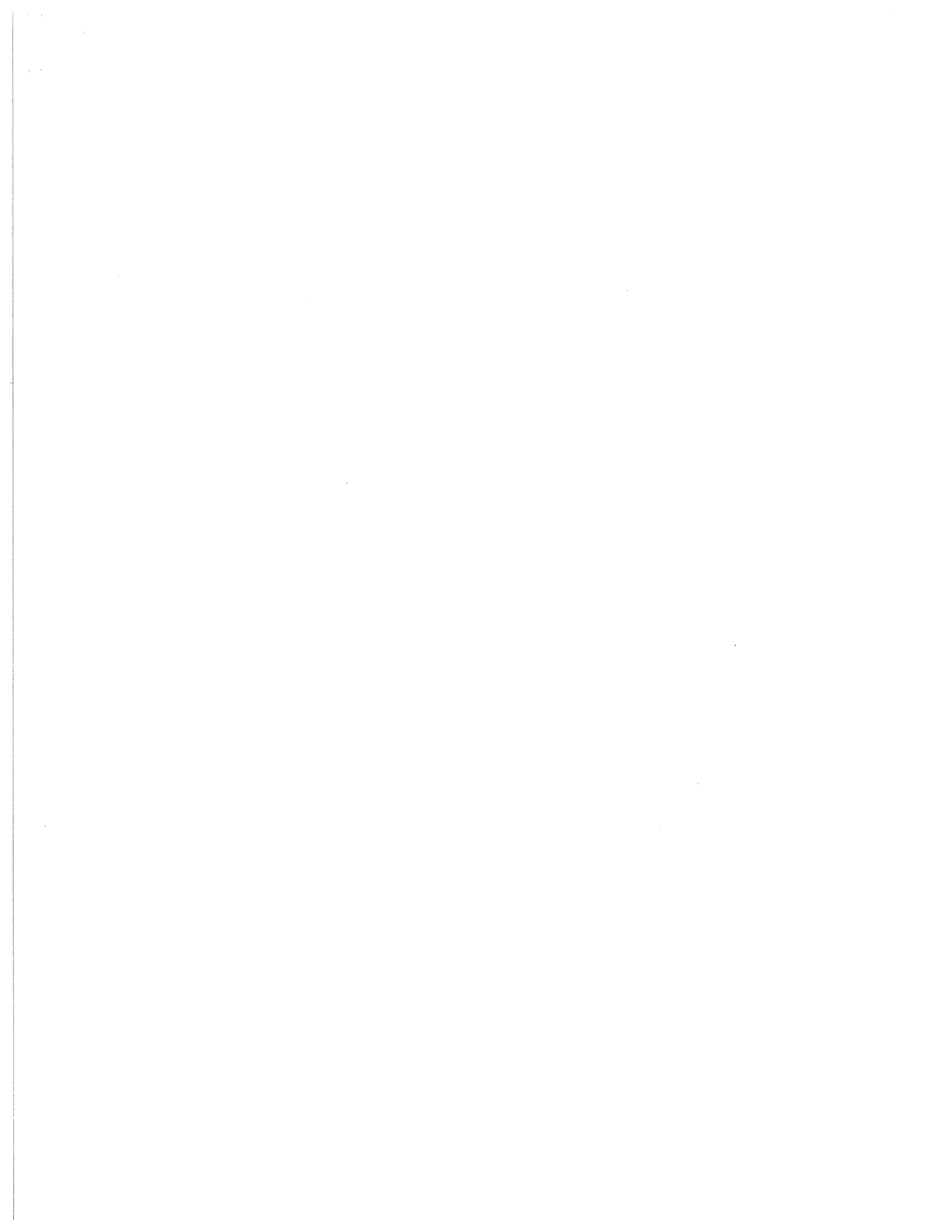


THE BIRTH OF KETTLE MORAINÉ LUTHERAN HIGH SCHOOL
AND THE DEVELOPMENT OF ITS CURRICULUM
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How wonderful it is to see our Lord at work in His kingdom. Those associated with Kettle Moraine Lutheran High School in Jackson, Wisconsin, certainly know of God's "incomparably great power for us who believe. That power is like the working of his mighty strength, which he exerted in Christ when he raised him from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly realms, far above all rule and authority, power and dominion, and every title that can be given, not only in the present age but also in the one to come. And God placed all things under his feet and appointed him to be head over everything for the church (Eph. 1:19-22)." By God's strength in Christ Kettle Moraine Lutheran High School has been a significant part of His kingdom for thirteen years.

The power of God's kingdom in the hearts of His believers in Ozaukee and Washington Counties was particularly apparent back in 1973. After a year of vicaring I know how difficult it is to get people to come to meetings of any kind. How happy those people must have been at the first informational meeting to consider starting an area Lutheran high school to see eighteen interested men in attendance. That meeting at Our Savior's Lutheran Church in Grafton was small in comparison to a meeting at David's Star Evangelical Lutheran Church in Jackson only a month later. Could those original eighteen men have ever been ready to see 150 enthu-

siastic Christians at their mass meeting on March 25? The results of a potential student survey given at this meeting were extremely encouraging. They "showed 2725 children in 18 area congregations are between the ages of 0-13 (future potential) with 1000 of these attending Christian Day schools and 65-85 students a year would be interested in an area Lutheran high school." The enthusiasm of this group was evident when they authorized a study committee of about 30 men to research the feasibility of an area Lutheran high school north of Milwaukee County. According to the May 15 minutes, Pastor Herbert Winterstein, temporary president of the federation, opened a checking account with \$68.50 left from the March meeting in the name of Kettle Moraine Lutheran High School. This was the first mention of the school's name in the minutes.

There was no dawdling during this first year. At this same meeting in March, by consensus of opinion, the general purpose of the high school was put in writing as "to make available a Christian education on the secondary level to all children in our area congregations." The study committee was also split up into various subcommittees: temporary sites and facilities, permanent site, permanent facilities, constitution and legal, membership and publicity, and finance. Already, on October 21, a resolution was passed "that, God-willing, we start an area Lutheran high school in the fall of 1974" The calling of a principal began on Nov. 19 when Pastor James Westendorf was sent a call. An enrollment and recruitment committee was added as well. By Nov. 20 posters, letter heads, and envelopes had been prepared for publicity.

In January, 1974, Pastor Winterstein encouraged, "Our gracious

and all-merciful Father in heaven has granted us the strength and courage to take steps to begin a high school in this area where his Word will be taught daily and our youth can be led to the green pastures and still waters of their Good Shepherd." A month later he resigned from his office as president because he had accepted a mission call to Japan. Although his absence would be felt, one can probably see in this the Lord's will for Kettle Moraine Lutheran High School. Two pastors and one layman were nominated to replace Pastor Winterstein, and Mr. Richard Tharman, a West Bend industrial buyer, was elected on the first ballot. This was a large step in the direction of an area Lutheran high school in which the laity had a strong voice. Unfortunately, we will soon see that this move was too late to save a great deal of trouble. Of course, there is no way for me to document this, but I believe by this time the seed had already been planted that would make a preministerial tract a must for the high school curriculum. I would tend to believe that this seed was planted by Pastor Winterstein and his fellow area pastors. The necessity of the preministerial tract wound up in the constitution and once there, no matter how expensive or how little interest there was for this tract, it couldn't be removed from the curriculum.

On February 24, all the subcommittees were realigned as follows: site and facilities, curriculum, recruitment, publicity, constitution, and stewardship. After a full year of progress, complete with a rich measure of God's blessings, as well as all arrows pointing in the direction of a Fall 1974 opening, one might have expected enthusiasm high for the Federation's second mass meeting. There are many different ways one can see the

difference between God's faithfulness and man's unfaithfulness in this world and one such example was seeing only 67 people at this March 24 meeting compared to the 150 people at the meeting one year before.

The Lord continued his faithfulness in spite of this as ten days later the council of Christ Lutheran Church (ALC) in Jackson offered the use of a portion of their facilities for a reasonable price (\$200-300/month). After a half dozen unsuccessful calls for a principal, the curriculum committee called a motion on June 17 that an acting principal on a temporary basis be called simply to work during regular school days and regular school hours. After another two calls, Mr. Carl Natzke filled that position. About the same time, Mr. James Fenske was given the call for permanent principalship but was given the option to wait until the semester break to take up his responsibilities. Perhaps a motion of faith, it had already been decided at the July 9th meeting that the school would be opened on September 3, 1974, even though it was the middle of August before Mr. Natzke accepted his call. In the meantime, Mr. Fenske had accepted his call and was installed on November 3. That being two months after school opened, the curriculum committee was wise in opting for an acting principal. Another wise move was the recommendation to use local talent as part-time teachers. Four part-time teachers joined Mr. Natzke and later Mr. Fenske that first year: Rev. Dale Arndt, Mr. James Becker, Rev. Paul Pankow, and Mrs. Karen Pautz. I believe this idea could have been used to great advantage later in the school's history to add more class selections sooner. These six teachers had their hands full teaching 9th and 10th grades which amounted to 35 students.

My first experience with Kettle Moraine Lutheran High School was an embarrassing one. The high school sponsored an area spelling bee for parochial school eighth graders in which I took part. In describing the rules, Principal Fenske told us he would give a definition for homonyms. "For instance," he said, "I'm a principal and that's spelled P-R-I-N-C-I-P-A-L because I'm a prince of a pal." Then he chose me to get the first word, typhoon, and I spelled it wrong. I had to proceed to the back of the room through over 50 other students who hadn't even been asked a word yet. I'm thankful that I did better on my admission tests or I would never have become a student at Kettle Moraine.

As a student at Kettle Moraine, I had very little knowledge of what was going on behind the scenes. Perhaps this is somewhat after the fact, but I must commend especially the faculty for making everything look like it was running smoothly when actually we were all on a rough ride. If I had any idea how many hours were put in by both Board and Faculty members during those first years I might have been far more appreciative. That's probably true of most if not all of the students of that time. I look back with a bit of embarrassment at some of the complaints that were made. One complaint in particular has stuck in my mind all these years about which the rest of this paper will be concerned. Often I would hear fellow students gripe, "This school doesn't offer classes that I want or need for the future!" Was theirs a valid complaint?

Unfortunately, I believe this complaint was valid for a few. There were more than likely a few students at Kettle Moraine who didn't belong there. Why? Kettle Moraine simply didn't have what they needed for the future. I remember quite clearly one of my

classmates failing out of Kettle Moraine and enrolling at one of the West Bend public high schools. Soon rumors were floating back to the students at Kettle Moraine that he was getting A's at West Bend. My immediate thought was how poor an education people must be getting at these public high schools. I was wrong in my evaluation. At that high school this student was able to take classes like Shop and Small Engines. He wasn't a college bound student and needed such classes to begin a career after high school. Why was he sent to Kettle Moraine? Perhaps his parents had read an article in the paper like this one found in the West Bend News early in 1976, "Kettle Moraine Lutheran High School was founded with the objective of offering a Christ-centered secondary education to WELS and ELS young people in the Jackson area. It enables students to take the first steps in preparing for God-pleasing lay occupations or full-time work in the kingdom of God." If this article had been written in a 1986 newspaper it would have been entirely true. In 1976, no more could be said than what Mr. Tharman was quoted in the newspaper as saying in 1974, "With a modest beginning and a small student body, a limited curriculum is being offered presently. Expansion will come in the future with larger enrollments."

When a student registered and received his handbook he or she could read the purpose of Kettle Moraine: "KMLHS was established to provide a truly Christian centered education to our youth at the secondary level. Our curriculum is designed to prepare our youth to be dedicated Christian laymen. In addition, an academic program is available for those who wish to continue their education at our synodical schools to prepare for the preaching and teaching ministry." Why was it put this way? The federation's

constitution reads: "The curriculum shall be designed to enable graduates to lead fruitful, God-pleasing lives in any God-pleasing profession or trade, to prepare for the church's ministry, or to enter any secular institution of higher learning." The statement of purpose in the handbook certainly seems to highlight the idea of training for lay occupations and treats training for church work as something in addition--a side light of sorts. The constitution treats all three ideas stated equally, although the lay occupation is mentioned first and might be considered stressed. But in practice, training for lay occupations was not highlighted not was training for work in the church treated as something in addition. A handwritten memo from 1981-'82 shows this to be the case, written by Mr. Taylor who started teaching at KMLHS in the Fall of 1979. He observed that the foriegn language curriculum instituted primarily for the preministerial tract was staffed by the equivalent of one full-time teacher. He questioned the validity of retaining such "a program that serves only 4% of our student population as opposed to other programs (such as industrial arts) that would likely serve upwards of 20% of our student body." In a list of recommendations to the WELS Commission on Higher Education it was stated, "From our own experience here at Kettle Moraine Lutheran it is costing us approximately \$800.00 more to educate a preministerial student for the 1980-'81 term" principally because of the language courses required. Tuition was considerably less when I attended from 1975-'79 so the margin may have been even greater then. Those taking the preministerial tract were getting quite a deal with special attention at an inexpensive price. The other students at Kettle Moraine were helping fund our education.

Furthermore, various advertisements gave the impression that Kettle Moraine was ready to replace the need for public high schools. For instance, one article read, "September of 1974 was the date aimed for by the study committee for our Christian high school to open since we have no time to lose in providing an opportunity to combat the secularism, materialism, and humanism reigning in public high schools." After hearing such an attack the area public high schools could have easily drawn half of our students away simply by listing their course offerings next to those of Kettle Moraine. An early survey taken seemed to imply that Kettle Moraine could meet the needs of all 2725 children in the 18 area congregations as it stated, "65-85 students a year would be interested in an area Lutheran high school."

Finally, one last item that seemed less than accurate was a curriculum list from 1974. In parantheses under arts and crafts was listed Shop and Home Ec. Home Ec. wasn't offered for another couple years and Shop was first offered in 1986. With the level of misrepresentation that occurred during those first years, one could expect complaints about the courses offered.

However, in the light of the fact that everything possible was being done during these first years to expand the curriculum, this complaint was inexecutable. One only has to take a glance at the scope of the Faculty-Curriculum Committee's work to see why the curriculum wasn't looked into as much as it probably should have. This committee was involved with the approval of additions or deletions to the curriculum, as suggested by the principal and faculty, an ongoing-curriculum evaluation, classroom visitation, consideration of staffing needs, evaluation of faculty self study,

liaison between faculty and board of regents on matters relating to grievances, salary, etc. When you consider that it took eight different calls to find their first teacher and that in the first three years the staff was expanded from 1 full-time teacher and four part-time teachers to seven full-time teachers and two part-time teachers one can easily recognize what this committee was busiest with. Besides that, additions and deletions were to be suggested by the principal and the faculty. The principal was extremely busy with administration. Administration responsibilities arose quickly. Already on Sept. 23, 1974, only 20 days after the first school year began, it was resolved to add \$75,000.00 to the budget for a land purchase. Forty-eight acres were purchased by March 1975. Less than a year later a goal of \$800,000.00 in cash and commitments was set over a three year period for a new building. Nor could the rest of the faculty put much thought into revising the curriculum. To insure the quality of their education some established Lutheran High Schools considered five classes per day a maximum teaching load. Most of the teachers at Kettle Moraine were teaching seven classes a day without considering study hall supervision or other responsibilities. For instance, in 1977, Mr. Richard Sievert had only one hour per day free to be the student body Guidance Counselor.

In the face of all this, there were still additions made to the curriculum that students could easily take for granted. In January of 1975, a typing course was added for 10th grade during the second semester. On May 13, 1975, the AAL Lutheran High School Support System gave funds to establish courses in Algebra II, Chemistry, Home Economics, and Drafting. Mrs. Paul Nitz, who

began teaching in 1975, when faced with not having to teach Home Ec. II because of lack of interest decided to teach a Home Ec. course for Junior and Senior boys rather than take an extra library period.

A practical policy was set down on Nov. 15, 1976, that fifteen students are the minimum number of students offered a given course. Those with less would have to be approved by the Executive Board. Any classes smaller than fifteen would be considered exceptional cases. I found it somewhat ironic that in June of 1976, before this policy was set, Arts and Crafts Courses were dropped as well as Home Economics II because of low attendance. However, after this policy was set, in June of 1977 Latin III with only four students and German II with only five students were kept in the curriculum because the "manpower was available" and "some of the courses must be offered to fulfill the requirement of the three-track curriculum as required by the constitution." The minimum enrollment per class policy was enstated to make the best use of available **faculty**. To keep these two classes because manpower was available seems somewhat contradictory. When the classes were dropped in 1976 the students were told to take correspondence courses if they were still interested. Why couldn't the same thing have been done for German II and Latin III in 1977? From personal experience, I know that this was a realistic possibility. That same year I took Latin II by correspondence through the University of Wisconsin Extension. I found this very enjoyable and received a B+ for the course. The only setback was the fact that it took longer to finish because I wasn't monitored at all. I believe a system of lightly monitored correspondence courses for those classes with under fifteen students would have been quite successful and would have freed up teachers for other classes.

The minimum enrollment per class policy could have easily weeded out the impractical classes and left room for more popular classes. In many cases, especially in the case of Latin III and IV, it was never recognized.

The need for additional courses was recognized, especially for the general track, by the Faculty-Curriculum Committee on March 13, 1978. It seemed that it was no longer feasible to plan the curriculum on a year-to-year basis. Significantly, it was stated that need for the course must be considered every bit as much as cost. The committee recommended on April 3 that courses be added according to the priority list as determined by the results of a follow-up faculty poll. The students also took this poll and the results which came out on April 26 had General Shop heading the list. The list continued with Driver's Ed., Earth Science, Spanish 1-2, Art (practical), General Business, etc. As important as all of this sounded, a report stated simply that very few additional classes of any kind could be offered without additional staffing and space. This was stated when already in the new building with a staff of eleven members. The teachers were still burdened with six classes per day and 4.5 preparations compared to the proper five classes and three preparations. The building set up for 200+ students had already, in its first year of use, 205 students attending.

In the 1977-'78 annual report of the Faculty-Curriculum Committee the little that was done toward curriculum development is easily recognized. "Pastor Behling, the Religion Department Head, presented his ideas for our Religion curriculum. The emphasis of the curriculum is not only doctrine, but also to promote sanctification in the lives of our students that with the

Holy Spirit's influence, they may be led to take an active role in the activities of their respective congregations as mature Christians. At present, no further recommendations have been made as to additional curriculum development, although both students and faculty have been surveyed to determine which courses are necessary to offer a more balanced and complete curriculum." Great concern was also expressed concerning the inadequate Physical Education program and a plea was made for their own gymnasium facility soon. Once again most of the curriculum committee's time was spent on staffing needs.

Due to a budgetary problem in 1979 the curriculum actually suffered a setback. It was resolved that for the 1979-'80 school year Phy. Ed. 10, Treble Choir and Boys Home Ec. be dropped. To keep the four-track curriculum in tact provisions were made to keep Drafting II, Advanced Math, Latin III-IV, and German II. It was adopted that these classes be taught by correspondence and the price be underwritten to a maximum of 50% by KML. On the other hand, in the midst of this setback, the Curriculum Committee kept moving ahead. It was at this time that the position of Band Man was brought up to relieve Mr. Jerome Kieselhorst so he could teach another class and to develop grade school band programs. This has helped tremendously in Kettle Moraine's recruitment efforts and has cost the school very little since most of it is paid for through the cost of the lessons given. Incidentally, I have been told that Latin III-IV was taught anyway during 1979-'80 because Pastor Roger Kobleske had the time. Whatever the case, by May 21, 1979, it was moved and passed that the fees for the above courses taken by correspondence be completely underwritten

by the school. On May 22, the Faculty-Curriculum Committee added to its long list of duties the developing of job descriptions for the entire administrative team.

On February 18, 1980, the Faculty-Curriculum received a new name--Educational Programs Committee. With the new name came the same old problems. A new building program was in the works with additional responsibilities for the principal that threatened to take him out of the classroom entirely. Groundbreaking was already set for March 22. In the meantime the entire Phy. Ed. program had to be dropped so the expanding Home Ec. Department could use the room originally built for it. Too many faculty members still had to teach seven periods a day. There was need for additional instructors for Phy. Ed., Business Ed., Industrial Arts, and foreign languages. With these many needs I don't understand why the Educational Programs Committee chose to only underscore the importance of continuing to call for a foreign language instructor. They even felt that a possible deficit in the budget fro 1980-'81 should not be a reason for not obtaining this needed instructor. "Not to call would represent a decided step backward in our attempt to alleviate the problem of excessive classloads for our instructors and administrative personnel." It was felt that the following courses must be covered according to a Nov. 12, 1979, Faculty-Curriculum Committee Report: Latin II, Latin III-IV, perhaps German I, and German II. This wasn't said about the other areas of the Curriculum although an additional instructor in any one of these areas would have relieved the overburdened staff. If only the preministerial tract hadn't been so permanent. The general tract was also set down by the constitution but one

wonders if it was being done justice without proper Business Education and without any Phy. Ed. or Industrial Arts. Perhaps this is part of the reason why it was noticed in February of 1981 that some brothers and sisters of students at KMLHS would not be entering the ninth grade the next year. No reason is given in the minutes.

About this time in the minutes I found a number of handwritten recommendations that were tabled. They suggested the call of one additional staff member in the area of Industrial Arts who would teach Drafting and Math, but whose major responsibility would be to plan and implement the development of an Industrial Arts program for Kettle Moraine. It also suggested a four-year phasing out or restructuring of the foreign language department. Perhaps this was what prompted the following statement in the KMLHS Digest in 1982. "Areas where we feel a need to improve our curriculum are the addition of elective courses in the areas of computer studies, industrial arts, and specialized, in-depth academic courses. There is also a great need for remedial programs to help the less gifted students at KMLHS. The financial situation has not allowed us to make these additions. But we feel they are real needs, and we want to meet these needs as soon as we are able."

Then begins a great deal of improvement for the curriculum. In September 1982, an Apple II microcomputer was purchased utilizing funds received from AAL. This was the initial phase in the inception of a full computer education program for KMLHS.

In a 1983-'84 Attrition Analysis report it was discovered that there was a total of 18 students who left KMLHS after their

freshman year prior to the 1983-'84 school year compared to the regular five. Nine went to public schools in the area. Only one had left because of curriculum problems. I wonder how many potential students never started because of curriculum problems. There is no way of knowing this, but then 18 students leaving was disturbing enough.

In 1985 a computer course was added which was immediately filled to capacity. The funding for materials came through the AAL Lutheran High School Enrichment Program, donations, and course fees. In 1986, a Technical Education Program was started with Shop and Small Engines. In the Fall of 1987, classes for Electricity and Electronics will be added. The ironic twist about this is that Mr. Fenske who was with Kettle Moraine from the first year of its existence is teaching these Tech. Ed. classes. Just like the computer class these classes are paying for themselves.

Could these important classes of the general tract for this area Lutheran high school have been offered earlier? One can see from this paper that the necessity for the foreign languages and the preministerial tract got in the way of progress several times. This seems even more ironic with Northwestern Prep only an hour away. Another problem that continually arose was the financial picture. When Kettle Moraine began one year after the first organizational meeting it was indeed, as Mr. Fenske called it, a venture of faith. As the school grew so quickly we could see the Lord's blessings which filled our hearts with joy. At the same time the devil filled our heads with doubts. Naturally, many decisions were made with our heads rather than our hearts. In the face of this our gracious Lord has blessed Kettle Moraine with

a beautiful facility, a full faculty, and, now, an expanded curriculum. I reiterate Mr. Fenske's prayer from the 1974-'75 Equestrian, "May God also give each of us the faith, the strength, and the dedication to utilize all of our God-given gifts and talents to his eternal glory and for the furtherance of his kingdom."

