in Germany (1955-57). One daughter, Ruth, accompanied her parents as their driver and travelled on her own in Europe and Africa in the 1970s. Two of Elisabeth's five children caught the travel bug, including Katherine (Knuth), who is now serving for three years as a nurse at Mwembezhi Lutheran Dispensary, Zambia. All three of son Henry's children have picked up an interest in history. One has taken college trips to England, China and Russia (including Siberia in winter). Another has followed the family lead to

become a fourth-generation pastor and plans to study in Germany.

When Dr. Koch did not travel, he read and wrote. From 1970 until his death in 1984 he contributed regularly to Christian News. A comprehensive list of his articles would include devotions, historical essays and commentaries. He wrote pointed, thoughtful devotions such as "The Wandering Church," based on Heb. 13:14. (41) He translated interesting events in church history that had been lost in German, such as an ironic story of Luther sleeping in a hotel room next to a sworn enemy and converting him through his overheard, fervent prayers. (42) During the church seasons Dr. Koch pointed readers to well-known historical names like Bethlehem, then showed that their forgotten facts can be more impressive than fiction. (43)

As comfortable as Dr. Koch was at a slide screen or at a typewriter, he undoubtedly found his fulfillment in the pulpit. Even at ninety-five years Dr. Koch ascended the pulpit steps at his son's Cleveland, Wisconsin church for Good Friday. His legs and eyes were weakened by age, but his voice was clear and powerful. Dr. Koch regularly preached on Good Fridays, wielding the sharp sword of God's law with skill, then sheathing it with Christ's confident cry, "It is finished."

When Dr. Koch's wife, Marie, suffered a stroke and died early in 1984, Dr. Koch's health soon failed also. He had lived decades past his best friends and associates, but had marked all his efforts as grace, "To God alone the glory." On November 7, 1984 the Lord called his weary warrior home.

ENDNOTES

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2 Wilbert Gawrisch, ed. "The History of Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary from 1863 to 1903," Wisconsin Lutheran Quarterly (Mequon, WI: Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary, Winter 1988) pp. 9-10.

3 50th Anniversary bulletin from St. John Ev. Lutheran Chruch in Pardeeville, Wisconsin (1945).

4 50th Anniversary bulletin from Trinity Ev. Lutheran Church in Caledonia, Wisconsin (1905).

5 Commencement bulletin from Northwestern University [College] (Watertown, Wisconsin, June 22, 1909).

6 Dr. Koch kept a diary for at least one of his years at the seminary.

7 Dr. Koch's "Vita," in which he details his studies in Leipzig and Berlin. (personal, not published).

8 Translated from Dr. Koch's "Vita," p. 3.

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10 Dr. H. A. Koch, "Constantin Von Tischendorf," Christian News Encyclopedia (Washington, MO: Missourian Publishing Co. 1983) p. 1667.

11 Dr. Koch, "Vita," p. 3.

12 Dr. Koch, "Vita," p. 5.

13 Dr. Koch, "Vita," p. 6.

14 Dr. Koch, "Vita," p. 4.

15 Dr. Koch, "Ueber die Entstehung der Ev. Luth. Dreieinigkeitsgemeinde Berlin-Nord," (a family copy, probably for Trinity Berlin-North's anniversary. It traces the development of the free churches in Berlin; 10 pages). p. 1.

16 Dr. Koch, "Ueber..." p. 3.

17 Dr. Koch's photo album, which pictures and dates the churches in Berlin (family copy).

18 Dr. Koch, "Ueber..." p. 5.

19 Dr. Koch, "Ueber..." p. 7.

20 Dr. Koch, "Ueber..." p. 8.

21 Dr. Koch, "Ueber..." pp. 6-7.

22 Dr. Koch, a personal letter to Miss Marie Friedrichs, December 14, 1927.

23 Dr. Koch, a personal letter to Miss Marie Friedrichs, February 7, 1928.

24 35th Anniversary bulletin for Grace Ev. Lutheran Church (Manitowoc, WI, 1975).

25 Frederick Koch, a personal letter to Dr. H. A. Koch, March 24, 1936.

26 Ibid.

27 Annual Report, Grace Ev. Lutheran Church (Manitowoc, WI, December 31, 1943).

28 35th Anniversary bulletin for Grace Ev. Lutheran Church.

29 Ibid.

30 A. E. Johann [Wollschlager], Der Grosse Traum Amerika, (Hamburg: Mosaik Verlag, 1965) pp.129-131.

31 Ibid. p. 129.

32 Ibid. p. 130.

33 Ibid.

34 Ibid. p. 131.

35 Ibid.

36 Dr. Koch, letter to Alfred Maas dated June 12, 1951 (Mequon, WI: Wisconsin Lutheran Synod archives, "Refugee Mission" box 4, folder 22).

37 Interview (January 4, 1988) with Dr. H. A. Koch's son, Rev. Henry F. Koch, in which he recalled his father's 1951 summary of the German free church visit.

38 Dr. Koch, letter to Alfred Maas dated August 13, 1952 (Mequon, WI: Wisconsin Lutheran Synod archives, "Refugee Mission" box 4, folder 22).

39 Dr. Koch, letter to Alfred Maas dated August 4, 1952 (Mequon,WI: Wisconsin Lutheran Synod archives, "Refugee Mission"

box 4, folder 22).

40 Dr. Koch, "400th Anniversary of the Formula of Concord," Christian News, (New Haven, MO: Lutheran News, Inc., February 21, 1977) p. 8.

41 Dr. Koch, "The Wandering Church -- a Devotion Based on Hebrews 13:14," Christian News, (New Haven, MO: Lutheran News, Inc., November 27, 1978) p. 10.

42 Dr. Koch, "Moltenberg and Martin Luther," Christian News, (New Haven, MO: Lutheran News, Inc., November 6, 1978)

43 Dr. Koch, "Bethlehem," Christian News, (New Haven, MO: Lutheran News, Inc., December 26, 1977) p. 6.

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