

**THE LIFE AND MINISTRY OF
PASTOR DUANE KENNETH TOMHAVE
1936-1998**

Written by:

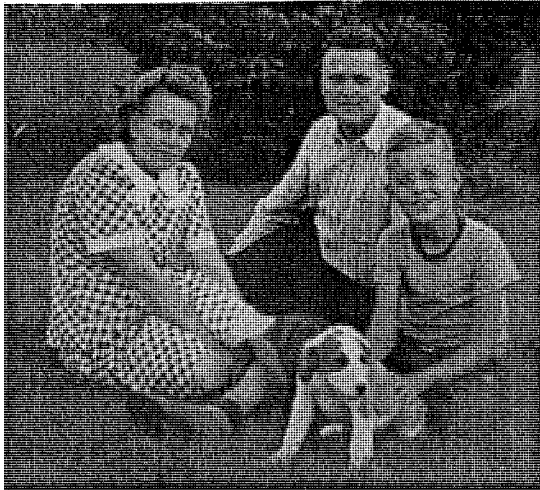
Douglas C. Tomhave

This assignment has taken many unexpected turns. The paper I now write was originally supposed to be a video interview with my father Pastor Duane K. Tomhave. The topic was going to be world missions – focusing on the changes and opportunities the Lord has given our Synod in the last decade. Because of his failing health and extreme weakness, my father suggested an interview by cassette tape because he had trouble sitting up for long periods of time. I intended to record conversations with him as he elaborated on the questions that I asked. The scheduled interview never happened.

My father came home from the hospital only a few days and was forced to return because of blackouts. He died two days before our scheduled interview on my quarter break. I asked him in his last hours in the hospital, *“Are you giving me a hint that you don’t want a paper written about you by making it so difficult for me to get you on tape?”* He apologized and gave me permission to write the paper. He told me that I could find what I needed in his personal files and newsletters and everything else would have to come from the memories of others. This is the background for the paper I now write. I will attempt to quote from his letters and writings whenever possible to offer as much of his own words as I can. Unfortunately, many of his ministry stories and personal experiences went to the grave with him. Yet I wish to record in the following pages the life story and ministry of my dad, a man I admired and loved.

The Beginning Years

Duane Kenneth Tomhave was born on August 4, 1936, in Montevideo, Minnesota. He was the only child born to Raymond and Elna Tomhave. He was baptized on September 27th of the same year, making him a son of the Lord. Raymond worked as a telegraph operator for Western Union and was transferred a few times as he was promoted up to eventual management



Family picture out on the farm

positions. The family moved for a brief time to Valley City, North Dakota in 1942. When Duane was in the first grade, his father received a position in New Ulm, Minnesota. They joined St. Paul's Evangelical Lutheran Church and that is where their son received his Christian grade school education.

Duane's mother, Elna, revealed that her son had an early interest in two things that he pursued for the rest of his life - reading and music. Even though he didn't love school he loved to read. He would read anything that he could get his hands on. The librarian in New Ulm revealed to Elna that her son had read almost everything they had to offer him in their library. Elna also recalls Duane telling her of the times that he would get a flashlight and read books under the covers when he was supposed to be sleeping. This love for reading that started as a child ended up serving him well throughout his entire life and ministry.

Also, his love for music started at a young age. Duane had a wonderful voice. In Montevideo, he was given an opportunity to sing *You are My Sunshine* on a local radio program before he was even five years old. He had no piano or drums, but would make his own drum set out of pots and pans, hanging on a string, and bang away to his favorite radio program. He learned how to keep a beat and sing on his own, even though he was given no formal training.¹ This musical talent and love for music will show itself throughout his schooling years.

Raymond Tomhave was active at St. Paul's Church and even served as the church

¹ This information was offered in a telephone interview with Duane's mother Elna on March 21st, 1998.

president during the remodeling of the church in the late 40's. Life was centered on the church, family, work and school. Pastor W. Schmidt confirmed Duane on April 2, 1950. His confirmation verse Psalm 145:15-16 – *The eyes of all wait upon thee, and thou givest them their meat in due season. Thou openest thine hand, and satisfiest the desire of every living thing.*



Confirmation picture - 1950

There was no one single event or individual that influenced Duane into the ministry. His grandfather Carl and father would both have liked to pursue the ministry, but they had to go to work at a young age to help their families. Schooling was too big of an expense for them to even consider. Duane received encouragement from his family and pastor, but really made the decision on his own when he applied for high school at Martin Luther Academy. This school was just up the hill from their home. There was some natural recruitment when he saw some of the guys that he looked up to in grade school now going to Martin Luther Academy. He had a chance to see plays, basketball games and the other activities that brought him to the conclusion that MLA was the high school for him.² He returned home one evening after school and told his parents that he was going to pursue the pastor track at MLA and see how it went for him.³

The Schooling Years

The freshman class at MLA was a group of 65. The next year, the number went up to 78

² Interview with Pastor Ron Uhlhorn, classmates from high school through Seminary.

³ Interview with Duane's mother, Etha.

students. Duane served as the class president his sophomore year. He was a town student the first three years at MLA until his dad was transferred to a Western Union job in Mankato, Minnesota. He decided to continue with his studies at MLA and moved into the dorm for his last year. Stories from his classmates give an idea of what school was like at the Academy.⁴

There seems to have been a shortage of professors along with little or no retirement plan for the faculty at this time. Some men decided to stay on or were called back to teach well into the golden years. It was not unheard of to have professors oblivious to things going on in the classroom, forgetting who students were, or even lapsing into German at times. The quality of education in certain subjects was lacking; this was coupled with high school students capitalizing on many less than ideal situations. Even in this rather large class, there was a very small group of men in the pastor track, only around five men took the full four years of Latin and continued on to NWC.

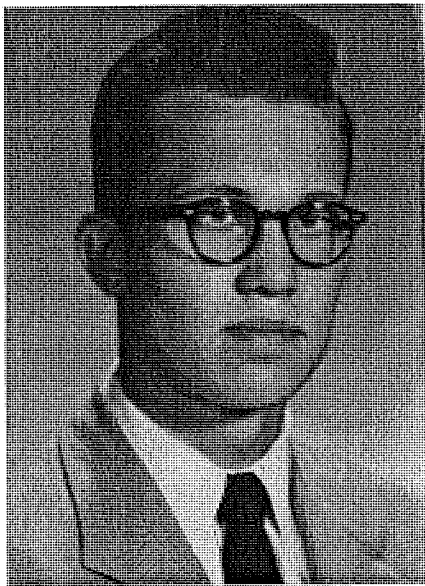
Duane was involved in singing, plays and basketball throughout his high school years. He loved to sing and he taught himself how to play guitar by ear. He and quite a few others had formed a group and used to entertain up on the hill. A group of about 6 guys and girls got together and performed, along with a little stand-up/slapstick type comedy. The music they sang was mostly mimicked from the radio and records. Duane really had a love for small group (4, 6 and 8 part) singing. During his junior year, he and three other men (Pape, Ponath, and Zuleger) formed a quartet that first performed at the Spring picnic in 1953. After that, they entertained at Student union parties, the talent shows and sang between acts during the senior class play. He and Dave Ponath sang together in quartets formed throughout their college and seminary years.

⁴ Information gleaned from various stories told by Alan and Rachael Stelljas, Ron Uhlhorn, and David Ponath.

Duane was also privileged to make the *Marluts* choir his senior year – this choir was normally only for the college students.

Baseball and basketball were the small town sports that all the people came to see. The local papers carried all the news and highlights. Duane was one of the 6'2" big men, but was far from being the star. This was back in the days of the set shot and Chuck Taylor high tops were considered cutting edge footwear. His basketball career ended with high school and he pursued other areas of interest in the future.

The plays at MLA were always a big production. This was another area of interest for Duane. He was a natural on the stage. He had little problem performing in front of crowds and loved to make people laugh and smile. This offered him great experience for the future in ministry. He even managed to get a leading role in their senior class play *Father Was A Housewife*.



High School Graduation - 1954

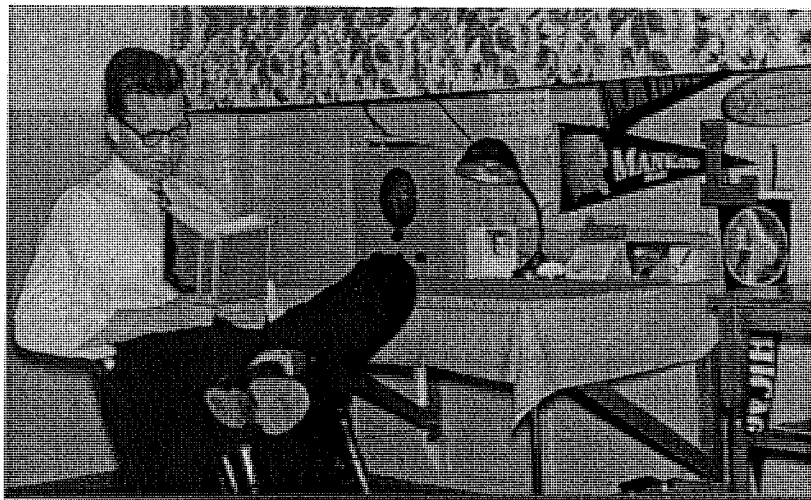
assignment from the Seminary.⁵

Duane graduated with a class of 72 on June 4th, 1954. His high school class picture lists these facts , “DUANE TOMHAVE – Mankato, MN – Hef...headed for the ministry...pet peeve; translating in Latin class...collects records...has his very own version of German...reads *Evangeline*.” This is a quote from the ‘54 class prophecy, “In Salt Lake City, we hear that Duane Tomhave is making quite a name for himself by converting the Mormons.” This never came true, but he was sent out west for his first

⁵ 1954 *Excelsior* – some high school information came from inserts and scrapbook material that my father saved.

The next spring, Duane arrived on Northwestern College campus in Watertown, Wisconsin. All the students were assigned rooms and they lived with eight guys (9th grade – Senior in college). The new students from MLA were eager to find their rooms when they arrived, but were informed by the dean that he couldn't help them right now because he was helping his wife can tomatoes. No, this didn't offer a good first impression. In fact, the next two years at NWC were quite trying on most of the students from Minnesota. Several different factors contributed to this feeling of frustration.

First, the Latin class at MLA did not compare to the one offered at Prep. The demands of the Latin course at NWC kept them in their rooms for hours at night trying to learn what they didn't learn from high school. Latin and German classes gave much frustration to many of the MLA guys. This was also a time of relatively small classes at NWC and it was striking that these



First year at Northwestern College

men were not encouraged as they should have been when each one was so valuable.

A second factor was that MLA did not have a football program and football was the big sport at NWC. Duane did not feel that college was a good time to try football

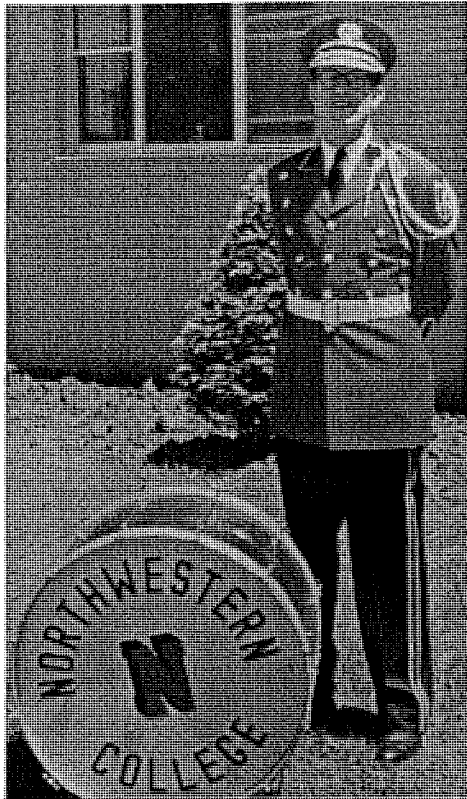
when many of the other guys had been playing for years in high school. He decided to focus his interests on other things.

A third big factor was that the NWC campus was going through some big changes. Some of the professors were getting quite old to teach and the relationship between professor and student wasn't what it could have been. Also, the buildings on the grounds were very old and a long overdue building program on that campus was being undertaken. Elna, his mother, reflected on her impression of the dormitory building. She noticed that it was shockingly old and in need of replacement and she even worried about leaving her son there.

Conversations with Pastor Dave Ponath and Pastor Ron Uhlhorn revealed that they had a tough first few years on campus and encouraged one another to continue on several occasions. Of course, all of this has to be set in the context of college students wondering what they wanted to be in the future. Spurred on by the comments of a professor after a bad science test, Duane was determined on one occasion to leave college during his sophomore year. He was going to return to Mankato and work at *Fischers*, a men's clothing store. The Lord had other plans in mind. He never did leave and the years got better as things got settled on campus. The next year, college students moved over to the new dorm, East Hall, and they were separated from the Prep students once and for all.

Duane was involved in many things throughout the college years. He was again in a quartet with Dave Ponath that sang all over town, at ladies groups, Sharps Corner or wherever people would lend an ear. This was one of his joys in his schooling years. He was also involved with the glee club serving as head and director for a few years. The choir at NWC was somewhat informal and volunteers were needed to help get things organized. He was one who helped organize tours and singing dates. He even was the one who got some gown caskets for

tour that were still being used until not too long ago. Duane also served as one of the choir soloist in various concerts.⁶



NWC band uniform and drum

By default, Duane started to play with the NWC marching band. The band director needed a bass drummer who could keep the beat. He was asked to sit in and play - if he could direct a choir he could keep a beat. Next thing he knew, he was in uniform and a regular member of the band. Banging on those pots and pans in mother's kitchen really ended up paying off. This was yet another instrument he taught himself to play.

Duane also took part in plays that were held on campus and was somewhat known as the poet laureate on campus. This is quote about him from an old *Black & Red*

- Campus- and - Classroom:

But don't pull a Tomhave! That man has talent; a voice that is as smooth as lanolized linseed oil, mellow as mushrooms, an eloquent tongue, and most significant of all, the fair muses have bequeathed to him the fair gift of poetry. But, try to get him to contribute any of his excess genius for the worthiest of causes, namely *Black and Red*, and he trembles with fright. His loquacity lacks audacity. Now, I realize that modesty sometimes gets the best of a very select few of us, but with Tomhave, I doubt it! You ask him what the trouble is, why he won't let us print his lilting odes and rousing rhymes, and the only excuse he can come up with is that he doesn't want his name in print. Why? So that the boys at Sem won't find excuse to take vengeance on him next year on Gemuetlicher Abend, in other words, he is a chicken. From what I hear, the attitude is excusable, but not practical. In compliance with the wishes of Mr. Duane Kenneth Tomhave, otherwise known as Hef, I will no more use the name Duane, nor Kenneth, nor Tomhave, nor Hef in the C & C - in this issue.⁷

⁶ Telephone interview with Pastor Dave Ponath.

⁷ Black and Red- C & C, page 210, 1958(?)

During his junior year at college, Duane went to Rochester to have corrective surgery on a problem he born with. From birth, his right eye was crossed and there was nothing at that time that could be done. The procedure in Rochester was still very much a pioneer surgery. Duane thought that the crossed eye might be a hindrance to him in his future ministry, so he decided to go ahead with whatever could be done. His eye was successfully straightened, but his vision was almost completely lost in the process. Even with corrective glasses, which he had to wear his entire life, the vision in his right eye was never improved or restored.



The final year in college was a big year in the life of Duane. The NWC quartet was asked to sing at a banquet in Fond du Lac at the Winnebago Academy. This would not be his last trip up north to the Academy. There were many women there who had entered into the two year emergency teaching course. Low and behold a certain student by the name of Janice Hanson caught his eye. In the weeks ahead, through mutual friends who organized a bowling outing, the two finally met and hit it off. Janice was a graduate from Northwestern Academy in Mobridge, South Dakota. They dated until they both graduated in 1958.

College Graduation - 1958

By senior year, he was focused on the ministry and looking forward to the years ahead at the Seminary. The Commencement issue of the *Black and Red* in 1958 gives a profile for each of the graduates.

DUANE KENNETH TOMHAVE

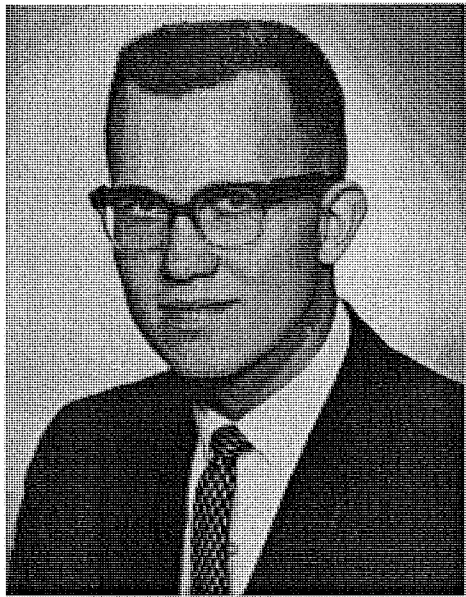
Mankato, MN

DMLC shipped us "Hef" four years ago as another of its fine productions, and since then his school has made use of his talents in many ways. The Male Chorus and Band both claim him as their president, the Prep and Collegiate Glee Clubs have been under his direction, and he serves as one-quarter of the Quartet (The Foghorn Four). His interests not only lie in the realm of music, however.

He holds the undisputed post of class poet laureate, has participated in intramural sports, and the Male Chorus tour members will tell you that President Tomhave's wit is exceeded only by his good looks. His personal charm has won him many a good friend, particularly in a sister institution (not Bethesda), while his fondness for Hebrew and its "interesting" prof insure him of a place at Sem next year.⁸

The fall of 1958 marked two huge events. Duane and Janice were engaged to be married and he made his entrance onto the Seminary campus for his final years of study. These were exciting years. Janice received a call to teach in Johnson, MN and taught there for two years. Their relationship was long distance and made them all the more eager for the summer of 1960, when they were married on June 5th.

The Seminary offered many of the same opportunities for Duane to use his musical talents. The quartet was still together and would sing wherever they were asked. The Seminary male chorus relied on the students to supply a director and hold rehearsals because the regular



Seminary Graduation - 1961

director (Kurt Eggert) could not be there for every practice. Duane was a student director, served as a soloist at major concerts and helped organize dates and tours, especially his final year.

The Seminary years are always a breath of fresh air after years of study toward a Bachelor of Arts degree in college. His focus was now totally on the ministry. The vicar year was optional in the early 60's and several decided to graduate in three years. After he had married,

he decided to take a call in 1961. In May of that same year, Duane received a call to Phoenix,

⁸ *Black and Red*, 1958 Commencement issue – pg. 40

Arizona. Very few received a call this far out of the Midwest. Two months later the young couple was blessed with the birth of their first child, a baby girl named Sandy.

The Phoenix Years

In August, the three Midwesterners headed out with all they owned to the state of Arizona. Jan recalls thinking that they were heading to a land of retirees and people with health problems. Both were rather ignorant of this area of the United States and had never ventured this far from home.

They arrived in Phoenix and lived in a small apartment type house across the street from some members. Jan was relieved to learn that this was a temporary situation, because this little dwelling was bug ridden. Their house was being built in a new housing project out of town at *Surrey Hills*. It was ready for occupancy on October 1st of that same year.

On August 27th, 1961, Pastor Duane Tomhave was installed as the first resident pastor of Emmaus Lutheran Church. I recall my father telling the story of his installation. The District President was Walter Diehl and he had preached for Pastor Hartman's installation the week before and proceeded to call my dad, "brother Hartman" for his installation. Another pastor forgot his robe, so none of pastors involved wore robes either. No one had the heart to tell Pastor Diehl what he had done, but my dad used to joke that he was never really a pastor because his name was not used during his installation.

On September 3rd, there were fourteen in attendance for his first sermon. None of his books had arrived because they were shipped 3rd class, so he preached on the book of Acts for the first month. The core group grew quickly and it was a booming area. Those first months offered a fairly free schedule and limited responsibilities. Here is an excerpt from a letter written to his parents in 1961:

Dear Mom and Dad,

I talked Jan into typing my sermon over, so I can take the time to write a letter. Hope I can fill you in without repeating what Jan has already written you. There are a lot of details that I can't begin to write...

Last Sunday, there were 14, including Sandy at our Service. Of course Labor Day weekend took a few of our fine families away. We are going to have a meeting next Wednesday evening to begin organization. We'll have to choose a constitution committee, etc., etc...

There's so much work to be done, but we will have to tread slowly. Our temporary chairman belonged to our congregation in Beaver Dam, WI, so that helps. But everyone else is Scout crazy. The superintendent of Sunday school is a troop leader of 40 boys. But he has a very wonderful family and they are our most devotional people. They have Sunday school on the bus with their kids even when they are on the bus traveling home to Pennsylvania. That was last weekend. Will have to overlook that issue for awhile until the time is ripe. When the proper time comes, we will try to start Pioneers - he'd make a swell leader. When you have only about 6 families and no constitution, you have to go light - can't expect everything overnight. I think that's the most important thing that I have learned...

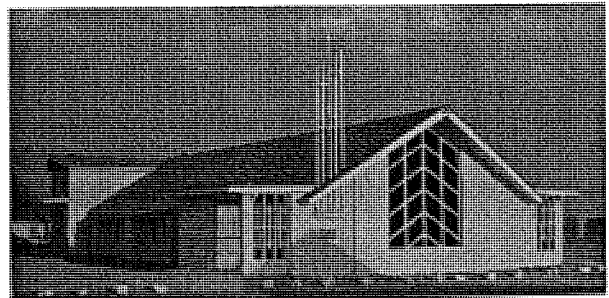
Seems we loaf a lot since I have little to do except bulletins, sermons and canvassing. When the house is ready, that'll be the end of that. Church work suffers now that I don't have books and files, etc. Can't really start anything...⁹

This free schedule didn't last long. In December of that same year, the congregation was officially organized with a constitution.

On October 14th, 1962, they broke ground on 2.9 acres of land for the new chapel. They had some financial assistance for the \$14, 821.98 piece of land with one building from the Board for Home Missions.



Old Chapel



New Chapel

⁹ Excerpts taken from a hand written letter to his parents in Minnesota on September 7, 1961.

They had been worshipping in an old remodeled building that was less than ideal. A single ½ inch pipe running a quarter mile connected them to the city water supply. The congregation was excited to build.

In March of 1963, the church was built and dedicated on the 24th. This church, with a few additions, continues to serve the congregation's needs today. The church, with furnishings, was built for \$36, 200. It was built without a bathroom, so the people had to walk over to the old building and use the one there. They were limited in what they could afford in that first building. In the same year, Duane was asked to serve on the East Fork Lutheran Nursery Board. He served on that board until he moved in 1969.

This position was his first exposure to world missions. ¹⁰ The nursery was a place that took care of abandoned or orphaned Apache children. At times, in the late 50's, the nursery was used as a sort of day care or an option for parents who didn't really want the responsibility of children. The Synod decided to close the nursery because it felt it was not their primary ministry to care for children. It was the state's responsibility to offer that care. The Arizona district still saw a need and validity to the program and started it up again using their own funds. The district was also granted the opportunity to ask for assistance from the ladies' mission societies.

This is where Pastor Tomhave entered the picture. He helped with the advertising and promotion of the nursery. In 1963, a needed new addition was built on to the nursery and Duane was responsible for the purchasing and delivery of the new furnishings for the nursery. The ladies of Emmaus helped send out thousands of the letters for the mailing of the *East Fork*

¹⁰ Information obtained in a telephone interview with Pastor Charles Found, Arizona District.



Inspecting the new Apache Nursery addition

Wednesday with a service tonight. Still have to finish off the sermon. Our attendance on Wednesday hasn't been too bad considering our membership. It was poor at first, but is increasing a bit. Sunday attendance is really a joy lately. We are in the 70 & 80 bracket every Sunday. Almost all our members come every Sunday. As we get larger, I suppose that won't always be the case.¹¹

In 1965, his duties were split as he helped out another church starting out in Phoenix as their first pastor. St. Thomas had regular services held by 1966 and a vicar, Ronald Semro, was sent to help with these duties. At this same time, Duane was asked to serve on the Arizona-California District Mission Board from 1966 until he left in 1969. These were busy years indeed! St. Thomas called a graduate to serve them full time in 1967. Pastor William Meier was that graduate, who still serves the congregation to date. Little did either pastor know that years later they would work together for over 13 years on the Board for World Missions.

In February of 1969, the average attendance was well over 100 and Emmaus went self-supporting. In May of that year, Duane received and accepted a call to St. Paul's in Saginaw,

Nursery Cradle Board. This was a periodic update letter and kept the contributors nationwide up to date on what was happening on the reservation. The nursery continued to function until 1993.

Emmaus was continuing to grow:

Dear Mom and Dad,

March 4, 1964

Have to take a time out even though it's

¹¹ Typed letter written on Church letterhead to parents in Minnesota on March 14, 1964 – first paragraph.

Michigan. Two more daughters were added in Phoenix, Bonni and Vicki, and the family of five headed back to the Midwest.

The Saginaw Years

Jan remembers the transition from a small church to a large church with a school and faculty was quite a shock. The Sanctuary was undergoing major renovations, so the church was meeting in the school. That was where the new pastor was installed. Unfortunately, the day of

installation was also the day that the first man landed on the moon. Many of the people that would have normally been welcoming their new pastor were gathered around a TV that had been in set up the fellowship area. It was an odd welcome indeed!

Jan recalls the situation when they arrived. They had no place for the new pastor's family to stay. All of their belongings were put into a garage and then they had to make arrangements for something a little more permanent. The decision was made to have the pastor buy his own home and within a few months they were settled in a home just down the street from the school.

**St. Paul's Lutheran
Installs New Pastor**

Pastor Duane K. Tomhave will be installed as associate pastor of St. Paul's Evangelical Lutheran Church at 7:30 p.m. Sunday in the parish center auditorium, 2745 W. Genesee St.

Pastor Richard A. Giesmer will install Pastor Tomhave. Pastor Philip K. Press of Pigeon will deliver the sermon. Saginaw area pastors will assist in the installation ceremony.

Pastor Tomhave comes to Saginaw from Phoenix, Ariz., where he has served for eight years. During his ministry there he established two mission congregations of the Wisconsin Synod.

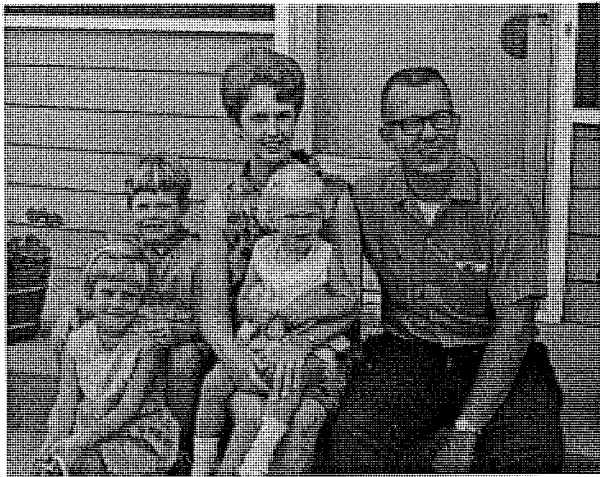
He graduated from Northwestern College, Watertown, Wis., with a B.A. degree and from Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary, Mequon, Wis., in 1961, with a B.D. degree.

Pastor Tomhave and his wife, Janice, are temporarily living at 224 Bay St. The couple have three daughters: Sandra, S. Ronald, and Vicki.

Following Sunday's installation service there will be a reception for Pastor and Mrs. Tomhave in the parish center.

—Saginaw News Photo
Pastor Tomhave

Duane's presence was a welcome change.¹² He had a young personality that the church had not seen in quite some time. The congregation had been through the CLC controversy that led a long time pastor away. Also, the congregation had been under the strong willed leadership



The young Tomhave family

of the Eckerts (father and son team) for 40 years. The young people and the MLS students were beginning to attend Peace and Bethany churches in Saginaw. St. Paul's was viewed as the old congregation. The middle ages in the congregation were disappearing. There was also some internal bickering with a new generation of leaders coming up and a

pastorate that was used to making the big decisions. This is the situation that Duane entered into. Pastor Gensmer was the older pastor and had many of the Eckert ideas on ministry entrenched in his practice. Each pastor was expected to be at every meeting and every function and the head pastor was the one that did all the funerals and so on. Duane said little, but started to witness a real need for some change.

Pastor James Tiefel reflected on what Pastor Tomhave faced and what he also brought to the congregation. (In 1976, Tiefel was assigned from the Seminary to replace Pastor Gensmer. Earlier that year, Duane was picking up Pastor Gensmer at his home and found him dead from a heart attack in his kitchen.) The greatest quality that Duane possessed was his infectious personality. He was an excited and happy individual and brought this to the activities of the

¹² Facts on what Duane Tomhave brought to the St. Paul's congregation were offered in a telephone interview with Professor James Tiefel, who served with Duane for 2 ½ years as his associate.

congregation. The mood of the congregation began to change and lighten up a bit from the stuffiness that had been prevalent for so many years.

A second thing that Duane was instrumental at doing was raising the congregation's sights toward ministry. Not only to the pastors and teachers, but also to outreach and education. The salaries were really low. The pastor informed the congregation that they had to work out a housing allowance that didn't come out of their salary for the new pastor fresh out of the Seminary. The congregation was slowly making progress in the right direction.

A third thing that Pastor Tomhave gave to the congregation working alongside the new graduate was delegation. The pastors worked it out to split their duties instead of going to everything, as was the custom before. Another push was to leave responsibility with the laymen to organize and carry things out. This was much needed to educate and involve the next generation of leaders.

Pastor Tomhave was also instrumental in encouraging the youth to think about and study for the ministry. Before this time, Saginaw was going through somewhat of a dry spell of encouraging pastors and teachers into the ministry. Duane used to personally encourage, guide and strongly recruit those who he thought had the gifts. Jan remembers having the pastor track guys from the congregation over for pizza when they came home on break to show slides of NWC and the Seminary. Even little efforts like these can have an impact. Here is a letter from a pastor now in the ministry that was encouraged by his pastor for years.

Pastor Tomhave,

Just a personal thought or two - 10 years ago this spring on a Saturday morning we had a chat in your office at St. Paul's School. If memory serves, that was on the contingencies for my reenrollment at NWC. I don't believe I ever properly thanked you for your words of advice and encouragement on that day. I'd like to do so now.

There were many periods of indecision and doubt during the rest of my college and seminary years, even up to and including assignment day. In fact,

there are still days when I wonder if indeed I was better suited for career as a "furniture mule" at Stevens Van Lines. Those days are greatly outnumbered by days on which I'm sure that this is where God wants Lin and me at this particular time. Starting a church from scratch and all the raw mission work involved has been a genuine blessing for both of us in our Christian faith.

Looking back, there are many people whom I'm indebted to. Their words and exemplary lives were surely the Lord's way of directing me to the ministry. You are prominent in that group of people. For such guidance I thank a patient and gracious God. And I'm very grateful for the way in which He used you to help me.

Greetings from our household to yours!

Sincerely, Mark ¹³

In 1970, the Tomhaves added number four to the family with the addition of a son, Douglas. Along with the demands of his family and a large congregation, Duane was also involved as a member of the Martin Luther Home Board of Directors from 1970-79. He played a big part in the planning and purchase of the Lutheran Home in the Saginaw area. Here is a letter from the secretary of the Board, commenting on what Duane contributed.

Dear Duane,

Something very important has happened in our Martin Luther Memorial Home Association! I refer to the acquiring and dedicating of the Martin Luther-Saginaw Home.

To my way of thinking, a great deal of the success for this accomplishment lies in the hands of two men. I refer to none other than Duane Tomhave and John Voss. These two men have been nothing short of terrific in the offering of their time and efforts to plan, see to, and carry out a myriad of details. Without their sound judgment and competent guidance, I am certain that many difficulties would have arisen which would have brought chaos to the otherwise smooth "take-over" of the former Heritage Home.

I merely want you to know, Duane, that I for one appreciate all that you have done most sincerely. I know too, that others feel the same as I do; -members of the Board, Mr. Eberhardt, and even members of the Saginaw Home staff. The fact that you have many other weighty responsibilities makes your contribution to the Association just that much more meaningful and valuable. It is a distinct privilege to be able to work side by side with a man like you on the Board of Directors. Thanks again most heartily for all you have done.

¹³ A letter written by Pastor Mark Birkholz to his former pastor and teacher in Saginaw, Michigan. It was received on March 14th, 1986, while Duane was serving the synod in world missions. He received several letters throughout the years thanking him for all his encouragements.

With fond fraternal greetings,

Bob ¹⁴

Pastor Tomhave was also the circuit pastor for the Saginaw/Tawas Circuit of the Northern Conference of the Michigan District from 1976-79. He was also on the WELS Board for Parish Education from 1973-77. In 1979, Duane received a call to a mission congregation in Genesee Depot, WI.

This call, of the many received over the last 9 years, really pulled him away from his current ministry. These were some of the thoughts and considerations that were going on in his head as he deliberated on this call.

It has caused me considerable wrestling. A number of calls have come during the ten years I have been at St. Paul's, Saginaw, none of which have allured me as much as this one has. Here I have it made - a house 1 ½ blocks from our grade school, MLS 8 blocks away; a most cooperative and well-equipped congregation with which to work. There would be no permanent housing, no church or school, and the probability of hauling kids to both grade school and high school every day. But these are personal considerations. It's the work that decides where the Lord calls and where a pastor serves... There is something about the big congregation that makes the ruts and roots grow deep. Far too many pastors find these calls the end of the line and remain 20 or 30 years or more. I am in the comfortable position of being happy whichever place I would chose... I'm looking for signs from heaven. If you have any extra signs around, I'd be happy to hear any guiding words from you... The Lord will guide us all to the decisions that are in the best interests of the church.¹⁵

Genesee Depot was not a typical mission. When Pastor Tomhave decided to accept the call, he offered St. Paul's these reasons for his decision.

Dear Members of St. Paul's:

By this time you have perhaps heard that I asked the congregation at its voters' meeting on December 17th to grant me a release from my present call so that I might follow another call from a new mission congregation at Genesee Depot, WI. Since so many of you cannot personally hear the details, it is well that you be informed by letter.

¹⁴ Typewritten letter Pastor Robert Baer – Secretary to the Martin Luther Memorial Home Association – sent to thank Duane Tomhave for his service. The letter was dated October 30, 1973.

¹⁵ A typewritten letter from Duane Tomhave to Pastor George Boldt requesting some advice on November 27th, 1978.

When a pastor or teacher receives a call to serve elsewhere, we all are reminded that we are part of a larger Christian family. The Lord supplies His church with workers according to its needs. Obviously, we all know the needs of St. Paul's, and they are many. I weighed them carefully, especially the unique dual pastorate in which Pastor Tiefel and I have found such harmony.

That group of Christians which has come together very recently live in an area about 10 mile and 20 miles west of Waukesha and Milwaukee respectively. 90 people attended their first ground service in an old school classroom in the Sunday after Easter in 1978. They have since rented the basement of an office building for services and Sunday School. The congregation has organized as Reformation Ev. Lutheran Church of Genesee Depot and Wales, WI on October 31, 1978. Already they number over 60 communicants, hardly a typical pioneer field. Most of the people in this fast growing area commute to their jobs in surrounding cities, and many are unchurched

Temporarily, the congregation is being served by a professor from Wisconsin Lutheran High School in Milwaukee. Since such swift growth demands experienced pastoral leadership to knit together, plan, locate, build church and school, and gather in new people, the Lord led that congregation and District Mission Board to call one of your pastors. It would like to benefit from some of that experience you have given him.

For a month I struggled to make a God-pleasing decision. There were many personal reasons for remaining at St. Paul's: the wonderful people, the convenience of grade school and high school for my children, the superbly equipped church, school, office and our home. But all these must finally fall into the background when weighed against the needs of the work.

Many of you have daughters and sons or close friends who have the privilege of serving in the public ministry. If any congregation understands how calls in the church operate it should be St. Paul's, a congregation which has an abundance of full-time church workers among its membership. One of the conditions of that calling is a willingness to leave home, friends, and personal desires behind to serve the Lord where his church has needs.

The Lord also knows your needs in Saginaw. Some of you wondered 10 years ago what you were getting in a 33 year old pastor who would leave Phoenix, Arizona for Michigan winters. Some of you may still be wondering about a pastor who would leave St. Paul's and start with no home, no church, no property, and no school. But often we just can't say, "Here am I, Lord, send somebody else." Therefore, since He is sending me, I want your prayers in my new work, which is really your work. I am looking forward to watching the Lord's blessings unfold in that field work. I am looking forward to watching the Lord's blessings unfold in that field also as He gathers people around His Word and Sacraments. Support from congregations like St. Paul's to the Synod's mission treasury, to the Church Extension Fund, in sending its sons and daughters into worker training, and now even in sharing one of its pastors, make this all happen.

If you keep your eyes on the ministry of the Word, which endures forever, rather than on the men who hold the position of pastors, you will understand. Several years ago the Lord answered your call when your capable associate,

Pastor Tiefel, came into our midst. May the Lord soon grant you another faithful and compatible shepherd to join him in the work among you which I have so much enjoyed.

Your servant in Christ,

Duane K. Tomhave¹⁶

The pastor's annual report, the last report written to the congregation by Pastor Tomhave, reflects the positive direction of the church in several areas. Many of the crises previously mentioned on the arrival of the new pastor in 1969, were now on the upswing. It was not the pastor, but the Word that gave such fruit. These are his closing words in that report: "It is that Word of God at work in you who believe that causes St. Paul's to continue as a strong and influential congregation... Suffice it to say that you made my work a joy because *When you received the Word of God, you accepted it not as the Word of men, but as it actually is, the Word of God...*"¹⁷

The Genesee Depot Years

In Late February and early March, the Tomhaves packed up and headed west to the small town of Wales, Wisconsin, where a 3-bedroom duplex awaited their arrival. The two oldest daughters remained at MLS to finish the year, while the two grade schoolers had to switch mid year. This was the beginning of the 40+ miles every day that mom and dad had to drive to keep the kids in a Christian day school. This commute continued for the next six years.

The congregation installed Pastor Tomhave soon after the move on the afternoon of March 11th, 1979. The service took place in the basement of the Dave Even Williams Professional Building. The church was packed, but it didn't take much to fill up a room of that size. For the next couple years, the routine of setting up and taking down folding chairs became

¹⁶ Typed letter to St. Paul's congregation from their released pastor, Duane Tomhave. Written on December 20th, 1978.

¹⁷ Closing paragraph to February addition of the *Cornerstone* newsletter in 1979, Pastor's annual Report.

the norm. Now Duane had to make the transition from a large church with excellent facilities to

Reformation to install pastor

Reformation Evangelical Lutheran Church, the Lutheran mission church in the Genesee-Wales area is proud to announce the installation of its first full time pastor, the Rev. Duane K. Tomhave.

He is a graduate of Northwestern College Watertown Wis. and Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary, Mequon. He and his wife Janice have four children, age eight to 17. He is 42.

Rev. Tomhave has served several other churches and missions throughout the country.

Installation will take place Sunday, May 11 at 2:30 p.m. at the church, located in the David Even Williams Professional Building in Genesee Depot. Refreshments will be served after the formalities.

The Tomhave family is now living at 178 Pembroke Way, Wales.



Rev. Duane Tomhave

Reformation holds services every Sunday at 10 a.m., followed at 10:30 by Sunday School and adult Bible class.

There will also be mid-week Lenten services at 7 p.m. every Wednesday.

a mission church with little to none. His experience with mission churches in Arizona really helped.

The immediate goal of the growing congregation was to build. Land purchase, parsonage and worship facilities were all part of the plans. Seven acres of land were purchased in short order on the corner of Highway D & E. The parsonage was built and dedicated on one end of the property by 1980. On April 22, 1981 the groundbreaking ceremony took place on the other end of the property for the

church. This date was the third anniversary of the first service of Reformation and there were

175 people in attendance for the ceremony.

November 15th, 1981 was the dedication Sunday for the new worship facility of Reformation Lutheran Church. The total cost of the 4300 square foot building was \$250,000. The three year old congregation moved into their new structure with approximately 250 baptized members in 75 families. The Lord really blessed the efforts of His church through the Gospel in this area.

In 1980, Pastor Tomhave was asked to serve on the WELS Committee on Youth Ministry for one year, but that term of service was cut short. At the 46th biennial convention, he was

elected as the WELS Board for World Missions Secretary and as a member of the Executive Committee for Central Africa. He served that board from 1981-84. Also, during the Genesee Depot years, he was given an opportunity to help with Milwaukee Institutional Ministries at the Ethan Allen minimum security prison for boys. Pastor Tomhave assisted the chaplin there to witness to boys who were involved in serious crime at a young age.

In 1984, Pastor Tate Sauer retired from his position as Executive Secretary to the Board for World Missions. Nominations for his replacement were received from all over the Synod. A concern of many was that the Executive Secretary should have some world mission ministry experience. Even though he didn't have the field experience, Duane received many nominations. Some of the reasons are listed in letters sent to the nomination committee.

My last duty before taking off to Nigeria is to submit some names as candidates for the position of Executive Secretary of the Board for World Missions, Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod.

They are:

Duane K. Tomhave
Ronald F. Freier
Richard E. Lauersdorf

Since all are presently serving on the Board for World Missions there is hardly any need to add "pertinent information" concerning them...Service on the board gives all three candidates, in my opinion, a good insight into the work which will be required as well as some experience as to its implementation. All have already given evidence of their interest in world missions through their service on the World Board.

May the Lord bless your deliberations!

Sincerely yours,
E. H. Wendland¹⁸

Many other letters of recommendation were sent to the nominations committee and the call for the executive secretary position did not come to Duane first. The divine call seeks the man and in late July, 1984, the call was extended to Pastor Tomhave and this was his reaction.

¹⁸ Typewritten letter to Pastor Tomhave from E.H. Wendland concerning his nomination on Nov. 22, 1983.

Dear Brothers:

The call you issued to me last evening, in the fear of the Lord, to serve as executive secretary of the board is humbly acknowledged. These past months of calling to fill this office have been turmoil to me as I hoped each man called would be able to serve in this position. It seems at times as if the matter has been considered several times already as I encouraged others to ask the right questions and find the necessary answers. It was with great reluctance that I served as vacancy representative of the BWM Executive Committee in the chair of those for whom I have always had utmost respect, Pastors Hoenecke and Sauer. This brief experience has also given me a taste of the awesome and varied demands made in this unique ministry. It differs in so many ways from the parish pastorate we all know so much better.

That the Lord should now direct you to offer this highest privilege to serve him and our church is staggering to me. World mission work has only become an intimate part of my ministry for the past three years. I am so inexperienced. Yet people at VBS tell me today that my eyes light up when I talk about the challenge. Apparently I cannot hide the fact that my heart has been primed by the gospel over the years to be a part of the worldwide mission if that is the will of the Lord and my fellow Christians. My first attitude is that it is going to be a very difficult call to turn down.

The coming weeks will be a special opportunity to hear the counsel from trusted advisors. It will also be a time of wrestling in prayer and asking for divine guidance. Our congregation will meet to consider with me this call after the service on Sunday, August 19. My answer will then be given. Add your prayers to mine that the Lord make known the outcome that he desires in the best interests of kingdom work.

Cordially in Christ, Duane K. Tomhave¹⁹

It didn't take long to decide on the direction of his ministry, in less than a month, Pastor Tomhave announced to his congregation on August 19th that he had accepted the call to serve the Synod's World Board. The letter explaining his acceptance sheds light on how he came to his decision, the extent of his responsibility and how he saw the Lord's guidance through it all.

Beloved Members of Reformation:

Perhaps by now most of you know that your pastor, who has served Reformation the past 5 ½ years, has accepted a call elsewhere. The voters assembly on Sunday, August 19, at a special meeting granted me a peaceful release to become the executive secretary of the Wisconsin Synod Board for World Missions. It is always a difficult decision to break the warm ties that bind pastor and people together. But the Lord has laid before me a challenge that I feel

¹⁹ Typewritten letter to Chairman William Meier, WELS BWM, by Duane K. Tomhave on July 31, 1984.

strongly I must follow. You have been a part of the preparation that led me into this task.

For the past three years I have been actively involved in African missions while also serving as your pastor. The Synod has foreign missions in Zambia, Malawi, Cameroon and Nigeria on that continent. Other world fields in which we work are Columbia, Mexico, Puerto Rico, Taiwan, Indonesia, Hong Kong, Japan, India, Sweden & Norway, Apacheland in Arizona and possibly a new start in Brazil. A full-time executive secretary of this program, your pastor will administer, publicize and encourage this far-flung effort. The position will also involve much hosting, travelling and counseling. Jan will be at my side in many of these personal contacts with missionary families. Many days and especially weekends are spent in lecturing and preaching. It is a somewhat staggering responsibility but the Lord also brings unusual blessings in difficult spiritual service. We place ourselves in his hands trusting him for protection and strength. We also need your prayers...I will continue to do your work only on a wider scale as I channel your mission offerings in response to the Savior's commission to go into all the world. You have been a major part of my life and that of my family. I hope my ministry in the Word has been of benefit to you...

Fondly in Christ,

Duane K. Tomhave²⁰

The World Mission Years

The transition to the World Mission office was a quick one. The Tomhaves moved to Brookfield, Wisconsin into a Synod owned home. The installation of the new executive secretary took place on October 10, 1984 at Trinity Lutheran Church in Waukesha, Wisconsin. The preacher at that service was Pastor Tate Sauer (the man Duane was replacing), Pastor William Meier, as the installing officiant (chairman of BWM), and assisting was a former executive secretary, Pastor Edgar Hoenecke. Retired Pastor Hoenecke offered the new executive secretary these words of guidance and encouragement in a letter written to Duane.

Dear Brother Duane,

The good news of your acceptance of the call as the Executive Secretary of our World Board reached me just yesterday.

Permit me to join all the other members of our board in thanking God for your decision! This is not because we, finally, again have a leader, although this is also important. It is much more because we have been given a leader who has shown over the past years a love and concern for the cause which is so important

²⁰ Typewritten letter to Reformation Congregation by Pastor Tomhave to explain call situation on August 28, 1984.

to our Savior that he made it the subject of his farewell to this world, as he ascended.

In the constant awareness of these, His farewell words, you may assume your duties with implicit confidence:

1 – what you are to supervise & promote for the victorious Lord is at his order! “*Go ye into all the world*”, he said.

2 - what you must understand in weakness, aware of your shortcomings, you are to do in His power & under his authority!

These considerations sustained me in 1955, almost 30 years ago, when the church placed this trust on me. Tate Sauer also loved to repeat, “*The Lord did it all!*”

Go, then, as you have been called and commit your large goals and your daily decisions in office to Him in simple trust and prayer. “How much more will He give the Holy Spirit to them that ask Him!”

Our prayers and willing hands will support you always!

In Christ, your loving brother,

Edgar Hoenecke²¹



Sauer – Tomhave – Hoenecke

In his new position, the first order of business was to ask, listen and learn. The first thing that was planned was an every field visit to take place in the first years of his service. Twelve overseas trips in his first 3 ½ years really filled the calendar quickly. Janice was given the privilege to accompany him on many of these trips. There were two big reasons why Duane was to take these trips. First he was to learn the fields. Next, he was to take pictures, slides and videos to promote the mission fields in the United States.

A primary part of the new Executive Secretary's role was to oversee the missions, but what became a sizeable role was to communicate these fields to the whole synod. Duane became an avid picture taker and later video master. He

²¹ Handwritten letter penned by Edgar Hoenecke to the new executive secretary, Duane Tomhave on August 24, 1984.



In Africa with cameras in hand

presented mission festivals and preached at churches and LWMS rallies over the Synod. This alone was a major contribution that Duane brought to this division of the Synod. Another thing that Duane did was to become a sort of world missions chronicler with his archives of slides, videos, mission newsletters

and his submissions to the Synod's printed materials. His love for reading was a big asset in the area of world missions. He read incredible amounts of materials and became quite knowledgeable in the areas of world politics, religion and economies.

The rest of the Tomhave world mission years will be offered through excerpts of the newsletter that he started in the World Mission division to keep the missionaries and the Board informed on all activities. My dad presented me with a folder of thirteen years of this newsletter called *TEAMWORD* and said that if I wanted to know what he has done in his service to the World Board to start here. The first issue of *TEAMWORD* was printed in October of 1984 and offered the opening thoughts of the new man at the helm.

This newsletter is getting off the ground with the approval of BWM. It is intended to reach you periodically with the general information from the board's viewpoint. It will avoid details that are best handled at the executive committee level. Other than that it has no bounds and its columns will be filled with items of general interest, we hope, to our far-flung mission staffs and families. The editor will be the new executive secretary. He wants to express publicly his appreciation for the many comments and words of blessing received as he assumes his new position...

In Colossians 1:6 the Apostle Paul was excited about faith and love and hope that springs up in the hearts of God's saints. He writes, "All over the world

this gospel is producing fruit and growing, just as it has been doing among you since the day you heard it and understood God's grace in all its truth." That kind of enthusiasm also flows freely in the BWM office. It underwrites every form we prepare, every letter we write, every budget we analyze, and every effort we extend. We are conscious of the team that represents Christ on behalf of WELS in countries around the world. (I can say that after just spending my first full day in preparing World Mission Building Fund Requests for the BoT!) We have chosen the heading *TEAMWORD* to indicate that all of us work together, each with our special God-given responsibilities. It is the Word of God that is central in motivating and strengthening us. We share our faith also by means of the communicated and printed Word in dozens of languages. On this page in the future we will hope to have world mission stories, anecdotes, experiences and information as it relates to our teamwork...

That is enough for one sitting. What a blessing is the word processor and a secretary that swiftly takes shorthand! What an even greater privilege it is to be involved full-time on behalf of God's people in the greatest work in the world. Naturally, you agree. May the Lord grant you so much joy in teamwork that the burdens disappear.²²

Money was not always plentiful for our World mission efforts and the first years as the executive secretary offered many budgetary challenges and many ideas could not be implemented. In 1986 the reports read:

As of April 30, ten months into the fiscal year, our division is spending at 101.2% of budget. Japan is at 123.5%, Hong Kong at 115.6% and Cibeque at 123.3%. Other accounts besides those seasonally adjusted are at or below budget. There's less than a month to hold the line on 1985/86 expenditures...²³

The operating budget is hurting especially at this time of year with a deficit of over 1.2 million. Please hold the line and look for outdated programs to phase out so that we can move into new and promising work. Ask yourselves, "Why are we doing this? Is it productive? Is there a better way? Could we get along without it? Can we by cutting corners help to fund other missionaries elsewhere?" We assume that you all do that regularly, but just in case one of you doesn't...²⁴

A serious matter right now is our 1988/89 budget. We are attempting to underexpend by \$127,000 division wide. Not only are we missing that mark at seven months, but we are projected to overspend by an additional \$107,000 at fiscal year's end, or \$235,000 total. Tighten the belts, cut the frills (?), hold the line, but, of course, keep doing the work!!! I know the contradiction in what I'm

²² Excerpts from *TEAMWORD* – October issue, 1984.

²³ Excerpts from *TEAMWORD* – May issue, 1986.

²⁴ Excerpts from *TEAMWORD* – October issue, 1986.

asking, but only you can make a difference in those areas that are under your control. We need to turn this around together.²⁵

These budget crunches made it hard to expand and grow and it always seemed to come at the expense of another program or opportunity. Yet the world mission fields did see some growth. It seems that the Lord was teaching the board and missionaries how to assess the fields and how to get the gospel out in any way they could. The Lord would go on to bless our world missions with opportunities and money to double their efforts in the years ahead. These were the lean years of deficits and cutbacks. Many difficult decisions and cuts had to be made by all the divisions of the Synod.

The presentations, pictures and PR work that Duane was called to do helped get the word out. He was good at showing various churches and the Synod at large how the Lord had blessed our efforts abroad and showed them the need for a concentrated effort from everyone in the area of world missions. The executive secretary was also given the privilege of delivering a major paper to Evangelical Lutheran Confessional Forum, October 17-18, 1988 in Mankato, Minnesota. This paper, *Synods of Mission-Minded Confessional Lutherans* gave the history and challenges of world missions - along with the efforts of the ELS - and called for a new world conference to bring these world missions together. This paper ended up being printed in the *Wisconsin Lutheran Quarterly* in the spring of 1989.²⁶

The 1990's saw many changes in the world mission scene. The March, 1990 issue of *TEAMWORD* reveals that history was made when the wall came down and Professor Brug, as part of the CICR, visited our brothers in East Germany with no difficulty. Plans to work more closely with that Church body were already in the works. Also, the preliminary paperwork in

²⁵ Excerpts From *TEAMWORD* – March issue, 1989.

²⁶ The paper *Synods of Mission-Minded Confessional Lutherans* is included in the addendum.

reference to the Confessional Evangelical Lutheran Conference (CELC) were sent to the different mission fields.

In the near future, overseas missionaries will be receiving a near final draft of a document worked out by representatives of WELS and ELS with input from missions' administrators. It is not intended to immediately put an umbrella over every world field, but the opportunity will be made available to all who desire fellowship opportunities either in person or on paper. We will ask you to study it and react after you have received the document.²⁷

The CELC was an idea to give the maturing church bodies abroad a chance to come together in fellowship opportunities and also to encourage the newer and younger bodies along in their maturity process. Duane was on the ground floor of planning the conference and was one of the key figures for determining what church bodies were ready to participate in this huge venture. The World Mission office with the aid of our brothers serving in Germany made the travel arrangements and set up the conference location for the first big meeting.

Twelve church bodies of our affiliation have accepted invitations to participate in the Constituting Convention of the worldwide Confessional Evangelical Lutheran Conference in Oberwesel, Germany, near Frankfurt on April 27-29, 1993.²⁸



View over the Rhine - CELC Conference

This Conference took place with great success. The church bodies involved and individuals privileged to attend this international conference were all encouraged and strengthened. Many positive things came out of this conference and CELC would meet

²⁷ Excerpts from *TEAMWORD* – March issue, 1990.

²⁸ Excerpts from *TEAMWORD* – December issue, 1992.

again in three years. Duane was given the honor and privilege of opening the conference with the first essay that he had written entitled *God's Word is Our Great Heritage*.²⁹ A special video was made to show the highlights of the conference and to publicize its success.³⁰ This conference was an exciting time for Duane and he sent a fax back during the second day to share that excitement.

It's a beautiful day on the banks of the Rhine river, which is busy all day with barges, trains on both sides and roads. We are high on a hill, next to a castle, at a youth hostel. It's like a dorm, with about 100 rooms. The meeting area is modern and beautiful, a perfect place for this wonderful conference. Last evening we heard from half the church bodies represented. It was exciting, like a miniature Pentecost... My essay is behind – the first one yesterday. Now I can enjoy the days and take pictures, pictures, pictures...

We are enjoying the social time with nationals from Puerto Rico, Mexico, Zambia, Malawi, Japan, and also the Swedes, Norwegians, Fins and Germans. It is in full-blooming spring here. German birds seem to sing louder in the morning. Three splendid and mild, sunny days have greeted us so far. This historic conference – the first of its kind, is very uplifting. What a blessing God has given our church through its mission fields. Share this with our kids and parents. We are all fine. Duane³¹

This conference was one of Duane's highlights during his time of World Mission service. He was able to attend the next meeting of the CELC held in Parador Vistamar, Quebradillas, Puerto Rico from April 23-25, 1996. This was the second to last trip he was able to make before his health began to deteriorate.

In 1994, the BWM was proud to announce the number 100. 63 missionaries, 21 teachers, 5 nurses, 2 vicars and 9 volunteers equal 100 people in God's service abroad.³² In 1994, there was also a call for a total restructuring of the Board that took place to balance the responsible of the various fields. The Executive Secretary was now to be called the Administrator for World

²⁹ This paper which was written and delivered by Duane Tomhave, *God's Word is Our Great Heritage* is included in the addendum found at the end of this paper.

³⁰ A small video clip of Duane Tomhave delivering his paper at the opening of the CELC conference is included for your viewing.

³¹ Fax sent by Duane Tomhave on April 28, 1993 from Oberwesel, Germany and the CELC to the World Mission office – to be shared with family.

Missions. In his position, Duane had to be a visionary and he even presented to the board a vision statement in 1994.³³

D. Tomhave presented a 40 paragraph "Administrator's Servant-Leader Vision."...There are no easy answers, and yet the work is so important that status quo can be maintained if it is demonstrated to be the best way to administer these multiplying missions.³⁴

World missions began to grow rapidly when Duane was reaching his last years of service. Economies were changing, borders were opening and special funding through designated gifts and the estate planning of a wealthy individual were all ways that the Lord furthered his kingdom in the world. From 1985 to 1995, the WELS by God's grace was able to establish a presence in 8 new mission fields. On September 4, 1996, Duane was again given an opportunity to deliver a paper he worked long and hard on. The paper had to do with fellowship practices in the world mission fields. The paper was entitled *Unity of Doctrine and Practice in WELS World Mission Fields*³⁵ and it was delivered to the All Southeast Asia Missionary Conference in Puket, Thailand. This was the last overseas trip that Duane was physically able to make.

During this blessed time of mission growth, the Lord had other plans for the administrator, Duane Tomhave. An illness that the doctor diagnosed as rare and incurable led the administrator to make plans to be replaced.

Dear Colleagues in the Work:

It doesn't seem possible that 12 years, almost to the day, have passed since I began serving as your administrator in 1984. For three years prior to that I functioned as a member of the executive Committee for Central Africa and a member of the Board's Executive Committee. My life has been incredibly changed during those 15 years, and I thank the Lord for all the people and experiences he has brought my way.

³² Facts obtained from the *TEAMWORD* – November issue, 1994.

³³ The *Administrator's Servant-Leader Vision* statement is included in the addendum.

³⁴ Excerpt from *TEAMWORD* – February issue, 1994.

³⁵ This paper *Unity of Doctrine and Practice in WELS World Mission Fields* is included in the addendum at the end of the report.

Since the Board is considering the call of an Associate Administrator, I want to place before you the following request before you make a decision:

That the Board for World Missions at this time call a new Administrator; that I will resign my position as Administrator at the time a successor accepts and qualifies in the normal course of events; that I am willing to continue serving as Associate Administrator if the board is so minded.

I have discussed this with the Board's Administrative Committee, with President Karl Gurgel, and my District President David Rutschow. I make the offer for the following reasons:

- The timing is right for a number of coinciding events.
- My age (60) and the recent uncertainty of health and stamina.
- Kaye's January retirement compels more office management.
- There are dozens of detail projects awaiting attention.
- I have made 29 overseas trips since 1984; recovering slower.
- I think I am more valuable for what I know than what I do.
- Younger man could learn the ropes gradually with me in tow.
- Future option of "social security call" for me, if appropriate.
- With a new synod and board structure, a fresh BWM helmsman.

The Lord has placed this process in your capable hands through his church. I make this offer so that your work may be as easy as possible. I have seen too many workers stay beyond their time or force their calling body into an uncomfortable decision between personal respect and work needs. May his will be done and his kingdom come!

Respectfully yours in Christ,

Duane K. Tomhave³⁶

The last few *TEAMWORD* additions show the decline of his health came quite rapidly and the plans to stay on in the BWM office had to be changed. Also the new administrator was called and put into office two months after Duane had to resign by doctor's orders.

Some of you have heard about my "thorn in the flesh" which has kept me doctoring since January. It was discovered in a routine physical and finally diagnosed six months later as amyloidosis, a sticky blood protein that can gum up vital organs. It is in very early stages, not curable, but perhaps controllable. They are treating it with oral "zaps" every six weeks and hope to arrest it and cure the mischief it has caused in the kidney filters so far. I am feeling and doing fine, a bit less ambitious, but being strongly advised to reduce the workload. That will explain in part my decision eventually to step aside as administrator, details of which are enclosed. I have weighed many factors and have learned anew that "God's grace is sufficient for me." I thank you for your kind expressions of concern. It's not as dire as it may sound from a distance.³⁷

³⁶ Typewritten letter to the Board for World Missions by Administrator Tomhave on September 27, 1996.

³⁷ Excerpts from *TEAMWORD* – October issue, 1996.

Seven months later his optimism toward this incurable disease had changed drastically and he states the new realities in his last two newsletters.

This administrator is under the gun with meetings in-house and call meetings at night and a week's vacation coming up after a weekend of presentations. Jan and I are going to Fort Worth, TX, to get acquainted with our 12th grandchild, a boy born to Doug, our vicar son, and his wife Kelly. I'll be back in the office May 13, God-willing. But not for long! I have applied for long-term disability because of this incurable thing that saps strength and affects the kidneys. Doctors have advised me to choose between my work and my health, not an easy choice. But the Lord will provide for all our needs and will supply my replacement in due time. Thank you for all your expressions of concern and comfort.³⁸

PASTOR DUANE TOMHAVE RESIGNS AS WORLD MISSIONS ADMINISTRATOR FOR HEALTH REASONS

Some 13 years ago, TEAMWORD was begun as a tool to keep missionaries informed, a kind of missionary newsletter. This could be its swansong with all the innovation, especially e-mail and WEB pages. It has been a swift worldwide ministry that was chronicled in TEAMWORD's pages. My office staff tells me that I made thirty overseas trips, and I calculate that about 300 different congregations, conventions and conferences have been on my travel agenda. What I privilege to have seen first hand in all the WELS world fields and to be able to report how the Lord has blessed the gospel message on the tongues of over 60 missionaries on five continents.

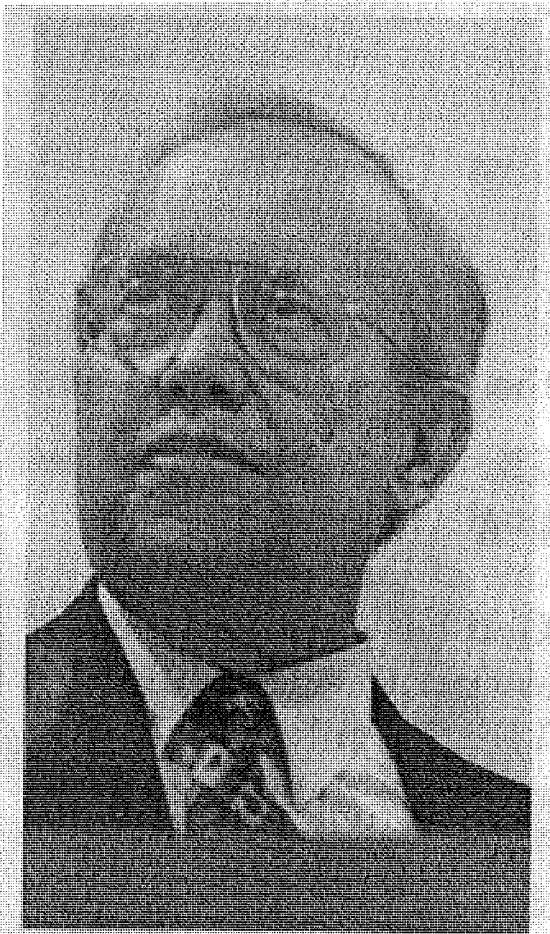
This TEAMWORD is intended to inform you that my public ministry is now ended. I have been sending signals to the board since last year that my health was in question. The rare incurable disease is amyloidosis, and it has done damages to the kidneys so far. I will spare you the details, but know that I expect to be on kidney dialysis for the rest of my life—maybe a little computer friend that does its thing during the night allowing some freedom of action.

As of May 31, 1997, I have resigned for health reasons. My doctor's disability form on "return to work" says NEVER. I will begin, God-willing, to clean out the office and my home office of a 37 year ministry with 15 years in world missions activities. Do you have any idea of how much footage and slides, "Captain Video" has accumulated? Temporarily we will continue to live in the Brookfield synod residence until a successor (associate administrator) is called. Plans are to gradually and eventually move to Watertown...

While this may seem abrupt to some of you getting information for the first time, it has been in the planning stages for many months. God has been gracious to allow a "setting of the house in order" during my mini-chemotherapy treatments of the last year.

Jan and I have also had a year in the Lord to see that our faith and sense of humor remain intact. She has been a companion caregiver for four years of an 84 year old "grande dame" with dementia. I have always kidded her that she was training

³⁸ Excerpts from *TEAMWORD* – May issue, 1997.



Pastor Duane Tomhave retired as administrator for world missions for health reasons. He has served as administrator since 1984. In addressing the convention he said, "The WELS world missions is a gem that all of us should be happy to be a part of." The convention gave him a rising vote of thanks for all his efforts on behalf of our world mission outreach.

Photo by Pastor Duane Tomhave
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in caregiving for her husband. We are okay! It's hard for me to let go of my world mission family and reapply myself as husband, father, son and grandfather. But it's time to do so.

For the record, we moved from Saginaw to Genesee Depot, a new Waukesha County mission congregation, and enrolled our kids at Trinity in Waukesha in 1979. In 1984 we joined Trinity when I accepted the world mission call. Two months later that congregation had a vacancy and called Pastor Daniel Koelpin from Cincinnati. Dan had just been elected to the Board for World Missions and its Southeast Asia Committee. It was the first voters' meeting I had attended there and Dan has been one of my pastors for the past 12 years, and now my successor. We enjoy a close friendship.

In the last line of his letter of this week, he writes: *"I am both excited about the prospect of working in this area so close to my heart and so vital to the mission of the church and at the same time I'm filled with the normal apprehensions that go with a major life change and a sense of my own inadequacies. Committing all things into the Lord's hands I AM AT PEACE. In the name of our ascended Lord, Rev. Dan Koelpin.*

ME, TOO! Duane³⁹

In August of 1997, there was a farewell service for Pastor Tomhave at the Synod

³⁹ Excerpts from the final *TEAMWORD* – June issue, 1997.

Administration Building. His family and over a hundred of his colleagues and coworkers were in attendance.⁴⁰ The world mission program offered these statistics when Duane left the helm as administrator: 66 missionaries, 22 teachers, 4 nurses, 1 vicar, 13 volunteers, 36 different languages, 51 national pastors, 10 national vicars, 177 national evangelists and assistant pastors and 347 preaching stations.⁴¹ How richly the Lord has blessed his church through the ministry of the Gospel. Duane's coworkers said that they would truly miss the enthusiasm he displayed in his work and his ever-present smile.

Duane was given an opportunity to bid farewell during the 1997 WELS Synod Convention. He shared these words:

"I can't believe all the things that went on in my service. It must have been someone else doing it. Actually, it was someone else – the Lord has done it all,"

"WELS world missions is a gem that all of us should be happy to be a part of. It's why we exist. Not to keep the message to ourselves but to give it away. To share it with those walking in darkness."

"And when we really get involved in the souls of men who are dying, the color of pew cushions, and other things that we preoccupy ourselves with, take small priority."

"The name of the game in the Bible is 'GO!'," Tomhave concluded." The delegates gave Tomhave a standing ovation, in appreciation of his service to spread of the gospel.

His closing comments:

"We're living in exciting times. Times that offer great challenges. Never before in the history of the world has there been a world mission field that is as large as the one facing us today. We stand on the threshold of the 21st Century and a great opportunity to be part of God's plan to spread the gospel."⁴²

⁴⁰ There is a video clip of Duane Tomhave at his farewell service putting his ministry in his own words. It is the last time he spoke publicly before his death.

⁴¹ Statistics taken from the Summer, 1997 edition of the *Mission Connection*.

⁴² Quotes taken from the WELS WEB page- Convention update on July 28, 1997 at Luther Preparatory School in Watertown, Wisconsin.

On To Eternity

The health of Pastor Tom have deteriorated quite rapidly. In the fall of the year, he had to have a shunt surgically installed to allow him to undergo home kidney dialysis. The kidneys were the major area that the amyloids had attacked, but that was only a short fix. Duane had noble intentions of cataloging all his world missions video on computer in his basement now that he had the time. Health would not permit such an undertaking.

The doctors tried valiantly to keep ahead of this terrible disease, but their efforts were matched with frustration. The amyloids were attacking his circulatory system and causing severe fatigue, inability to eat, dehydration and blood pressure problems. In the early months of 1998, travel plans and future moving plans all came to a halt. He was beginning to experience black outs because very little blood was getting to the brain when he was upright.



Last Family Reunion with Duane in Attendance

The doctors tried to treat this with a couple new drugs and Duane suffered a severe reaction to this medication in the hospital. His daughter, Vicki flew in from Portland, Oregon, because it seemed that the end was near. Duane had a temporary recovery from that episode to make it home for a week before his health began its rapid downward spiral. This once vibrant and healthy man could not even make it to the hospital under his own power. The doctors were optimistic, but the writing was on the wall.

At 2 AM on Tuesday, February 17th, the doctors called his wife Jan and told her that the family should come to the hospital immediately because there was nothing else they could do. The family gathered at his bedside and offered their final good-byes. Duane said, "Dying is the easy part, I know where I am going, I feel sorry for you who have to deal with everything else." I offered him the Lord's Supper in his closing hours and we all said the Lord's Prayer together. The pain increased and the nurse gave him another shot of morphine that put him into his final sleep. The family stood by and watched him take his final breath just before 6 AM that same morning. The Lord truly blessed our family with that time to be with our father at his closing moments of life. What a blessing to see how the Lord was able to use His servant Duane so extensively in the furthering of His Kingdom. Our time of grace is a precious gift!

Based on my father's confession of faith in his risen Savior, he now rests in the hands of our all-loving God in heaven. What a blessed reunion that will be on the last day, when my father along with all the saints (including the people that my father was able to touch with the message of the Gospel throughout his life) and all the angels will stand before the throne of the Lamb praising God throughout all eternity. Even though the ministry of Duane K. Tomhave ended rather suddenly and in death – his story has a happy ending – ETERNITY!

- SOLI DEO GLORIA -

Bibliography

Telephone Interviews:

- March 21, 1998 – interview with Elna Tomhave - Duane Tomhave's mother.
- March 26, 1998 – interview with retired Pastor Charles Found – worked on the same Apache Board with Duane Tomhave in the AZ district.
- April 4, 1998 – interview with Pastor David Ponath - friend, classmate and former quartet member with Duane Tomhave.
- April 4, 1998 – interview with Professor James P. Tiefel – former associate with Duane Tomhave at St. Paul's in Saginaw, MI (1976-79)

Verbal interviews:

- April 6, 1998 – interview with Pastor Ronald Uhlhorn at the WELS furlough house – friend and classmate of Duane Tomhave
- Month of June, 1996 - Allen and Rachel Stelljas – information gained in conversations about high school as we toured Germany together on a bus (MLC study tour) – both were high school classmates of Duane Tomhave.

Physical Sources:

- Black and Red* - A Northwestern College student publication – 1958 edition.
(clipped single page – 210)
- Black and Red* – A Northwestern College student publication – 1958 commencement edition – page 40.
- Cornerstone* – Church newsletter from St. Paul's Church in Saginaw, MI, 1979
Pastor's Annual Report.
- Duane Tomhave's scrap books throughout the years of schooling and into the ministry.
- Excelsior* – High School year book for MLA- 1954.
- Hand written and type written letters and faxes from and to Duane Tomhave in his personal file – specific topics and dates are stated in the footnote for each letter quoted.

Mission Connection - Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod newspaper publication printed to show the various Board activities. Summer issue, 1997.

TEAMWORD - Internal newsletter of the Board for World Missions. Duane K. Tomhave was editor and major contributor to this publication. The issues were taken from the years 1984 to 1996.

WELS Web page - computer printouts of the Convention update on July 28, 1997. The Synod Convention was being held at Luther Preparatory School, Watertown, WI.

VIDEO:

The first video clip was taken from a World Missions Office commissioned project. Video clips were organized with commentary to present the CELC conference and quote some of the reactions of the people involved. I used this video with permission of the World Missions Office. There is no copyright. Copies of video available from the World Missions Office upon request.

The second video clip was home video taken by a friend in August of 1997 of the farewell offered by Synod for their former administrator, Pastor Duane K. Tomhave. I used our own home copy. There is no copyright on this video.

PICTURES:

The majority of the personal pictures are from personal files, scrapbooks and slides taken by and of Duane K. Tomhave.

Newspaper clippings were trimmed and there was no way of determining the specific newspaper or dates. The newspaper clippings were all printed in the local area papers. None of the pictures and articles came from major newspapers. Any additional information is unknown.

The pictures of the Old and New chapel (page 12) are taken from the 25th Anniversary Booklet that Emmaus Lutheran Church had put together and sent to my father. Pictures may have been taken by my father.

The Apache Nursery picture (page 14) is taken from the *Northwestern Lutheran* publication. Volume 51, Number 26 December 27th, 1964 page 411.

The picture and article included on page 35 is taken from the *WELS Herald* - 1997 Convention update issue.