

THE WISCONSIN SYNOD  
IN COLORADO

*The early years of the Wisconsin Synod's  
mission work in Colorado*

by

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## *Introduction*

Had you been a traveler stepping off the train into a dusty depot in Denver, Colorado around the turn of the century, you would have immediately noticed a difference from life “back east.” Things were still pretty wild and wooly in this once mining town, and a good dose of tact and caution would be necessary things. Many of the people who had come to this town had come for one thing- gold! Most had been driven by the greed of striking it rich on a few golden nuggets easily panned from the bank of the river. Theft was not uncommon, and often it was “frontier justice” that ruled the land. As one could imagine, this was certainly not the most civilized area to be in. Yet it was into just such a setting that the first Lutheran missionaries were sent.

It is the intention of this paper to trace the *early* roots of Lutheranism in Colorado (in general), and of the work of the Wisconsin Synod (in particular). In so doing, I believe the gracious hand of God will be clearly shown at work, as His Gospel message and work proceeded to march forth, spreading His kingdom to the people and towns of the territory today known as Colorado.

### *I. Earliest Lutheran Involvement (mid 1800's)*

Many of the initial settlers within the present day boundaries of Colorado were men and women seeking their fortune in gold. Before that, the territory was covered mostly by trappers and scouts, besides, of course, the Native American Indians (Utes) already living there. Around the year 1840, one of the first permanent settlements was established on the site of what is today the city of Pueblo. About a decade later, a little to the south and west, Ft. Garland (originally

called Ft. Massachusetts) was built in the eastern part of the San Luis Valley, in the foothills of the Sierra Blanca.<sup>1</sup> The San Luis Valley, located in the south-central part of the state, is the home of many of the headwaters that eventually come together to form the mighty Rio Grande River. These settlements could be considered among the first significant settlements within the state.

Around the time these settlements were getting started, the report of the finding of gold in California made its way to the masses in the East. "Gold fever" had set in, and thousands of would-be prospectors began streaming west to the Sierra Nevada's of California and to the Rocky Mountains of Colorado. "It was with the wave of these gold-hunters and in its wake that some of the first permanent settlers reached the Pike's Peak country, among them also such as could be regarded as mission-material."<sup>2</sup> These events are substantiated also in Muriel Wolle's book Stampede To Timberline: The Ghost Towns and Mining Camps of Colorado. The book, originally written in 1949, gives detailed accounts of early settlements in Colorado, along with accurate and detailed sketches of each place.<sup>(cf. appendix 1)</sup> As the population in these mining camps and early settlements increased, so also did the need for spiritual guidance- especially in light of their motive for coming.

And so, we see, the stage has been set. What once was completely frontier, begins to be settled. What once was a small settlement, begins to be populated. What once was a land with no church, begins to receive the workers to build up churches among them.

Perhaps the earliest recorded Lutheran missionary activity within the current bounds of the state took place in December of 1865 when the *Synod of East Pennsylvania of the Evangelical Lutheran Church* passed the resolution to establish a mission in Denver. The man chosen for the work was the Reverend L. M. Koons of Pottsville, Pennsylvania. An article written in the local Denver newspaper, *The Rocky Mountain News*, speaks favorably of the missionary coming to

their town: "The Missionary is a young man of thorough education, devoted piety, and more than ordinary talent..." Little is known as to whether or not this mission ever survived in the city of Denver.<sup>3</sup>

## *II. Early Missouri Synod Work (late 1800's)*

Physically speaking, it would be almost ten years before any lasting results were accomplished for the Lutheran mission effort in Colorado. That time came shortly after the spring of 1870 when a group of colonists headed west from the Chicago area, among whom were many Lutherans.

It was on March 1, 1870, when a colony numbering about one hundred families (367 souls) arrived from in and near Chicago to settle in the Wet Mountain Valley. Among these colonists were quite a few who had been members of the Lutheran Church. While various necessary items for living in the "Far West" had been brought along, including even a small flour mill, the most necessary, a faithful pastor, had been forgotten. Here they were now, with no shepherd even within hundreds of miles to minister to the needs of their souls. But by and by help to relieve this need was sought and eventually received. Mrs. Gottlieb O'Graske, Sr., later usually known as "Grossmutter O'Graske" wrote to C. F. W. Walther, asking him to send a missionary to the Valley, to Blumenau. This letter was turned over to President Buenger (of the Western District [LC-MS]) who requested the Reverend J. Hilgendorf, then a young man stationed in Omaha, Nebraska, to make an exploration trip to Colorado. After first exploring Denver in quest of German Lutherans, Pastor Hilgendorf came to *Blumenau* in the early part of November, 1872. He preached there on two consecutive Sundays and organized a congregation of fourteen families.<sup>4</sup>

The Reverend J. Hilgendorf, who would later become the first president of the Nebraska District of the Missouri Synod, and still later one of the vice presidents of the entire synod, had been pastor of the First Lutheran Congregation of Omaha since September 9, 1871. It was about a year later that he received word from Pastor Buenger that he was to make an exploratory trip to the territory of Colorado.<sup>5</sup>

It should be stated at this time, that the original impetus for this trip is not 100% clear from what has been recorded. Prof. P. E. Kretzmann, Ph. D., D. D., seems to give the impression that the idea of doing mission work in Colorado originated with the then president of Missouri's Western District, Pastor Buenger. He writes in the 1930 *Concordia Historical Institute Quarterly*: "...it was not till 1872 that President Buenger of the Western District took definite steps toward having the country along the Rockies and tributary to Denver explored in the interest of Lutheran mission-work."<sup>6</sup> The letter from Mrs. Gottlieb O'Graske is never mentioned, at least not directly, and then only as a reason for checking out the Wet Mountain Valley area while he was out there.<sup>7</sup>

Whatever the original impetus was may be unclear, nevertheless the man was sent and the work was begun. The story is told that when President Buenger commissioned Pastor Hilgendorf, \$50 was included with the letter. Along with it came the remark that "this sum, of course, will not suffice, but a missionary always knows how to help himself." This was at a time when the going rate for train fare was 10 cents a mile and when a decent hotel went for \$20 a day! Prof. Kretzmann goes on to say, "But Pastor Hilgendorf was made of true missionary stuff, which meant, among other things, that he was willing to stay in the cheapest rooming-house that he could find in Denver, a shack which charged \$3 a day."<sup>8</sup>

Pastor Hilgendorf later wrote his own account of the journey, a story as interesting as they come...

I was the first pastor of our Synod to preach in Denver, Pueblo, and Blumenau (Westcliffe). Denver at that time was a city of some 13,000 inhabitants. One found there all kinds of people from under the heavens. Thus I had the pleasure of seeing a party of 400 Ute Indians enter the city... As for the rest, the customs and usages of Denver left much to be desired. Men shot one another in broad daylight, at high noon, in gambling for money or for other reasons. It was intimated to me that I might be hung with a rope, which was already purchased, just because I was a pastor.<sup>9</sup>

Yet, Pastor Hilgendorf would not be intimidated or persuaded to change his course of action.

After preaching in Denver he went on to Pueblo, where he faced other inconveniences:

At bedtime we clambered up through a trap door and the proprietor pointed to a bed where a Mexican was undressing. "That's your bed—you sleep with him," he said and was gone. The Mexican had a large revolver and a long dagger. These he placed under his pillow. I took out my pocket knife and did likewise. The night passed quickly and I do not believe I ever slept more peacefully. In the morning when I awoke the Mexican was gone.<sup>10</sup>

From Pueblo, Hilgendorf continued on his missionary trip to the mountain town of Canon City, located at the lower end of the Royal Gorge of the Arkansas River, one of the most magnificent canyons in the Rocky Mountains. (Today it happens to be the world's deepest gorge covered by a suspension bridge.) After doing some work in this town also, Hilgendorf finally headed to the south and west, to the location of that German settlement they called *Blumenau*, which means, "flower meadow". This place was located actually just outside of what became the town of Westcliffe.<sup>11</sup>

Pastor Hilgendorf was welcomed by the people and remained in the settlement at Blumenau about two weeks, sharing with them the gospel, preaching twice, and baptizing several children. But this was only to be an exploratory trip, so he would soon have to return to Nebraska. The 14 families that made up the original congregation were somewhat formally organized. They insisted that the missionary prepare for them a call to be sent to the seminary at St. Louis to provide them with a permanent pastor. This he did, and it would not be long before the seminary would send them their own pastor, as we shall soon see.<sup>12</sup>

Having provided for the spiritual welfare of the group, Hilgendorf decided that it was time for him to return to his flock waiting back in Omaha. He found a ride with a Roman Catholic man who would take him as far as Pueblo. As they headed east through the mountain passes, they

decided to stay the night in a cabin along the way. While they were there, six hunters paid them a visit. The uninvited guests made themselves right at home, and began telling tales of their wild adventures—producing the Indian scalps to back them up.<sup>13</sup> Pastor Hilgendorf writes,

Since my driver and I were in the minority, we had to take the poorest bed, immediately in front of the door, where fresh air was certainly not lacking. A snowstorm was raging outside. In the middle of the night one of the hunters got up, came close to us, with his revolver all cocked to shoot, and shot—a rat which had disturbed him in his sleep. Well, that was better than if we had gotten the bullet.<sup>14</sup>

Hilgendorf did however make it back to Pueblo where he again preached the Word of God to the people gathered there. From there he proceeded on once more to the city of Denver. Before leaving to return home, Hilgendorf had found eleven families who wanted to join the Lutheran Church. They insisted that he stay and serve as their spiritual shepherd, but he persuaded them to sign a call, which he drew up for them and sent on to President Buenger. President Buenger in turn, prevailed upon Concordia Seminary's faculty to send a man to care for the people in Colorado. This they did as we read,

On the third Sunday after Epiphany, January 26, [1873], in the afternoon service, in Immanuel Church in St. Louis, Candidate H. Brammer, called by the Ev. Luth. Congregation in Denver City, Colo., a duly examined candidate of the holy ministry, was solemnly ordained by the undersigned with the assistance of Prof. G. Schaller. Pastor Brammer has already left for his distant field of activity. May our most blessed Lord Jesus help *the first Lutheran preacher in Colorado* to build His Lutheran Zion not only in the city of Denver, which numbers some 12,000 inhabitants, but in the entire territory among the Germans living there! J. F. Buenger.<sup>15</sup>

As we read further in Prof. Kretzmann's article, it is clear that the conditions this young pastor had to face were very difficult. For starters, he had trouble simply finding the people who had signed his call. Once he did find them, some refused even to listen to him, and those that welcomed him were far from able to raise the small amount they had promised to contribute to his support. "The outlook, then, was extremely discouraging, and it was only to be expected that

Pastor Brammer, having received a call from Iowa, would follow the advice of the Mission Board and of the pastoral conference in St. Louis and discontinue the work in Denver.”<sup>16</sup> *Once* Here again however, it would not be long and another man would be sent to take his place.

So the beginnings for Missouri were promising, but slow. The first mission exploration had been made. The first ties to German Lutherans had been established. The first “permanent” pastor had arrived. And, despite the difficulties involved, the Missouri Synod continued to send men into Colorado, and their work slowly prospered. Almost immediately a man was sent to replace Pastor Brammer, and to meet the needs of the Lutherans living out there. Candidate H. W. Hoemann, ordained on the thirteenth Sunday after Trinity, was sent to serve the congregation in Wet Mountain Valley, just outside of Westcliffe. This congregation, named *Hope*, eventually built a church and grew, and was the first official congregation of the Missouri Synod in Colorado.<sup>17</sup>

From here the Missouri Synod’s efforts spread to Denver and Pueblo, building on the work initially begun by Rev. J. Hilgendorf on that first exploratory journey. Later, congregations were established in Durango, Dix, Brighton, and Colorado Springs. Finally, their sphere of influence would grow increasingly wider in all four directions: east to Vernon and Arriba- west to Salt Lake City, (Utah)- north to Ft. Morgan and Sterling- and south to Monte Vista. By 1912 there were 15 established Missouri Synod congregations in Colorado.<sup>18</sup>

It is important that we have a basic picture of the Missouri Synod’s work in Colorado because, in certain places there, the early work of the Wisconsin Synod is somewhat tied to that of Missouri. Our work within the state may be considered somewhat of a “spin-off” from theirs, and has not always been looked at in the most favorable light. And so, let’s take a closer look at



the focus of this paper, namely, the early work of the Wisconsin Synod within the state of Colorado.

### *III. "Second-hand Connections" (early 1900's)*

In my research, the earliest connection to Colorado that the Wisconsin Synod had in any way was really only a "second-hand" sort of connection, but one that would later have some significance. That was through a man by the name of Theophil Hoffmann. Pastor Hoffmann was born on December 21, 1897, and grew up in a parsonage near Mayville, Wisconsin, where he was both baptized and confirmed by his father, the Rev. Theodor Hoffmann. He attended Concordia College in Milwaukee (LC-MS), and continued his training at the Theological Seminary at Wauwatosa, Wisconsin (WI Syn.). On June 15, 1921 Theophil graduated from the Wisconsin Synod Seminary. Toward the end of that year he was called to be the first missionary-at-large for the Lutheran Church, Missouri Synod. He was to serve an area comprising southern Colorado, New Mexico and Utah.<sup>19</sup> On December 15, 1921 he was ordained into the ministry at Colorado Springs by Otto Luessenhop, then President of Missouri's Colorado District.

Thus was begun a life of active and zealous service to our Lord and His Church. Pastor Hoffmann had hundreds of miles of territory to serve, and the roads at that time were all but impassable to cars. He had to rely on the narrow gauge railroads of the time to get him from place to place. Often he had to spend whole days en route to a preaching station. When he arrived at his destination, services were conducted in homes, schoolhouses, or any available structure. One of the preaching stations was the place known as Cripple Creek. It had been a booming gold-mining town at one time, but at that time the gold had run out, and the town was almost deserted.

In 1923, Pastor Hoffmann was called to serve the Durango-Thompson Park parish, in the southwestern corner of Colorado. He also served the preaching stations of Hesperus, and Tiffany, which was forty miles east of Durango, his home. At Hesperus he held services in the living quarters of the railroad stationmaster. While serving in this field of labor, he was joined in Holy Wedlock with his beloved wife Claudia at St. Paul's Lutheran Church in Winneconne, Wisconsin on September 17, 1924.<sup>20</sup>

Now you may be wondering, “How does this Missouri Synod man qualify as a ‘Wisconsin Synod connection?’” The answer to that lies in what would later develop at one of the congregations he was serving from his home in Durango. While at Durango, Pastor Hoffmann was also serving the Zion Congregation at Dix. Years later (1939), this congregation would ask for a release from the Missouri Synod because, by that time, the Wisconsin Synod had established a church in Mancos. Mancos was much closer, and the Zion congregation felt the pastor there could more easily serve them. Eventually that is exactly what did happen. A majority of the congregation split from Zion and joined the Wisconsin Synod congregation at Mancos.<sup>23</sup> A brief note in the 1940 Nebraska District Proceedings (Wisconsin Synod) refers to the situation only in passing: under a heading of *Intersynodical Relations* it says, “Two members of our Mission Board had a conference with two representatives of the Mission Board of the Missouri Synod in Colorado, respecting our congregation in Mancos, Colorado. We are entertaining the good hopes that all will be well by and by.”<sup>22</sup>

Theophil Hoffmann was the first graduate of Wisconsin Synod Theological Seminary to be called as a missionary to Colorado. It may have been a second-hand connection, but it was the first tie to Colorado that our synod had made. And just six years after his ordination, Theophil Hoffmann was called back into the Wisconsin Synod. It seems the Mission Board of the Wisconsin Synod wanted an experienced missionary to serve the preaching stations at Rapid River, Gladstone, and Manistique in Michigan’s Upper Peninsula.<sup>23</sup> In the end, the Wisconsin Synod would benefit from this “Colorado connection” after all.

To this point however, the Wisconsin Synod had not *officially* begun working within the bounds of Colorado. It seems that limited funds and manpower kept the Colorado field listed as a

“future mission field.”<sup>24</sup> It was not until 1933 that any official action would be made by the Wisconsin Synod in Colorado.

The story of how the Wisconsin Synod officially began its labors in Colorado really comes through another “second-hand” kind of connection. As we said before, during the middle to late 1920’s, Colorado was at best only a “future mission field” for the Wisconsin Synod. And yet, during this time, work was already being done in the state that would eventually become the “possession” of the Wisconsin Synod. It was a man by the name of Alvin C. Bauman who was doing that work. Here is his story.

Alvin C. Bauman also had early ties to the Wisconsin Synod, but, like Theophil Hoffmann, would <sup>began</sup> begin his ministry as a Missouri Synod pastor. He was born July 26, 1885 to Pastor and Mrs. Carl Bauman in Cedarburg, Wisconsin. (As he was growing up, he received the nickname “Bell”, because he was the bell ringer in the family.<sup>25</sup>) He attended Northwestern Academy in Watertown, and in 1905 was sent to serve as a vicar in the Arkansas Valley, in southeastern Colorado. At the end of his vicar term however, he did not return to the Wisconsin Synod seminary. Instead, he went to Concordia Lutheran Theological Seminary in Springfield, Illinois. His first assignment was to the Missouri Synod congregation at Poole, Nebraska in 1907, where he would remain <sup>ed</sup> for almost 10 years.<sup>26</sup>

Late in 1915 or early in 1916 A.C. Bauman received a call from a group of Christians in Prescott, Wisconsin. This was a very young congregation, having been “organized” only a few years before. On September 23, 1920, the group of believers became an official member of the “Ev. Lutheran Joint Synod of Wisconsin, Minn. and other states,” taking for themselves the name “St. Paul’s.” Here Pastor Bauman was able to serve for 2 years as the shepherd of this flock. But then, according to St. Paul’s congregational history, “Pastor A.C. Bauman received a call and on

May 21, 1922, a meeting was called at which the congregation gave their pastor a friendly and peaceful dismissal.”<sup>27</sup>

However, no mention is made by whom the call was made or to where he would go. In his obituary in the *Northwestern Lutheran* it is stated that in 1923 A. C. returned to Colorado.<sup>28</sup> But these years, from 1923 to 1932 are very quiet, if not silent on Pastor A. C. Bauman. No records could be found that could positively tell what occurred in his life during this time. A brief article in the *Northwestern Lutheran* on the history of the WELS in Colorado states that, “he had given up his work as a pastor in our Minnesota District and removed to Colorado for the sake of the health of a member of his family.”<sup>29</sup> In a brief interview his nephew, Mr. Paul Bauman- who has himself been researching the life of A. C.- seemed to think that the reason for his coming to Colorado was in fact, for his wife’s health.<sup>30</sup>

Whatever the exact reason may have been, we know that Pastor Bauman went to Colorado, and along with him the future of the Wisconsin Synod there. In his obituary it states that while he was there, A. C. was doing mission work “throughout the state.” The article mentions that in 1930 he came to Crowley County in southeastern Colorado, and began serving four separate congregations: St. Paul’s and Grace Churches in Sugar City, Messiah in Ordway, and St. Paul’s in Rock Ford.

It was his work in this region that would in reality mark<sup>ed</sup> the earliest beginnings of the Wisconsin Synod’s involvement in the state of Colorado. After serving a number of congregations and preaching stations around the state, Pastor Bauman realized that he needed some help. In the summer of 1933 he appeared at the convention of the Nebraska District of the Wisconsin Synod to enlist their services in doing mission work in Colorado. “He reported that the demands made upon him were greater than he could take care of and expressed the opinion

that there was room for much mission work in the state.” Upon hearing his report and carefully considering the matter, the Wisconsin Synod “through the Mission Board of the Nebraska District entered upon work in the state of Colorado.”<sup>31</sup>

Amazingly, this was not the only door into the mission fields of Colorado that the Lord opened for the Wisconsin Synod at this same time. In the spring of 1933, events were transpiring that would present another opportunity for work within Colorado’s borders. In 1913 a German congregation was formed by the name *Deutsche Evangelische Lutherische Zions Gemeinde* at Ft. Morgan in the northwestern part of the state. The church was founded by a group of German and German-Russian immigrants that settled in the area.<sup>32</sup>

Shortly after the organization of the congregation, property was purchased on the corner of 6<sup>th</sup> Avenue and Ensign Street. Later that year a church edifice was erected. Three years after the church was built, a parsonage was added. The cost of the land, church, and parsonage was in excess of \$10,000.00. To cover the costs loans were sought from the members and from the Iowa Synod of which the congregation was a member.

During the early years the congregation grew and there was an apparent outward unity. But, true doctrinal unity was lacking. This became evident during the celebration of the Lord’s Supper. One group would follow the Lutheran teaching and practice, while another group in the congregation would follow the Reformed teaching and practice.

The disunity intensified as the congregation was served by different pastors. If the pastor was Reformed in his teaching and practice, then the congregation would follow him. If the pastor was Lutheran, the congregation would make the appropriate adjustments and follow him.

In 1927, during the pastorate of Reverend E. Schroeder, the dilemma reached a crisis stage, and a split became imminent. During a Church Council meeting Reverend Schroeder issued a mass excommunication to all the members who followed the Reformed methodology. Later, in the same meeting, the same people were also barred from entering the church. With this one action a flourishing congregation of over 400 communicants was reduced to 9 voting members and their families.

Because the congregation was so small and unable to support itself, President Moehl of the Iowa Synod informed the remaining members the Synod could not

support the congregation. So he advised them to seek another congregation with the same faith and practice and join it.<sup>33</sup>

The congregation turned to Trinity Lutheran Church, a Missouri Synod congregation in town. However, due to doctrinal problems that arose there, the remaining members of the old *Deutsche Evangelische Lutherische Zions Gemeinde* could not find a permanent home. The nine men and their families, along with 16 other families from Trinity, decided to attempt a reorganization of their church. They appointed a committee of 5 men to oversee the work, and as part of their duties, they were to travel to Norfolk, Nebraska, to confer with the President of the Nebraska District of the Wisconsin Synod- Pastor J. Witt. "President Witt gave them a hearing, but no definite advice. On their return trip they stopped in Sterling, Colorado, to confer with Pastor O. H. Hensel, who was the Missouri Synod District President. After their return to Ft. Morgan, they convened at the house of Edwin Schmidt to report on their progress."<sup>34</sup>

The group must have been positively encouraged by their trip, for they proceeded to purchase the property of the original church site, revise and sign the constitution, and make official application to join the Wisconsin Synod.

During the 50 years of its existence the Lord has blessed Zion in many ways. Among these blessings was the privilege to be the first Wisconsin Synod congregation in Colorado. Pastor Venus H. Winter testifies to this fact in a letter to one of Zion's former pastors- Rev. Henry G. Meyer. Fondly he recalls the first worship service he led.

"Dear Brother,"

*"The picture on the cover of the Northwestern Lutheran last week brought back memories to me. Once upon a time I preached in that church. It was September 3, 1933, 29 years ago, and it was the first Wisconsin Synod service ever held in Colorado."*<sup>35</sup>

The assembly of believers in Ft. Morgan turned to their newly found synod and asked them to provide a shepherd. The members of Zion proceeded to call Candidate Harold Schulz to be that shepherd.

That afternoon (September 3, 1933) the congregation met. Mr. Luebke, the secretary, kept the minutes. Incidentally he hailed from my home town of Norfolk, Nebraska. In that meeting which was conducted almost exclusively in German, we called Pastor Harold Schulz. I knew Pastor Schulz very well at the time, and we were good friends. In the accompanying letter I told him that reportedly we had received the cream of the crop of Missouri and also of the American Lutheran congregation. He later told me that I had been correct in my surmise.<sup>36</sup>

On October 1, 1933, Candidate Harold Schulz was ordained and installed into office by Pastor Herbert Witt, as the shepherd of Zion Ev. Lutheran Church, Ft. Morgan, Colorado—the first of the Wisconsin Synod.<sup>37</sup>

As in the case of Pastor Theophil Hoffmann, the Wisconsin Synod's connection to Pastor A. C. Bauman and his work in Colorado was, at first, a sort of second-hand connection. The Wisconsin Synod's connection to the independent congregation in Ft. Morgan also came about in a rather second-hand sort of way. Yet it was in this way that the Lord brought the Wisconsin Synod into Colorado. It was by *His* hand that the seeds of the Gospel had been spread on Colorado soil. It was by *His* hand that those seeds had grown up into ripe fields ready for the harvest. And it was by *His* hand that the workers would be sent to harvest a crop of souls precious to the Lord.

#### *IV. The First WELS Missionaries (1933-1938)*

The late '20's and early '30's were extremely difficult times both on the local level, and on the national level. Locally, the people and towns of this area were dealing with the extended drought.<sup>38</sup> Nationally, our country was still suffering the painful effects of the Depression. Naturally then, our synod as well was feeling the financial strain of the times. "The watchword at the time was: No expansion. It was largely due to this that our work in Colorado was not prosecuted as vigorously in the first years as might otherwise have been done."<sup>39</sup>

Yet, to God's glory, even in a time when funding was extremely tight, men were sent to Colorado to proclaim the Good News of Life and salvation through Jesus Christ. On December 24, 1933, Candidate Adelbert Hellmann accepted the call as assistant pastor to the newly acquired Sugar City parish. He was ordained and installed by the now "veteran" A. C. Baumann. Also, to show just how "frontier" this area still was at this time, notice who assisted in this ordination service- Pastor E. Guenther from the Apache mission in Arizona.<sup>40</sup>

Describing these early mission endeavors by our synod, Immanuel P. Frey (later the first "general missionary" for Colorado) writes concerning the young Pastor Hellmann,

The records of the Nebraska Mission Board show that the first monthly subsidy to the amount of \$12.50 was requisitioned December 31, 1933. This was to one of the so-called twenty-five-dollars-a-month candidates, with whom our synodical Mission Board was experimenting at the time in the attempt to do at least a little new mission work. He was not assigned to any particular preaching place or places by the Board but was instructed to work under the direction of Pastor Bauman where his services could be used to the greatest advantage for the time being.<sup>41</sup>

Times were indeed tight for our synod, especially in those early years. But that did not stop them from sending still another missionary to Colorado, into the same southeastern corner of the state. In fact, as the near future would soon reveal, the Wisconsin Synod was "just getting warmed up" when it came to doing mission work in Colorado. Only days after Hellmann's ordination/installation at Sugar City, Pastor Walter Siffring accepted the call to serve as missionary to the La Junta mission field, about 20 miles to the south. He was installed there in La Junta on the last day of December 1933, once again with Pastor A. C. Bauman leading the service.<sup>42</sup>

Moving from the southeast corner of the state, the hand of the Lord led our little synod to a small town in the north-central part of the state- Platteville. It appears that sometime in 1934 we received there an entire congregation by the name of "St. John."<sup>43</sup> The Lord was richly



blessing the work in Colorado, and He was providing the workers as well. Candidate Victor Schulz received and accepted the call to serve the St. John's, Platteville parish. He was ordained and installed on December 16, 1934 by, yet again, Pastor A. C. Bauman, with Harold Schulz assisting in the service.<sup>44</sup>

At this point in time, the work in the southern and eastern parts of the state really began to blossom. More workers were needed to cover the areas and to serve the people. Two more missions were begun- one in the community of Eads, about 60 miles east and 20 miles north of our Rocky Ford church; and the other in Lamar, straight east of Rocky Ford about 20 miles before reaching the Kansas border.<sup>45</sup>

In the north also there was continued expansion. At Hillrose, perhaps in connection with the Wisconsin Synod Lutherans worshipping at Zion in Ft. Morgan, there was a small flock of families desiring weekly services and in need of regular Sunday School for their children.

On Tuesday, October 1<sup>st</sup>, 1935, eight heads of families met with Reverend George Tiefel, chairman of the mission board, at the home of Mr. August Werner. This group of eight men decided to organize at an early date and also ask for a local pastor. Their wish was granted. The first local pastor was Reverend [Gerhardt] Struck. He began his work in January 1936. On January 14<sup>th</sup> the congregation was organized and a constitution was adopted.

The next step was to get a house of worship. This meant much labor and great sacrifices. Finally, after much searching, an old vacated schoolhouse was found which would serve the purpose. A lot was purchased and the school house was moved on to it, and remodeled and furnished. The conversion of the school house into a little chapel cost nearly One Thousand Dollars (\$1,000.00). It was dedicated on the 23<sup>rd</sup> of February. Pastor A. C. Bauman delivered the sermon. On the following Sunday, a Sunday School was begun. By September 30<sup>th</sup> there was an enrollment of 38 children. There were 73 souls in the congregation. Of these 32 were communicant members and eight were voting members. The congregation became a member of the Wisconsin Synod on the 29<sup>th</sup> day of June, 1936.

Looking back upon the short history of the congregation we must certainly exclaim with the prophet Samuel: "Hither to hath the Lord helped us."<sup>46</sup>

It is plain to see the hand of the Lord graciously at work in this congregation also. Considering the financial strains of the times, it is amazing that this tiny gathering of believers was able to *completely* cover the expenses of a pastor, chapel, and Sunday school, all within the first year of their existence.

In the Nebraska District Proceedings for the 1936 and 1938 Conventions several other new preaching stations were listed for Colorado: Cowens, Kendrick, Caddoa, Crowley and Las Animas- all of which are in the southeastern portion of the state. Along with Elizabeth in the middle of the state, and Buena Vista, a beautiful mountain village about 90 miles straight west of Colorado Springs, in the very heart of the majestic Rocky Mountains.<sup>47</sup> The mere number of different preaching stations that opened up in such a short amount of time is somewhat amazing in itself. But when you look a little deeper another important point comes to mind. The men who had been sent to Colorado were truly *mission-minded men*. Conditions were much different than today- communication was much slower, roads were much rougher, finances much tighter, and distances much greater. Nonetheless, these men preached the Gospel. In the face of hard work and challenging surroundings they took the Word of God into many new areas, and to many new peoples. We praise the Lord for their untiring mission zeal.

The first five years of the Wisconsin Synod's work in Colorado were marked by abundant blessings. In that short amount of time 9 men had been sent or called, and were covering 15 separate towns with the truth of God's grace. <sup>(Cf. appendix 2)</sup> With these first five years under her belt, the Wisconsin Synod was well under way with its mission work in Colorado. The Lord continued to open new doors as well as provide the men to walk through. For this we can rejoice in the Lord.

These years were not completely void of any hitches however. While Wisconsin was glad to be reaching so many new places with the Gospel, Missouri was beginning to be upset over the fact that Wisconsin was invading her "turf." One place in particular seemed to be an especially sore point of contention. That place just so happened to be the location of the very first Wisconsin Synod Church in Colorado- Zion, in Ft. Morgan.

At the 1936 Nebraska District Convention it was reported that Missouri was upset over the entrance of the Wisconsin Synod into Ft. Morgan, possibly in connection with those 16 families who had left their Trinity church over doctrinal issues and joined the members from Zion.

This is how the proceedings read:

The Colorado District of Missouri is holding certain grievances against the Nebraska District of the Wisconsin Synod, and the Nebraska District is making counter charges.

The representatives of both Districts met at Ft. Morgan in November and December of last year. The last meeting was held in the midst of both congregations. The matter is still pending, as especially one point in this controversy has not as yet been sufficiently cleared up. Efforts are still being made to adjust matters in a Christian spirit.<sup>48</sup>

Ft. Morgan however was not the only point of contention between the two Synods. Apparently Missouri had also considered Pastor A. C. Bauman's work in and around Ordway, La Junta, and Rocky Ford an "intrusion" on their field and tantamount to "sheep stealing." It was an issue that would take some time to get resolved. In both the 1938 and 1940 Nebraska District Proceedings reference is made concerning the meetings of the two committees in their efforts to set the matter straight. In the end...

A five man intersynodical "summit conference" consisting of two Missouri Synod pastors, two from the Wisconsin Synod, and chaired by a Norwegian Synod pastor studied the matter and requested specific apologies. President Witt of the Nebraska District of the Wisconsin Synod admitted guilt for accepting the seceding members and pastor Heitfeld and the members of Trinity, Fort Morgan also presented apologies. The seceders ignored the requests at first but eventually

sent a statement to President Behnken and the case was officially closed. The members remained within the Wisconsin Synod however.<sup>49</sup>

### *V. Later Developments (1938-1943)*

With the coming of 1938, the Wisconsin Synod was slowly but surely beginning to move out of its “rookie” years as far as mission work in Colorado was concerned. They had many capable men reaching out to a number of distinct areas. But even so, Colorado was a very big area, and the Lord only knew how the rest of the state stacked up as mission potential. Recognizing this fact, and recognizing the tremendous blessings God had already provided in this cowboy country, as well as in other southwestern states such as Arizona, an *Exploration Committee* was put together by the Synod. They were to head out in the spring of 1938 to survey the land and produce a report to provide a clearer picture for the planning of future mission expansion in the west. The Exploration Committee was sent first to Arizona where they would spend about three weeks scouting the hot territory of Arizona. After that they were to catch a train bound for Colorado and finish their trip with the exploration of Colorado.<sup>50</sup> (*Cf. Appendix 3 for a complete account of the Exploration Committee’s travels through Colorado, together with a map marking the places visited, and their progression.*)

The committee arrived in La Junta, Colorado, on Monday, March 28, at 7:00AM where the veteran Colorado Missionary, Pastor A.C. Bauman, was ready and waiting for their arrival. He proceeded to serve as their tour guide first, throughout the southeastern corner of the state (Rocky Ford, Las Animas, Lamar, Ordway, etc.), and in subsequent days throughout the central (Colorado Springs, Elizabeth, Denver), northern (Loveland, Ft. Collins, Greeley), and northeastern (Ft. Morgan, Hillrose), sections of Colorado. They carefully noted where the cities were positioned, the layout of the population, the cultural and economic conditions of the areas,

and so on. They had originally desired to reach the western half of the state, but because it was still early in the year, the Continental Divide posed too great a barrier. Finally, in the late afternoon of Tuesday, April 5, they left Denver for their homes in Wisconsin.<sup>51</sup>

This exploratory trip proved to be beneficial both to the Synod in getting a first-hand working knowledge of the Colorado mission fields, and to the Colorado mission fields who would be on the receiving end of Synod's mission endeavors. More men continued to be sent and steady funds to provide for the needs. But perhaps the most significant later development was the calling of a General Missionary for the state of Colorado. While it had been resolved already in 1937 at the Joint Synod Convention, (a similar idea had been advocated in certain circles for decades prior to this) it finally became a reality in July of 1939.<sup>52</sup> A contemporary account of the placing of the missionary reads:

In accordance with their call the General Missionaries are "to explore new fields, preach the Gospel to the unchurched, organize preaching places wherever possible, and to serve them with preaching. Where the prospects justify it you are to prepare the way for the calling of a resident missionary."

Since our General Missionaries have been in service less than a year, we may consider this innovation still in the experimental stage. However, the reports of these men constrain us to say that the need for such missionaries is great, indeed. Every District of our Synod ought to have a missionary of this kind.<sup>53</sup>

The man the Lord placed as the General Missionary for Colorado was Immanuel P. Frey. From the words of one of his reports it is clear what caliber of man Pastor Frey truly was. "In slightly less than a year's activity 2,115 canvassing and follow up calls have been made. Including mission board and conference meetings, 34,500 miles have been traveled by car, train and bus. Sermons to the number 88 were delivered."<sup>54</sup> All in slightly less than 1 year's time!! It would seem that the majority of his work centered in or around the Denver and Golden areas, based on where new missions were reported as opened. In the same report Pastor Im. P. Frey gives a good

description of the status of the mission work at the end of the 1930's. He points out that numerous towns and cities had been canvassed in part or in whole, and three exploratory trips to the western slope had been completed resulting in the placement of two permanent missionaries. Services in Denver and Golden were being conducted on a regular basis, and Pueblo, the second largest city in the state, had established a preaching station. And to round out the picture, "from time to time exploration trips have also been made to other parts of the state. However a large part of the state still remains unexplored."<sup>55</sup> This man truly possessed a missionary's heart.

### *Conclusion*

With the coming of the Exploration Committee in 1938, and the calling of the General Missionary in 1939, mission work in the state had really reached a new level. The *early years* of mission work were coming to a close. By the early to mid forties the Synod would be granting Colorado the largest mission budget in the entire synod. Mission expansion was great throughout the District. Many new mission parishes were opening up all over, especially in the larger cities. New mission strategies were being tackled. No longer was it a strictly *rural* focus. The first Lutheran Day School had been opened, and congregations began to celebrate tenth and fifteenth anniversaries.

The Lord had opened Colorado for the Wisconsin Synod. He had provided the people. He had provided the Pastors. He had provided the power of His Holy Spirit to plow up the rock hard soil of men's hearts with the Law, so that He could plant there the seed of His Gospel. It is plain to see the hand of God at work in the early years of mission work in Colorado.

Unfortunately however, where God's people are and where His Church is being planted, there the Tempter is also- using all his might to uproot and destroy whatever he can. Colorado

too would experience the work of Satan, who seeks to divide God's people and break up His churches. Churches would be lost, and souls would wander, but through it all the work of proclaiming the Good News would continue. God blessed the missionaries in Colorado with many things. But perhaps one of the greatest blessings was a constant awareness of what was most essential...

Even within the Lutheran Church we see evidences of earthly-minded tendencies. There is a hankering to put the Lutheran Church on the map; to win recognition from the world; to make an impression by emphasizing those outward aspects which the unconverted are inclined to admire. There is feverish activity to gain favorable publicity even if a point must be stretched to make the church more popular. There is a tendency to introduce pomp and show into the church services and to rely upon outward attractions, such as social activities, to build and preserve the church. Indications are not lacking that we too are beginning to lose sight of the fact that all flesh is like grass and that, at least in practice, we are beginning to edge away from the truth that only the Word of the Lord endureth forever.

Let us hold fast to the truth that only that will finally survive and endure which has been produced by the Word of the Lord, the Word which by the Gospel is preached unto us. Everything else is destined for destruction and will become ashes. Men need the Gospel of Jesus Christ, the message that God has redeemed them, foul and sinful as they are, with the blood of His own Son and so made them worthy to enter into the inheritance incorruptible and undefiled and that fadeth not away. Only those who have this Gospel of Jesus Christ in their hearts are fortified against the changes and vicissitudes of this life and will finally enter that eternal rest which remaineth to the people of God.

The temptation is often strong to resort to other methods and tactics, because to the fleshly mind they seem to produce quicker and more impressive results. **But our Lord has entrusted to us the simple preaching of the Gospel as the only worthwhile and effective means. If we adhere to that we can safely leave the results to Him. We may not see many results here on earth, but we shall see them in eternity.**<sup>56</sup>

We rejoice in the grace shown to the people and places in Colorado. May His Word continue to be preached there in all its truth and purity, and may the proclamation of the Gospel continue to march forth, to the very ends of the earth!

## Endnotes

1. Prof. P. E. Kretzmann, "The Beginning of Sound Lutheranism in Colorado", as printed in *Concordia Historical Institute Quarterly*, 1930, v. III pg. 65.
2. Ibid., pg. 66.
3. Lyle L. Schaefer, Faith to Move Mountains: A History of the Colorado District of the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod, pg. 5f. (This was confirmed by checking *The Rocky Mountain News* articles.)
4. Lyle L. Schaefer, op. cit., pg. 13. Author is quoting George A. Weinrich's unpublished *A Short History of Hope Ev. Luth. Church, Westcliffe*.
5. Prof. P. E. Kretzmann, op. cit., pg. 66.
6. Ibid.
7. Ibid., pg. 67.
8. Ibid., pg. 66.
9. Ibid.
10. Lyle Schaefer, op. cit., pg. 11.
11. Prof. P. E. Kretzmann, op. cit., pg. 67.
12. Lyle Schaefer, op. cit., pg. 13, 14.
13. Ibid.
14. Prof. P. E. Kretzmann, op. cit., pg. 67.
15. Ibid., pg. 68.
16. Ibid.
17. Lyle Schaefer, op. cit., pg. 15.
18. Ibid., pg. 15ff.
19. *A History of St. Paul's Ev. Lutheran Church*, Gladstone, MI. Written for 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the dedication of St. Paul's Ev. Lutheran Church, Pastor James E. Hanson.

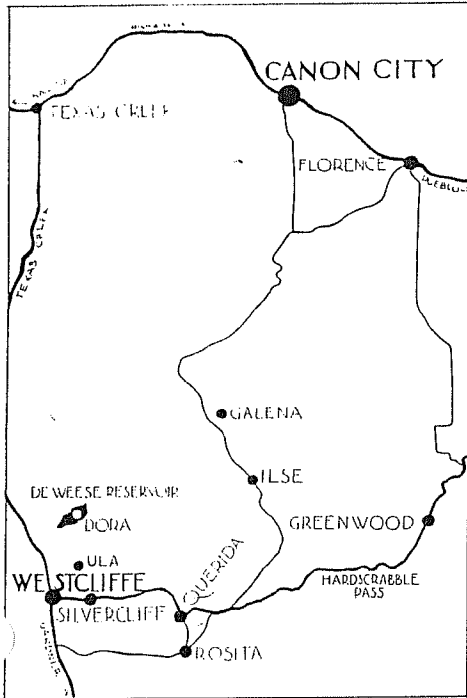


20. Biographical sketch included in 1961, 40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Service bulletin for Pastor Hoffman, serving at Gladstone, MI
21. Lyle Schaefer, op. cit., pg. 24.
22. Nebraska District Proceedings, 1940, pg. 12.
23. Biographical sketch included in 1961, 40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Service bulletin for Pastor Hoffman, serving at Gladstone, MI
24. Lyle Schaefer, op. cit., pg 150.
25. Interview with Mr. Paul Bauman of Detroit, MI – nephew of A. C. Bauman. April 21, 1997.
26. James F. Koch, *Obituary for A. C. Bauman*, Northwestern Lutheran – May 12, 1968.
27. Historical sketch from St. Paul's, Prescott, WI - *75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary (1874-1949) Booklet*.
28. James Koch, op. cit.
29. Im. P. Frey, op. cit.
30. Interview with Mr. Paul Bauman of Detroit, MI – nephew of A. C. Bauman. April 21, 1997.
31. Im. P. Frey, op. cit.
32. *A History of Zion Lutheran Church – 1933-1983*, pg. 1.
33. Ibid., pg. 2.
34. Ibid.
35. Ibid., pg. 4.
36. Letter written from Rev. Venus H. Winter to Rev. Henry G. Meyer, October 15, 1972.
37. *1934 Nebraska District Proceedings*, pg. 8.
38. Letter written from Rev. Venus H. Winter to Rev. Henry G. Meyer, October 15, 1972.
39. Immanuel P. Frey, *Our Mission Work in Colorado*, Northwestern Lutheran – Sept. 7, 1941, pg. 282.
40. *1934 Nebraska District Proceedings*, pg. 9.
41. Im. P. Frey, op. cit.
42. *1934 Nebraska District Proceedings*, pg. 9.
43. *1934 Nebraska District Proceedings*, pg. 6.

44. *1936 Nebraska District Proceedings*, pg. 10.
45. Ibid.
46. *A Short History of the Trinity Evangelical Lutheran Church of Hillrose, CO* – written Feb. 28, 1937 (by Mr. Henry Linker ?)
47. *1936 Nebraska District Proceedings*, pg. 48, & *1938* pg. 64.
48. *1936 Nebraska District Proceedings*, pg. 11.
49. Lyle Schaefer, op. cit., pg. 151.
50. *1938 Western WI District Proceedings*, pg. 75-81.
51. Ibid.
52. *1940 Nebraska District Proceedings*, pg. 11, 15-16.
53. Ibid.
54. Ibid.
55. Ibid., 16, 17.
56. *1944 Nebraska District Proceedings*, pg. 8,9.

~ Appendix 1 ~

*Sketches and Pictures of Earliest Lutheran Activity*



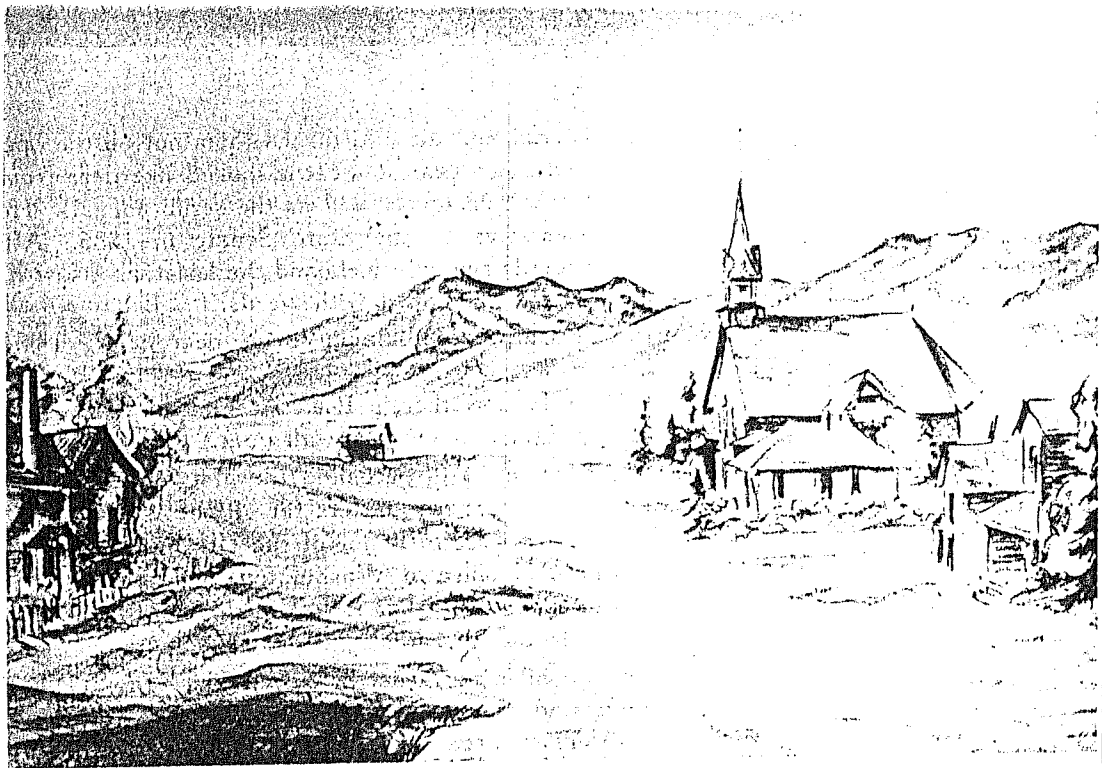
*The Wet  
Mountain  
Valley*



Pastor J. Hilgendorf.



Pastor J. H. Brammer.



WESTCLIFFE



The Present Church in Westcliffe, Colo.



REV. THEOPHIL H. HOFFMANN

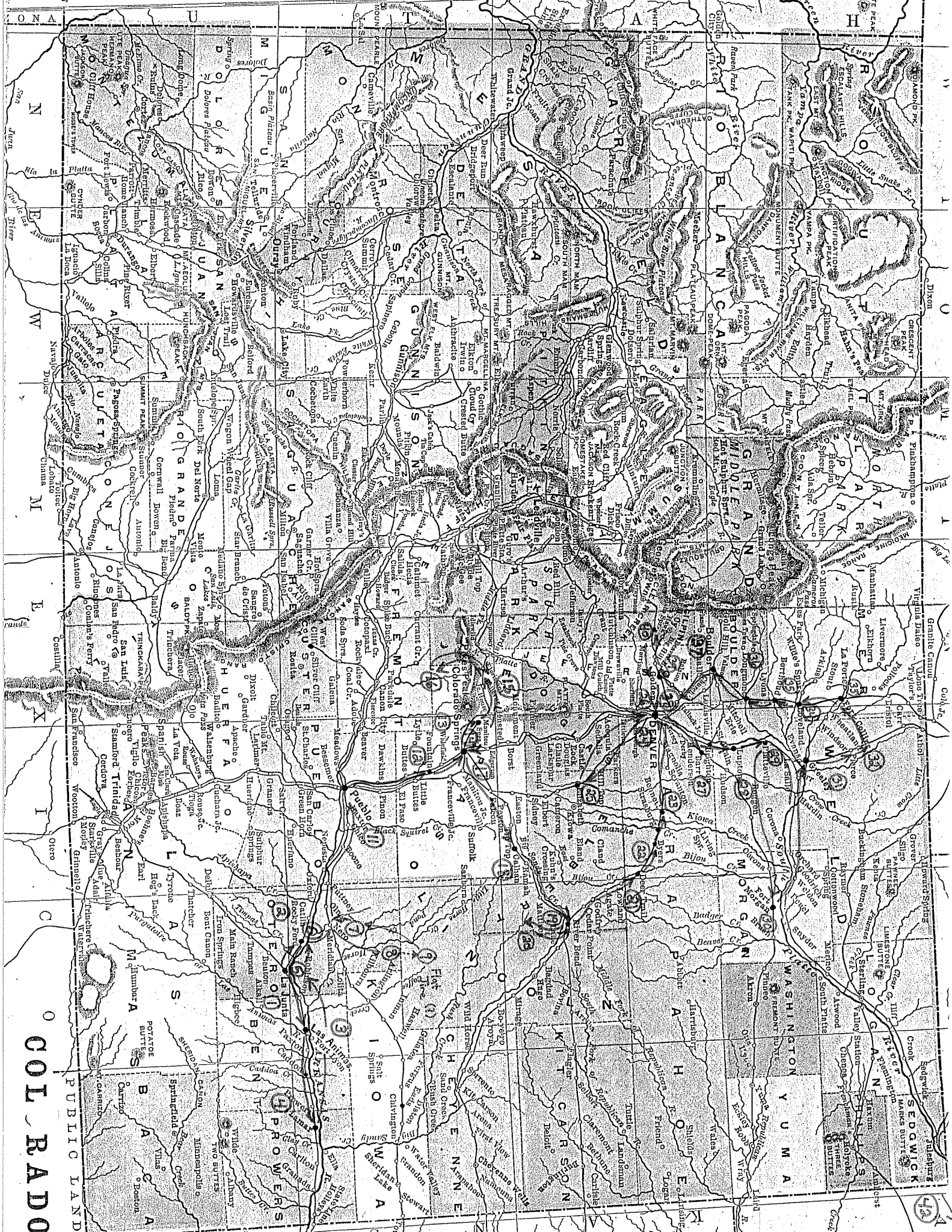


THE REV. A. C. BAUMANN  
1916—1922

~ Appendix 2 ~

*"The First Five Years in Colorado"*  
*The Pastors and their Stations*

<b>Pastor</b>	<b>Station</b>	<b>Year Reported</b>
1. Alvin C. Bauman	Sugar City - St. Paul's	1933
2. Harold Schulz	Ft. Morgan - Zion	1933
3. Walter Siffring	La Junta	1933
4. Victor Schulz	Platteville - St. John's	1934
5. Herbert Witt	Lamar	1934
6. Adelbert Hellmann	Eads	1934
	Las Animas	1935
Walter Siffring	Rocky Ford - St. Paul's	1935
7. Gerhardt Struck	Hillrose - Trinity	1936
Alvin C. Baumann	Ordway, Cowens, Kendrick	1936
Herbert Witt	Caddoa	1936
8. Orval Kreie	Hillrose - Trinity	1936
	Buena Vista (attempted)	1938
9. Victor Tiefel	Platteville - St. John's	1938
Victor Schulz	Elizabeth	1938



COL RADO

PUBLIC LAND

Map grid labels: 37, 36, 35, 34, 33, 32, 31, 30, 29, 28, 27, 26, 25, 24, 23, 22, 21, 20, 19, 18, 17, 16, 15, 14, 13, 12, 11, 10, 9, 8, 7, 6, 5, 4, 3, 2, 1, 0, 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30, 31, 32, 33, 34, 35, 36, 37

Map grid labels: 101, 102, 103, 104, 105, 106, 107, 108, 109, 110, 111, 112, 113, 114, 115, 116, 117, 118, 119, 120, 121, 122, 123, 124, 125, 126, 127, 128, 129, 130, 131, 132, 133, 134, 135, 136, 137, 138, 139, 140, 141, 142, 143, 144, 145, 146, 147, 148, 149, 150, 151, 152, 153, 154, 155, 156, 157, 158, 159, 160, 161, 162, 163, 164, 165, 166, 167, 168, 169, 170, 171, 172, 173, 174, 175, 176, 177, 178, 179, 180, 181, 182, 183, 184, 185, 186, 187, 188, 189, 190, 191, 192, 193, 194, 195, 196, 197, 198, 199, 200

~ Appendix 3 ~

*Exploration Committee's Route  
Spring 1938*

1. Arrive at La Junta
2. Breakfast at Rock Ford
3. Explore Las Animas
4. Visit church & parsonage at Lamar
5. Return to La Junta
6. Explore Rocky Ford
7. Inspect construction of parsonage at  
Ordway
8. Heading for Cowens & Kendrick
9. Flat Tire!
10. Repairs in Ordway
11. Avoid the snowstorm, head to  
Pueblo
12. Pass through Fountain
13. Explore Colorado Springs
14. Explore Manitou
15. Tourist towns of Green Mountain...
16. ...and Cascade
17. Spend the night in Colorado Springs
18. Through "mission-potent" Calhan
19. Arrive in Limon
20. Hilltop view of farms south of  
Limon
21. Through tiny Deer Trail
22. Through tiny Byers
23. Through tiny Strassburg and Byers
24. One mile high- in Denver!
25. Visit Victor Schulz in Elizabeth
26. Return to Denver
27. Passing through Brighton...
28. ...and Ft. Lupton...
29. for conference at Platteville
30. 87 miles east to Ft. Morgan &  
Hillrose
31. Explore Greeley
32. North to Eaton & Ault
33. South through lush Ft. Collins
34. My Home Town! Loveland!
35. Through Berthod
36. To Longmont
37. To Boulder, where the University is
38. Explore the suburbs of Broomfield  
& Westminster
39. Into the Rockies via Golden
40. Explore Idaho Springs
41. Back to the capitol, Denver
42. Return home to Wisconsin!

We drove 36 miles farther north to Clifton (pop. 2,305), nestling between sheer mountain sides, and spent the night there. Copper smelting is about the one and only industry, and the town was very quiet, almost dead, while we were there. About 80% of the population is Mexican. The next morning we drove on to the mining town of Morenci (pop. 5,114) six miles over winding mountain roads. There was more life here than in Clifton. We had the name of one Lutheran, but failed to get in touch with him. There is not much work in these towns, but they should be kept in mind.

#### The Safford Region

Early in the forenoon we turned back from Morenci and Clifton and headed for Safford, about 50 miles southwest. The Gila Valley around Safford has about 35,000 acres under irrigation, with productive farms. This valley has a population of about 10,000, of which about half are Mormons. The 1930 census lists the population of Safford at 1,706, but evidently it has grown considerably since. It is a modern, thriving town with a large trade territory. Here we talked with two Lutheran ladies, who upon occasion have attended the Indian Mission services at Bylas 35 miles west, but since they have no cars, they ordinarily attend sectarian churches. Both are interested in having Lutheran services. In our opinion, the Safford community should be worked and provision made for Lutheran services. Since it might not be advisable to have a man devote his entire time to this field at the present time, a possible solution might be to provide Missionary Sprengeler with a teacher in his Indian school, so that he may be free to devote some time to this field, in addition to his other duties as an Indian missionary. There are a number of other towns in this valley, such as, Solomonville (pop. 1,283), Thatcher (pop. 895), Pima (pop. 980), Fort Thomas (pop. 459) and Geronimo (pop. 50). In this latter village, on the edge of the Indian reservation, there are three Lutheran young men (Rothmiller), who regularly attend the Indian mission services at Bylas, 7 miles west. We arrived in Bylas in the evening and spent the night there. The next day we drove through the eastern end of the San Carlos Indian Reservation to Peridot and San Carlos. Since our work was not concerned with Indian Mission, no report is necessary.

#### Globe - Miami Field

About 25 miles west of San Carlos lies Globe and 5 miles farther on Miami, two copper-mining cities with a population

of over 7,000 each. Globe for many years was an Indian Mission station, though outside of the reservation. For a number of years we also had a missionary for the Whites in these two cities. At the present time Pastor Alfred Uplegger resides in Globe in the old Indian Mission parsonage and conducts services for the Whites in the dilapidated chapel adjoining it, though he is salaried by the Indian Mission. The work among the Whites has dwindled to an attendance of 6. This may be due in part to the unattractive quarters, but the fact that the old Dominion Mine in Globe has practically been closed and perhaps will not be reopened is a strong contributing factor. The work of our church here seems to be pretty well halted, but we believe that the field should not be immediately abandoned, since it is impossible to say whether there is any future there for our church. Nor should the few loyal Lutherans we have there be left altogether to shift for themselves. We favor a watchful waiting policy here. Within a distance of 40 miles of Globe there are several other mining towns, such as Hayden (pop. 2,500), Winkleman (pop. 729) and Superior (pop. 2,525), where Missionary Uplegger has been in touch with individual people. Mining towns, because of the large foreign element to be found in them, usually offer great difficulties to the establishment of a Lutheran church.

From Globe and Miami, without visiting the towns last named, Pastor Uplegger drove us to the Whiteriver Apache Reservation. Sunday, March 27, Missionary Guenther drove us through mud and slush nearly 100 miles north to Holbrook, already mentioned earlier in this report, from where we late in the afternoon caught a train for Colorado.

\* \* \* \* \*

### EXPLORATION COMMITTEE REPORT ON COLORADO

#### The Arkansas Valley

Monday, March 28, at 7:00 A. M., we arrived in La Junta, Colorado, being met there by Pastor A. C. Bauman of Ordway. After a dash to Rocky Ford, 11 miles away, for breakfast in Pastor Siffring's home, we again drove through La Junta (pop. 7,193) toward Las Animas 22 miles away. Las Animas is a city of 2,517 without a Lutheran church, the nearest church being in La Junta. Las Animas is a beautiful, modern town lying in the fruitful Arkansas Valley, stretching from Pueblo to the Kansas line, a distance of about 135 miles. 153,000 acres are irrigated under this project. Some of the



chief products are hay, corn, melons, sugar beets and livestock. The country around Las Animas has a fine appearance with substantial farm buildings. The population has practically no foreign element. There are quite a few Swedish-Americans in that neighborhood, and there are a number of other families that are nominally Lutheran, many of which are connected now with sectarian churches because no Lutheran church was at hand. It is our conviction that prospects in this community are such that our Synod should place a man in this field.

Continuing eastward in the Arkansas Valley we came to Lamar (pop. 4,233), where for the past several years we have had a mission congregation (Herbert Witt, pastor), with a nice combination church and parsonage. This town has a very neat and modern appearance with a trade territory of about 75 miles. Thirty-five miles north of Lamar lies Eads (pop. 518) in a dryland territory along the Missouri Pacific, where Pastor Witt also conducts services. Then off the highway toward Las Animas is the little village of Caddoa, 22 miles away, where the Lamar pastor also has services. There are hopes that a dam across the Arkansas River will be built near Caddoa. If this dam should materialize, the water supply in the entire Arkansas Valley will be greatly increased and much more acreage will be added to the irrigation project in that case. That would mean much to the entire valley from the Kansas line to Pueblo.

Returning through Las Animas we came to La Junta once more in the same valley. This is a division point for the Santa Fe with a large payroll. This too is in every respect a modern little city. There is one Lutheran church here without a resident pastor.

Driving westward through Swink (pop. 418) to Rocky Ford (pop. 3,426), famous for its melons and seeds. Here we had for several years a small congregation of German Russians, but as a result of a split we now have only a small remnant there. There is one other Lutheran church in Rocky Ford. From Rocky Ford we drove 13 miles north to Ordway (pop. 1,139) where we have had an organized congregation since 1936, A. C. Bauman, pastor. At the time we were there the congregation was building a new parsonage. Plans had also been made to build a chapel adjoining the parsonage, but though there is still considerable material on hand the congregation will need some financial assistance to carry out the project. Since it has been impossible to find a permanent place of worship, so that the services had to be continually

shifted from place to place, there is need of a church building here. Several lay members presented to us earnest pleas for help in this project. No other Lutheran church is to be found in the Ordway territory, nor is there any Lutheran church for 50 miles to the west and 80 miles to the north. Bauman has preached since 1923. Originally there were three Lutheran synods represented in this town of 598. For a while all were together in one congregation, but in 1936 the American Lutheran church began to serve a number of excommunicated members and took possession of the church and property, which is now in litigation. Our congregation acquired the former Episcopal church, a very churchly building, and is conducting services in it. When the court matter has been settled, this parish will be able to reduce its synodical subsidy considerably and perhaps dispense with it altogether.

Tuesday forenoon and the greater part of the afternoon we met in conference with the Pastors Bauman, Siffing, and Herbert Witt, our representatives in the southern part of the state. Mr. Passig of Ordway was also present at this conference held in Rocky Ford. These men gave us their views concerning mission opportunities in Colorado. Pastor Siffing gave us also a report on an exploration tour on the western slope which he had made a few weeks previously with Mr. Stolte of Fort Morgan. Since they had been handicapped by deep snows, a complete report could not be given. It may be stated at this time that your committee had planned to visit the Western Slope, but because of great snowfall which blocked the mountain passes this plan had to be abandoned. In consequence our report leaves at least half of the State of Colorado out of consideration. We can only say that, judging by what we heard, there are mission opportunities in the western half of the state.

Late in the afternoon we started on a trip to the Cowans and Kendrick region, 60 miles north of Ordway, and the Farmers Highway region where services are conducted by Pastor Bauman, assisted in late months by Pastor Siffing. Owing to tire trouble and the late hour we did not complete the trip but returned to Ordway. We planned to make the trip the next morning, but after miles of driving we ran into such a snowstorm that it would have been folly to attempt to drive farther in this sparsely settled country. In consequence of this we never reached these points. According to reports given us, this is a dry land country with few towns and no church of any denomination within a radius of 60 miles.

To avoid the snowstorm we headed west toward Pueblo,

50 miles away. Near Crowley (pop. 323) Pastor Bauman conducts services in the house of one of the members. Eight miles south of Crowley lies Manzanola (pop. 578), where there is no Lutheran church. The rural population around these towns in the Arkansas Valley is perhaps greater than in the towns themselves. Nine miles west is Fowler (pop. 968) in which there is a Norwegian Lutheran church. After passing through several minor villages we came to Pueblo, the Pittsburgh of the west, with a population of over 50,000, with three Lutheran churches, including one of the Missouri Synod. There are large residence sections which would seem to offer good opportunities for mission work and the establishment of a congregation.

#### From Colorado Springs to Limon toward Denver

Forty miles north we came to Colorado Springs, after passing through Fountain (pop. 577) in an irrigated section, in which there is no Lutheran church, but, so we were informed a number of Lutheran families. Colorado Springs, which, according to 1930 census, has a population of 33,237, is the famous summer resort at the foot of Pike's Peak with many wonders of nature which attracts thousands of tourists every summer. There are three Lutheran churches, including one of the Missouri Synod. The portion of the city west of the Fountain River in what was formerly Colorado City, now incorporated in Colorado Springs, and Manitou (pop. 1,205), a solidly built up region toward the foot of Pike's Peak, appears to have few churches and would seem to offer good mission opportunities. That applies also to the northeast residence section, which is building up. Beyond Manitou we drove westward to a point in the mountains about 20 miles from Colorado Springs through Green-Mountain Falls (pop. 41), Cascade (pop. 50), Woodland Park (pop. 194), and the first two are chiefly tourist villages, while the latter is in a ranching section. Beyond lie Cripple-Creek (pop. 1,427) and Victor (pop. 1,291) and other towns, which we did not have the time to visit. We are informed that there is no Lutheran church anywhere in this section.

The next morning, Thursday, March 31, we left Colorado Springs northeast toward Limon 73 miles away, apparently a good dry farming country, along the Rock Island. There are a number of small villages along this route. At Calhan (pop. 399) there is a Lutheran church, with about 40 Bohemian families. This congregation several years ago appealed to us for a pastor. Since the man could not be immediately

supplied, an ex-Missouri Synod pastor, not in good standing with his synod, was called and is still serving the congregation at the present time. Without mentioning the individual villages along this route, it may be said that this field is worthy of investigation. In Limon (pop. 1,100) there is a Norwegian Lutheran pastor. We drove about 7 miles south of Limon to get a view of the farming region from the top of a hill and saw a great many farms stretched out before us. It might be a good plan to work the entire region at some distance east of Colorado Springs in connection with Cowans, Kendrick, and Farmer's Highway, previously mentioned, as one mission parish. About 15 miles north of Limon there is an abandoned church building, and requests have come to one of our missionaries some time ago to conduct services there. We are informed that there are Danes and Norwegians in the territory.

From Limon we swung back northwest toward Denver, a distance of 87 miles along the highway without a Lutheran church, also a dry land country. Along this highway are such towns as Deer Trail (pop. 390), Byers (pop. 400), Strassburg (pop. 217), Bennett (pop. 211), and Aurora (pop. 2,295). Aurora is a suburb of Denver, with a break between the two. So far as we were able to learn, there is no Lutheran church here. By establishing a mission here, we could serve not only this town but also the eastern end of Denver.

From Denver we drove about 35 miles to Elizabeth, where Pastor V. Schultz resides and in the neighborhood of which he has three preaching places. He is being salaried out of the special Exploration Fund and is exploring a territory 40 by 80 miles since January 1.

#### The South Platte and Big Thompson Valleys

The next morning we drove 35 miles north of Denver to Platteville, passing through Brighton and Fort Lupton, in each of which the Missouri Synod has a congregation. In Platteville, where V. Tiefel is now pastor, we had a conference with the brethren of our northern field (Pastors V. Schultz, H. Schultz, V. Tiefel, O. Kreier), several lay members also being present. Platteville and the other towns just mentioned to Fort Morgan and Hillrose, where our Synod is also represented, all lie along the South Platte River and have irrigation. At the Platteville conference pastors and laymen stressed the need of more workers. Late in the afternoon we drove through Fort Morgan to Hillrose 87 miles to see fields which we are already occupying.

The next day we cut back to Greeley (pop. 12, 203), which has a large State Teachers College and two Lutheran churches (Missouri and American), and then headed north into the Poudre Valley to Eaton (pop. 1,221) and Ault (pop. 737) in good irrigated country, with no active Lutheran church. We felt that there should be mission material for our church in these communities. We turned west from Ault and four or five miles south of the highway got a glimpse of Windsor (pop. 1,352) where, we were told, there is a German Russian church of the American Lutheran Church with only German services, which is not holding the young people because of the language question. This section, like the others just mentioned, is irrigated, and the population is such that, in our opinion, it should be thoroughly canvassed.

Next we came to Fort Collins (pop. 11,489) with two Lutheran churches. While there we were informed by a business man that the Grand Lake project, which would irrigate about 600,000 acres, was practically assured. This valley was one of the finest from an agricultural standpoint that we saw in Colorado, the Big Thompson Valley, running about 100 miles south toward Denver. We followed this valley south from Fort Collins to Loveland (pop. 5,506), Longmont (pop. 6,029), Berthoud (pop. 811) and Boulder (pop. 11,223), seat of the state university, in all of which towns and cities there are already Lutheran services. Lying between Loveland and Platteville (where, as already stated, our Synod has a congregation), 9 and 14 miles, respectively, from the latter place, we find Johnstown (pop. 767) and Milliken (pop. 483), without a Lutheran church. These towns are also in a well populated irrigated district.

#### Denver and Surroundings

About 10 miles northwest of Denver city limits we came to Broomfield (pop. 125), then on to Westminster (pop. 436) and Arvada (pop. 1,276), the latter place right on the edge of the city with no Lutheran churches.

Sunday afternoon we drove about 35 miles into the mountains to Golden (pop. 2,426) and Idaho Springs (pop. 1,207), neither of which has a Lutheran church. Other towns which lie beyond we did not visit. Coming back we drove by way of Littleton (pop. 2,019), about 10 miles from the center of Denver. Littleton has no Lutheran church, but Pastor Victor Schultz from Elizabeth, 35 miles away, has started a canvass of the town. There are other small towns nearby.

On this day as well as the next day we drove around various sections of Denver. Among the sections of Denver which appeared to us to offer good prospects for the establishment of missions because of their distance from other churches, dense population, and number of new homes going up, are the Park Hill region in the east toward Aurora, Sullivan, University Park, South Denver, and the old Petersburg section. Denver in 1930 had a population of 287,861, with comparatively few Lutheran churches. It should be remembered that quite a few of our Wisconsin Synod Lutherans have in the past moved, and still are moving, into Denver, and we should earnestly consider whether we should not hold what we have and take advantage of the opportunity to work among the unchurched which is offered us in Denver. It should be borne in mind that Denver is the largest city and business center of the healthseekers. We left Denver Tuesday, April 5, in the late afternoon, for our homes.

We spent nearly three weeks in Arizona and about ten days in Colorado. It should be borne in mind that this report covers only the eastern half of the state, and not all of that. Weather conditions made it impossible for us to give any attention to the western half. Our work served only as a general survey of the two states, and it rests with you to decide whether this general survey should be followed up with a thorough canvass and intensive work in such fields as seem to offer us an opportunity to carry out the divine commission, "Go ye into all the world and preach the Gospel to every creature."

(Signed)

J. GAUSS.

IM. P. FREY.

#### NEGRO MISSIONS IN THE U. S. MOVEMENT IN NEGRO POPULATION

Southern Field

At one time New Orleans had a Negro population outnumbering that of any of the larger cities in our country. Today New York, Chicago, Detroit, St. Louis and other cities are leading New Orleans by a comfortable margin. The southern Negro is on the move. Southern conditions and northern opportunities are the cause. Nevertheless, New Orleans still has a very large Negro population and as a mission field it is holding its own and can even report progress. For well indoctrinated Negro Lutheran Christians generally we go to New Orleans. The Christian day-

~ Appendix 4 ~

*Chronology of Significant Dates*

<u>Year</u>	<u>Event</u>	<u>Source</u>
1840	Pueblo Settled	<i>Conc. Hist. Inst. Qrt. 1930, v.III, 65ff.</i>
1865	Rev. Koons of E. PA. Syn. arrives in Denver	Lyle Schaefer, <u>Faith to Move Mtns</u> , pg. 5
1870	Colony of Germ. Luth.'s settle outside of Westcliffe	Lyle Schaefer, <u>Faith to Move Mtns</u> , pg. 13
1872	First MO Synod Pastor visits Westcliffe	<i>Conc. Hist. Inst. Qrt. 1930, v.III, 65ff.</i>
1873	First permanent MO Synod Pastor in CO	<i>Conc. Hist. Inst. Qrt. 1930, v.III, 65ff.</i>
1905	Alvin C. Bauman vicars in SE Colorado	<i>Northwestern Lutheran – May 12, 1968</i>
1923	Alvin C. Bauman begins mission activity in SE CO	<i>Northwestern Lutheran – May 12, 1968</i>
1933	Zion, Ft. Morgan becomes 1 <sup>st</sup> WI Synod Parish	<i>History of Zion Lutheran Church – 1933-1983, pg. 1</i>
1934	St. John's, Platteville – 2 <sup>nd</sup> WI Synod Parish	<i>1934 Nebraska District Proceedings, pg. 6</i>
1935	MO Synod begins to hold grievances	<i>1936 Nebraska District Proceedings, pg. 11</i>
1936	Mission work expands greatly	<i>1936 Nebraska District Proceedings, pg. 47-48</i>
1937	Church & parsonage dedicated at Lamar	<i>1938 Nebraska District Proceedings, pg. 13</i>
1938	Exploration Committee explores CO	<i>1938 Nebraska District Proceedings, pg. 75-81</i>
1939	Immanuel P. Frey – 'General Missionary'	<i>1940 Nebraska District Proceedings, pg. 11</i>
1940	Continued dealings w/ MO re: Ft. Morgan	<i>1940 Nebraska District Proceedings, pg. 12</i>
1941	Mission work begins to look to the cities	<i>1942 Nebraska District Proceedings, pg. 14</i>
1942	CO Mission District. takes control of missions	<i>1942 Nebraska District Proceedings, pg. 10</i>
1943	Zion, Ft. Morgan celebrates 10 yrs. already!	<i>1944 Nebraska District Proceedings, pg. 11</i>
1944	Cand. John F. Brenner ord./ins. at Hillrose	<i>1944 Nebraska District Proceedings, pg. 10</i>

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