

The Minnesota District's First Fifty Years

By: The Reverend Professor Edward C. Fredrich

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Part One—The Way It Was On June 13, 1918

The exact date for the golden anniversary of our Minnesota District that we are observing at this convention actually occurred already on June 13 of this year. It was on June 13, 1918, that the former Minnesota Synod met for the first time as the Minnesota District -of the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod, then known as the "Evangelical Lutheran Joint Synod of Wisconsin, Minnesota, Michigan, and Other States. "

In the afternoon of June 13, 1918, District President J. R. Baumann of Red Wing, after preaching that morning the opening sermon on Peter's confession in Acts 4 to Christ Jesus as the only "name under heaven given among men whereby we must be saved, " declared the assembly of 80 pastors and professors, 12 teachers, and 38 lay delegates, a total of 130, to be officially in session.¹

The historic meeting occurred in a historic setting, Trinity Church in St. Paul, then located at Wabasha and Tilton Streets. Trinity is the oldest of the District's congregations. It was organized In 1855 by Pastor Wier, pioneer Lutheran pastor In St. Paul and was served from 1857 to 1862 by J. C. F. Heyer, the famed "Father" Heyer in the mission story of the Lutheran Church in our land.²

Among the delegates to the District's first convention was Pastor E. G. Hertler of Immanuel Church, LaCrescent who after fifty years is still laboring faithfully in the same parish.³ Received into District membership at the 1918 convention after graduation from Wauwatosa and a call to Bowdle, South Dakota, was Pastor Carl Schweppe, the chairman of the anniversary committee of this convention.⁴ President Schweppe would also be among those Dakota pastors who in the course of the second Minnesota District convention in 1920 would organize the Dakota-Montana District and serve as its first mission board chairman.⁵ Pastor Edgar

¹ *Verhandlungen der ersten Versammlung des Minnesota Distrikts* (Milwaukee, 1918) p. 3. Hereafter these and subsequent Proceedings will be cited as *Minnesota District Proceedings* with the identifying year added.

² A. Kuhn, *St. Geschichte der Minnesota Synode und ihrer einzelnen Gemeinden* (St. Louis, 1910), pp. 221-223. Hereafter cited as Kuhn, *Geschichte*.

³ *Minnesota District Proceedings*, 1918, p. 4.

⁴ *Minnesota District Proceedings*, 1918, p. 37.

⁵ *Minnesota District Proceedings*, 1920, p. 102.

Gamm, then of McIntosh, South Dakota, was an advisory delegate in 1918 and also helped found the Dakota-Montana District in 1920.

The Minnesota District, when it was born on June 13, fifty years ago, contained 87 congregations that were Synod members, 57 congregations that had not yet joined the Synod, and 31 preaching stations, of which 18 were located in the Dakotas. These congregations and stations were served by 95 pastors and numbered 22,342 communicant members, an average of about 150 communicants per congregation.⁶ The District had 85 Christian elementary schools staffed by 22 male teachers, 12 women, and 52 pastors. During fiscal 1917 the District contributed for synodical purposes \$65,389.32 or \$2.93 per communicant.⁷

Our impression of the 1918 District will be sharpened and highlighted if it is set off against the backdrop of world, national, and local affairs. The setting is for the most part somber. The world was at war. World War I was in its final year.

On June 13, 1918, the Germans, who were in the midst of a general offensive, launched a major attack in the Belleau Wood sector near Chateau-Thierry in an effort to break the stubborn resistance that was holding up and endangering the whole last-ditch drive which represented the final chance for a German victory. The stubborn resisters were the U. S. Marines of the Second Division, the first doughboys to be engaged in quantity. The quantity was there; the question was quality. The marines answered it emphatically by hanging on despite heavy casualties all through District week. By June 26 they were ready to launch their counterattack that would clear the Wood, help stall the German drive, and set the pattern for the Allied offensive that would not halt until November 11, 1918.

While the Battle of Belleau Wood was raging on June 13 one of Pershing's million men in France was trying hard to be a good soldier in spite of the loss of the glasses he could not do without but also could not replace. This despectacled doughboy would return to the classroom and in 1922 be received into District membership.⁸ He is an active member today. His name is Prof. H. Sitz.

On District Sunday, June 16, 1918, Pastor A. C. Haase preached in English on "He that is not with me is against me, and he that gathereth not with me scattereth abroad."⁹ Pastor G. E. Fritzke based his German sermon on "Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path."¹⁰ On that very same day in Canton, Ohio, Gene Debs spoke to a Socialist convention on his displeasure at the draft and the war. The result was a ten-year prison sentence and the necessity for Debs to campaign for the White House in 1920 from a cell in the "big house" at Atlanta.¹¹

Speaking the wrong thing or even the right thing at the wrong time could spell trouble in 1918. The District was off officially informed at its first convention that the school it had turned over to the Joint Synod had lost its president five months before.¹² This was ex-President A. Ackermann of Dr. Martin Luther College. He had become a star spokesman for a group in the area that had been contesting the constitutionality of drafting Americans for military service overseas in the absence of a direct invasion of our country. The argument carried enough legal weight to merit a Supreme Court test but was objectionable enough during the time of warfare to force Ackermann's resignation.¹³ The 1918 *Proceedings* carry his name as a member in good standing stationed at Essig and he would in fact serve the District as its president from 1936-1948.

While President Baumann in his report was complimenting the District on a solid financial performance along normal lines and the gathering of special funds for the new Army and Navy Fund to the amount of \$17,291.54, "minute men" were promoting Liberty Bond sales throughout the land in the Third Loan Campaign

⁶ These and school statistics are from the 1917 Parochial Report attached to the *Minnesota District Proceedings*, 1918.

⁷ *Minnesota District Proceedings*, 1918, p. 94.

⁸ *Minnesota District Proceedings*, 1922, p. 61.

⁹ Matthew 12:30

¹⁰ Psalm 119:105

¹¹ Arthur S. Link and Wm. B. Catton, *American Epoch*, Vol. I. (New York, 1967), p. 210.

¹² *Minnesota District Proceedings*, 1918, p. 42.

¹³ *Selective Draft Law Cases*, 245 U.S. 366, 369 (1918).

that aimed at 3 billion and was to gather well over 4 billion.¹⁴ While the District was adopting new home mission regulations and reorganizing conference boundaries, in distant Russia decrees were being prepared by Lenin's regime to nationalize 3700 large industries and to expel opponents from the soviets, thus laying the foundations for a Marxist economy and a one-party state.¹⁵

The point is not that the big events of total war and Red revolution dwarf to insignificance what happened June 13, 1918 at the corner of Wabasha and Tilton in St. Paul. The point is rather this that in the bewildering current century one war follows another and setbacks in the peace are brought about by victories on the battlefield with the result that there is very little that makes sense and has meaning but what the District's founding fathers busied themselves with in St. Paul on June 13-20, 1918. In their time and in their way they devoted themselves to the task of improving the working of Christ's Kingdom in their midst. We can rejoice because the benefits have come to us, not with fanfare or upheaval, but in that quiet way the Spirit does His work and the Lord pours out His blessings. When the full scroll of history is unrolled, it may well show that the dedicated and faithful labors of love wrought in Trinity Church in St. Paul during June, 1918, were much more beneficial and important than what was wrought at the same time by the flaming zeal of Lenin in Moscow or by the cold steel of soldiers in the trenches.

Even in the realm of the temporal it isn't always what's loud and costly and noted that is significant. On June 13, 1918, no one in the nation or the state or the District would have given a passing thought to the young Minnesotan who was taking care of his father's farm near Little Falls for the duration and hating every minute of it.¹⁶ The young man had just graduated from high school despite an agricultural leave of absence from March on. He disliked cows and chores and much preferred to devise a labor-saving gadget or tinker with one of the farm machines. Often he let his eyes stray from the furrow and row up to the beckoning skies. In his way on June 13, 1918, Charles Lindbergh was making national and international history, and church history too. For the flight that contradicted his father's and his own isolationism would certainly be a factor that God would use in giving a land-locked Lutheran District a quickening interest in foreign missions by mid-century.

Reference might also be made to another Minnesotan, at Cape Cod for the summer of 1918, who would not have been known to the founding fathers of the District then but who would soon make their places of labor world famous. This was the ruddy refugee from Sauk Centre, glumly beginning on May 24, 1918, to block out a novel with a Minnesota setting that would be written in the next years at Mankato and would when published make literary history.¹⁷ Sinclair Lewis's *Main Street* described and, no doubt, transformed the scores of Gopher Prairies in which Minnesota District congregations are located. For a time the working title of this District history was "Ministry to Main Street" but was eventually replaced at the urging of those who feared that some might be offended by a veiled reference to the scoffing author of *Elmer Gantry* in the title of a Minnesota District paper.

That is, at least in part, the way it was on June 13, 1918. The intent has been to provide a background against which to view the origin and development of the District. But more background is needed. There should certainly be given in this District history appropriate, if limited attention to its forerunner and parent, the German Evangelical Lutheran Synod of Minnesota and Other States.

Part Two—Pioneers and Planters

Previously reference was made to the link between the Minnesota District and the Minnesota Synod that was emphasized by the place where the Synod transformed itself into the District. This was Trinity Congregation, which antedates the founding of the Synod by five years, was represented at the organizational meeting, and numbered among its pastors the first Synod president and also the third.

¹⁴ *Minnesota District Proceedings*, 1918, pp. 7 and 94.

¹⁵ *Minnesota District Proceedings*, 1918, pp. 52-57 and 69. For the details on Russia see Basil Dmytryshyn, *USSR: A Concise History* (New York, 1965).

¹⁶ Kenneth S. Davis, *The Hero: Charles A. Lindbergh and the American Dream* (Garden City, NY, 1959), p. 65

¹⁷ Mark Shorer, *Sinclair Lewis: An American Life* (New York, 1961), p. 251.

The first Lutheran pastors appeared on the Minnesota scene in the mid 1850's. They came to serve the many Lutheran farmers that had been attracted to the area by the fertile land, by the high prices paid for agricultural products in the lumbering frontier, and by the Sioux land cessions of 1851 that finally enlarged the original St. Croix-Mississippi triangle that had been ceded in 1837. By the end of 1852 20, 000 pioneers lived in the new cession, some lumbermen but most farmers grubbing out their clearings.¹⁸ Statehood was imminent and church development also.

Missionary Wier, who inclined to the theology of the Buffalo Synod, came to St. Paul in 1855, gathered a group of Lutherans for the first Lutheran service on 5 July 22, and aided them in organizing Trinity Congregation on July 25.¹⁹ In the next year the Missouri Synod began work when Pastor F. Sievers, Sr., of Frankentust, Michigan, on a missionary visit to the Minnesota Chippewas looked up scattered Lutherans in the area for that Synod's Northern District. He organized congregations in Minneapolis, Henderson, St. Peter, and Le Sueur.²⁰ Also in 1856 the energetic home missionary and founder of charitable institutions of the Pittsburgh Synod, Pastor W. A. Passavant, labored in the area.²¹ Scandanavian Lutheran pastors appeared in the late 1850s. Especially noteworthy, however, for our concerns is the man who arrived at St. Paul on November 16, 1857, John C. F. Heyer.

Pastor Heyer, veteran foreign missionary of the Pennsylvania Ministerium, that had by then rejoined the General Synod, came to Minnesota after long service both in our Midwest and in India. Making St. Paul and Trinity his home base and working diligently there, he in his usual energetic fashion made his influence felt near and far in the Territory. In 1860 he gathered together in St. Paul Pastors Blumer, Brandt, Wier, Mattison, and Thompson and, with himself as the sixth member of the group, formed the Evangelical Lutheran Synod of Minnesota and Other States.²²

Efforts along that line had already been initiated at a meeting sponsored by Passavant at Red Wing, July 3-5, 1858, but were delayed when the Swedish Lutheran pastors, who were to have been included, preferred to remain on the sidelines and await developments within their own circle. However, at Red Wing Pastor Heyer and some of the rest did resolve:

that we now proceed to organize an Evangelical Lutheran synod on the basis of the Unaltered Augsburg Confession, as this confession is understood in agreement with the other symbolical books of our Church.²³

It is not surprising that the new synod joined the General Synod in 1864. Pastor Heyer was the leading spirit and first president. He had been sent to Minnesota by the General Synod at the request and through the subsidy of one of its bodies, the East Pennsylvania Synod, which in its 1857 convention at Lancaster had resolved:

That five hundred dollars be appropriated to the support of an English Lutheran Mission in St. Paul, Minnesota, and that the Executive Committee of the Central Home Missionary Society of the General Synod endeavor to secure a suitable man for this important post.²⁴

¹⁸ Ray Billington, *Westward Expansion*, (New York, 1967), p. 480.

¹⁹ Kuhn, *Geschichte*, p. 221.

²⁰ L. Fuerbringer, ed., *Concordia Cyclopedia*, (St. Louis, 1927), p. 499.

²¹ H. Meyer, *Pflanzungsgeschichte des Minnesota Distrikts der. Ev. Luth. Synode von Missouri, Ohio, und anderen Staaten* (Minneapolis, 1932), p. 11. Hereafter cited as Meyer, *Pflanzungsgeschichte*.

²² Kuhn, *Geschichte*, p. 4.

²³ J. L. Neve, *Brief History of the Lutheran Church in America* (Burlington, Iowa, 1934), p. 238. Hereafter cited as Neve, *Brief History*.

²⁴ Neve, *Brief History*, p. 236.

Heyer was that “suitable man” and although he could not give adequate attention to the “English” part of the assignment while at Trinity and although he relinquished that post to Pastor Fachtmann in 1862, he continued to play an influential role. Jacobs reports:

He was the delegate of that synod to the General Synod at York and at Fort Wayne. He represented it in the convention at Reading, Pennsylvania, and again at Fort Wayne, where he became one of the founders of the General Council.²⁵

The previous quotation points to the second major fellowship step taken by the infant Minnesota Synod. It was among those synods that, under the leadership of the Pennsylvania Ministerium, broke with the General Synod in 1866 and then in meetings at Reading in 1866 and Fort Wayne in 1867 formed the General Council. The breaking point was a parliamentary dispute regarding the status of protesting Pennsylvania delegates. The point under protest was the acceptance into General Synod membership of the liberal Franckean Synod. The larger issue was a clash between laxity in doctrine and practice and a desire for a more confessional brand of Lutheranism. Minnesota was on the better of the two sides in 1866 when it withdrew from the General Synod.

The Minnesota Synod also contended for true Lutheranism during its brief membership in the General Council that terminated in 1871. The General Council was an improvement over the General Synod but not the final answer for those desiring a full and true confessional Lutheranism. Already in 1867 at the founding convention Ohio had requested a more soundly Lutheran position on chiliasm, lodge membership, pulpit fellowship, and altar fellowship, and Iowa on the last three points. In 1869 Wisconsin withdrew because what had been requested was not forthcoming. Questions that the Minnesota Synod directed to the General Council on fellowship with errorists were first shunted aside on parliamentary grounds, then tabled to a subsequent convention because of lack of time, and finally answered in such a way as to permit the establishment of fellowship with errorists, if the erring was a matter of weakness and not of persistence. The Minnesota response to this answer included the phrases, “utterly unsatisfactory” and “useless struggle.”²⁶ The Synod withdrew from the General Council in 1871.

The writer of the *History of the Minnesota Synod* sums up the matter in this way:

That this was not an easy step for us to take is easy to understand. From both the old General Synod and the General Council we received considerable assistance, that we needed very much. All that we had to renounce for conscience' sake. Within a period of ten years we had to break off our associations twice. But it was a time of purging which brought rich rewards.²⁷

The “rich rewards” is a reference to the fellowship that the unencumbered Synod could now establish with the Wisconsin Synod and thereby with the Synodical Conference. So rich a heritage of the Minnesota Synod and District is this fellowship that it merits special treatment below under the heading of “Wisconsin Relations.” Beforehand, however, consideration should be given to the prelude and prerequisite to the enjoyment of that fellowship, namely the improvement in the doctrinal position of the Minnesota Synod, that was effected in the late 1860’s.

Part Three—Toward Confessionalism

The years 1866-1867 that were so crucial in the history of Lutheranism in America also stand as a watershed in the development of the Minnesota Synod’s theological posture and practice. Several noteworthy events can be referred to in this connection. As has been mentioned, Minnesota was among the synods that withdrew from the General Synod when that body revealed its unsound character in 1866 and was also among

²⁵ Henry E. Jacobs, *A History of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in the United States* (New York, 1893), p. 486.

²⁶ Kuhn, *Geschichte*, pp. 9-12.

²⁷ Kuhn, *Geschichte*, p. 12.

the protesting synods that gathered at Reading in 1866 and Fort Wayne In 1867 to found the more confessional General Council.

In 1866 the young and small synod was confronted by the lodge question. The pastor at Red Wing, Dr. Bleeken, who had succeeded Heyer there in 1863, belonged to the Free Masons and preferred that association above the Synod to which he belonged and the congregation he was to serve. The Synod's history sums up the sad story with the curt but pertinent remark, "We were rid of an unclean member."²⁸

In 1867 the growing congregation at New Ulm, pledged to the Unaltered Augsburg Confession from its organizational meeting on, applied for synod membership but was rejected because of its name, Evangelical Lutheran- -Reformed St. Paul's Congregation, and was not accepted until President Sieker effected the deletion of "Reformed" from the name in 1869.²⁹

It is noteworthy and praiseworthy that a young and feeble synod already in 1866 and 1867 should for conscience' sake shun the unionistically inclined church body and misnamed congregation and masonic pastor and endeavor to make confessionally meaningful membership associations. That the membership associations up to this point were considerably less than that is, by the same token, clearly indicated by the entangling alliances that had been permitted to evolve.

The record indicates that the early years of the Minnesota Synod were marked and marred by laxity in doctrine and practice. Kuhn's declaration reads:

As fir as the confessional position of the Synod at that time is concerned, the situation was, to say the least, not very rosy. Under the Lutheran name the prevailing tendency of the old General Synod held sway. To be sure, we pledged ourselves to the symbolical books of the Lutheran Church, claimed on that account to be true Lutherans, but did not yet realize the contradiction between the confession and our day-to-day practice, which unfortunately had a unionistic shading. This we only recognized later amid severe trials.³⁰

Actually, when the original membership is taken into account, one could expect trouble of this sort and even worse. Of the six synodical founders one, Wier, shared the Buffalo error regarding Church and Ministry and within two years was dismissed by the congregation he was serving in the Stillwater area because he insisted on private confessions.³¹ At that time he joined with Pastor Krause informing the short-lived Concordia Synod of the West.³² Two other founders, Mallison and Thompson, who was of the General Synod, were limited to English in their pastoral endeavors and consequent did not play major roles in the development of a predominantly German Synod.³³

The records regarding Blumer and Brandt are skimpy and murky. Kuhn refers to Blumer as the, "actual pioneer" and lauds the "self-denial, time and strength" he dedicated to the service of the Synod.³⁴ On the other hand, the Evangelical historian, Carl Schneider, maintains that Blumer throughout his pastorates at Stillwater (1858-1860) and then at Shakopee "was under commission of the A. H. M. S. (American Home Missionary Society) and considered himself the pastor of a German Congregational Church."³⁵ Brandt, formerly with Wier in the Indianapolis Synod and serving at Town Hart in Winona County from 1856 on, seems to have resigned

²⁸ Kuhn, *Geschichte*, p. 8.

²⁹ Kuhn, *Geschichte*, p. 165-166.

³⁰ Kuhn, *Geschichte*, p. 6.

³¹ Kuhn, *Geschichte*, pp. 4 and 60-61.

³² Dr. Roy R. Suelflow, "The Relations of the Missouri Synod with the Buffalo Synod up to 1866", *Concordia Historical Institute Quarterly*, XXVII, 2 (July 1954), 70.

³³ Kuhn, *Geschichte*, p. 4

³⁴ Kuhn, *Geschichte*, p. 4

³⁵ Carl E. Schneider, *The German Church on the American Frontier* (St. Louis, 1939) p. 439.

because of eye trouble and then been instrumental in 1861 in appealing to the Missouri Synod for a pastor for himself and his people.³⁶

This leaves, of the original six, Heyer and he was no tower of strength when it comes to confessionalism. This is admitted even by Ackermann in his moving presidential address on the occasion of the seventy-fifth anniversary of Heyer's coming to Minnesota, an address delivered at the 1942 convention and remembered, I am sure, by some in this gathering.³⁷ Our publication, *Continuing In His Word*, on the other hand, tends to exonerate Heyer and make his successor at St. Paul in 1862, G. Fachtmann, the goat in the troubled early history of the Synod.³⁸ Fachtmann's record is bad enough in itself, including even an expulsion from the Synod in 1870 after futile dealings and by unanimous vote.³⁹ He should not be made to bear the burdens of others.

To blame Synod's membership in the General Synod from 1864 on to the transfer of leadership from Heyer to Fachtmann isn't entirely in accord with the record. There is nothing to indicate that Heyer protested, disapproved, or was even surprised at the event. As has been previously noted, Heyer was, in fact, Synod's representative at the convention of the General Synod where membership was effected.

Much is also made of the fact that several families broke away from Fachtmann's congregation in St. Paul Trinity, and eventually formed the Missouri Zion Congregation. Heyer seems to be as much involved as Fachtmann. A narrative of the events from the Missouri viewpoint reads thus:

Several sincere Lutherans in the existing Trinity Congregation in St. Paul amid the prevailing laxity insisted on Lutheran doctrine and practice. Trinity Church, like the Minnesota Synod to which it belonged, was at that time still, as the history of the Minnesota Synod states, following the tendency of the General Synod which had a "regrettably unionistic shading." Also the pastor of the congregation (i.e. Heyer) was unionistic. Despite the earnest protest of these Lutheran families nothing was done to change the situation. When in 1862 there was a vacancy in the pastoral office of the congregation, these Lutheran members insistently urged the calling of a truly Lutheran pastor. When also this was in vain, these families left the congregation, giving a thorough justification of the step.⁴¹

(Editor's Note: The omission of footnote #40 is very much intentional, as the original document skips directly from 39 to 41.)

This account, it will be noted, makes clear that the cause of the separation lies as much in the previous pastorate and the subsequent calling as in Fachtmann's ministry. Heyer was that predecessor and himself selected and installed his successor.⁴²

It is difficult to establish and evaluate the precise role Heyer played in the doctrinal and confessional history of the Synod. As a missionary, in days when all pastors in these parts were missionaries, he had no superior and few peers.

The itinerary of his first mission explorations sounds rugged even in the District's Chrysler era. Heyer was also ready to espouse the cause of Lutheranism over against laxity and liberalism in missionary ventures. Well known are his personal stands in the interests of beginning the India Mission under Lutheran, not

³⁶ Meyer, *Pflanzungsgeschichte*, pp. 11 and 50.

³⁷ Adolph Ackermann, "President's Report", *1942 Minnesota District Proceedings*, (Milwaukee, 1951), p. 103.

³⁸ M. Lehinger, ed. *Continuing In His Word* (Milwaukee, 1951), p. 103. Hereafter cited as Lehinger, *Continuing*.

³⁹ Kuhn, *Geschichte*, pp. 6-8.

⁴¹ Meyer, *Pflanzungsgeschichte*, p. 51.

⁴² Adolph Ackermann, "Pioneer Pastor and Lutheran Missionary: J.C.F. Heyer", *Concordia Historical Institute Quarterly*, XXXIX (April 1966), 37-38. Hereafter cited as Ackermann, "Pioneer Pastor."

sectarian, auspices and again in 1869 of keeping it so.⁴³ He helped found the General Council and was quick to protest formally when the Council rejected a conservative Iowa resolution on altar and pulpit fellowship.⁴⁴

This is not to say, however, that Heyer would have espoused the unit concept of fellowship. How much he contributed to the confessional weakness of the Synod in its early years or how much he personally was involved in the swing to the right after 1865 is difficult to determine. For one thing, the record is scanty. Minutes of the first meetings are missing; proceedings, it seems, were not published before 1867.⁴⁵ The Heyer biography the General Council by resolution authorized almost a century ago appears never to have been written, although in more recent times a study has appeared.⁴⁶

In any event, the reader and researcher gets tired trying to keep up with the hurrying and scurrying of this tired, sick, old man Heyer. In early 1857 he was in India, in mid 1857 in Pennsylvania, in late 1857 at St. Paul.⁴⁷ In 1858 he went back East on a fund raising campaign which netted enough for the Trinity basement built when he returned. In 1860 from May to November Heyer was again collecting in the East. In 1862 he resigned the Trinity pastorate, Kuhn says, because of advancing old age; he was 69.⁴⁸ Then came a long exploratory trip through various parts of Minnesota. From July 20, 1862 on for a year he served as Red Wing's pastor, resigning again because of old age. In 1864, while still Synod President, he preached in semi-retirement at Somerset, Pennsylvania. Returning to Minnesota, he helped dedicate St. Paul's in New Ulm in 1866 and in 1867 served Trinity, St. Paul, during a vacancy. After leaving Minnesota for good in November 1867, he visited Germany, returned to the United States, served as missionary two more years in India, and was chaplain at the Philadelphia Lutheran Theological Seminary until his death in 1873. Officially he was Synod President from 1860 until 1868.⁴⁹ How much leadership was provided by the ubiquitous President is hard to say, however. This moot point, and others like it, in the Heyer and Synod story could perhaps be clarified by a specialized study of this man's Minnesota decade from 1857 to 1867. It's high time too that the centennial Synod history, forgotten or ignored in 1960, be produced.

A brief took into this history as background for an account of the District's first fifty years has led the writer to assume that Heyer, heroic missionary that he may have been, just wasn't the man to lead the young Synod into the sounder confessional position it began to take. As has been said, there is some evidence that Fachtmann has been burdened in our Synod's lore or legend with shortcomings and failings that should rest, at least in part, on Heyer's shoulders. One does not have to suspect the motives that prompted the resignations because of declining strength and health, ten years premature, and the constant travel in an age when church work was generally and efficiently done without countless committee meetings hither and yon.

It is known that Heyer remained in the General Council until his death and did not leave it when Minnesota did. Heyer did not seek any close ties with the staunchest Lutheran body working in this area, the Missouri Synod. J. P. Koehler makes this point while discussing relations between Heyer and Fachtmann. Because Heyer sought Wisconsin Synod pastors through Fachtmann, the latter had hopes of making Minnesota a Wisconsin mission field. But as Koehler explains:

This was, however, not Heyer's intention, for in those years controversy had broken into -the open because of the more definite doctrinal position of the Synod and Heyer, who belonged to the General

⁴³ Geo. J. Fritschel, *Geschichte der Lutherischen Kirche in Amerika* (Guetersloh, 1896), II, 73 and 330-331. Hereafter cited as Fritschel, *Geschichte*.

⁴⁴ S.E. Ochsenford, *Documentary History of the General Council of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in North America*, (Philadelphia, 1912), p. 131.

⁴⁵ Edmund J. Wolf, *Die Lutheraner in Amerika* (New York, 1891) p. 401.

⁴⁶ Fritschel, *Geschichte*, mentions the biography resolution. In 1942 E. Theo. Bachmann brought out a Heyer life entitled *They Called Him Father*, published by Muehlenberg Press, Philadelphia.

⁴⁷ These biographical details and those that follow in the paragraph are taken from Ackermann, "Pioneer Pastor".

⁴⁸ Kuhn, *Geschichte*, p. 4.

⁴⁹ Kuhn, *Geschichte*, p. III

Synod, did not want to play a part in placing this huge field, through an alliance with the Wisconsin Synod, into Missouri's hands.⁵⁰

Without disparaging his other labors, one is forced to conclude that the improvement in the Minnesota doctrinal position is not to be attributed to Heyer.

If not to him, then to whom? Several synods vie for the honor. Certainly the good neighbors to the East deserve and will receive mention. The Iowa Synod historian declares:

Iowa also exerted a good influence on this (Minnesota) Synod, so that it did not go over to the camp of the unionists. Had Iowa played any kind of church politics at all, it would have been easy for it to make the little Synod a part of itself.⁵¹

On the other hand, a Missouri writer insists, "With the coming of Sieker the spirit of Missouri entered the Minnesota Synod."⁵² That would be in 1867.⁵³ Partisan claims along this line and the whole subject of relations of the early Minnesota Synod with other church bodies deserve much more thorough study than could be given here.⁵⁴

In the matter of individuals who exerted a good influence on Minnesota's theological position, the name most frequently mentioned is that of Johann Heinrich Sieker, Installed at Trinity, St. Paul, on Reformation Festival In 1867 and Synod president from 1869 to 1876.⁵⁵ Sieker certainly played a key role in guiding the Synod from the General Council into the Synodical Conference. Trained at Gettysburg Seminary for the Wisconsin Synod ministry; he first served at Granville and was consequently able and inclined to help establish closer relations between his new and old Synods, as will be described more fully in the next section.

But it should be remembered that the general improvement in the Minnesota theological position was already under way by the time of Sieker's arrival. His call to Minnesota was a part of it. Who of the some twenty pastors in the young Synod at the end of the Civil War provided the leadership in confessionalism?⁵⁶ No names stand out in the slim records. It may well be that not even the most thorough searching will disclose any special name. What of it? The absence of such outstanding names need not mar the account; that absence can, in fact, in itself score a most important point.

In the real building of the Church, in the development of true trust in the Word, in the production of good spiritual fruit, men and groups of men are mere tools of second rank. More important are the tools of the Gospel, the Means of Grace. And the master builder is the Holy Spirit. He it is who guided the twenty to see and to trust and to live by the Truth. He used men, some known and some unknown, to carry out His purpose. He used events too, events like the conflicts of Civil War and Indian Uprising and the disturbances involved in the realignment of church bodies to provide a testing and a winnowing time that would see good produced before it ended.

We are experiencing similar conflicts and disturbances in 1968 as we observe the District's golden anniversary. They need not dismay us. They will, in the end, bring us a blessing if we let the Spirit have His way with us. We don't have to play leadership roles. Ours need not be the names that stand out bold on the pages of church history. We have the Means. The Lord and His Spirit work through them, grace for grace and light for light, now as then. In the post-Civil War years the twenty in the Minnesota Synod were led into a

⁵⁰ Joh. Ph. Koehler, *Geschichte der Allgemeinen Evangelisch-Lutherischen Synode von Wisconsin und andern Staaten* (Milwaukee, 1925), p. 246.

⁵¹ Fritschel, *Geschichte*, p. 413.

⁵² Ch. Reimnitz, "Passavant and Missouri", *Concordia Historical Institute Quarterly*, XXVII (July, 1954), p. 82.

⁵³ In 1944 Dr. Paul Spaude presented to the District an essay on this subject entitled "The Progress of True Lutheranism in the Old Minnesota Synod." The essay is outlined in the 1944 *Proceedings* and a copy was requested for the District archives.

⁵⁴ Kuhn, *Geschichte*, p. 224.

⁵⁵ Kuhn, *Geschichte*, p. IV and 224.

⁵⁶ Meyer, *Pflanzungsgeschichte*, p. 57.

deeper realization and appreciation of the Truth. This, in turn, led to closer ties with the Wisconsin Synod and membership in the Synodical Conference.

Part Four—Wisconsin Relations

Relations between the Minnesota and Wisconsin Synods have a small and unpromising beginning. The first mention of Minnesota in the *Wisconsin Proceedings* is in 1862. In the discussion of the report of the Seminary Committee, of which Fachtmann of St. Paul was a member, the Minnesota Synod was referred to in terms which the secretary thus summarizes:

The Evangelical Lutheran Synod of Minnesota consists of only 8 pastors, of which only 2 or 3 are in full-time service, the others are farmers from Pennsylvania who upon special requests hold services in houses in the English language.⁵⁷

In 1863 Heyer attended the Wisconsin Synod Convention at Milwaukee and, on behalf of the Minnesota Synod, requested the establishment of closer relations between the two bodies. The Wisconsin Synod resolved to send President Bading to the next Minnesota Synod Convention.⁵⁸

In 1864 the Wisconsin Synod heard the report that Missionary Moldehnke's travels had reached into Minnesota, granted Fachtmann a delayed release and permitted him to sit as an advisory delegate of the Minnesota Synod, and reacted favorably to the Minnesota request that President Heyer collect for the Watertown seminary in the East in exchange for the privilege of sending Minnesota students to Watertown.⁵⁹ The 1866 convention of the Wisconsin Synod granted the representative of the Minnesota Synod, Pastor Fachtmann, the status of advisory delegate and heard a report on the Synod in the neighboring state by Professor Moldehnke, who had spent several months as missionary in that area and had attended the annual convention of the Synod. The report stressed the growth of the Minnesota Synod, its need for pastors, especially such as had been theoretically trained, and its desire to participate in the work of the school at Watertown.⁶⁰

Conflict in convention dates seems to have prevented delegate exchange in 1867.⁶¹ The next year, however, Pastor Sieker brought to the Wisconsin Synod, along with the customary greetings, a resolution of his Synod's most recent convention expressing the wish to join with Wisconsin in forming one church body. Wisconsin declared its pleasure and intention to do all in its power to bring the desire to reality.⁶² When President Bading and Professor Hoenecke attended the 1869 Minnesota convention, they offered for discussion a proposal for federation of the two bodies and, upon request, drew up in writing a simple five point plan. The fifth point, calling for meetings of doctrinal commissions to achieve mutual certainty of unity, was adopted by the convention.⁶³ Implementation came in a meeting at La Crosse on September 25, 1869, attended by Presidents Bading and Sieker, Professor Hoenecke, and the Minnesota pastors, Emmet, Kuhn, and Reitz. The delegations declared that doctrinal unity existed, the Wisconsin representatives viewing the Minnesota membership in the General Council, from which Wisconsin had withdrawn, as continuing on a protesting basis over against the un-Lutheran policies and practices of that body.⁶⁴

This General Council membership, however, proved to be a difficult matter with which to deal. The next Wisconsin convention approved the official acts of its president, including those at La Crosse, but was not willing, for the present, to go beyond the customary friendly exchange of delegates. Three Wisconsin Synod members feared that a more formal fellowship declaration and relationship would prejudice and conflict with

⁵⁷ *Verhandlungen der Evangel-Lutherischen Synode von Wisconsin* (Watertown, 1862) p. 17. Hereafter cited as *Wisconsin Proceedings* with date.

⁵⁸ *Wisconsin Proceedings 1863*, p. 32.

⁵⁹ *Wisconsin Proceedings 1864*, pp. 7 and 11 and 14.

⁶⁰ *Wisconsin Proceedings 1856*, pp. 3 and 9 and 29.

⁶¹ *Wisconsin Proceedings 1867*, p. 8.

⁶² *Wisconsin Proceedings 1868*, p. 18.

⁶³ Kuhn, *Geschichte*, pp. 13-14.

⁶⁴ Kuhn, *Geschichte*, pp. 14-15.

their synod's withdrawal from the General Council. The Minnesota Synod could do no more than voice its displeasure but was willing to continue to work for closer ties.⁶⁵

Within two years these ties were established. On June 8, 1871 the Wisconsin Synod "recognized with great joy the orthodoxy of the honorable Synod of Minnesota. " This set the stage for the memorable 1871 convention of the Minnesota Synod which:

1. severed ties with the General Council, as has been previously described;
2. recognized the Wisconsin Synod as an orthodox church body;
3. made provisions for the training of pastors by accepting the Wisconsin offer of the use of Watertown in exchange for \$500 toward the salary of a professor;
4. became a junior partner in the publication of a church paper by agreeing to supply a member of the *Gemeindeblatt* editorial board and to share in the profits of the paper.⁶⁶

Subsequently the Minnesota Synod found itself in doctrinal agreement with Missouri pastors in the state. Two so-called "peace conferences" were held early in 1872 in St. Paul. After discussing pastoral relations and the Ministry of the Keys, Minnesota and Missouri pastors, as well as some from the Norwegian Synod that attended the gatherings, pledged that they would work together in peace and harmony, side by side.⁶⁷ When more formal synodical action followed, it was possible for Minnesota, to become a charter member of the Synodical Conference in July 1872.

A pivot point, around which relations within the Synodical Conference revolved in its early years was Walther's dream of state synods or districts with all Missouri, Ohio, Minnesota, Wisconsin, Norwegian, Illinois pastors within a given state forming one unit in the Synodical Conference, which would foster one large seminary, while the state synods would have preparatory schools. Preliminary steps might involve temporary re-alignments. For Minnesota this would have meant, for the first, either Minnesota's absorbing Missouri's Northwest District, just the opposite, or the creation of a new state synod. This third possibility most of the Minnesota men favored. The Missouri men in Minnesota naturally assumed that the Minnesota Synod, not having any training schools, should enter their district.⁶⁸

Wisconsin was not so directly involved for two reasons. In the first place, there were no Wisconsin Synod congregations in Minnesota. Secondly, the joint use of Watertown for training pastors had been terminated upon request of the Minnesota Synod. In its 1875 convention, after the grasshopper plague, pleading a \$700 deficit in the synodical treasury and pointing to more Minnesota students at Springfield than at Watertown, the Minnesota Synod resolved to request cancellation of its annual \$500 obligation to Watertown and to send available monies to Springfield. The Wisconsin Synod could not do anything but reluctantly agree.⁶⁹

However, it was the strong Wisconsin Synod stand against the state synod plan that was a key factor, humanly speaking, in insuring the continuing existence of the Minnesota Synod. All efficiency and geographical and emotional and financial arguments aside, it was Professor Hoenecke who successfully countered the theological argument that doctrinal unity must result in outward federation or merger. In this day of hyperactivity in the field of church mergers, it may be well to hear and ponder Hoenecke's point that was so crucial in the history of the Minnesota Synod ninety years ago. Among other things he said in reply to the Missouri call for amalgamation:

⁶⁵ Kuhn, *Geschichte*, pp. 15-16.

⁶⁶ Kuhn, *Geschichte*, pp. 16-17.

⁶⁷ Meyer, *Pflanzungsgeschichte*, pp. 65-66.

⁶⁸ Kuhn, *Geschichte*, pp. 30-31.

⁶⁹ Kuhn, *Geschichte*, pp. 25-26.

It is no more necessary for two church bodies which agree in doctrine and practice, to desire to be united in one body, than it would be for two Christian persons who love each other to want to marry. We love each other as two church bodies, yet it is not necessary for us to be joined organically. I am not afraid of any kind of danger. I have my honor and recognition as a Lutheran before God, and do not let these depend upon men; and if my brother would deny me this recognition, I would have to bear it as a cross, but I stand in Scripture and the Symbols with uprightness of heart.⁷⁰

Eventually the election controversy would bury the plan for a Synodical Conference with state synods, as it would also cement relations between Minnesota and Wisconsin. Before it flared, however, efforts were made to restore the working relationship between the two neighbors. In 1879 President Kuhn, who succeeded Sieker in 1876, when the latter was called to New York, proposed to the Synod that in the future there be delegate exchange with Wisconsin and also some joint conventions, joint efforts in the training of pastors and teachers, but no actual federation or merger. There was some opposition from friends of Missouri in the Minnesota Synod but the proposal was adopted by both Synods and supplied benefits to both until 1892. The vote in the Minnesota congregations was 18 for, 4 against, and 3 maybe, the condition being that state-synod formation not be jeopardized.⁷¹

The improved relations with Wisconsin just at that time were of vital importance, for the election controversy was brewing. The controversy that troubled both Synods, though not to the degree it affected the other Synodical Conference synods, led to a joint Minnesota-Wisconsin convention at La Crosse in 1882. Walther's Biblical and Confessional Position that election is caused only by the mercy of God and the merits of Christ, and not by foreseen faith, was upheld over against Ohio and segments of the Norwegian Synod. Three protesting pastors left the Minnesota Synod. The Springfield congregation and part of Stillwater also withdrew.⁷² All the rest of the Synod stood firm on Scripture and the Confessions, aided by the brethren in Wisconsin.

The next major step in Minnesota-Wisconsin relations was the establishment, together with the Michigan Synod, of the Evangelical Lutheran Joint Synod of Wisconsin, Minnesota, Michigan, And Other States on October 11-13, 1892. At the preliminary and planning meeting Minnesota was represented by Pastor C. J. Albrecht, who served as its president from 1883-1894. Here proposals were drawn up for consideration of the individual Synods.

When the 1892 Minnesota convention acted in the matter, 72 were for the general proposal and 20 against. It was resolved to hold a congregational referendum over the summer and go ahead with majority approval. This was obtained. Four congregations, two in St. Paul and the others in Good Thunder and Inver Grove, together with the pastors of the first three, objected to the innovations and requested releases. After long and fruitless dealings the dissenters found a place in the Minnesota and Dakota District of the Missouri Synod. Only Inver Grove was peacefully released.⁷³

In the Joint Synod, Minnesota was still a sovereign synod, retaining its name and property, especially Dr. Martin Luther College that had been founded in 1884, but sharing with the other two synods more closely than before the training of workers and the establishment of home missions and engaging with them in the work on the Apache Reservation. Within two years by mutual agreement Dr. Martin Luther College was serving as the one teacher training school the Joint Synod had resolved upon.

The beneficial results of the new arrangements, which were especially obvious in the relation between Minnesota and Wisconsin, gave rise to the thought of taking additional steps along the same pathway and of reaching the goal of actual merger into one synod with geographical districts. Such action was urged upon the Joint Synod by a 1903 overture, by the Eastern Conference of the Wisconsin Synod in 1907, and by Joint Synod

⁷⁰ *Wisconsin Proceedings 1877*, p. 27.

⁷¹ Kuhn, *Geschichte*, p. 32

⁷² Kuhn, *Geschichte*, p. 34-35.

⁷³ Kuhn, *Geschichte*, p. 39-42.

lay delegates in 1911. The latter request was transmitted with approval by the Joint Synod to smaller bodies for their consideration.⁷⁴ The Minnesota Synod's committee met with others representing the sister Synods and joined with them in a proposal for merger into one synod that would hold the properties. When the Minnesota Synod considered this proposal in 1913 it reacted favorably but made allowance for a congregational referendum.⁷⁵

There was some delay because of an effort to bring into discussion a merger of the whole Synodical Conference and because of legal difficulties.⁷⁶ By 1916, however, the Minnesota Synod could be requested to adopt the proposed constitution and to take steps to transfer property.⁷⁷ In its last convention as the Minnesota Synod at Mankato, June 14-20, 1917, the Synod heard the report that necessary legal steps had been taken and only some difficulties in transferring Northwestern to the new synod still had to be overcome.⁷⁸ The next meeting, the first Minnesota District convention, has already been described.

Part Five—First District Decade

The post-war decade that Harding hoped would be a return to “Normalcy” and that television characterizes as the “Roaring Twenties” was something midway between the two for the Minnesota District and the larger body, the Wisconsin Synod. It proved to be amazingly easy for our church in Minnesota to adjust to the new order of things and very soon District status and operation became normal and routine. But there was enough change, innovation, growth, and progress to produce an era in our church history that was, if not roaring, at least very interesting, lively, and fruitful.

Perhaps the most significant of all the changes in those years is one that received scant notice at the time and that is indicated by the English *Proceedings* of the 1924 District Convention with the explanation, “Translated from the German Record by R. C. Ave-Lallemant assisted by Herbert Lietzau.”⁷⁹ Already in 1922 the District had requested and offered to subsidize, if necessary, an English version of the *Proceedings*. The report states: “The District took this step because an English report, at least in this state has become an absolute necessity.”⁸⁰

The English language was being used more and more and during the Twenties; our District could be said to be a truly bilingual church body. An old tradition of the area was carried to its high point and ultimate conclusion. You will recall that when Father Heyer was sent out to Minnesota by Pennsylvania Lutherans was for the express purpose of founding an English congregation in St. Paul.⁸¹ He had on occasion preached in English but by the nature of the situation that aspect of the work soon faded into the background more and more, was soon forgotten, and remained so for a half century. It was finally, however, during and after World War I that the use of English in our churches and schools increased markedly.

This put a heavy burden on the pastors and teachers of that time. Lay people could hear and read and speak the Word in the language of their choice; the pastor and teacher had to be adept in both languages. By and large, they met the challenge successfully. To be sure, there were difficulties within certain congregations about time schedules and number of services. In some instances, a pastor could not carry out bilingual duties; the 1928 *Proceedings* lists a resignation “due to the language question.”⁸² What could have been a very troubled era for our church body, ran fairly smoothly in this respect.

⁷⁴ *Verhandlungen der Allgem. Ev. Luth. Synode von Wisconsin, Minnesota, Michigan, und Andern Staaten*. (Milwaukee, 1907 and 1911) pp. 35-36 and 57-58 respectively. Such *Verhandlungen* are hereafter cited as *Joint Synod Proceedings* with date.

⁷⁵ *Synodal-Bericht der Deutschen Evangelisch-Lutherischen Synode von Minnesota und Andern Staaten* are cited as *Minnesota Synod Proceedings* with date.

⁷⁶ *Minnesota Synod Proceedings*, 1914, pp. 72-73.

⁷⁷ *Minnesota Synod Proceedings*, 1916, p. 56.

⁷⁸ *Minnesota Synod Proceedings*, 1917, pp. 11 and 40. It should be noted that the *Minnesota District Proceedings* 1930 and 1928 (Milwaukee, 1931), p. 42, carry the notation that during the 1928 convention “one meeting of the old Minnesota Synod” was held.

⁷⁹ *Minnesota District Proceedings*, 1924 cover page.

⁸⁰ *Minnesota District Proceedings*, 1922 p. 88.

⁸¹ See footnote 24.

⁸² *Minnesota District Proceedings*, 1928 p. 50.

How sudden and rapid the introduction of English was, can be seen by publication figures. The 1918 *Proceedings* lists 2020 *Gemeindeblatt* readers and does not even bother to tabulate *Northwestern Lutheran* figures. In 1920 there were 2014 *Gemeindeblatt* and 27 *Northwestern Lutheran* readers. In 1922 the figures were 1847 and 386 and in 1924, 1579 and 453.⁸³

It is difficult for us to appreciate this task and problem, for we have buried it. Even St. Paul's in New Ulm is ending German church services before the summer is over. We read Luther and preach German in translation. While we breathe a sigh of relief at the non-fulfillment of dire predictions that true Lutheranism could not survive beyond a generation if the German Luther and the Gospel in German were lost, let us not pass this point by without paying a humble and sincere tribute to our pastors in the Twenties who, almost without realizing that they were providing a very special and quite rare service, supplied what was required by the times, a bilingual ministry. If only all of us would in our day become as adept in either a classical or modern language as they were in their extra language, a strong resource for theological and mission growth would be made available to the church.

In this decade we have had our *Missio Dei* and other major building efforts. They brought us the good spiritual gifts of training in sanctification and joy in church building. The previous generation had its major building projects too and the changes in synod membership, earning power, and dollar value are taken into account, will we not agree that their efforts and accomplishments certainly equal, if they do not surpass, ours?

By the end of the District's first decade it could hear, when it assembled in 1928, reports that the cornerstone laying of the Doctor Martin Luther College Administration Building had taken place on May 6 of that year and that during June foundations for the new theological seminary had been poured.⁸⁴ Each building cost in the neighborhood of one-third of a million. Those were major efforts in days when the regular synod quota was below \$3.00 per communicant.

Every District gathering gave time and thought and prayer to these ventures. In 1922 a Seminary Building Committee for the District was established.⁸⁵ In 1924 the District resolved: "We shall earnestly attempt to complete the Seminary Collection by January 1, 1925."⁸⁶ A similar resolution, but less optimistic, was passed in 1926.⁸⁷ In 1928 the report was given that the 1926 resolution "to the effect that the Seminary collection be terminated in the fall of 1926" had not been carried out.⁸⁸

A notable advance in mission endeavors also took place in the Twenties when our District, along with the others in the Synod, launched out on their first full-fledged overseas mission venture. This was the establishment of the Evangelical Lutheran Free Church of Poland, made possible by the men and monies our Synod to a large extent supplied. The beginning was made in 1924 and the work is still being perpetuated, at least indirectly, through present-day efforts in Germany. For a time there was urging, within the District, to make this a Synodical Conference undertaking.

The decade of the Twenties produced another beginning and founding which involved the Minnesota District much more directly and which occurred much nearer home. This was the official organization of its sister and daughter, the Dakota-Montana District. The date was June 25, 1920. On that day 23 pastors and 6 lay delegates, all of them Minnesota District members attending its regular convention, held a meeting of their own and voted the Dakota-Montana District into being.⁸⁹

The step did not come as a surprise, nor did it occasion any ill will. Such a division of the Minnesota District had been assumed already in the new Synod constitution proposed in 1917. The Minnesota District itself urged the step and requested the Synod to grant the formal but necessary ratification at its next session.

⁸³ See Parochial Reports appended to the respective *Minnesota District Proceedings*.

⁸⁴ *Minnesota District Proceedings*, 1928, pp. 56 and 62.

⁸⁵ *Minnesota District Proceedings*, 1922, pp. 53 and 85.

⁸⁶ *Minnesota District Proceedings*, 1924, p. 25.

⁸⁷ *Minnesota District Proceedings*, 1926, p. 28.

⁸⁸ *Minnesota District Proceedings*, 1928, p. 59.

⁸⁹ *Minnesota District Proceedings*, 1920, pp. 10-11 and 68-69 and 102-103 provide this and subsequent material on the organization of the Dakota-Montana District.

Back in the 1880's "*Reiseprediger*" of the Minnesota Synod began to go into Dakota Territory and gather Lutherans together around the Word and Sacraments. Some of the "*Reiseprediger*" were C. Boettcher, G. Lohme and F. Johl. Soon the congregations were organized that would form the District in 1920.⁹⁰

There were good reasons for dividing the Minnesota District and letting the brethren to the West set up their own organization. Among them were the following offered in the resolution requesting division:

1. Much travel time and money would be saved when it came to attending conferences and larger meetings;
2. The area would have off officials of its own, living in the field of labor;
3. A more stable ministry would ensue, on the grounds that pastors tend to stay in their own district.

Even though time may not have fully validated the last of those reasons, the District division has not harmed the mother District and it has been beneficial to the daughter. Even during its first decade Minnesota could help the Dakota-Montana District erect its own synodical school, which opened at Mobridge in 1928. And when it is time for the Dakota-Montana brethren to celebrate their District's golden anniversary on June 25, 1970, the sincerest and most heartfelt congratulations will come from their Minnesota neighbors and brethren. We will not let this meeting pass by without taking appropriate action along that line.

One other major item of Minnesota District business in the Twenties that merits mention is the intersynodical unity endeavor culminating in the "Chicago Theses" that the Missouri Synod rejected in 1929. There is a special area background story here that adds to the general interest and importance. As Pastor Schlemmer in his 1920 District paper on "Current Efforts at Unity in the Lutheran Church" recounts, a Sibley County Mixed Conference in 1915 sparked a discussion on the status of the Lutheran Church in America that aroused much attention in view of the imminent Reformation anniversary.⁹¹ A series of well-attended meetings, at which Ohio and Iowa men were also present, took place at Trinity Church in St. Paul and gave opportunity for a discussion of the doctrines of conversion and election. When President Baumann reported this to the 1917 Convention of the Minnesota Synod, it set up a committee to act in this matter.⁹² Our Joint Synod and others took up the matter and soon formal meetings of representatives of Joint Synod, Missouri, Ohio, and Iowa were being held.

When the Minnesota District in 1922 discussed developments at these meetings, Pastor Boettcher, who had been a member of the District committee and attended some of the more formal committee sessions, reported that all representatives at the latter were in agreement on the doctrines of conversion and election. All that remained, he said, was an explanation regarding the phrase, *intuitus fidei*.⁹³ This, however, proved to be the sticking point, as subsequent events were to reveal.

In the end the efforts failed when the Missouri Synod rejected in 1929 the final statement known as the "Chicago Theses." Men in Minnesota and some of our commissioners felt that such outright rejection was too harsh and hasty a step and that the statement, if not altogether satisfactory, was at least a start in the right direction. In those days people in our circles were calling the Missouri Synod ultraconservative and woefully behind the times. That is a switch.

However, the endeavor had its good results. The Word of God and the Confessions and some of their most important doctrines were studied extensively and intently. The Minnesota District, that had almost a parochial interest in the origins of the effort, for example, in 1924 "requested the Visiting Elders to submit the doctrinal theses of this (intersynodical) committee to their respective conferences for further discussion."⁹⁴

⁹⁰ Kuhn, *Geschichte* passim. Brief histories of the Dakota congregations are included in the Minnesota history.

⁹¹ *Minnesota District Proceedings*, 1920, pp. 18-62 contain the essay of Pastor Schlemmer.

⁹² *Minnesota Synod Proceedings*, 1917, pp. 69-70.

⁹³ *Minnesota District Proceedings*, 1922, p. 56.

⁹⁴ *Minnesota District Proceedings*, 1924, pp. 10 and 17.

There are, no doubt, some in our midst who can personally testify to the benefits that were derived from such discussions.

Part Six—Depression and Aggression

In the years from 1929 to 1945 the church in our land in general and the Minnesota District in particular were tested by two major stresses and trials. First came the most severe and enduring economic depression our land has ever known. Its effects were still lingering when in 1937 and 1939 and 1941 war came to just about all the major countries in the world and finally also to the United States.

The Depression made itself felt in all areas of living, also in religious matters. It would, however, be a mistake for one who cannot personally recall those years, to assume that all church work ground to a halt. On the contrary, there were frequently encouraging developments. For the country as a whole, the best record in the ratio of charitable and religious giving to total spending was set during the Great Depression and still stands. So far as the District is concerned, a quotation from the abbreviated 1934 *Report* bears out that point:

It was humiliating to note that, on the basis of a comparative report covering 1928-1934, the financial secretary showed that during the past fiscal year our collections were almost as high as they were in 1928-1929. What in 1934 we were able to do, that we evidently in 1928 refused to do. So prosperity was after all, not an unmixed blessing; and the depression not altogether a curse.⁹⁵

The figures for the District's contributions to the regular synodical budget run from just under \$61,000 in fiscal 1929 to almost \$74, 000 in 1930 and then down to the low figure of \$52,358 in 1936. Then there is an upswing to \$65, 354 by 1939, almost \$70, 000 by 1940 and \$82, 000 in 1942.⁹⁶ The fact that the drop from 1930 to 1940 is only about 5% indicates a strong effort was made to continue the work of the Lord. The fact that there was such a decline, instead of an advance, indicates that much of the work would have to limp along, if it did not come to a complete standstill.

This was the status of things which characterizes the history of the District and Synod during the Depression. Mission fields were held but expansion was curtailed. A typical report runs:

The work was "greatly hampered by the continued financial stringency" but the "missionaries in the field continued their earnest efforts to bring Christ's Gospel to immortal souls with unabated zeal."⁹⁷

Parents continued to send young people to prepare for the teaching and preaching ministry. Classes that began preparatory school in the early Thirties and graduated in the late Thirties were among the largest Northwestern had ever seen. The Minnesota District was outstanding in supplying potential pastors during the Depression. There were men available but no vacant posts. By 1936 there were only 10 calls for 16 New Ulm graduates and only 2, both at schools, for the 13 Thiensville graduates. Adding the backlog from previous years made a total of 28 ministerial candidates waiting for assignment.⁹⁸ The number would rise in the next five years.

Throughout this period the Minnesota District and the others spent much of their convention time on the problem of retiring a debt, which to a very large extent was incurred before the Thirties. At the beginning of 1932 the debt stood at \$752,000 and within six months \$550, 000 would have to be on hand for repayments and running expenses. A hurried Every Member Canvass kept the wolf from the door but fiscal problems continued.⁹⁹

⁹⁵ *Minnesota District Proceedings*, 1936, p. 7. The 1934 Report is included in the 1936 *Proceedings*. The quotation itself is a quotation from the July 29, 1934 *Gemeindeblatt*.

⁹⁶ See "District Treasurer's Report" in the pertinent *Minnesota District Proceedings*.

⁹⁷ *Minnesota District Proceedings*, 1936, p. 4, which refers to items from 1934.

⁹⁸ *Minnesota District Proceedings*, 1936, p. 50.

⁹⁹ *Minnesota District Proceedings*, 1932, p. 60.

By 1935 a new debt retirement program was underway which would still be in effect in 1940 and which was given special emphasis by the bulletins of the so-called "Michigan Plan."¹⁰⁰ The District Proceedings of 1940 carry this report:

The original debt retirement program which started in 1935 is still on the program of unfinished business. Originally an average contribution of \$4.00 per communicant member could have liquidated this debt. To date our Minnesota District averages \$1.55 per communicant, with the task completed in only twenty-eight congregations. In 105 congregations the work has begun, in some a certain amount has been promised, but is held in trust until all have enrolled in the cause. Several are short of their original promise, others have pledged their support in the form of a note. A number "will work" or are "at work" but thus far have made no remittance. To date a total of \$43, 800.00 has been remitted against \$113,000.00 figured on at \$4.00 per communicant member.¹⁰¹

It was only in 1944 that the District was within \$7000 of the goal in this matter and could see in the near future a "successful conclusion."¹⁰²

That was already in the second last year of World War II. The special problems that World War II brought are aptly prophesied and summarized in the 1942 "Report of the General Mission Board. " A quotation follows:

It goes without saying that difficulties will confront us which, to a greater or lesser degree, may hinder or hamper our blessed work. Heavier burdens will be laid upon the faithful. They recognize that someone will have to fill the gap left in the ranks of our members by our sons who are serving our country in the armed services...

The constant demand of our government for higher taxes to provide means for carrying on the war may cause not a few to curtail their contributions toward the support of the Kingdom at home and abroad.

The migration of members from the smaller towns to the industrial centers of our nation may mean a temporary, or even permanent, loss to the home congregations... And it is evident from reports at hand that this moving from smaller towns and rural sections is already showing its effect on the missions in such places.¹⁰³

Synod members in the armed services peaked at 26, 000 at the end of the war. With the Minnesota District a little better than 18% of the Synod's membership, something less than 5000 of the 26, 000 can be assumed to have come from our District.¹⁰⁴

Certainly an effect of World War II that would make itself felt in our District and Synod in the era after 1945, was the growing concern for overseas missions. Contact with distant areas, established through a global war and through the international situation of our country since its conclusion, has led to mission work beyond the states in Central America, in Europe, in Africa, in Asia. This is, without doubt, the most important development in the history of our District and Synod since 1945. Other major events in those years will be touched upon in connection with special subjects to be discussed as this history turns from a chronological to a topical approach.

Part Seven- -Steadfast in Controversy

Our District could not avoid becoming involved in the two major doctrinal controversies that perturbed our Synod during the past fifty years. The more recent of the two grew out of our relations and dealings with the

¹⁰⁰ *Minnesota District Proceedings*, 1936, p. 60-63.

¹⁰¹ *Minnesota District Proceedings*, 1940, pp. 74-75.

¹⁰² *Minnesota District Proceedings*, 1944, p. 59.

¹⁰³ *Minnesota District Proceedings*, 1942, pp. 25-26.

¹⁰⁴ *Minnesota District Proceedings*, 1946, p. 42.

Missouri Synod and had to do primarily with the doctrine of fellowship and with its application to the contemporary situation. The other, although some of its roots can be traced back to Watertown in 1924, revolved around the Beitz paper, “God’s Message to Us in Galatians: The Just Shall Live by Faith, “ delivered in Schofield, Wisconsin in September 1926.¹⁰⁵ The outcome was the establishment of the Protestant Conference.

When the District was informed through regular channels of the thieving epidemic at Watertown in 1924, the resultant expulsions and reinstatements and the dispute between Board and Faculty over those actions, it resolved at its meeting in 1924:

We regret the trouble at the Institution and hope that the committee appointed will be able to settle matters to such an extent that such things may not occur again.¹⁰⁶

District *Proceedings* make no mention of any subsequent events until 1928. It is not too far fetched to assume, however, that District members were moved to ponder and discuss reports of the Fort Atkinson case that added to the Watertown problems. Certainly they were not unaware of the Beitz Paper that agitated the Western Wisconsin District, of the *Gutachten* of the faculty of the Theological Seminary which charged the Beitz Paper with loveless judging and with confusion and error in treating the doctrine of sanctification, and of special Western Wisconsin District action that led to the severance of a number of congregations, pastors, and teachers.¹⁰⁷

Official District reaction, however, was not forthcoming until in 1928 the convention committee on the President’s Report submitted the following resolution that was adopted:

Your committee deplores the events causing in the Western Wisconsin District the loss of several pastors, teachers, and congregations.

In recognition of affairs mentioned in report of Synodical Committee we would note that by the trend of the time we also are subject to similar temptations and dangers and must earnestly guard against encroachment of false doctrine and un-Lutheran practice. Intensive study of the Scriptures and of the Lutheran Confessions is highly necessary to that intent.

It might be well to point out that Christ has given instruction for church discipline not for the purpose of condemnation but the salvation of the souls, and therefore extreme patience and loving admonition on the one hand while on the other humble submission of one’s own will to the instruction of Gods Word must be found.¹⁰⁸

By the time of the next District meeting the situation had worsened. Prof. Koehler had come to a disagreement with his colleagues on the Seminary faculty over the interpretation of the Beitz Paper and with the Board and Synod over procedures to be followed. He had written two papers, a *Beleuchtung* and *Auslegung*.¹⁰⁹ His opponents produced an *Antwort*. A letter concerning his dismissal from the Seminary had been received by District President Albrecht. The whole bleak and bitter situation was painfully and painstakingly considered by the District in 1930.

A ten-man Seminary Committee presented a lengthy report of over two pages, which was in the main adopted by the District but which carried only nine signatures. The burden of the report is the conviction that peace in the Synod can only be restored if the original cause of the turmoil is faced and removed, meaning that

¹⁰⁵ A. Pieper and J. Meyer, *Antwort auf Prof. Koehler’s Beleuchtung* (Milwaukee, 1927), p. 4.

¹⁰⁶ *Minnesota District Proceedings*, 1924, p. 27.

¹⁰⁷ *Gutachten der theologischen Facultaet von Wauwatosa* (Milwaukee, 1927), passim.

¹⁰⁸ *Minnesota District Proceedings*, 1930-28(sic), pp. 48-49.

¹⁰⁹ Joh. Ph. Koehler, *Beitz’ Schrift und das Gutachten Beleuchtet* (Thiensville, Wisconsin, 1929).

the misunderstandings involved in the two original documents, Beitz's Paper and the *Gutachten*, must be corrected and clarified.¹¹⁰

As far as Beitz and his Paper were concerned, the committee pointed to conflicting interpretations of the Paper and then deplored the author's insistence on remaining silent instead of clarifying the situation.¹¹¹

The other side was also faulted. The committee questioned the value and wisdom of issuing a *Gutachten* in the first place. Then it deplored the fact that the *Gutachten* was written and published without face-to-face discussion with Beitz. At best, it is argued, such a confrontation would have made publication of the *Gutachten* unnecessary; at worst, it would have made for better understanding and more accurate writing.¹¹²

These are the points that the District wanted to be considered by all parties, those that had dealt with the matter in the past and those that were still acting or would in the future become involved. With contrition and confession, courage and conviction the District so resolved and then made its resolutions known to those directly concerned.¹¹³

The 1932 action on this controversy contrasts sharply in what is said and how it is said with the 1930 counterpart. The action is businesslike, the tone brusque. Communication from the Western Wisconsin District conveying its disagreement with the findings of Synod's special "Peace Committee" are simply filed without discussion or action as matters not within the proper concern of the District. A communication from the Central Conference of the same District calling attention to a challenge of the Minnesota District's 1930 resolves via the customary review channels was likewise simply filed as being only a report of a conference resolution. Finally, the reply of Pastor Beitz to the 1930 resolutions was filed without discussion or comment as containing a matter "not within judgment or control" of the District.¹¹⁴

In 1936 upon recommendation of President Albrecht and the convention committee, the District resolved to regard Pastors E. Baumann, H. Albrecht, and G. Schuetze "as people who have severed their affiliations with our Synod." These three, the argumentations state, had been practicing fellowship with the Protestants, had not heeded admonition, and had refused to participate in further dealings or discussions with representatives of the District. Thus ten years after it began, the Protestant controversy had regrettable consequences in the District.¹¹⁵

In 1962 at Synod's prompting the Western Wisconsin District rescinded the resolutions that back in 1927 led to the formation of the Protestant Conference.¹¹⁶ In 1963 the Synod as a result resolved:

That despite disappointing results attained thus far, the Western Wisconsin District and other Districts that are involved in the Protestant matter be encouraged to seek steps to close this long-standing breach.¹¹⁷

There have been no specific District outcomes to report.

Even more detrimental and damaging than the Protestant controversy, so far as outward, tangible results are concerned, was the disagreement within our own Synod and District regarding fellowship with the Missouri Synod.

Certainly from 1944 on, if not before, our Synod began to have serious concerns about the pathway Missouri seemed bent on following in matters that relate to the area of fellowship. In 1968 it is quite obvious that Missouri has strayed far from the old pathways of the Synodical Conference we once knew, not only in fellowship, but even in attitude to Scripture. Back in the late Forties and early Fifties, however, the divergence

¹¹⁰ *Minnesota District Proceedings*, 1930-1928 (sic), p. 32.

¹¹¹ *Minnesota District Proceedings*, 1930-1928, pp. 32-33.

¹¹² *Minnesota District Proceedings*, 1930-1928, p. 33.

¹¹³ *Minnesota District Proceedings*, 1930-1928, pp. 33-35.

¹¹⁴ *Minnesota District Proceedings*, 1932, pp. 66-93.

¹¹⁵ *Minnesota District Proceedings*, 1936, pp. 13-14 and 15 and 73-74.

¹¹⁶ *Joint Synod Proceedings*, 1963, p. 195.

¹¹⁷ *Joint Synod Proceedings*, 1963, p. 222.

was not so obvious. Now Missouri speaks loudly about change; then she kept insisting there was no intention of making any basic change.

In the first years of the intersynodical disputes, discussion tended to hinge on specific applications of Bible truths, on such pointed, practical problems as what is and isn't "external" or what was wrong with this or that organization. It wasn't until 1955 that our Synod began to see and discuss the problem as a whole in terms of the doctrine of fellowship and the sin of unionism. From then on the issues became clearer but on both intrasynodical and intersynodical levels steps still had to be taken before all admonition had been made and the full picture could be seen. The time factor became, within our Synod and District, a major concern.

District resolutions in the early Fifties indicate an awareness of the problem, a desire to study the issues at the grassroots level, and a resolve to press on to a solution.¹¹⁸ A special difficulty arose in Mankato in relations between our Immanuel and Missouri's Our Savior Congregations. By 1952 this had become a District case and in 1954 it appeared on the convention agenda.¹¹⁹

The growing intensity of the disturbance after Synod's Saginaw convention is apparent in the 1956 District *Proceedings*.¹²⁰ President Barthels had resigned his office and memorialized for a termination of fellowship with Missouri. Immanuel of Mankato was reported as "abstaining from active fellowship with, and support of, the Joint Synod of Wisconsin and Other States" while "they prayerfully await faithful, obedient action in accord with the Word of Romans 16:17 at the recessed session of our Synod's convention in 1956." The request of a District congregation for a release to Missouri's Iowa District was not granted.

When the convention committee proposed continuing fellowship and protest, the report was adopted by a vote of 130-26. Fifteen men insisted on registering their negative votes and three of these gave reasons. The negative side, of course, wanted a termination of fellowship with Missouri at once. Two of the three statements quoted Romans 16:17. Before the year was out Immanuel and its two pastors withdrew and Bethlehem of Mason City and its pastor went over to Missouri.¹²¹

After the heated discussions and close vote at Synod's 1957 New Ulm meeting the lines were more sharply drawn. In 1958 the District's convention committee on "Church Union" brought in two reports, one deploring the divisions being caused but willing to go the extra mile and the other urging severance of fellowship and basing its stand on Romans 16:17. In the voting 114 favored the first report and 22 of these registered, while 47 favored the second and 24 of these registered. During the next biennium nine pastors, one professor, two teachers, and the majority of the Austin congregation withdrew from the District, in addition to minority groups of members in other places.¹²²

In 1960 the resolve to uphold the Synod's representatives in "recognizing an impasse" in discussions with Missouri on fellowship and to urge that the information be carried to the Synodical Conference and a "Conference of Theologians" was adopted by a 137-21 vote. There was one more pastor withdrawal. After severance of fellowship with the Missouri Synod in 1961, the Buffalo congregation with its pastor withdrew to join Missouri.¹²³

The factual recitation of these events does not convey the difficulties and distresses they brought the District then, nor does that recitation have the power to connote the regrets and sorrows that have been occasioned since. Old fellowship ties were broken. Congregations were split. A score of workers, whose loss we could not spare, no longer labored with us. The ranks of the celebrants at this anniversary have gaps and the joy is dampened.

Two things in this connection should be crystal clear and two resolves unanimous. The first is that we determine to do all that can honorably be done to heal the breaches. Prayers on behalf of our representatives in their dealings with the Church of the Lutheran Confession are of first importance. Secondly, we should here

¹¹⁸ *Minnesota District Proceedings*, 1950, 1952, 1954, pp. 84 and 89 and 95-96 respectively.

¹¹⁹ *Minnesota District Proceedings*, 1954, pp. 68 and 96.

¹²⁰ *Minnesota District Proceedings*, 1956, pp. 20 and 32 and 52-53 are sources for the content of this and the next paragraph.

¹²¹ *Minnesota District Proceedings*, 1958, p. 17.

¹²² *Minnesota District Proceedings*, 1969, pp. 18-19.

¹²³ *Minnesota District Proceedings*, 1962, p. 19.

highly resolve to refrain from that which caused the ills. This was, above all else, the desire of a church body, not ours nor the C. L. C., to be of the world and not merely in it, the desire to please that world even at the risk of displeasing the Lord, the desire to agree with its wisdom rather than be content with the Word. If the abnegation of that desire is not furthered in us at this fiftieth anniversary celebration, then the anniversary might as well not have been observed, and then we could have no reason to hope for any other God-pleasing anniversary celebrations.

Part Eight—Insuring Anniversaries

This leads to the thought of insuring future anniversaries. How can this best be done? Without minimizing the importance of what has just been said, it can certainly be affirmed that the best way of insuring future anniversaries pleasing to God, is the training of the youth in God's saving Truth. The main reason why we can celebrate a golden anniversary is the dedication of the fathers to the cause of Christian education by the home, by the school, by the congregation, by the Synod and District.

In the rugged pioneer days one could not expect to find elaborate day schools in which teachers trained in Synod colleges taught. That does not mean Christian education was neglected. Pious parents did what they could in the home. Pastors, in addition to providing the customary instruction preparatory to confirmation, often doubled as school teachers for a full or much shorter school term. As late as 1917, the Synod claimed to have 85 schools but listed only 22 male and 12 women teachers; consequently the majority of the schools were manned by pastors.¹²⁴

Even in the old Minnesota Synod, however, there were efforts to establish more adequate schools, train teachers more fully, and free the teaching pastors for pastoral activities. Teachers were called, for instance, to Red Wing in 1881 and to New Ulm in 1805.¹²⁵ In his fiftieth anniversary history of the Synod, Kuhn shows an awareness of the needs and the shortcomings in this respect. He chides congregations that neglect the training of the youth for good citizenship in church and state and try to make do with one pastor-teacher when means are at hand to provide both. But he also directs attention to a clear demonstration of the Synod's zeal for Christian education when he describes how the Synod offered its all-purpose training school at New Ulm as the common teacher training school of the Joint Synod, gladly yielding the advantages of a local ministerial college and seminary for the benefit of the program of Christian education.

The Minnesota Synod had resolved to establish the school when President Albrecht offered on behalf of his New Ulm congregation the necessary land and \$4000. This was in 1883. The Synod, however, did not necessarily designate New Ulm as the school's location. It stipulated that building would only begin when \$14,000 was collected and that in the meantime any area might indicate what it would offer the Synod if the school were placed in its midst. Before the stipulated \$14, 000 was at hand, the energetic New Ulm burghers on the appointed building committee and their even more energetic pastor began building operations. Atonement for this disorderly procedure was made when Pastor and Building Committee Member Albrecht apologized to Synod President Albrecht and when Synod President Albrecht in turn forgave Pastor and Committee member Albrecht.¹²⁷

The full story of the early years and the development of Doctor Martin Luther College need not be told here. A full-scale history is being prepared by its long-time president, Carl Schweppe. So far as the point under discussion is concerned, it is sufficient to note that after ten years of service as an all-purpose school, Luther College in 1894 began to be the school that we still know, the chief teacher training school of the whole Synod. By 1910, after 16 years in its specialized role, Luther had supplied 91 candidates for the teaching ministry.

The District has shown a continuing interest in Christian day schools. In 1928, when accurate District records regarding "full time" schools became available, there were 32 schools, 8 teaching pastors, 20 male

¹²⁴ *Minnesota District Proceedings*, 1918, attached report.

¹²⁵ Kuhn, *Geschichte*, pp. 170 and 198.

¹²⁷ Kuhn, *Geschichte*, pp. 35-36.

teachers, 18 women teachers, and 1588 pupils, with 5217 in Sunday Schools.¹²⁸ The most recent *Parochial Report* has 30 schools, 36 male teachers, 39 women teachers, and 2674 pupils, with 9772 in Sunday Schools.¹²⁹ While the number of schools has unfortunately not been increased, the number of teachers and pupils has almost doubled. This is gratifying.

In recent years much of the District's concern for the program of Christian education has centered on the future role of D. M. L. C. in Synod's program. A number of expressions, memorials, resolutions testify to the general conviction that there should be no minimization of that role and that instead the school should be developed as soon as possible to its full potential. While this whole subject is still controversial and undetermined in certain of its aspects, some of the matters have clarified themselves and can be recorded here.

During the Fifties there developed in certain areas of Synod a loss of confidence in D. M. L. C. The undersupply of teacher candidates was a nagging worry. The quality of the training was brought into question; this was no doubt a misjudgment brought about by the fact that too many students were plucked from college classrooms and sent inadequately prepared into the classrooms of our day schools. The D. M. L. C. thinking seems to have been slow in adjusting to increased post-war demands in the number of candidates needed; in their defense be it said that the sponsoring body never even satisfied their modest requests expressed in terms of a 500 enrollment.

The result was that the Synod involved itself in a second teacher training school. This venture seems to have been fostered in part by two dubious suppositions: one, an educational version of the old saying, believed only by lovers and lunatics in the fiscal field, that two can live as cheaply as one and secondly, the notion that the best way to cure an educational problem is to build another school. By 1964 a special committee recommended that D. M. L. C. be converted into a junior college and a new senior college be erected in Milwaukee.¹³⁰

The school and District were relieved when in 1965 the Synod voted to retain D. M. L. C. as a four-year college and erect a junior college in Milwaukee. In 1967 this decision was re-affirmed.¹³¹ The school and District are especially grateful that the recent problems have been more than compensated for by the four major additions to its plant in the Sixties: Music Hall, Hillview Hall, Luther Memorial Union, and Administration Building Enlargement.

In the field of secondary education there are two items worthy of note. The preparatory department, that has always been a part of Synod's New Ulm school, has since 1963 had its own Board of Control and for all practical purposes operates independently of the College, though on the same campus.¹³² Martin Luther Academy, in fact, already owns property on which it hopes to erect its own plant in the not too distant future.

The other noteworthy development in the secondary field is the District's first area high school. This is St. Croix Lutheran High School in West Saint Paul. During the past school year it celebrated its tenth anniversary. The school is operated by the Twin City Lutheran High School Association, in which various Wisconsin Synod congregations in the Twin City metropolitan area hold membership. The school has established itself firmly in its first decade and looks forward to a secure and prosperous future. It is, however, understandably lonely and anticipates the time when there will be other District high schools. This hope the District shares.

The Belle Plaine Home will be mentioned in this place. This is done, not only to achieve the effect of contrast between youth and age, but also in recognition of the fact that this establishment was conceived originally as an orphanage. Back in 1897 the donor of the \$5000 that initiated the project, Mrs. Sophie Boessling, was interested primarily in an orphanage. Subsequent dealings between her and the Synod committee led to the erection of a combination orphanage and home for the aged.¹³³ For many years Belle

¹²⁸ *Minnesota District Proceedings*, 1930-1928, p. 70.

¹²⁹ *Statistical Report of the Wisconsin Ev. Lutheran Synod for 1967* (Milwaukee, 1968), pp. 26-27.

¹³⁰ *Report to the Nine Districts* (Milwaukee, 1964), pp. 26-49.

¹³¹ *Joint Synod Proceedings*, 1967, pp. 144-147.

¹³² *Joint Synod Proceedings*, 1963, p. 112.

¹³³ Kuhn, *Geschichte*, p. 48.

Plaine was the only Wisconsin Synod home for the aged. On November 6 of this year it will be celebrating its seventieth birthday. It has grown old gracefully, rendering useful physical and spiritual service to a group well-deserving of the best care and concern their fellow believers can give them.

Part Nine—Working While It is Day

As we pause in our day-to-day assignment of labor to look back over fifty years and more of the labor of others, what will be our main reactions and chief responses? There will be, first of all, a deep sense of gratitude. We can be thankful to the fathers, the forefathers, the pioneers. They built well. They broke good ground. They blazed a true trail. The history and heritage they have bequeathed is worth cherishing.

Above all else, our gratitude is directed toward Him who was with them always. He blessed their building. He let the sunshine of His Grace and Gospel and the dew and rainfall of His Word and Spirit nurture their planting. He guided them on the way they should go. By His mercy, through no merit of ours, the lines are fallen unto us in pleasant places and we have a goodly heritage.¹³⁴ When we review the deeds of the fathers with grateful hearts, we are, first of all, thanking and praising Him.

An anniversary is not only for bowing gratefully in the direction and at the feet of those that have gone before; an anniversary is to inspire us to mount the shoulders of the fathers, the forefathers, the pioneers. It is for us to continue and advance the work they began. The roll is not ended when we have recited the list: Heyer, (1860-1868), Hoffmann (1868-1869), Sieker (1869-1876), Kuhn (1876-1883) Albrecht (1883-1894), Gausewitz (1894-1906), Schroedel (1906-1909), Zich (1909-1910), Pankow (1910-1912), Naumann (1912-1917), Baumann (1917-1920). The list continues: Albrecht (1920-1936), Ackermann (1936-1948), Naumann (1948-1953), Barthels (1953-1954), Lenz (1954-).

In this listing these presidents simply represent the Synod and the District as a whole. As they labored in their office and then gave way to a successor, so the Synod and the District membership constantly changed, with new faces replacing the old. Each group in its day had its assignment. We have ours. In some respect it is easier than that of Blumer; in others it is more difficult. Be that as it may, in this year of our Lord 1968 we are to do the Lord's work according to His will and in obedience to His Word. All credit to the fathers and the heritage they have left us but now it's our turn to begin to enact the history of the District's second fifty years.

What kind of years will they be? They will bring changes. It doesn't take a prophet to predict that there will be adjustments in the many rural parishes of the District in the next decades. We will be able to cope with them if we have and use half the vision of the fathers. Working with the youth of the church is presenting more and more of a problem. We will be able to solve it. Youth work has also in the past been a special District concern.¹³⁵ Whatever the task and problem the next fifty years may bring, we can with confidence build our Lord's Kingdom. We still have the Means of Grace, and in them the Lord of the Church and His Spirit. That's more than enough for the next half century.

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¹³⁴ Psalm 16:6

¹³⁵ *Minnesota District Proceedings*, 1936, pp. 66-68.

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