

A CHRONOLOGY OF EVENTS SURROUNDING THE 1959 MINORITY SPLIT
WITHIN THE DAKOTA-MONTANA DISTRICT OF THE WISCONSIN SYNOD
WITH A SPECIAL VIEW TOWARD EVENTS AS THEY OCCURRED
IN ST. JOHN'S EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH
MAZEPPA TOWNSHIP, GRANT COUNTY
SUMMIT, SOUTH DAKOTA

In an effort to understand what lies behind the CLC, a group of our own brothers who felt constrained to part ways with us, and also in an effort to re-capture the particular history of a congregation now "related" to this writer, the following paper has taken shape. The writer has sought to make the paper an accurate and running account of events, developments, and courses of action taken by those involved.

Because it is felt that a proper understanding of backgrounds and events-at-large serves to explain and clarify the often-times confusing and seemingly random maze of ^{smaller} details, this paper is constructed so as to lead the reader from the general to the more specific--the facts of the one serving to enlighten and bolster the facts of the other.

Please note the names following which shall come up ~~again~~ in the paper (men who eventually constituted the the Minority):

Dakota-Montanna District

Paul Albrecht
Helmuth Rutz
Marvin Eibs
Leland Grams
Christian Albrecht
V.E. Greve
A. Sippert

St. John's, Mazeppa Twp.

Ralph Breitzman
George Dumann
Orville Noeldner
Elmer Dumann

WELS

CLC

1938 LCMS passes Union Resolution

1950-1953 LCMS and Common Confession.

1953 (Aug 5-12) Watertown Convention.
LCMS CHARGED WITH breaking our
affiliation.

1955 (Aug 10-17) Saginaw convention.
WELS sees LCMS as falling under
Ro 16:17, but decides to wait until
LCMS meets in 1956. Vote 94-47.

1956 (Aug 21-23) Special Watertown
Convention. "Rays of hope." "Hold
in abeyance." Vote 108-19-39.

1957 (Aug 7-14) New Ulm Convention.
In view of current committee meet-
ings "continue to hold in abey-
ance." "Vigorously protesting
fellowship." Vote 77-61.

1957 (Aug) President Reim resigns.

1957 (Oct-Nov) Several pastors and
congregations withdraw from
WELS.

1957 (Oct) Free Conference (F.C.)
Lyons, Nebr.

1957 (Nov) F.C. Spokane, Wash.

1957 (Dec) F.C. Mankato, Minn.

1958 (Jan) F.C. Opportunity, Wash.

1958 (May) F.C. Cheyenne, Wyo.

1958 (Jun) First publication of
Lutheran Spokesman.

1958 (Jul) F.C. Spokane, Wash.

1959 (Jan) Interim Conference (I.C.)
Mankato, Minn. High school,
college, seminary to begin.

1959 (Aug) I.C. Red Wing, Minn.

1959 (Sep) Immanuel Lutheran
College opens at Mankato
funded by a private federation
(High school, coll., sem.)

1960 (Jan) I.C. Mankato, Minn.

1960 (Aug) CLC Constituting
Convention, Watertown, SD.
Paul Albrecht elected first
president. ¹

1959 (Aug 5-12) Saginaw Convention.
Continue vigorously protesting
fellowship until committees
either resolve matters or reach
an impasse

1960 (May 17-19) Union Committee
resolves that impasse reached.

1961 (Aug 8-17) Milwaukee Convention.
Vote to break 124-48.

¹Arvid Gullerud, "History of the Church of the Lutheran Confession,"
paper written for CLC convention, no date.

DAKOTA-MONTANA DISTRICT

- 1870's First families from Wisconsin and Minnesota arrive.²
- 1880's Mission District of Minnesota Synod. Reizepredigers travel eastern South Dakota from Elkton to north of Watertown. Missionaries Boettcher, Luebbert, Lahme, Johl. Congregations at such places as Elkton, Ward, Havanna, Henry, Grover, Rauville, Germantown.
- 1890's Missionaries gradually work westward. Damage done by other Church bodies and the short tenure of many pastors.
- 1898 (Sep 17) Paul Albrecht born.³
- 1900's Missionaries begin work across the Missouri River. Follow railroad lines.
- 1917 Minnesota Synod becomes Minnesota District of Joint Synod of Wisconsin and other States.
- 1920 Protestant Controversy in Joint Synod.
- 1927 Paul Albrecht accepts Call to Bowdle, South Dakota. Shortly thereafter, 2 brothers and 1 son join Protestants.⁴
- 1930's Depression. Hard times in Dakota-Montana. Change from German to English.
- 1940's Mission work begun in Black Hills area. Quiet years-- war, young people moving to cities.
- 1946 Pastor Albrecht elected president of Dakota-Montana Distr. To be Re-elected until 1958.
- 1950's District nearly torn apart over fellowship with LCMS.
- 1951 (Jan) M. Eibs installed at Faulkton and Ipswich (near Bowdle).⁵

²Except where otherwise noted, District history up to "1951" from Karl G. Sievert, "Preaching the Gospel on the Dakota-Montana Prairies or A History of the Dakota-Montana District of the WELS," Printed in Fifty Years of God's Blessings in the Dakota-Montana District: 1920-1970, District Anniversary Committee, Pastor Gerhard H. Geiger, chairman.

³Mike Albrecht, "Grandpa," prepared for the contest for the Dr. John Henry Ott awards, Northwestern College, Watertown, Wisc., 1977, p. 4.

⁴Ibid., p. 9.

⁵Except where otherwise noted, general District history, facts, and figures from PROCEEDINGS Dakota-Montana District Conventions, 1952, 1954, 1956, 1958, 1960.

- 1953: Pastor Hallstein of Raymond, SD, leaves the WELS for conscience on charges of unionism (first in Synod to do so). President Albrecht settles the troubles in Raymond. His notes for the meeting in Raymond state: "If he Hallstein was sure . . . he should have admonished us, not only once or twice, but many times."⁶
- 1953 (Dec 13) M. Eibs installed at St. John's, Mazeppa Twp.
- 1954 (Apr 4) L. Grams installed at Faulkton and Ipswich (near Bowdle).
- 1954 (Jun 8-10) District convention at Mobridge. Convention hears essay by Carl Lawrenz, "The Scriptural Principles concerning Church Fellowship." - - - Convention elects H. Rutz as 1st Vice-President (2nd Vice-President, 1952; in District since 1939).
- 1955 (Aug 10-17) President Albrecht in attendance at Synod Sagnaw Convention. He becomes increasingly dissatisfied with the Synod's failure to break with LCMS. Although only advisory delegate, had name recorded in protest when vote to wait until 1956 prevailed.⁷
- 1956 (Jul 17-19) Dakota-Montanna District convention at "obridge. Meeting held one month late, so as to consider results of LCMS action in June. Resolution passed that Synod adopt 1953 recommendations to break ties.
- 1956 (Aug 21-23) Synod Watertown Convention. Votes to hold in abeyance ^{of} prevails.
- 1956 (Aug 26) V.E. Greve installed at Lemmon (from Washington, Pacific-Northwest District.)
- 1956 (October 21) C. Albrecht (brother to Pres. Albrecht) installed at Grover, SD.
- 1957 (Jun) Eastern Confernece of Dakota-Montana District draws up memorial to be presented to Synod at New Ulm Convention, 1957, asking for termination of fellowship with LCMS.
- 1957 (Aug 7-14) New Ulm votes to "continue to hold in abeyance" President Albrecht objects and takes emphatic action. Presents statement of protest; resigns post on Union Committee; refuses to co-operate on this matter; refuses fellowship with those advocating this action.
- 1957 (----) Perhaps a "minority group" begins evolving at this time.

⁶Albrecht, opcit., p. 12.

⁷Ibid., p. 15.

- 1957 (Oct 22) Special District Convention in Aberdeen. President Albrecht presents a strong case for district opposition to Synod action. Underlying feeling, that entire District ought to break with Synod.⁸ However, the convention votes to concur with Synod Action. In that light Pres. Albrecht delivers a resignation from presidency. Convention rejects his resignation and requests that he continue to serve "according to the dictates of his own conscience." He could not give an answer immediately. (Never resigned.)
- 1957 (---) After Aberdeen, 12 formal protests filed with President Albrecht by members of District: Pastors C. Spaude, R.F. Zimmerman, H.E. Rutz, M. Eibs, C. Albrecht, W. Schuetze, C. Hanson, V.E. Greeve, E.J. Otterstatter, A.P.C. Kell; and Ministers Kurt Storm, Robert Preszler.
- 1958 (Feb 11) Special Pastoral Conference at Bowdle called by Praesidium. Same ground re-covered. District continues to stand as it did at Aberdeen.
- 1958 (Apr 21) Regular District Pastoral Conference, Mobridge. Naumann and Lawrenz present as representatives of Union Committee. Majority of District concurs with synod.
- 1958 (---) Minority continues to evolve. (???)
- 1958 (May 4) A. Sippert installed at Clear Lake and Hidewood (from Pueblo, Col--Neb. Distr.)
- 1958 (Jun 17-19) District Convention at Mobridge. District votes to continue vigorously protesting fellowship with stand of Synod. - - - - W. Schumann elected president of District. - - - - Committee of Six (Three and Three) selected to settle differences between two camps within Distr.
- 1958 (---) Minority continues to meet. (???)
- 1959 (Jan 26-27) 1958 District Convention reconvenes at Mobridge to hear report of the Committee of Six. The efforts of the Committee have only served to widen the differences.
- 1959 (Feb 16) Minority Group holds conference at Bowdle.⁹ Perhaps at this time they drew up Bowdle resolutions (contents?) and signed E. Schaller memorial to be presented to Synod at Saginaw, 1959.
- 1959 (Apr) District Praesidium and Synod feel that Minority Group is no longer acting in fellowship with WELS.

⁸ Edward J. Werner, present pastor at Our Savior's, South Shore, SD, in interview with writer December 28, 1978.

⁹ Secretary's Minutes, St. John's, Mazepa, March 16, 1959. Only documented facts found for this paper concerning date and place for a minority conference.

- 1959 (Apr 22) Letter from District Praesidium to district stating that Pastor Albrecht no longer in fellowship with WELS. Letter urges Bowdle congregation to take action one way or the other.¹⁰
- 1959 (May 4) Letter from P. Albrecht to E. Schaller stating that he (Albrecht) or others had not terminated fellowship; that he in person had requested Pres. Schumann for an immediate correction; that Schumann had left him with the impression that the correction would be made.^{11,12}
- 1959 (Jun 29) Letter from Minority group to District Praesidium stating that their action was not to organize a separate conference, but to discuss common feelings; that they had never severed fellowship with District at large; that their memorial (E. Schaller) does not mean no longer in fellowship.¹³
- 1959 (Aug 5-12) Synod Convention at Saginaw. Memorial of Minority Group read to convention as memorial of two congregations ^{stating} since "The District Praesidium felt constrained to conclude that the nine pastors who had formulated it HAD WITHDRAWN from fellowship in District and thus also in the Synod."¹⁴
- 1959 (Sep) Dissension at Bowdle concerning property rights--eventually ends up in state courts.¹⁵
- 1959-1960 Minority Group by this time must evidently ^{have been} associating ~~self~~ with Interim Conference.
 1960 (May 17-19) Impasse reached.
- 1960 (Jun 21-23) District Convention at Mobridge. Pres. Schumann reports; "In impatient action . . . minority group within district by word and action indicated a termination of fellowship with our District and Synod." (Approx. 500 communic.)
- V. Greve and St. Luke's, Lemmon
 - H. Rutz and Our Savior, Jamestown, ND
 - A. Sippert and Zion, Hidewood;
 - L. Grams and 1st Lutheran, Faulkton; Zion Ipswich
 - M. Eibs.
 - P. Albrecht
 - C. Albrecht
- District adopts ^a report urging Synod--if impasse cannot be resolved, break.

¹⁰ Albrecht, op.cit., p. 20.

¹¹ IBID. p.20.

¹² However, already on April 19th⁽¹⁾ Pastor M. Eibs stated at congregational meeting that he had withdrawn from Synod. Minutes, April 19, 1959.

¹³ Albrecht, op.cit., p. 20

¹⁴ Ibid., p. 17.

¹⁵ Ibid., pp. 21-24.

ST. JOHN'S, MAZEPPA TOWNSHIP

- 1880 Missnary Boettcher serves families of Germantown Twp., Mazeppa Twp., Rauville Twp., and Watertown.
- 1888 (May 14) People of Mazeppa TWP. organize St. Paul's Ev. Lutheran Church.¹⁶
- 1891 St. Paul's, Mazeppa, acquires permanent church and cemetery lots. Still part of previous four-way parish.
- 1897 St. Paul's, Mazeppa, changes name to St. John's, Mazeppa. Church building erected on property.
- 1905 Mazeppa becomes part of three-way parish with Germantown Twp. and newly organized church at South Shore.
- 1920 St. John's, Mazeppa, joins Wisconsin Synod. (Dakota-Montana District established.)
- 1921 St. John's, Mazeppa, goes self-supporting (remains single-congregation parish until 1956).
- 1925 Whereas in 1920 100% of work done in German, now 50% English.
- 1930's Financial difficulties during Depression.
- 1947 (JUL 13) Candidate Eibs (graduate from Concordia, Springfield) ordained and installed at Smith's Mill, Minnesota.
- 1949 (Aug 21) W.C. Nickels installed at Mazeppa.
- 1951 (Jan) M. Eibs installed at Faulkton and Ipswich, SD.
- 1951 (Oct 4) Minutes read that Pastor Nickels ^{desires to} will give special presentation concerning church union matter and the Common Confession.¹⁷
- 1953 (Aug) Pastor Nickels retires.
- 1953 (Dec 13) Pastor M. Eibs installed at Mazeppa.

¹⁶Information on early history of St. John's, Mazeppa, taken from "50th Anniversary of the Dedication of St. John's Evangelical Lutheran Church, Mazeppa Township, Grant County, South Dakota--1897-1947."

¹⁷Except where noted information hereafter concerning events in St. John's congregation taken from Record of the St. John's Lutheran Church, Mazeppa Township, Grant County, Summit, South South Dakota. Secretary's Minutes.

- 1955 (Oct) Pastor Eibs and delegate report on the report given at the District conference concerning the Saginaw convention of WELS.
- 1956 (Jan) Ralph Breitzman elected president of congregation.
- 1956 (Feb) Pastor declines Call to Grover, SD, where he had been serving as vac. pastor.
- 1956 (Jul 29) Pastor Eibs reports on District Convention just held at Mobridge (July 17-19) at which the District urges Synod to adopt 1953 resolution ^{at} during the special 1956 Conv.
- 1956 (Aug 21-23) Pastor Eibs attends Watertown Convention as voting Delegate.
- 1956 ((Oct 28) Pastor Eibs receives call from St. John's Rauville.
- 1956 (Dec 13) St. John's, Mazeppa, and St. John's, Rauville, form one parish (exists until 1972, after which and to the pres. Mazeppa exists as a single-congregation parish being served continually as a vacancy.)
- 1957 (Jan 9) R. Breitzmann elected congregation president; George Dumann, elder.
- 1957 (Feb) Eibs declines Call to Stephenville, Wisconsin. (N.B. At this time discontent brewing in Dakota-Montana District).
- 1957 (Jun) Eastern Conference to which Mazeppa and Pastor Eibs belong sends memorial to Synod concerning immed. break with LCMS.
- 1957 (August) Synod does not act in accordance with memorial.
- 1957 (Oct) Special District Aberdeen Convention. *District concurs with Synod in spite of Pres. Albrecht's "resignation."*
- 1958 (Jan) R. Breitzmann elected congregation president; Orville Neeldner, trustee. Pastor and delegate report on special Aberdeen convention and also on Synod Convention ^{preceding, Aug. 195}
- 1958 (Feb) Special Bowdle Pastoral Conference.
- 1958 (Apr) Regular Pastoral Conference, Mobridge.
- 1958 (---) Pastor Eibs becoming very intent for break with LCMS.¹⁸
- 1958 (Jun 17-19) Pastor Eibs and O. Neeldner attend District Conv. (S.umann elected president; committee of six appointed.)
- 1958 (Jul 13) Pastor ~~E~~ and O. Neeldner report on District Conv.

¹⁸Harry Borns, 1979 congregational president, in interview with author, April 16, 1979.

1958 (---) Atmosphere becoming very charged within Mazeppa Congre.¹⁹

1959 (Jan 12) Albert Steinocker elected president; George Dumann, elder.

1959 (Jan 26-27) 1958 District Conv. reconvenes to hear report on efforts of Committee of Six. Gap widens.

1959 (Feb 16) Eibs attends minority conference at Bowdle, where group draws up Bowdle resolutions and signs E. Schaller Memorial.

1959 (Mar 8) Pastor Eibs announces that he has received a Call to Winner, Neb., and Witten, SD.

1959 (Mar 16) Joint meeting of Rauville and Mazeppa. Pastor presents ultimatum: "If you want me to serve as your Pastor . . . then (minutes summarized)--

1. Accept what I teach according to God's Word.
2. If disagree, prove where I am wrong from Bible.
3. District and Synod have rejected my protests; I am bound to stand up for the truth.
4. Join protesters
 - a. Act according to Bowdle resolutions
 - b. Sign E. Schaller memorial
 - c. Withhold mission money from Synod
 - d. Sever fellowship with LCMS as a congregation
 - e. Sever fellowship with WELS in August, if Synod does not move to break.

Concerning agreement with above statements, congregation votes 20-No, 12-yes, 11-blank, 1-wait. In effect they answer Pastor Eibs' question, "If you want me to serve as your Pastor . . . " Eibs requests time to consider his call. Time granted. ↳ with a resounding, "NO!"

1959 (Mar 22) Eibs announces that he has accepted Call.

1959 (Mar 29) Mazeppa votes to grant Eibs his release and to call C. Albrecht (!) of Grover as vacancy pastor.

1959 (Apr 5) Eibs announces that he cannot accept Call because of information withheld from him (!).

1959 (Apr 12) President Steinocker, without pastor Eibs' knowledge, circulates a notice for a joint meeting April 19:

- "Only one thing to be acted upon
 Issue a new call to Rev. Eibs
 Extend the old call
 Call a new pastor"

Pastor is shown note.

¹⁹ Ibid., April 16, 1979.

- 1959 (April 16) Council Meeting. Pres. Steinocker states that he acted alone in setting up meeting. Pastor Eibs reminds group that is is "against the constitution for individuals or minor bodies within the congregation to make decisions without the authority of the congregation or pastor" (!!)
- Passages read from Catechism and quotes from other books.
- 1959 (Apr 19) Pastor Eibs announces that he has withdrawn from the WELS because of their failure to term. fellowsip with LCMS.
- (Apr 19) Joint meeting, evening. The parish has a problem of what to do about a pastor. Eibs has officially been released and a vacancy pastor called. No doubt, many did not want Eibs back under any circumstances. Evidences of conflict in minutes. In the end a motion prevails to ask Pres. Schumann for a new call list. Thus, ineffect, Pastor Eibs is left in mid-air. When requested to continue to serve Mazeppa and Rauville until a new pastor arrives (in reality, an inconsistent request), Eibs rightfully refuses, but by stating that it is "because the vote of the congregations had wrongfully deposed him" (!). At that point Pastor Eibs' services to Mazeppa and Rauville ceased.²⁰
- 1959 (Apr 20) Mazeppa makes arrangements with Pastor Kell of Bethlehem of Watertown, for services.
- 1959 (May 4) Joint meeting. Pres. Schumann meets with congregations concerning call for new pastor. He advises that it would be best to call a student. To call from the field would take a great deal of time because, as the minutes read, "No pastor would very likely come to South Dakota because the aroma is not good." Congregations vote to apply for candidate.
- (May 4) After Joint Meeting, Pres. Schumann meets with Mazeppa concerning a vacancy pastor. According to the March 29 meeting, C. Albrecht had been called as v.p. Schumann points that "Albrecht is not with Synod any more." Thereupon, much discussion, especially by O. Noeldner and G. Dumann. (Summary of minutes follows):

Dumann--Has C. Albrecht resigned officially?

Schumann--Albrecht has stated that it was impossible for him to go along with Synod, because of not obeying Ro 16:17-18.

Noeldner--Why is this action of Albrecht and others called un-Scriptural?

Schumann--They are using only Ro 16:17-18 and Ti 3:10. There are other passages to be used.

²⁰From the parish, he moved to Eagle Lake, Minn., (near Mankato) where he did not serve a parish, but was soon called to serve a group (mission) in St. Paul, Minn., later named Berea Lutheran and a member of the C&C. ("New Address," Lutheran Spokesman, II (October, 1959), p. 11.)

Noeldner--Is the LCMS causing divisions and offenses?
Schumann--Yes, and they will probably never come clean.

However, beware of overdoing Ro 16:17-18.

Noeldner--Is it a sin to break with WELS?

Schumann--No, but why are you (or anyone else with such leanings) here tonight? Get out and follow those pastors!

Dumann--Is C. Albrecht being accused of false doctrine?

Schumann--/Minutes give no direct answer/ That was their doing. They pushed themselves into that position.

Congregation acts to rescind Call to G. Albrecht and extend a Call to V. Thierfelder of Goodwin for Vacancy pastor.

- 1959 (May 17) Congregation to pay \$4.00 expense incurred by Eibs for attending a minority conference at Jamestown, ND.
- 1959 (JUL 12) Candidate Leroy Doberstein ordained and installed at Mazeppa and Rauville.
- 1959 (Jul) Trinity Lutheran organized in Watertown with 27 voters-- former members from Grover and Mazeppa. C. Albrecht later called to be first pastor.²¹
- 1959 (August 2) G. Dumann family and R. Breitzmann family request a peaceful release. Discussion. Release granted.
- 1959 (Aug 5-12) Synod at Saginaw votes to continue sig. prot. fell.
- 1959 (Oct 13) Pastor Dobberstein clarifies use of terms "release" and "transfer." They mean the same. Written request from O. Noeldner family asking that membership be dissolved.
- 1960 (Jan) Elmer Dumann family (brother to G. Dumann) dropped from roles because they had joined Trinity in Watertown.
- 1960 (Jul 8) Pastor Dobberstein reports on District Convention (Jun 21-23). States that an impasse has been reached.
- 1961 (Apr 18) Pastor Dobberstein reports concerning LCMS issues. States that a break is unavoidable.
- 1961 (Aug 8-17) Synod Convention breaks with LCMS.
- 1961 (Oct) Pastor Dobberstein reports on the controversial issues /presumably recent Synod ^{break} action/.

²¹ "News," Lutheran Spokesman, III (April, 1960) p. 10.

THOUGHTS AND CONCLUSIONS

As one looks back over the record, certain thoughts come to mind. Concerning the District picture, one cannot help wondering how much of an affect ~~did~~ the action fo Pastor Hallstein in 1953 had upon President Albrecht. Perhaps this was the seed that began to germinate several years later in his own actions.

Details also are lacking concerning the exact beginning and workings of the minority group. How long was the group in forming? What were its purposes and actions? Did it associate itslef with the Interim Conference before April 1959? Such information would help to clarify the action taken by the Synod and the District Praesidium.

Although there is somewhat of a feeling that the minority group got a raw deal in the way in which their termination was handled, one cannot help wondering what other course of action was open to the respective officials. Individuals who refuse fellowship with the men who propose and lead in the adoption of action by the Synod-at-large can hardly be considered to be in fellowship with the body.

One wonders to what extent the personal contact of Professor Lawrenz with Paul Albrecht and company affected the course of events. The lack of love by the ~~the~~ latter (or the CLC at large) for the former is obvious.

Although the facts scarcely show it, the real power play in the District came at the special Aberdeen convention in October of 1957. It was here that hopes were high for the

entire District to break with the Synod. When such action was prevented by the District's concurrence with Synod action and by when the District ~~did~~ not react^{ing} with great upheaval to the resignation of President Albrecht, the beginning of the end was at hand. The events which took place in the spring of 1959 were inevitable.

Concerning Pastor Eibs and St. John's Mazeppa, similar questions arise. Why did Marvin Eibs attend neither Northwestern College nor Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary, but rather come through the Springfield program? His family was Wisconsin Synod from Marshall, Minnesota.²²

One also lacks for details concerning the exact course of events that took place ~~concerning~~ⁱⁿ the jumbled state of affairs ~~concerning~~ between Pastor Eibs, St. John's Mazeppa, and the congregations at Winner and Witten. It seems to be strange timing that Eibs, a member of the minority group, should appear on a call list that spring. Did he actually feel that his hold in Mazeppa congregation was strong enough to issue the ultimatum, "If you want me to be your pastor, join the protest group"? Whose suggestion was it to call C. Albrecht as vacancy pastor? What information led Eibs to change his mind concerning the Call to Winner and Witten? A letter to those congregations would prove to be most helpful. Did Eibs genuinely expect Mazeppa and Rauville to take him back in view of his previous ultimatum? Why did he announce his withdrawal from the Synod on the day of the meeting to reconsider his Call? What was his thinking?

²²Professor Armin Schuetze, in interview with author, March 4, 1979.

Just as the District did not in reality lose a great portion of its members, so also Mazeppa did not lose all that many members--four families. Communicant membership statistics list the drop from 1959 to 1960 as 142 to 130. However, this loss ~~did~~ almost coincidentally ^{marked} ~~mark~~ the beginning of the end ofr Mazeppa congregation. Since 1960, due to decling rural population ^{and} the church amalgamation at South Shore (South Shore and German-town Twp.) with the erection of a new facility, membership ~~has~~ steadily decreased. 1978 communicant membership stood at 68.

Naturally the records do not show for either the district or the congregation the intense emotion and dissent that was generated by this entire affair. Brother was turned against brother and son against ~~against~~ father. Accusations were made, tact was laost, emotions ran wild. Terms such as "hothead," "brainwashed," and "on the way to hell" were uttered more than once. Only now is time beginning to erase the ^{harsh feelings} ~~near hatred~~ felt by the one side for the other.

What has this paper proven? If nothing else, in this author's opinion, it serves to establish ~~the fact that~~ a very definite factor involved in the growth and eventual outcome of the minority split; ^{i.e.} ~~was~~ a phenomenon called "sphere of influence." The members of the District's minority group can for the most part be closely tied to President Albrecht and as a result quite naturally fall ^{as} ~~ing~~ under his influence. Pastor Rutz must have worked closely with President Albrecht, being vice-president of the District ^{since 1954} ~~A~~. Also both were members of the District for many, many years. Christ Albrecht, the President's

brother certainly cannot be termed a stranger to him. Eibs and Grams both served at Faulkton and Ipswich which put them geographically very close to President Albrecht and undoubtedly subject to his influence. Concerning Greve and Sippert who came to the District from Washington and Colorado, respectively, it is not at all difficult to surmise that the ^{early} rumblings of dissent in their own districts had affected them before coming to Dakota-Montana.

Likewise is the case in Mazeppa congregation. Ralph Breitzmann had been president of the congregation for three years during Eibs' pastorate, George Dumann and been elder (Elmer was George's brother), and Orville Noeldner had served as trustee and had accompanied Eibs to the District Convention in 1958. (Whereas at Rauville, there was no following. Eibs had only served there two years; it was his "second" congregation.)

Following the "sphere of influence" evidence to its logical end, one can hardly escape the conclusion that were it not for the influence and actions of President Albrecht, there would have been no Minority Split in the Dakota-Montana District.

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"Dedication of Our Savior's Evangelical Lutheran Church,
South Shore, South Dakota, October 27, 1968."

"75th Anniversary, St. John's Lutheran Church, Rauville
Township--1890-1965."

"75th Anniversary, St. Luke's Ev. Lutheran Church, Germantown
Township, Codington County, South Dakota--1888-1963."