

Ministering to Members in the Armed Forces

By Clayton E. Krug

[December 22, 1978]

1. How it has commonly been done in the past

Tribes and nations have been willing to wage war in spite of unfavorable odds so long as they believed their god was with them. Gideon's three-hundred boldly attacked the Midianites who were "as grasshoppers for multitude."

But nobody wants to fight if he thinks his god is not on his side. To insure this, or at least to convince the masses that it is so, war aims are always proclaimed to be just; the people are admonished to pray for the success of their fighters; and the god or dieties of the nation are taken along to battle in the form of religious leaders and religious symbols. Priests sounding trumpets went before the army of Israel with the Ark of the Covenant at Jericho. Moslems scourged half a world under the star and crescent of Allah. Crusaders were, by definition, followers of the Cross.

Armed forces are not thought to be complete unless supplied with representatives of their deity or ideology—prophets, priests, commissars, chaplains. This has been taken as a matter of course since time immemorial. The Council of Ratisbon in 742 AD, for one example, provided for Christian chaplains in its ecclesiastical law.

As long as the entire tribe or nation had the same religious faith or superstition there was no problem; but where there were multiple faiths the question became, whose faith will win the favor of supplying religion to the armed forces? The king's? The majority's? Everybody's? Each of these solutions has been tried. Where there has been a state religion, as in Europe, the government has supplied chaplains to the armed forces just as it has supplied clergy to the churches. In the American Colonies this pattern was usually followed, too. In Concord, Massachusetts Bay, for example, a certain Rev. Emerson was the town pastor, paid from taxes. When the militia assembled he preached to them as a matter of course, just as he performed his other duties. When Col. George Washington appealed to Governor Dinwiddie of Virginia to appoint a chaplain for his regiment in the war against the French his appeal was denied, not on principle, but for reasons of economy.

During the War of the Revolution most of the ministering to the armed forces, loyalist or rebel, was done by camp pastors or civilian chaplains who were without official status. Soon after the war broke out Rev. Ezra Stiles wrote that, "the Army...have Ministers plenty...have preaching not only in the Meetg-houses but Fields—a general Seriousness & sense of religion, & much singing of Psalms & Anthems thro' the Army—especially Morng. and Eveng. Prayers."

But fighting forces seem to require careful organization, to make the chain of command lead directly from top to bottom. Colonels, cooks, and chaplains alike are liable to be included in the overall organizational diagrams. The Revolution, which began with unorganized camp pastors, closed with an organized system of brigade chaplains. The legal origin of the present Corps of Chaplains is traced to a 1775 resolution of the Continental Congress, which set the pay of chaplains at twenty dollars a month. Once begun, the system expanded quickly during the War. A 1776 regulation mentioned chaplains commissioned to regiments, companies, troops, and garrisons. In addition to these there were hospital chaplains, a chaplain missionary to the friendly Indians, and, interestingly, a German chaplain-at-large.

Already then the American Church had many denominations. Which should be represented in the chaplaincy? The only consistent principle was that the chaplain should represent, if possible, the religious sentiment of the troops he served. When Congress, in 1777, desired to substitute brigade chaplains for regimental chaplains, Gen. Washington protested that the measure might introduce religious disputes, whereas the regimental arrangement "gives every Regiment an Opportunity of having a chaplain of their own religious

Sentiments, it is founded on a plan of a more generous toleration...a Brigade...composed of four or five, and perhaps in some instances six Regiments, there might be so many different modes of worship.” Yet, in 1813, Congress provided for one chaplain for each brigade. So far as records show, all chaplains commissioned up through the War of 1812 were Protestant.

By order of Congress issued after the Revolutionary War in 1784, the Continental Army was reduced to a total of eighty men, who were retained to guard stores at West Point and Fort Pitt. The Corps of Chaplains was cut to one or two men; and sometimes there were none. The brief buildup of forces for the War of 1812 was again followed by general demobilization. An Act of Congress in 1818 provided for one chaplain. It is thought likely, however, that the need for religious services in the Army was provided by a contract system of civilian chaplains, similar to “citizen surgeons” who in cases of need took the place of non-existent regular army surgeons.

Although, in 1838, Congress authorized the commissioning of up to thirty post chaplains, the actual number serving was seldom even half that. The reasons given by historians for this situation are first, the spirit of religious apathy then abroad in the land; and, second, the fact that many Americans questioned the constitutionality of the Chaplaincy. The revival of religious faith which swept across the nation during the Civil War showed itself among the fighting forces on both sides as clearly as elsewhere. “Mine eyes have seen the glory of the coming of the Lord.” Unofficial chaplains, camp pastors, clergymen, and lay evangelists were active and welcome everywhere. Congress, for its part, when calling for half a million volunteers in 1861, provided that each regiment of militia was to have its chaplain, who was to be a regularly ordained minister of a Christian denomination. Again, in August of the same year, regimental chaplains were provided for the Regular Army, who likewise were to be Christian ministers. In 1862 this requirement was changed so as to allow for Jewish chaplains, and now read that a chaplain must be “a regularly ordained minister of some religious denomination.”

Christian and Jewish. But there are people of other faiths within our borders. All are promised equal standing and equal rights. Furthermore, the names Christian and Jewish both cover a wide range of distinctive beliefs. It is a practical impossibility for government to support and regulate a religious ministry without infringing to some degree on religious liberty and freedom of conscience. The story of the Chaplaincy in the years since the Civil War demonstrates this.

Ideally, every religious body should, at its own expense, take care of its own adherents when in the military, as it does when they are at home; and every soldier should be permitted to select his own spiritual adviser. Yet on board ship, or in an isolated post, not everyone can be served by his own clergy. The alternatives are either for the government to provide no religious services at all, or to ask one clergyman to provide for the religious needs of all as best he can.

Most American religious bodies appear to be satisfied that the military chaplaincy as it exists today is about the best solution possible. When a committee, which had been appointed by our Synod for this purpose, tried to find other denominations who might share our views and be ready to take steps with us to seek changes in the laws and regulations governing the chaplaincy, it could find none. It would seem that, by trial and error, a method of promoting good morals and morale, desired by the government, and affording opportunity to inculcate and practice religion, desired by the churches, has been arrived at that is generally satisfactory. There are those on both sides who are not satisfied with the government chaplaincy. The Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod is one of these.

2. How our Synod has carried on its ministry to members in the Armed Forces

From its beginnings until the First World War our Synod had no formal ministry to the military. One pastor, Paul Brockmann, before and later minister of Trinity Lutheran Church in Waukesha, Wisconsin, was an officially commissioned chaplain at Fort Douglas in Utah for some five years at the turn of the century. It is not known if there were others—relations between pastors and congregations and the Synod were more free and

easy in those times than they are today. During America's involvement in World War I, 1917 to 1918, there was complete cooperation between our Synod and the Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod in the task of providing for the spiritual needs of young men from congregations of both synods; both were members of the Synodical Conference, working together harmoniously.

It was a time for prompt action. All planning and organizing was put in the hands of the Lutheran Church Board for Army and Navy, better known simply as the Army and Navy Board. The Wisconsin Synod was represented on the Board by two men, who in turn were answerable to the Wisconsin Synod Committee for the Spiritual Care of our Brethren in War Service. This Committee was composed of Pastors John Brenner and O. Hagedorn and attorney Ernst von Briesen.

The Army and Navy Board reacted quickly to the enormous task before it. By the end of the war it had appointed seventy civilian chaplains, who devoted their entire time to this service. One hundred and twenty four part time camp pastors were appointed to minister at locations near their parishes. Thirteen pastors were accredited by the Board to be commissioned as military chaplains. Of these, four served in the American Expeditionary Force, three in the U. S. Navy, and the remainder at stateside posts.

During the course of the War some 350 military camps, naval bases, hospitals, and sanatoria were operated for U.S. Forces. A total of 37,582 Synodical Conference service men were registered with the Army and Navy Board. Of these, 10,645 served overseas, in France, in the Canal Zone, in Hawaii, in the Philippines, and in Siberia, as well as in many naval bases.

A central office was set up in Chicago to handle the administrative works with an office manager and twenty secretaries and clerks. Twenty automobiles were bought and used to facilitate work in the camps. More than eighty thousand hymnals and prayer books were distributed, plus 12,000 New Testaments, 425,000 sermons, 260,000 tracts. A *Soldiers and Sailors Bulletin* was issued in 30,000 copies per month.

It was reported that from the time of the organization of the Army and Navy Board on July 13, 1917, to February, 1919, receipts for this work from the five synods of the Synodical Conference amounted to \$559,230. By agreement the Wisconsin Synod was to pay one-fifth of the costs assigned to the synods. This opportunity to sustain and strengthen its members in the military forces was not only met, but oversubscribed. The 1919 report of Treasurer W.H. Graebner shows that in the 1915 to 1919 fiscal biennium the sum of \$112,120.49 was received for "Army and Navy"; that \$58,434.45 was disbursed to the Army and Navy Board; and that a surplus of \$153,686.04 was on hand. Nearly all of the surplus was later put in the Church Extension Fund of our Synod.

A remarkable performance by the people, at a time when failure to meet established financial goals in other divisions was commonly experienced. It demonstrated that then, as now, the people at home were and are determined not to be slack in doing what they could do to make the doctrine, reproof, correction, and instruction in righteousness of the Scriptures and the comfort of the sacraments available to those serving in the Armed Forces.

Just as the troops were returning home the U.S. War Department issued an order that had the practical effect of excluding civilian clergymen from training camps. The reason given by the Department for issuing the order is stated in this quote from an official reply made to a protest of the order: "The purpose, and the sole purpose, of the regulations is to further the spiritual interests of the soldiers. The authorized legal agency for caring for these interests is the chaplain, and in order that the chaplain should exercise his function to the fullest measure, it was necessary to place the responsibility directly upon him... It must be remembered that the most vital opportunities of the chaplains will not be on this side of the Atlantic, but in France, and far obvious reasons no plan of volunteer assistance to the chaplains is possible there... It is the hope and expectation of the Department that men who can meet the necessary physical qualifications and who have shown by their successful experience in the camps that they are the type needed for Army service, will feel impelled to apply for a position in the Army as a commissioned chaplain..."

These new regulations were officially protested against by the Synodical Conference, the Baptists North and South, by other denominations, and by their church papers. The *Watchman-Examiner* said in part, "This order, if carried into effect, practically ends a most vital and effective service. It means that the churches shall

have no means of ministering directly to their people in the camps. It means the beginning of an official state religion in the army...”

But the War to end Wars was itself ending. Rapid demobilization soon followed. Interests turned to peace and its pursuits. Protests that had been lodged were not followed up with vigor, and the new state of affairs stood. There would be a chaplain corps, selected from lists of clergy accredited by their respective denominations, ideally to be in proportion to the numerical strength of the denomination. The chaplain, acting for the commanding officer, was to be made responsible for armed forces morals and morale. There should be one chaplain for each 1200 service personnel, so far as possible. Religious beliefs of all sorts were to be grouped under three “recognized religions,” Protestant, Roman Catholic, and Jewish. The chaplain, to foster the morals and morale of all persons in his assigned unit, was to be required to offer or provide for regular worship and other religious observances for all. He was not to be expected to violate his conscience, or the rules of his denomination in the performance of his duties, and he must be and remain a member in good standing of his own sect or denomination.

During the War there had been no volunteer civilian clergymen of the common sort serving overseas; no civilian chaplains, camp pastors, or local civilian ministers. Exceptions were “big-name” churchmen and pulpit orators who visited by special invitation of the military. It seems to have been taken for granted that it must be so. Recall the quotation above, “...and for obvious reasons no plan for volunteer assistance to the chaplains is possible there [in France]...” In the report of the Wisconsin Synod Committee for Spiritual Care etc. of 1919 these rather plaintive words occur, “That we could send no camp pastors to them in Europe is not the fault of the Board.”

Yet, there were civilians in abundance with the troops in France. Red Cross representatives, business agents, newspaper people, even Salvation Army doughnut ladies. Why civilian chaplains should have been singled out for exclusion remains unexplained.

In its final report the Committee proposed, and the Synod subsequently resolved, that the Board of Trustees of the Synod should be authorized to take immediate steps in any future time of need to cooperate in similar fashion with fellow-believers, and to appoint committees and expend funds to effect this. There was a vitality and readiness for necessary action that lived in the Joint Synod of Wisconsin and Other States in those years. It shows through in the reports and records of the time. Not less than fifty articles, reports, notices, and the like that had to do with ministering to the military were printed in the *Northwestern Lutheran* in 1918; and perhaps as equal number in the German language *Gemeindeblatt*. Nearly all of the *Northwestern Lutheran* articles were written by Pastors John Brenner and Hans Koller Mousse. Two Wisconsin Synod pastors were appointed by the Army and Navy Board to be civilian chaplains; Arthur Sydow at San Antonio and M. Hohenstein at Seattle.¹

In the twenties and thirties there were other things to think about than the out-of-sight, out-of-mind Army, Navy, and budding Air Forces. First, the exhilarating experience of watching America become the greatest nation on earth; then the poverty, fear, and sad shuffling of the Great Depression.

In 1939, Depression or not, another war began in Europe, threatening once again to engulf the world. Congress passed a Selective Service act designed to produce a U.S military force of five million men. On October 16, 1939, all men age 18 to 35 had to register for possible military service. An ever-accelerating buildup of U.S. military might was under way.

Memories of 1917-1918 were still fresh. The 1919 resolution of the Synod mentioned above was activated. Plans must be made to supply our defence forces with the means of grace.

On January 30, 1941, under the leadership of President John Brenner, the *Spiritual Welfare Commission, Ev. Lutheran Joint Synod of Wisconsin and Other States, For Men In Military Service* was formed at a meeting in Milwaukee. Present, besides Brenner, were pastors Wm. Roepke, E.H. Walther, M.J. Weyhausen, O.B. Nommensen, and Mr. G. Kalfahs as representatives of the General Mission Board; Pastor

¹ Editor N.B.: Check this for accuracy.

Paul Pieper from the Board of Trustees, and, by invitation, Prof. C. Schweppe and Pastors E. Benj. Schlueter, Wm. Nommensen, A.E. Frey, and E.R. Blakewell.

William Roepke, Chairman of the Mission Board, appointed the first Commission members: Schlueter, Blakewell, Wm. Nommensen, Frey, Schweppe, and Attorney Albert Dammann, Jr. The Commission, in turn, named Blakewell its Executive Secretary and Schlueter its Chairman. The commission operated as an arm of the General Mission Board.

The original intention was to work with the Missouri Synod's agency for ministering to the Armed Forces, now renamed the Army and Navy Commission. Blakewell and Schlueter were delegated to attend a meeting of a Missouri Commission, held at Chicago on March 3, 1941.

Disturbing news was heard at that meeting. It was to the effect that the Executive Secretary of the Army and Navy Commission had given out information that the U.S. Government would not allow camp pastors to do spiritual work in the various training camps and cantonments; this would be in charge of recognized chaplains only. This information, though reflecting the purpose of the previously mentioned change in chaplaincy regulations of 1918, nevertheless created a false impression. The 1918 regulations simply could not stand, because they subverted the U.S. Constitution in the matter of free exercise of religion. They were subsequently modified, and camp pastors were in fact active during World War II. It is simply unthinkable that a whole class of U.S. citizens should be denied free access to the clergyman of their choice. Still, the impression gained that our churches must, at the very least on foreign soil, do their face-to-face ministering through Armed Forces chaplains was the cause of subsequent strife and dissatisfaction between us and Missouri, and within our own Synod.

Now, obviously, the military chaplaincy was not thought of as our only possible avenue of ministering to "our boys." Home pastors, congregations, and loved ones kept in close touch by letters, printed sermons, sending them the *Northwestern Lutheran*, and the like. The Spiritual Welfare Commission, for its part, established a file of the addresses of servicemen as these were received from home sources, and mailed out an ample stream of tracts, prayer books, service folders with sermons, etc., and thereby supported the efforts of the local pastors and congregations. It was also understood that even though local ministers and appointed civilian chaplains and camp pastors might not be allowed to do their vital work within the confines of the camps, there was nothing to hinder them from ministering to servicemen outside the gates, or in nearby towns. It was initially expected that in this matter the pattern set in the previous war; that is, of working with the other synods of the Synodical Conference, would be followed.

Office space needed for the fulfillment of these objectives was at first found in the residence of Pastor Blakewell, on E. Thomas Avenue in Milwaukee; later in the parish hall of Salem, his congregation. Before long Blakewell was given an assistant because of the many duties falling on him as S.W.C. executive secretary.

During the two decades between the World Wars a deeply running, though often poorly perceived, cleavage between the Wisconsin and Missouri Synods had begun to strain the bonds of fellowship. The question was about Scripture, and eventually this question was to cause a complete break between the two synods.

One sign of the strain popped up as soon as the Synods began to gear themselves for war. A number of evidences of the underlying difference soon appeared. Here is one example:

First, this *Report of Special Committee on Army and Navy Chaplaincy* as it was adopted by a convention of the Missouri Synod.

Pursuant to the resolution of Synod, your committee has carefully studied the official documents regarding the office and functions of the chaplaincy in the Army and Navy. The committee also heard reliable testimony from several of our pastors who have been chaplains in the Army; furthermore, the committee received interpretations personally from the Chief of chaplains on some of the paragraphs and wordings of the regulations which were indefinite and might be variously interpreted. The committee was impressed with the fact that again and again it is

emphasized in these documents that the chaplains are to function “according to their respective creeds or conscientious practice in each case” (A.R. 605 p. 3). And although they are under the authority of the commanding officers, this provision does not imply any dictation as to their spiritual ministry; consequently, the conscientious Lutheran chaplain can avoid all unionistic practices. This has been corroborated by pastors who have been chaplains in the Army. The committee is also convinced that in offering our men for the chaplaincy there is no departure from the accepted Scriptural position of our Synod and on the separation of Church and State. The government is interested in the moral welfare of the Army and Navy and presents, through the chaplaincy, opportunities for service to those who desire the ministrations of the chaplain; and while it contributes towards the maintenance of the chaplains a stipulated allowance, this does not conflict with the doctrine of the separation of Church and State, especially, since he must perform his duties “In conformity with the teachings of denominational beliefs...” (*Chaplain, His place*—p. 13). And again, “The chaplain will naturally give such ministrations as the titles and practices of his Church may warrant, provided it be seen that such are desired by the patient.” (*Chaplain and his place*, p. 23). Furthermore, the Church commissions or calls these men and, even though appointed by the government, they represent us only as long as they conform to the principles and practices of our Synod as members in good standing. Therefore, we hold that the President should carry out the resolution of the Cleveland convention and forthwith appoint an Army and Navy Board.”

Second, from a report of the Committee on Chaplains of the Wisconsin Synod:

“...your committee respectfully submits the following opinion:

The commissioning of Army and Navy chaplains by our Synod would conflict with Scriptural principles because

1. The application for and the appointment to chaplaincy conflicts with our doctrinal stand on the divinity of the pastoral call. Also, the Training Manual of the War Department entitled, *The Chaplain*, assigns specific duties to the chaplain which are in direct violation of the divine call of a Lutheran pastor.
2. The appointment to chaplaincy and the regulation of the chaplains’ duties by the War Department are a violation of the principle of separation of Church and State.
3. The spirit of doctrinal indifferentism pervades the regulations of the War Department pertaining to the office of chaplaincy and fosters unionism.”

This report was unanimously adopted by the 26th Convention of the Wisconsin Synod in 1941.

The impasse on the chaplaincy question was complete and remains unsolved. On this impediment of opposed convictions all efforts of both sides to work together in harmony to provide for the spiritual needs of their members in the U. S. Forces during World War II broke down.

The Army and Navy Commission went ahead on the basis of the beliefs of its synod. As early as June, 1941, some forty Missouri Synod clergymen were serving as commissioned chaplains.

The Spiritual Welfare Commission struggled manfully, but found itself in a bind. At the outset of its activities it had to devise and implement a program that would fit the new situation. At the same time it had to take the lead in setting forth as clearly as possible, and in defending, the Wisconsin Synod position on the chaplaincy. It had to try to counter a lingering unrest and dissatisfaction within the Wisconsin Synod in a tune of high-running emotion and desperate need, which arose from a belief that our Synod was doing less than its best for its members now at war.

Regarding the chaplaincy question it can be said that, given the Wisconsin Synod view of the nature of the Scriptures, and its necessarily strict application of passages that define and limit Christian fellowship, no

other answer than the one given was possible for Wisconsin. Forty years of subsequent history have established this.

From 1941 until the formal rupture of relations between Wisconsin and Missouri twenty years later a confused and unhappy situation blighted the course of Wisconsin in the area of ministry to members in the Armed Forces, as in other areas. Strained though the ties were, the two synods were in fellowship. Their federation in the Synodical Conference continued. So it was that while Wisconsin did not approve of and could not participate in the government chaplaincy program, and never did authorize any of its clergymen to apply for the position of chaplain, it still was in fellowship with all Missouri Synod pastors, including those who were commissioned chaplains. Wisconsin Synod parents, pastors, congregations, and the Spiritual Welfare Commission could and did commend their sons and daughters in the Armed Forces to the spiritual care of Missouri Synod pastors and chaplains, both stateside and overseas.

A chronic shortage of synodical funds hindered the work, too. The Great Depression had not ended when the War started. During a dozen years of dire poverty even the most venturesome and dedicated Christians had learned to “think small.” The SWC had been informed that full participation with the Army and Navy Commission in its programs would cost the Wisconsin Synod \$50,000 to \$60,000 the first year. A staggering sum at a time when the salary of a full-time civilian chaplain was to be set at \$125 per month plus expenses. The actual amount spent by the SWC in its first year of operation was \$5,177.66. However, much was done with little; and expenditures did rise quite rapidly thereafter as the work expanded. Already in May 1942, some 4,000 names of Wisconsin Synod service personnel, distributed among 400 camps, were listed in SWC Files. By 1944 this number had gone to over 20,000, and in that year the SWC spent \$46,000.

By then, a voluminous river of soul-sustaining materials flowed from the SWC office. Pastor E. Blakewell was now full-time chairman and director of the SWC, and Pastor John Raabe was executive secretary. The SWC office was at 2020 E. North Avenue in Milwaukee. When a mailing was to be sent out, it was taken to one of the local churches, where a corps of volunteer workers would do the tedious job of assembling, folding, and envelope stuffing. Gifted writers throughout the Synod were called on to produce these materials.

Still, a sense of unease pervaded the Synod, lay and clergy, and the SWC kept hearing about it. By private letters, resolutions of congregations, and even a memorialization from a pastoral conference, the Commission was asked if there was not more that it could do. The Spiritual Welfare Commission was not unresponsive. Three full-time civilian chaplains were placed where they could do the most good—Erwin Scharf of Slinger, Wis., in Louisiana; Fred Gilbert of Tomah, Wis., at Camp McCoy in Wisconsin; and Walter Amacher of Omak, Wash., at San Diego, Calif. Pastors of local congregations were requested to take service personnel of nearby camps under their spiritual care, and paid their expenses for doing so.

Earnest pleas to expand our military ministry continued to come in. Among suggestions received were to grasp the opportunity to minister to German prisoners of war held in the U.S.; to send pastors to take care of our wounded in overseas hospitals, especially in England; to make a more determined effort to persuade the U.S. War Department to change its regulations governing the military chaplaincy; and to allow several of our pastors to be commissioned as chaplains under existing regulations and let them find out by actual experience if it might be possible for them, after all, to do the work of a chaplain without violating their consciences or cutting corners on principles. When and where it was free to do so the SWC improved its services. Local pastors were alerted to the needs of prisoners of war and reimbursed for serving them. One full-time pastor was appointed for POW work. As to sending pastors to overseas hospitals, the SWC and Mission Board, at a combined meeting in May 1944, decided not to attempt this; but in January of 1945 the Commission did decide to put the matter before the Synod for decision. However, the Synod did not meet until that summer, and by then the War was almost over. Hopes of being able to persuade the War Department to modify its chaplaincy regulations remained, but this would have to be a peacetime project. Suggestions to allow some pastors to try out the existing system were not well thought out, however well intentioned.

With the arrival of the happy day when at last the sounds of war were stilled, hearts again dared to hope for lasting peace. Armed forces were cut to peacetime levels. The Lutheran Spiritual Welfare Commission, as it was now termed, reduced its staff to a director and one secretary. The number of names in the files declined from 14,000 overseas alone to less than 1,200 in all by 1949. Only the mailing program remained, plus overseeing a few camp pastors who still were active.

Once more, however, peace eluded the world. Communist nations adopted a course of expansion by force of arms, and the free world, led by the United States, countered with a strategy of containment of Communism. First confrontation, and then armed conflict, broke out in Korea and elsewhere. A new buildup of the U.S. Armed Forces was required. With it came a revival of effort by the LSWC. During the Korean War Pastor Luther Voss, who had seen active duty with the U.S. Army in the First World War, was called by our Synod to be a full-time civilian chaplain, and he served about two hundred WELS servicemen around Dothan, Alabama. Pastor Fred Tiefel was called to be a missionary and civilian chaplain in Japan. In 1949 the LSWC budget was just \$4,420. In 1951 it was raised to \$24,000. A servicemen's prayer book, *God Our Refuge*, was prepared and distributed. Our corps of camp pastors was again activated for the duration of the conflict. At this time two members of the Commission who had served with distinction since 1941 resigned for reasons of health—Pastors Schlueter and Wm. Nommensen. They were replaced by Pastors A. Berg of Sparta and F. Brandt of Appleton, Wisconsin.

It was in 1951 that a special committee of two, Pastors A. L. Mennicke and E. Schaller, was assigned to make a definitive study of the chaplaincy question. Their clear, concise report was presented to the Synod at its convention of that year. It concludes with this statement: "In view of the provision (T.M., p. 36) of the Manual making military chapels available for the use of denominational groups not represented by a chaplain, and with the desire to make positive proposals in behalf of the spiritual needs of our service men, your committee begs leave to recommend:

- a. That the Lutheran Spiritual Welfare Commission be encouraged to expand its present system of camp pastors wherever possible.
- b. That an investigation be made of the advisability and feasibility of extending such service to overseas areas.
- c. That consideration be given to the possible merits of personal consultation with the proper authorities in Washington for the purpose of securing an intelligent understanding of the nature of our activities in this field and of the principles and policies which govern us.

This report was received by the 1951 convention and was printed in its Proceedings "for general information." Another ten years passed, however, before any action was taken on the committee's recommendations.

New members appointed to the LSWC in the 1950s included Pastors Paul Kuehl of Hartford, Wis. (Chairman), Walter Kleinke of Milwaukee (Executive Secretary), N. Kleinhans of Oshkosh, Wis., Arnold Schroeder of Milwaukee and Prof. Conrad Frey of Saginaw, Mich.

When in 1959 the Wisconsin Synod suspended relations with the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod one of the practical results was that pastors and chaplains of the Missouri Synod could no longer be enlisted to provide spiritual care for Wisconsin Synod members in the services. It was necessary to expand our military ministrations; all the more so when, soon after, a new war flared up in Southeast Asia, and America became ever more deeply involved.

Once again a network of camp pastors (now called contact pastors) was activated, stretching soon from coast to coast. Pastor Luther Voss was called to serve as civilian chaplain again, this time to be active in posts and bases on the eastern seaboard, with headquarters in Norfolk, Va. Then, at Christmas time, 1965, he became the first overseas civilian chaplain of the Wisconsin Synod. He did able pioneer work in Viet Nam for eighteen months. When he returned he was assigned again to the Norfolk area and served there until his retirement at over seventy years of age. In early 1965 he carried to the Department of Defense in Washington D.C. a

statement from our Synod concerning the principles and methods we desired to employ in ministering in our own way to our own people in the Armed Forces. The Department, through the Armed Forces Chaplains Board, accepted the statement, and in its formal response invited our Synod to expand its Armed Forces ministry to cover all installations where members of our Church might be stationed, whether at home or overseas.

At this time the LSWC, through its Student Services committee, established a national student organization for WELS members, Lutheran Collegians. The first of numerous campus pastor workshops was conducted; a national constitution for Lutheran Collegians was written by the Commission and approved and adopted by a conference of student representatives at Whitewater, Wisconsin. By May of 1966 two full-time and 35 part-time campus pastors were doing work with Wisconsin Synod students at public campuses.

After Chaplain Voss's return to the U. S. other civilian chaplains were appointed annually to the Viet Nam post, on leave of absence from their place of permanent call. Prof. Erwin Scharf of Northwestern College, Watertown, served there 1967 to 1968. He was followed by Pastor Frederick Gilbert of Milwaukee who lived under siege conditions and put his life on the line for the Savior during an enemy counteroffensive that engulfed Saigon, until he was requested to leave by Vietnamese authorities for the sake of his personal safety. After control of the situation had been regained by United Nations forces, Pastor Melvin Schwark, now of New Ulm, served a tour of duty, followed by Pastors W. Hoyer of Rochester, Minn., Roland Ehlke of Milwaukee, and, as hostilities in Southeast Asia were ending, Karl Otto of Wauwatosa, Wis. closed out the Viet Nam chapter of our civilian chaplaincy. On his way home he was asked to make a survey of American troops stationed there, to see how necessary it might be to place a civilian chaplain there. His findings led directly to the calling of Pastor E.C. Renz as our first civilian chaplain for Europe, in 1972, and the calling of a second chaplain to assist in the work, in 1977.

Meanwhile, development and expansion of our stateside ministry to members away from home continued. In July 1967 the first contact pastors conference was held at Wichita, Kansas. Pastor C. Krug of Waukesha, then chairman of the LSWC military services committee, was present for the Commission. In 1968 a convention of Lutheran Collegians was held at Maple Lake, Minnesota, with sixteen chapters represented. Lutheran Collegians there adopted a long-term program of providing volunteers for special, temporary assignments in WELS foreign mission work. Pastor Daniel Malchow of Milwaukee was chairman of the student service committee at this time. When he left to become [president at] Northwestern Lutheran Academy in Mobridge, South Dakota, Pastor John Raabe was appointed to take his place. In 1971 and 1972 Pastor Krug, on leave-of-absence from Trinity Church in Waukesha, undertook a tour of military installations throughout the contiguous-states of the U.S., and also visited Wisconsin Synod pastors who had been requested by the LSWC to serve them, with the purpose of gaining information and improving this ministry. His reports revealed that without exception our pastors and missionaries were eager to add this often difficult and time consuming work to their other duties, and to help to the best of their abilities to strengthen and confirm in the faith their assigned charges in the military.

The Lutheran Spiritual Welfare Commission was dissolved by the Synod in 1975,² after a 34-year history of diligent service to members of the Wisconsin Synod away from home when the present Special Ministries Board was created. Under remarkable blessings from on high, the Wisconsin Synod, now on its own after the dissolution of the Synodical Conference, and with the valued association of the Evangelical Lutheran Synod, made unanticipated forward strides in dedication to the Lord, in membership, and in the works of faith. The Special Ministries Board was begun to help the Synod meet the new situation and seize the abundant opportunities for a broadened service in the area of special or specialized ministries. The LSWC, in effect, now became a division of the Special Ministries Board.

This account should not be ended without mentioning the dedicated and long-time work of Pastor Walter Kleinke and Mrs. Virginia Stolper in the LSWC office. For more than twenty- five years they took care of the multitudinous, undramatic details and small tasks that make for an efficient operation.

² Editor: Please check this date.

Most of the people in the military forces that these efforts have touched in one way or another never responded openly. That is the way of things. But still, a large file of appreciative cards and letters with such response has grown up. Unsolicited gifts and offerings have often been included. These are tokens, if tokens we must have, not that the Word bears its fruit—that we know—but that the Word is also gratefully received. From that all members of the Synod may take satisfaction, and for that all must give thanks to God.

REPORT OF THE SPECIAL COMMITTEE ON ARMY AND NAVY CHAPLAINCY

Pursuant to the resolution of Synod, your committee has carefully studied the official documents regarding the office and functions of the chaplaincy in the Army and navy. The committee also heard reliable testimony from several of our pastors who have been chaplains in the Army; furthermore, the committee received interpretations personally from the Chief of chaplains on some of the paragraphs and wordings of the regulations which were indefinite and might be variously interpreted. The committee was impressed with the fact that again and again it is emphasized in these documents that the chaplains are to function "according to their respective creeds or conscientious practice in each case" (A.R. 605, p. 3). And although they are under the authority of the commanding officers this provision does not imply any dictation as to their spiritual ministry; consequently, the conscientious Lutheran chaplain can avoid all unionistic practices. This has been corroborated by pastors who have been chaplains in the Army. The committee is also convinced that in offering our men for the chaplaincy there is no departure from the accepted Scriptural position of our Synod on the separation of Church and State. The government is interested in the moral welfare of the army and Navy and presents, through the chaplaincy, opportunities or service to those who desire the ministrations of the chaplain; and while it contributes towards the maintenance of the chaplains a stipulated allowance, this does not conflict with the doctrine of the separation of Church and State, especially, since he must perform his duties "In conformity with the teachings of denominational beliefs..." (*Chaplain, His place*—p. 13). And again, "The chaplain will naturally give such religious ministrations as the rites and practices of his Church may warrant, provided it be seen that such are desired by the patient." (*Chaplain and his place*, p. 23). Furthermore, the Church commissions or calls these men and, even though appointed by the government, they represent us only as long as they conform to the principles and practices of our Synod as members in good standing. Therefore, we hold that the President should carry out the resolution of the Cleveland convention and forthwith appoint an Army and Navy board.

Proceeding P. 13.

Respectfully submitted,

Geo. A. Romoser, Chairman
 J. Frederic Wenchel, Secretary
 H.D. Mensing
 A.G. Dick
 F.C. Proehl

Copied by HN
 April 16, 1941