

|. A History of Erwin Raymond Scharf

By

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Church History

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Our story begins in Wisconsin along what is known as State Highway 175. Before that, it was called U.S. 41 and earlier still, about the turn of the century, it was spoken of as the "Yellowstone Trail". That is what travelers called the road which led from New York City westward by way of Chicago, Milwaukee, through the Fox River Valley, westward to the Twin Cities, and then Southwest to Yellowstone Park. They didn't have road signs back then. So in order to assist the travelers, farmers who lived along the road would paint a large rock near a fork in the road. Thus came the name "Yellowstone Trail".

This story was about to unfold almost 100 years ago in the last farmhouse at the left when traveling north out of Dodge County. It was the story of a young Erwin Scharf. His father, John William Scharf, like so many young men had been wrestling with the oft-given advice in those days: "Go west young man". Since he had relatives in Wisconsin, he decided to visit them

while he looked for employment. Shortly after following that impulse and arriving from Brooklyn, New York, he happened to become acquainted with BIRTHA PLANTIKOW. BIRTHA and her family had come some twenty years earlier from Pommerania in Germany and settled on a small farm near Lomira. Shortly thereafter, in 1888, they were married.

It was along Highway 175 that John and BIRTHA settled down to raise a family. Having already given birth to five boys and two girls, on April 8, 1907 they added one more boy to the family by the name of ERWIN RAYMOND SCHARF. Shortly after ERWIN'S birth, he was brought into the kingdom of God through Holy Baptism. One more child was born after ERWIN giving the SCHARF family a total of nine children. Of the nine children, three are still living: ERNA BIERWAGEN, MINNIE MAROSE, and ERWIN SCHARF.

While the First World War was raging in Europe, ERWIN obtained his elementary education in one of those well-documented one-room school houses. While ERWIN was in this one room school, he had the opportunity to move up twice. He had just turned twelve, when his teacher asked him to go to Mayville and take tests for eighth grade. He also began taking confirmation classes at an early age.

BERTHA was a great help to her son in his confirmation instructions. Each evening she would sit down by the fireside and help her son with each preparation. Since the confirmation classes were in German, BERTHA would help ERWIN go through each lesson. Pastor PIETZ allowed ERWIN to be instructed at an early

age as long as he had intentions to study for the ministry. Then in the spring of 1920, Erwin along with four other classmates was confirmed at St Johns in Lomira.

That summer, Erwin made plans to attend Northwestern Prep School in Watertown, Wisconsin. It was late in the summer when Pastor Pietz came over to the house and informed Erwin that he should send in his application. A few days later Erwin received a letter of acceptance from President Kowalke. In his first year away from home, he met the challenges of a completely new environment. He had to study diligently even more so than some of the other students. It was because most classes were lectured in German even Latin class was to first be translated into German. Being one of the younger ones in his class, he was more reserved than the other students. He even had somewhat of an inferiority complex that would surface later in his ministry.

In his quinta (sophomore) year he was asked by Dr. Ott, the college librarian, to be his assistant. Erwin accepted the challenge to help in the bookstore and in the Library. During the six years that Scharf held the position, he became a close friend of the Doctor. They enjoyed swimming and canoeing together on the Rock river. Erwin received his first swimming lessons complements of Doctor Ott and a couple of friends when they capsized the canoe and left him to paddle for his life. Doctor Ott took the young Scharf on special book-buying excursions to Milwaukee and Chicago, where they always made a point to take in special events such as concerts, plays large

museums and libraries. In 1924, Erwin graduated from Northwestern Prep. Back then, there really wasn't a graduation service, it was simply a transition from the prep department to the college.

During his four years in college, he was not only a diligent student, but also enjoyed extracurriculars such as singing in choruses and participating in the Phi Gamma Rho Literary Society, predecessor of the Forum. In their senior year, Martin Franzmann and Erwin Scharf co-directed "She Stoops to Conquer". It was the first performance in Northwestern's history in which they opened up the doors to the public. Professor Kowalke even gave them permission to charge admission for the play.

Back in the late twenties, school was much different from what it is today. School went from Monday to Saturday noon. Since the students didn't have vehicles on campus, each student would remain on campus until there was an extended vacation. All this time together, allowed the students to make some very close friendships. During his years at Northwestern, Erwin made many friends. Many of these friendships lasted throughout his ministry. Special friends that came to mind were Martin Franzmann, Sieghard Westendorf, Rolfie Hoenecke, Gerhardt Redlin, Heinz Bluhm and Heinrich Vogel. In 1928, Erwin Scharf graduated from Northwestern college.

The student became Instructor Scharf after his graduation in 1928 when he accepted a two year assignment to Winnebago Lutheran Academy in Fond du Lac. Since his parents had already moved to

Fond du Lac, it was convenient for him to stay with his parents while teaching at the Academy. At first, he was reluctant to leave his classmates behind. But when he stepped into the classroom, he gained some worthwhile experience that would be valuable later on in his ministry. While at the Academy, he taught Latin, Greek, German, Religion and History. In those days Greek was started in the Quarta (Junior) year at Prep School. It was also required at the feeder schools. He also helped out with dramatics.

In 1930, he felt it was time to finish his studies at the Seminary. In his first year at the Seminary, his parents both passed away within five months of each other. This and also being in a new class made for somewhat of a quiet school year. It was that next summer that Erwin's talents were again put to use. All his library experiences from Northwestern were put to good use. He and two other students catalogued the entire Seminary Library. It was at this time that the numbering system was changed over from the German numbering system to the Dewey Decimal system.

In January, of his second year of school at the Seminary, Erwin was elected President of its first organized choir. He immediately began making plans for a tour that spring. The area to be toured turned out to be much of southern Wisconsin. Cities included, in order were, Beaver Dam, Waterloo, Kenosha, Racine, Milwaukee, Manitowoc, Green Bay, Appleton, Fond du Lac, Thiensville, and West Allis. The tour began April 29 and continued to May 14. That year the choir also for the first time

sang at the commencement exercises.

Since by now his old class had graduated from the Seminary, Erwin was happy to be invited by two Seniors to room with them, Hilton Oswald and Bill Schweppe. That same year he managed the Seminary Bookstore while Hilton joined him in taking care of the Seminary Canteen. Before the close of that school year the three of them began to plan a nine-week camping trip for the following summer. They toured to the west Coast by the North and returned by the South.

The friendship that was created during that school year and on this nine week camping trip was very special. Even after their Seminary days the three of them would get together whenever possible.

Erwin was busy with the choir in his last two years at the sem. A tour was once again planned for that spring. It was early in the fall of 1931 that Erwin was asked to sing in the quartet. The quartet was asked to take a tour in the summer of 1933 of churches in the outlying areas of the Synod which were losing contact with the Seminary. Even though this was during the depression, they were able to pay for the trip from door collections. The churches were very excited to see the four young men and also to hear their organist, Martin Albrecht.

Being in a new class at the Sem, because of having taught for two years, Scharf had the opportunity to make even more lasting friendships: Siegfried Fenske, Fred Bergfeld, Waldmar Pless, Otto Engel to name just a few.

In 1933 the Synod was feeling the burden of the depression, and only two calls were assigned, one of them to Erwin Scharf and the other to Waldemar Pless. They were both called to the Academy in Fond du Lac to teach. Call day was nothing like it is today. On the last day of classes, the entire student body would meet in the chapel for a closing service. Professor Pieper would give a devotion of encouragement before sending everyone home.

Scharf was excited to return to the Academy. His work had been appreciated by the students and he had enjoyed teaching. He had hoped to serve in a Parish soon after graduation, but the Lord had other plans.

Scharf taught for five years at the Academy this time. He was one of five professors which meant he had a very busy schedule. Each day he was to prepare for seven different courses. One week out of each month he was to conduct morning devotions. And in his first year he directed Shakespeare's "The Taming of the Shrew". Instructor Scharf had already acquired a love for History, and since it appeared that God planned to use his teaching abilities for a while, Scharf spent five summers working in a full schedule of History courses at the University of Wisconsin in Madison.

In 1937 Instructor Scharf became Pastor Scharf as he accepted the call to serve two congregations named St. Paul's, one in Slinger and the other near Cedar Lake.

Four years later a young woman by the name of Irene Zarling came into the life of Pastor Scharf. They met at an Easter

sunrise service. Irene was teaching in West Bend at the time where that service was being held. She accompanied the choir while the choir performed an Easter cantata. He was the guest-preacher. Irene had graduated from D.M.L.C. in 1930 and had by the time of this meeting taught in Hortonville, Wisconsin, and at Seberwaing, Michigan. Her father was the pastor in Iron Ridge. Since Irene had grown up in a parsonage she was well prepared to assist Erwin in his parsonage. They decided to be married on July 30, 1941.

The entrance of the United States into World War II would have a direct effect on Scharf's ministry. In October, 1942 the Spiritual Welfare Commission requested the Slinger parish to give Pastor Scharf a two-years' leave of absence to become our Synod's first full-time civilian chaplain in Louisiana. He was given permission to choose his own replacement from that years uncalled Seminary graduates. He chose Norbert Reim. Soon after that Erwin, Irene, and their four-months' old son Ralph were soon on their way to serve in the seven large encampments as well the large maneuver area in that state.

The Spiritual Welfare Commission (now known as the Special Ministries Board) furnished Scharf with lists of the servicemen in his area. During the week he would look up as many of these men as he could. On Sundays he would hold services twice, once in De Ridder in the morning and again in Alexandria in the evening. After the morning service the De Ridder people quite frequently served a pot-luck dinner to the service men present

and to the Scharfs ala "Southern Hospitality". Irene always accompanied the pastor on these trips as organist and Ralph was willingly attended by military baby-sitters.

In 1944, while the Nazis were going down to defeat and the U.S. did not need any longer to train such large units of new troops Scharf completed his assignment in Louisiana and returned to Slinger. Soon after their return to Slinger, their second child was born, a daughter, Charlotte. On November 1 of 1944 they were busy moving to Rhineland. Their stay in Rhineland lasted for 12 years. These were 12 years of some of the busiest times and fondest memories of his career. One of the major projects that was to be undertaken upon his arrival was the building of a new grade school. Seven years after his arrival the school was completed and dedicated on December 10, 1951. During his tenure in Rhineland he and his wife were blessed with two more children, giving them a total of four: Ralph, Charlotte, Helen, and Madeline.

During the summer of 1956 Pastor Scharf received a Call to teach at Northwestern. This called for a difficult decision. While he did not completely like the idea of leaving the parish ministry, he did have to admit that his twelve years in Rhineland were too often disturbed by calls. There had been ten of them, of which seven were for returning to teach. It was fortunate that this call came during the summer, in early July. There was time for deliberation and then some preparation. Arrangements were made for moving in August.

In those days the separation between the College and Prep Departments had not been really given serious thought as yet. He taught some courses in each - largely History and Religion with occasional courses in German and Latin. During his years at Northwestern, Professor Scharf has served on a number of committees on campus, also retaining his love for drama by serving as advisor to the Rostra and Forum for a number of years.

In speaking with several former students of Professor Scharf, there was a great amount of respect and admiration for the man by all the students. It was very evident that he conducted himself in and out of the classroom to the best interest of the students. There wasn't an activity at school that he would be absent from. Sections of each class would be invited over to the Scharf residence for a dinner or snacks. Perhaps it was the relationship he had had with Dr. Ott that convinced him it was important to have a good relationship with the students. When Students had problems, they could be found walking to the doorstep of Professor Scharf. Helen, the daughter of Professor Scharf, recalls many students coming over to speak with her father.

In addition to his work on campus, Scharf has served our Synod through membership on the Synod Board for Parish Education, the Synod Educational Upgrading Committee, the Synod Interchurch Relations Commission, known then as the Doctrinal Commission, and during the 50's and 60's, when a split with Missouri was inevitable, he was asked to serve as secretary of the Synod's

Protest Committee. Of all the boards he was on, the one he enjoyed most was the Synod's Doctrinal Commission. It was very challenging especially when meeting with the theologians from Germany. He was also made chairman of the Synod Committee for planning the 500th anniversary of Luther's birthday. This was a varied and lasting assignment. For one thing it meant preaching the opening sermon for the 1983 convention of Synod in New Ulm, as well as an opening sermon for the State Teachers' Convention in October of the same year in Milwaukee. It called also for an assignment to prepare five essays on the theme: "Martin Luther, Reformer in the Making". These were to be delivered at the five Monday afternoon sessions of the Milwaukee area Pastor's Institute at the Seminary. During the following seasons there were invitations for the reading of these essays or major parts of them for six different districts of the Synod. By the time that was done, there was a request from the Northwestern Publishing House that the five essays be recast into the form of a book by the same title. It was published in 1987 and is still being sold by the Publishing House.

For many teachers, the summer is a time to relax and prepare oneself for the upcoming school year, not so for Professor Scharf. Since 1960 he spent thirteen summers as a visiting professor for summer sessions at DMLC. The classes he taught there include Comparative Religions, the Lutheran Confessions, the Life of Christ, and the Epistle to the Romans.

In 1967, a war had once again affected Scharf's ministry.

In the summer of that year, at the age of 60 when most men are planning how they should soon spend their retirement, Scharf was again asked to take a leave of absence for a civilian chaplaincy. This time he was to go halfway around the world to Vietnam, to serve our Synod's lists of servicemen in that war-torn country. He stayed there from the summer of 1967 to the winter of 1968 and returned with a treasury of war stories to tell. As one might well expect, such an adventure had a profound effect on the professor, accentuating for him the blessings we enjoy as Americans. Such an impression is reflected in a letter he wrote while in Vietnam, part of which was published in a 1967 edition of the *Black and Red*. In it he wrote, *"Working with the servicemen has been most rewarding, in spite of the fact that the conditions of war make it very trying to get to them and they to me. One thing I can say in all honesty without being a bit paternal, thank God everyday for the privilege you have of staying at school and preparing for the high calling of bringing God's voice and truth to a world sick enough to have caused what I see here in Vietnam. Thank Him, too, that you have been born an American and under the grace of the Gospel. Over here one really sees what those things should mean to us."*

(Slide show of Vietnam experience)

One of the highlights of this interview was speaking with Professor Scharf about his Vietnam experience. Even though many friends and colleagues tried to talk him out of going because of the danger involved, there was never a hesitation on his part.

He shared with me some of his first impressions of that trip. It happened that his first time in an airplane was the trip to Vietnam. This first time flying experience seemed minor compared to the culture shock he was about to encounter. There were people everywhere. Over three million people lived in the city of Saigon. People from the countryside moved to the city to avoid the war. The streets were cluttered with people walking, riding, selling, and even living. Fire hydrants were frequently opened so people could wash their clothes and dishes. Living space was scarce. People would build their homes over the rivers and up to the railroad tracks. The river was used for everything; toilet, laundry, and even swimming.

There was a certain odor that was unavoidable. Perhaps it was from the unsanitary conditions or the garbage dumped in the streets. It could have been from the "Nuc-mom" that was used for cooking. Nuc-mom was the sauce made by filling huge vats with raw fish and burying them with onions, letting the whole mixture rot until it ran off in a juice. That juice was the nuc-mom which they poured over their hot dishes.

Men left most of the work for women, even the hard work, like fixing the streets. Women did whatever they could to get by. Some would cook a meal and then carry it in a harness on their shoulders until they found a vacant spot on some filthy street corner. Then they would set up their portable restaurant. Some women went in for prostitution, others would sell themselves as slaves. There was certainly a culture shock for one coming

from foreign shores.

Buddha played a significant role in the Vietnamese culture. Big statues, Buddhist shrines, temples, and parks were every where. Funeral processions seemed to be present on a daily basis. Buddha seemed to be present in every aspect of the culture. It made evangelizing difficult.

Once over in Vietnam, Professor Scharf's task was outlined as follows. The Spiritual Welfare Commission would send him a list of names at each camp from the WELS churches. He would then send a letter to these gentlemen informing them that he would be coming to the camp to see them. He would ask them to reply if possible. The difficult part came in trying to reach each camp. A person took their own life in their hands when going on the streets of Saigon. Professor Scharf was in three transportation accidents during his stay in Saigon.

There were several different types of transportation. The most common means was by bicycle or motor-cycle. Many people would place a carriage in front of the bicycle and taxi people around. Cars and buses jammed the streets. Occasionally, Professor Scharf would take a helicopter from one camp to another. These different trips to the various camps would bring out a plethora of stories which unfortunately are not in the scope of this assignment. The Professor would do whatever he possibly could to see the men on his lists. We'll let a number of the pictures which will be shown in the adjoining video to illustrate the truth of that statement. Most of his contacts for

Communion were with one man at a time. On Sundays anyone who chose to look for Pastor Scharf knew that he stayed at his room in his hotel in Saigon. There he would have a service for six or seven men twice or three times a day. These were not large groups, but his consolation was always this that these contacts with men of his own faith and confession were encouragingly more than the military chaplains dared hope to serve in their gatherings where they had to accept any and all Protestants. Even after the Vietnam war ended there were servicemen or their parents who contacted Pastor Scharf to thank him for his efforts to serve their spiritual welfare.

The end of the first semester would in those days come at the end of January. In 1968, that meant that Pastor Scharf's leave of absence would end at that time. Since the Spiritual Welfare Commission hoped he might visit smaller groups of men either serving or training in a variety of bases in peaceful surroundings in the Pacific, they sent him lists of such men and suggested that he spend January looking them up. Leaving as soon as he could meet his successor and show him around a bit he flew from Saigon to make stops at the following areas: Bangkok in Thailand, Hong Kong in China, Taipei in Taiwan, Tokyo in Japan, and, finally, Hawaii. With the help of a couple stationed there, Col. and Mrs. Karl Kuckhahn, it was possible to end the whole tour with a gathering of 44 people in the chapel at Fort Shafter. This may have been the beginning of our mission in Honolulu.

In 1981, after twenty-five years at Northwestern and 51

years in the ministry, professor Scharf decided to retire. He taught one more year to allow his replacement to better prepare himself for such a large assignment. By that time it had become an eventful and multifaceted 52 year ministry. He served as Pastor in three different congregations, as a teacher on three different campuses, as chaplain for troops in two different wars, as the preacher of the Gospel on two continents, and has toured a third to better teach its history. He had to struggle 36 times with calls throughout his ministry. Few ministers experience such adventures, and Professor Scharf points to such variety as a characteristic in his ministry for which he is very thankful.

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2. Interview with Professor Scharf

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Question: Of all the people you have met and worked with in your career who had the most influence on you?

It happens quite often that people are so strongly influenced by those with whom they associate or among whom they grow up that when they are older they can recall who it was that had most to do with the kind of life they chose to follow, possibly even the profession they followed.

Early in my life I would have to say it was my mother. She had come to Wisconsin from Germany at the age of eight, settling with her parents and older siblings on a farm in the outskirts of Lomira. Later, as a young woman, she and several of her sisters were employed as maids in the homes of wealthy German families on the eastside of downtown Milwaukee. In 1888 she married my father who had recently moved from Brooklyn to work on the farm of one of his relatives a little north of Lomira. Since he came from Brooklyn he was not at home in the German language. Hence we spoke little German in our family circle, except when my mother's relatives and friends came to visit.

My childhood Pastor was the Reverend Rudolph Pietz who like almost all our pastors in those days, was not too much at home in English. Church services were conducted in German, as well as were the instructions for confirmation. That is where my mother played an important role in my training. Almost every evening, when after supper the men of the house were busy with chores in the barn, my mother sat near the fire with her knitting basket on

her lap and the Small Catechism of Luther in German open to the lesson for the next day. Many were the times when she used the occasion to speak of the matter of studying for the ministry.

Of course, I should also mention Pastor Pietz in this connection. He had a wise rule of not letting anyone start instructions for confirmation before being fully twelve. That posed something of a problem for me. The grade school I attended was a one-room country school which enjoyed a succession of three very able teachers. The total enrollment was at most seventeen. The result of that was that a few of us traveled at our own pace. I managed to finish eighth grade a few weeks before my twelfth birthday. I was then able to start confirmation instructions. Since Pastor Pietz knew by then that I was thinking of attending Northwestern he agreed to reduce my course to one year. During that year I attended Confirmation Instructions two forenoons a week while I attended Lomira High School for the balance of the week. Since the curricula at the two schools were so very different, I started N.P.S. over in the ninth grade. A year later another Lomira farm-boy, a very good friend of mine, did the same thing. He was Professor Carl Lawrenz, later to be president of Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary.

While still speaking of people who influenced me on my way to the ministry, I should certainly mention one more person. I refer to Dr. J. H. Ott, vice-president of Northwestern, Librarian and manager of the bookstore. I don't mean to say that he often spoke to me about the ministry. He was not a theologian himself.

He had received his Ph. D. at Halle in Germany. In Spring of my Quinta year (second year in High School) he called me in one day and asked whither I might like to work for him. He explained that his assistant until then was to graduate that coming June, that I might work with them and then take over for my last six years at Northwestern as his full assistant the next September. That meant a lot to me, since I was the youngest son in a family of nine. Little did I realize how much that would mean to me. It meant traveling with him to Milwaukee and Chicago in order to help him carry the school supplies to the depots. What I liked particularly was that he usually arranged such trips when we could see some play on the legitimate stage or take in some opera or symphony concert, on occasion even a museum or art institute. Being a farm Boy that I was, I found all of that an education in itself. Then, too, he had his own canoe. As long as weather permitted he wanted me to paddle and steer his canoe up the river and take a longer swim with him. Though he was reaching 68 by that time, he remained very athletic. He had been turnmaster at the college for many years.

Question: During our meetings you mentioned several people who were very good friends of yours. Could you please comment on some of those friendships?

When you ask whom I remember as very close friends, I run a risk of omitting some because of my 87 year old memory (or lack of it) and then, too, the fact that after our twelve years of boarding school were over we found ourselves still with many of the same men in the various conferences and schools in which we still worked. But in my case I believe I might dare to mention some who meant a lot to me. When the new school year started for our Quinta year Martin Franzmann joined our class from Lake City, Minnesota. We became very close friends and remained such all the way through to the Sem. In our Senior (College) year we were presidents of the two Literary Societies and got Faculty permission to stage our school's first full evening play for the public. It was "She Stoops to Conquer". When our class reached college level we were happy to find groups of new members joining us from Saginaw and New Ulm, Among them were Sieghard Westendorf and Roland Hoenecke. Sieghard and I became close for quite a number of years. In fact, we attended a Synodical Conference together in the Twin Cities where he suffered his cerebral stroke which caused his death a few years later. He was president of the Michigan District at the time. I was pastor in Rhineland at the time. The friendship between Roland Hoenecke and myself has continued through all these years. When I was called on to be a guest-instructor at the Summer school at D.M.L.C. for fourteen summers, during the 60's and 70's, the hospitality in the Hoenecke home was particularly pleasant for me.

Our class welcomed a new member, Heinz Bluhm, into our

Sophomore year. He came with his parents from Germany during the depression under Hitler. Heinz and I became good friends during our days at Northwestern. Heinz decided not to attend the Seminary but rather pursue his education at the University of Wisconsin. This decision resulted from the fact that he had not been able to conquer a severe speech impediment. We didn't see each other for the next seven years. When I graduated from the seminary I was assigned to teach at the Winnebago Lutheran Academy. It was at that time that I decided to spend a number of summers at the University of Wisconsin. It was there that I met up with Heinz again.

After earning his Ph.D. in German he was given a position at Yale university where he soon became a full professor and head of the German department. He became internationally known as one of the great Luther scholars of his day.

When he died he bequeathed all of his Luther library and his his own books about Luther together with \$25,000.00 to cover all costs resulting from their transportation and housing in Northwestern's library. In addition to this he bequeathed \$125,000.00 for the erection of a Luther statue to be placed on Northwestern's campus.

Waldemar Pless and I became good friends in our last years at Northwestern. In my last year I roomed with Pless and Otto Engel. When Waldemar and I both received calls to the Academy in Fond du Lac, we spent much time together even after he got married.

Question: You mentioned that there were not many calls available in your day. What was the feeling of the student body, especially of the seniors as the end of the year drew to a close? Were the students discouraged about the call situation?

Some graduates had to wait up to two years before receiving a call. There wasn't a feeling of frustration or discouragement. For the most part, we knew that we might have to wait. On the last day of classes, Professor Pieper would give us a stern message of encouragement. He would tell us to be patient and keep up in our studies. Eventually everyone approved by the faculty would receive a call.

Question: Having already taught at WLA for two years, what went through your mind, when you received a call to return to WLA?

I had mixed feelings, of course. I was excited to return to the Academy and at the same time I wanted to serve in the Parish. I was fortunate enough to have a call and for that I was thankful.

Question: What was your work load like?

Very busy! I had seven different preparations each day. For a week once a month I was to conduct the morning devotions. After school I was involved with dramatics. There wasn't much

free time during the school year.

Question: Since you taught for five years at the Academy, during this second stint, did you have many opportunities to preach in the local congregations?

Not as many as I would have liked to have had. You have to remember that this was during the depression. Pastors as a rule did not go on vacation and they didn't retire unless absolutely necessary. Consequently, there were few invitations to do guest-preaching.

Question: When you left the Academy did you have thoughts of returning to the teaching ministry someday?

To tell you the truth, I was so excited to get into the parish that I really didn't give it much of a thought. The word must have spread that I had enjoyed the classroom because seven out of the next ten calls were for teaching.

Question: What was the most rewarding part of your Parish Ministry?

As I look back on my nineteen years in the parish ministry I find it pretty difficult to pick out one or two especially rewarding parts. To be honest with you, I pretty much enjoyed it

all. Making mission calls, working with young people, Bible classes, and preaching seem to stand out in my memory as being more favorable than things like administration and organizations. But I hope that our young men will find encouragement in my saying that it is truly possible to like all aspects of the ministry.

Question; What was it about Rhinelanders that made it one of the fondest memories of your ministry?

There are several things that come to mind when thinking of Rhinelanders. People were eager to hear the Word of God. It was evident in Bible classes. They made Bible class a priority. They would drive some great distances even in the winter time to come to Bible class. The senior Bible class often numbered over 100 people. The Men's Club and Ladies Club were not just social functions. They expected to have a lesson concerning some Bible questions or some church-related subject at the beginning of each meeting. A brief opening devotion was not considered sufficient.

Every year there were four different Confirmation classes. One class, the seventh graders, met two mornings a week for their first year of instructions. The eighth graders met on the other three mornings a week for their final year of instructions. Then there were also a High School Class of young people who had been found formerly unchurched families or among those who had not attended Christian Day School. Finally, one evening a week there would be a meeting of an Adult Confirmation Class. This adult

class some years numbered as many as 25 or 27. These four classes started meeting in September and continued until May - usually Pentecost. All four classes were Confirmed in the same service, a total on occasion of 60 and 62.

The congregation was growing during these years. When we came to Rhinelander the congregation numbered 500 communicants. When we left twelve years later it was approaching 1,000 communicants.

Two other things come to mind when trying to answer your last question. One is the fact that during our last nine years the late service was broadcast over a radius of 80 miles over the Rhinelander radio station. And during the last three years Zion found it possible to rent a large Baptist camp on Crescent Lake. Our young folks could attend for the last week in June. Members of the LAdies Aid, the faculty of our Christian Day School, together with a number of students from Northwestern College, our Seminary, and Doctor Martin Luther College made up an adequate staff.

Question: Was there ever a time in your parish ministry when you felt nervous or inadequate when handling such a heavy load?

I can answer that question quite pointedly by giving you a quote from Pastor G.E. Bergermann, long time president of our Synod. "If I ever meet a pastor who on occasion is not nervous or does not feel inadequate, I do not want to hear him."

Question: What advice would you give a young Pastor if you were given a chance?

I find that question a bit too difficult to answer, simply because of the fact that I find what I wish to advise too little practised in our day. I would strongly urge that he try his best to get into the home of every family in his congregation at least once a year. The statement we heard stressed ever so often at the Seminary would be so worthwhile trying today still. "A house-going pastor makes a church-going membership."

Question: What was a typical day like during your two years of service as a civilian chaplain during World War II in Louisiana?

We lived in Alexandria and served the manevuer-area, as well as five large camp and two air-bases - a total radius of about 80 miles. On five days of each week I would keep busy calling on servicemen in their quarters. Evenings and on Saturday I would spend as much as possible on correspondence or sermon-work. In those days there were no WELS churches below the Mason-Dixon Line. For that reason I borrowed two Missouri Synod churches, one on each end of the 80 mile wide swamp, in Alexandria on the East and De Ridder on the West, conducting a morning service in the west and evening service in the East.

Question: List some of the most rewarding experiences in Vietnam?

There were far too many such to even begin composing a list! Let me mention just one which often comes to my mind. On this occasion I wanted to visit the men in the far North near Da Nang, close to the demilitarized zone. So I sent a duplicated note to the men in that area to tell them that I planned to fly up by Vietnamese flight. By return mail I received a note from one Sgt. Steele telling me that he hoped very much that I would find him that he had not had the Lord's Supper since he left home.

I did find him after a long search. When I did he was sleeping in his bunk. He was obviously delighted to see me. He explained that he had stood guard the night before amidst heavy bombing. But he hastened to ask whether I had brought communion. Of course, I had. When we finished, he explained that he was to stand guard again that night. I began to leave, but he urged that I wait till he could dress. He added that he wanted to go with me to show me to the bus stop at which the bus would take me into Da Nang. We jumped rides with jeeps, trucks, and other vehicles until we got to the bus stop he was looking for. He told me that I had no way of knowing what danger I was in. While I was reaching my hand to say Good Bye and wish him well, I soon realized that I had to nearly fight him off to keep him from sticking a ten dollar bill into my pocket.

I was ever so happy when I heard that he was going to spend an R&R leave in Hawaii the same time I was to leave Vietnam by way

of stops at bases in the Pacific. We met in Hawaii and he attended my communion service with his wife at Fort Shafter.

Question: What was it that brought you the most joy at Northwestern?

I enjoyed the challenge of presenting the material in such a way that the student would not only grow in the knowledge of Church History but also in the doctrine of the church. I enjoyed meeting the students in and out of the class room. This allowed the student to gain an appreciation and grow in his happiness for being in the Church. It was always most gratifying to counsel someone who was thinking of dropping out.

Question: How big a role does History play in the curriculum?

I believe that there are a quite a number of reasons for ministerial students to know history. Knowing history will surely be an encouragement to the pastor when he knows and sees how God shows his hand in history as He guides and protects the affairs of the church.

A knowledge of history will also help him understand the people of the Bible days and even of the modern church through knowing the events and cultures among which these people lived their lives.

Question: It was during your tenure that the big split came between Wisconsin and Missouri. What effect did that have on the campus at Northwestern?

There was really nothing to speak of. President Kowalke did a very good job of handling the situation.

Question: What are your thoughts on the amalgamation?

Being a History professor for so many years makes one more respectful of the past. I am heart sick about the campus that meant so much to me since 1920. I am concerned even to the point of being worried about the kind of effect this will have on our church body.

Question: In your 51 years of ministry, what are you most thankful for?

I would have to say my wife. It would have not been possible without her. She was a tremendous help throughout my ministry. She played a big role in rearing the family and in helping me when I wasn't able to be there. Coming from a parsonage, she knew what the ministry was all about. Her having

taught in Christian day school for twelve years was also a big plus. And to her let me add the thought of our four children. Observing how all four of them grew up by God's grace to service in and faithfulness to their church.

MRS. SCHARF

Question: What part of the ministry did you enjoy the most?

There wasn't a part that was better than the other. I enjoyed every part of it. I enjoyed meeting the different people from all walks of life whether it was in Louisiana, Rhineland, Slinger or at Northwestern. I enjoyed having people over to the house for social gatherings. I enjoyed rearing four children. And I enjoy watching my grandchildren grow up.

Question: What advice can you give to a young Pastor's wife?

She should remember that the friendly cooperation and Christian understanding with which the pastor and his family work in the home and in the congregation will be a big help to his ministry.