



Wisconsin Lutheran College:  
The History of Its Origin

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28 May 1986

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## Preface

During the course of this paper the names of a number of men are mentioned. Although credit might be due them for their countless hours of work, their labor was not in their own behalf, but to God's glory and for the advancement of His Kingdom. The names within this paper are given for historical reasons, so that an accurate account of the origins of the second Wisconsin Lutheran College might not be lost. The efforts and stamina of these men can only be credited to the faith that was given them through the power of the Holy Spirit. Therefore, may all the honor and glory for the birth and the success of this school be given to God who motivates and equips men for the growth of His Kingdom.

### Convention Votes to Close College

New Ulm, Minn. - After five hours of debate delegates to the 40th biennial convention of the Wisconsin Ev. Lutheran Synod voted 150-65 to close Wisconsin Lutheran College at the end of the 1969-70 school year and consolidate the Synod's teacher-training facilities at Dr. Martin Luther College, New Ulm, Minn.

Wisconsin Lutheran College, a junior college for teacher-training in Milwaukee, was opened in 1960. It has no campus of its own and will continue to use the classroom space that it has been renting from Wisconsin Lutheran High School until it closes next year. Current enrollment is 228.

(James Schaefer, NEWS--WELS, August 12, 1969)

This news release prompted by the decision of the WELS Synodical Convention conveyed the message of the closure of the first Wisconsin Lutheran College, formerly Milwaukee Lutheran Teachers College. The name of the college changed in the mid-sixties as the WELS began reflecting its synod affiliation with its school names. In recent years the seminary was renamed Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary, the Milwaukee high school--Wisconsin Lutheran High School and now the area teachers college. The same action of closing the door on the Milwaukee-based teacher feeder school would consequently incite in the minds of a few men the dream of a phoenix. Although this decision passed by the convention sparked men to take action, a fuel for this action had already been accumulating in the previous years.

In the 1966 Missio Dei fund raising campaign literature sent to all the Synod members it was stated that over \$1,225,000 would be allotted for worker training purposes. A 55 acre site had already been purchased in Brookfield, Wisconsin for the new home of the teachers college. From the Missio Dei offering the first unit of the new campus would be provided. This unit authorized by the 1965 Convention would provide classrooms for 250 students, administration offices, chapel-auditorium, cafeteria, gymnasium, student union center, and specialized areas for science and music. This was a clear indication that the Metro-Milwaukee was to receive a permanent Christ centered Arts and Science college.

Such a school was the dream of WELS members in the Milwaukee area and neighboring states as they contributed generously to the Missio Dei fund drive. They had been given a commitment that an Arts and Science College would be built as a result of their gifts. The action taken of August 12, 1969 not only put an end

to their dream, but also stirred up feelings concerning previous promises made to them. The young and flourishing teacher training school, a local Christ-centered higher educational institution and the vision of the new campus were to be squelched by a Synod convention that in previous years had fostered those hopes.

At this fateful convention in August of 1969, the resolution No. 1 proposed by committee No. 5 based its decision on: 1) previous projections of more teacher graduates that had failed to materialize, 2) analysis of birth rate, baptisms, and teacher drop-out showed need for about 175 graduates needed for years to come, 3) confidence of Dr. Martin Luther College to recruit and accomodate those needs, 4) possible increase in quality of the education by pooling resources, 5) concentration of staff to be more cost efficient, and 6) the ever increasing emphasis on mission expansion and its consequent demand on funds. At the time these men made their resolutions under prayerful consideration as they thought best for God's kingdom. They resolved: 1) to merge WLC with DMLC, 2) to rescind all previous resolutions concerning WLC, 3) to continue to salary the WLC faculty until they have accepted other calls or chosen other employment, 4) to dispose of dormitory property, 5) to retain Brookfield property for further use, and 6) to direct DMLC faculty and entire Synod to begin an intensive student recruitment program.

The financial implications were evident factors in closure of this college that mushroomed in a short-lived decade. Under the capable direction of Rev. Robert Voss success was an understatement. This success, however, according to Voss in a Milwaukee Sentinel article on Nov. 8, 1969, also lead to its sudden end, "When the college was started, the synod was caught in a real dilemma. There was a shortage of teachers for the synod's elementary schools." In the years since its inception, the college graduated 550 persons--521 of whom became teachers or are working to become teachers. "The fact that the college enabled the synod to catch up with its need for teachers so fast, made it a victim of its own success." Voss opposed the closing of the school as being a short-sighted decision showing a lack of confidence in the potential growth of our church and because a good percentage of the students came from within 100 miles of the school, "a case of putting the pump where the well was". Voss was not alone with this opinion.

There is little doubt that there were questions concerning the closing of the teachers college. One must take into the account how difficult it is to make projections using statistics. Considering this decision today in 1986, while DMLC is placing only half its graduates and the number of graduates is about the same as the late sixties, it would appear that this was a wise move. However, there were men who had dreams of this school being more than a feeder school for DMLC. These men had dreams of providing an educational facility to fill the needs of thousands of high school WELS members who needed Christian support in their young lives. While the closing of this school may have appeared to be to the financial benefit of the synod, there were those who felt it was at the cost of the youth.

The prime consideration of that synod convention dealt with the need for teachers and the financial aspect of two teacher training schools. Were there other alternatives to closing this facility? Could this school have developed a liberal arts program on the junior college level and become self-sustaining? While we promote Christian education on the primary and secondary level, doesn't the junior college have equal merit? If finances were the question, couldn't there have been alternatives to synodical subsidy, as a college association or even private status? As a liberal arts college, wouldn't WLC be more flexible to meet the needs of the entire synod, both as a worker-training school and to advance the Christian education of the laity? There was of course the Bethany program, but then again there is the point that the WELS concentration still lies in the Metro-Milwaukee area. The rapid growth of the teachers college in Milwaukee is proof of the advantage of having such a college in the proximity. It is easy to reflect on these questions with hind-sight. However, it was necessary at the time that something be done about the demand for teachers. As the record shows though, since that time no shortage has occurred in the teaching field rather a surplus. Was the closing of the college necessarily the best answer? That is debatable.

### **New Beginnings**

There were strong feelings that there should be a college in the Milwaukee area and there were opinions that the convention's decision was not in the best interest of all. Before the dust had barely settled after the convention, a meeting was called to discuss the results of the decision. Carroll Dummann, a prominent businessman and active layman in the WELS, who was present at the convention decided to take action.

On September 19, 1969 Dummann had several men to his home for dinner to discuss what had been decided in the previous month and what course of response they might pursue. Present in this study committee were four pastors; Roland Ehlke, Carl Leyrer, Jonathan Mahnke and Arnold Schroeder, two teachers; Gerald Berger and Orville Hando, and three laymen; Carroll Dummann, Clarence Hombsch and Richard Raabe. The optimistic tone for the meeting was set with the reading of Romans 8:28,29. The purpose of the meeting was stated as determining what if anything, could be done about the action of the Synod in merging WLC with DMLC resulting in the closing of the college in Milwaukee. The general concensus of opinion of the committee was that, even though the synod made a serious mistake to be evidenced in the near future, the most important function of the committee was to be one of "mending fences," of easing the bitterness of the fellow members, realizing that the welfare and the continued unity of the Synod must prevail.

The results of the convention were read and the men reacted to them. It was agreed that any action that should be taken should be done so within the framework of the Synod. Establishment of a college on a local level would be considered as a last resort. The committee then decided that a subcommittee be elected to formulate a statement which would be forwarded to the Praesidium of the Synod in the name of the committee.

Schroeder, Dummann and Leyrer were elected to serve as the subcommittee and the meeting was adjourned.

Two weeks later the statement for presentation to the subcommittee was prepared. The underlying purpose of the letter was stated as follows,

We, the undersigned members (9) of the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod submit the following statement with full knowledge that the Synod has spoken in respect to the termination (merger) of Wisconsin Lutheran College at its regular 1969 Convention. We do so without bitterness or rancor and certainly with no intent to be subversive or divisive; rather, we are deeply concerned about divisions and bitterness which already seem to have been created. We are moved simply by sincere conviction and heartfelt interest in the welfare of the Synod and the Church of Christ at large, a conviction and an interest which compels us to speak despite the action of the 1969 Convention.

Upon stating some concerns and misgivings concerning the Convention resolution, they suggested that the Synod had erred in its decision and that steps should be taken to retain WLC. Their objective was to maintain WLC on the basis of several advantages for the Synod, financially and spiritually.

The response of the Praesidium was an appointment of three men to consider the request. Six months after they received the "STATEMENT TO THE PRAESIDIUM AND THE COORDINATING COUNCIL OF THE WISCONSIN EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN SYNOD", April 3, 1970, the Coordinating Council issued a formal reply to the nine men who signed the letter the previous October. Although they mentioned their appreciation that these nine men express their concern for Christian education, "neither the Praesidium nor the Coordinating Council is empowered to alter resolutions of the Synod Convention, even if they should consider them ill-advised."

In an informal meeting with President Naumann in early November, Pastor Schroeder and Carroll Dummann learned of the initial response at the reception of the letter. They suggested that the committee meet in short order to discuss other alternatives. When the WLC Study Committee met on November 18 with their hopes of working through the channels of the Synod exhausted, they proceeded to examine alternative solutions. Since the High School Conference already had ten years of college experience and had proven that it was financially feasible, they were to be approached.

### **The Springboard**

Up until this point the concern for an area college had been expressed by a few individuals. The hope of the Synod rescinding the merger decision was lost. In December this matter was brought up at the monthly meeting of the Milwaukee Federation. The Milwaukee Federation is an association of Milwaukee area WELS churches which performs various services in the area from publicizing local church services to sponsoring a camp for WELS youth in the summer. Clarence Hombsch, also a board member of the Federation, reported at this meeting that several men had discussed the college in the area. He expressed desire that the Federation explore what support would be given to a college developed by subscriptions. A committee was then formed to

decide whether the Federation should be encouraged to support such a college. Clarence Hombsch was to head this committee and Principal Krause of Wisconsin Lutheran High School was to be included.

Within the next few months the new study committee had met several times and was prepared to report to the Federation in February. Principal Krause served as the spokesman for the committee. It was reported that the Synod had made an error in closing the Wisconsin Lutheran College and that an attempt should be made to start a college, a Liberal Arts or feeder college. The committee had discussed the basis of Christian education, the concern for the youth, the concerns expressed by a number of individuals, practicality of a junior college, the financial concerns, and the fact that the Federation represented a large number of congregations in the Milwaukee area. From its research they had drawn up the following resolution for the Board: "THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Milwaukee Federation of Wisconsin Ev. Lutheran Synod Churches take steps leading to the establishment of a Junior College in the Milwaukee area." The motion was made and passed. In order for this matter to receive sufficient attention, it was to be taken up at the annual meeting in April.

Clarence Hombsch continued to keep the Federation informed about the progress that the study committee was making. Prior to the April Annual meeting copies of the Resolution passed in February were sent to the delegates. Men were selected to speak on the various aspects of the proposed college.

The meeting of April 17, 1970 was conducted in the order of panel discussion. Pastor Arnold Schroeder, the first president of the Federation and chairman of the Synod's Spiritual Welfare Commission, introduced the topic with the reason why a junior college should be established. He described the WELS as "the last sizable Orthodox Church" and that there is a large potential for the church's future here in Wisconsin and Michigan. The spiritual health of our youth needs to be met. The rise of materialism is threatening our youth on secular campuses throughout the nation. It was for this reason that Bethany Lutheran College was supported by our Synod. He mentioned calculated estimates of 15,000 students among a communicant membership of 260,000 in three of our districts. What a potential! On the congregational level with its many problems the byword is always "faith". The challenge before them is to bring the "bread of Heaven" and the "water of life" to the youth and preserve them in that "faith". Concerning this bold move of establishing a college, Pastor Schroeder closed with a quotation by Bernard Shaw: "Some people see things as they are, and ask why. I dream of things that never were, and ask why not?" While both kinds of attitudes are essential, the secret of progress is through their cooperation.

Professor Paul Ruege, still teaching at the WLC which was to close in June, answered the question: "What kind of program would this college have?" Since we are committed for Grade School and High School, why not College? It would be a formal Christian training with religion courses for Confessional Christianity and subjects to meet the widest possible needs, i.e.

Letters and Science (2 year program--pre-professional) and technical school taught with a Christian point of view, in a Christian atmosphere, by Christian teachers and workers. Accreditation would have to be met on a provisional basis.

To discuss the location of such a school, Mr. Lester Found, the Vice Principal of WLHS, presented the availability of space at the high school. They have the facilities to cradle a beginning school. Classes could be held from 3-5 pm and even in the evening. The manpower could be borrowed from the faculty for the type of basic courses needed at a beginning college level.

The financial and organizational matters were spoken to by Principal Krause. This college would be able to rely on the administration and experience of WLHS in running a college as it had done for the previous ten years. For the time being tuition would cover the cost of operation and maintenance. When a plant would be required later this would be a capital expense. Krause, however, mentioned the financial advantages of a private institution over a Synod supported institution in regard to loans and financial aid. The control of the college could be by churches of the Synod, as a College Conference, not limited to the Milwaukee area, but able to draw from a wider sphere. Another alternative would be a local conference that could operate a community college.

This discussion was undertaken in the spirit that the Lord expects his people to take his work with faith and courage to expand His work. Furthermore, the recommendation that the Milwaukee Federation pursue the possible establishment of a Junior College was moved and passed. To implement this motion, still another committee was to be appointed consisting of one pastor, one educator and three laymen to explore all avenues of possibility for the establishment of a Junior College.

#### **Yet Another Study Committee**

The five members selected by the Milwaukee Federation to investigate the possibility of a Junior College were: Arnold Schroeder (pastoral member), Principal Krause (educational member), Clarence Hombsch, Richard Raabe and William Bowker (laymen). The first meeting of this committee was held on May 19, 1970. At his meeting their course of action was discussed. It was imperative that they first consider the academic structure of such an institution. The committee agreed that there was potential in the area for a four year liberal arts college. The immediate prospect, however, would be to establish a two year program using the High school's facilities. The question of approaching the Synod with the possibility of purchasing the land bought for the previous WLC was delayed. Under Bowker and Krause the question of a two year versus a four year college was to be considered. In the near future principals of area high schools would be contacted for a meeting to discuss the college.

The major success and impetus for these men who researched this dream of a college while encountering fears, doubts and disappointments on the road of serving the Lord's kingdom came from the results of a questionnaire they distributed. During the summer of 1970 a questionnaire was composed and sent out. The objective of this research and disbursement was twofold: 1) to

provide information concerning the College that was being discussed, and 2) to receive feedback concerning interest, needs, a junior or senior college, willingness to join a college conference and then the number of potential students. The recipients of this information were 395 congregations within a radius of 150 miles from Milwaukee. From professional sources, they were told that questionnaires of this sort generally receive a 10% response, however, this is enough to make accurate calculations. The Federation paid the accrued material and postage expenses.

Although most of the results had returned already in September, by November the results were tabulated and an exceptional rate of return experienced. Replies from 184 congregations were received or 47% of those congregations that had been contacted.

Of the 184 congregations replying:

- 21 (11.5%), representing 12,202 communicants (14%), were opposed to the establishment of new college.
- 22, representing 12,602 communicants, were in favor of a college, but expressed fears with respect to financing and possible doctrinal problems.
- 136 (85.5%), representing 58,690 communicants (81%), were in favor of a college, 104 of these congregations favored a 4 year school.
- 5 (3%), representing 2,724 communicants (5%), were undecided.
- 88 congregations were interested in joining the College Conference. 39 of these said they would join immediately.

At the September meeting of the Federation, results of the questionnaire were read and a recommendation was made by the committee. They proposed that the Federation appoint a provisional board which would proceed with a more intensive investigation in the areas of finances, organization of a college Conference, and formation of a constitution. A motion to table this recommendation prevailed. Before the close of the meeting, however, delegates rescinded the motion and directed the committee to expand and continue its investigation.

With the results of the questionnaire and the direction of the Federation to proceed, the committee abandoned one of its original proposals to limit the school to the Milwaukee area and began investigating a College Conference. The Committee then engaged in increasing its membership and focused its attention on specific details necessary to such a project. Along with the results of the questionnaire, an appeal was sent out to congregations to contact men or future Board members and to make known their hopes and plans for such a new college.

It was under the direction of the Federation that this committee was augmented with the help of Victor Manian, a Milwaukee judge. As reported in January of 1971, the College committee had now appointed Constitution and Curriculum Committees and progress in these areas was under way.

Judge Manian was the chairman of this committee and Rev. Jon Mahnke was the other member. Although the Constitution Committee began its work with the new year, discussion and revision would



be ongoing for years to come. The completed articles and rough drafts of the by-laws were available for distribution by May of that year. These were now subject to corrections. Considerable discussion dealt with membership and membership fees, both for congregations and associate memberships. It was also at this time that WLHS was in a major debt retirement drive, Project E. Since the committee members' obligations were also to the High School, they saw it fit to temporarily cease the committee work and devote their time to the fund drive. By this time the preliminary work was out of the way and they were prepared for the next step.

Curriculum study began alongside the development of the constitution. Under the direction of Paul Ruege, the chairman of the Curriculum Committee, which also consisted of Rev. Krause and Dr. Larsen, planning was made for a small college in its initial stages. The planning concentrated on first year students naturally and was to provide them with general preparation for work in any higher education program. Along with Religion, History, Mathematics, Science, Foreign Language and Physical Education were also to be offered. While in the case of Foreign languages, it only was feasible to schedule one, Spanish (because of its projected need in the future), other languages (e.g. German, Latin, and Russian) would be available on a tutorial basis. This would be typical of the entire curriculum. It would be tailored to the needs of the student body. All students would be required to take Religion classes.

The offerings of the second year would largely be determined by the goals and destinations of the first year students. Therefore at this time concentration was on the incoming class with the projected goal of beginning classes in the fall of 1972. It was the long range purpose of the committee to provide Christian education in the post high school years for all of its broad constituency.

The staff was to be comprised of men with considerable college teaching experience in the former WLC and other institutions of higher learning. Available were three earned doctorates, compared to Bethany which had none, New Ulm having no more than this as a four year college and NWC which had one. Such a level of qualification is not generally demanded of a junior college, but with the encouragement of the questionnaire results and the vision of a future four year institution this was seen as a sound basis. The availability of these instructors and facilities would warrant late afternoon and evening classes.

It was believed that the organization of the college conference and the recruiting of the student body could be done simultaneously. The enthusiasm generated would thus augment the other. A prospectus was available by the close of 1971 and it was <sup>wilson?</sup> their intention to begin recruitment at the start of the new year. Such optimism could not be supported with the man hours and outside support that was necessary for such an undertaking. Because these committee members had many other commitments and no solid organization had developed by this point, it was obligatory to delay the school opening.

There was no committee designated to pursuing the possibility of purchasing land. However, at this time efforts

were being made to acquire the 55 acres of land purchased by the Synod for the previous WLC or at least to postpone its sale until the new WLC might be in a position to make an offer. To this end, the Milwaukee Federation presented a memorial prior to the 1971 Synod convention concerning the 1969 resolution which directed that the Brookfield property remain available for future use. With the hope that this property might be utilized by the new WLC they wrote "that we (Federation) request the Board of Trustees of the WELS be directed to keep the Milwaukee Federation of WELS churches informed of its plans for the disposition of the site and to give them ample time and opportunity to acquire it for their purpose before making it available to others." At the convention the Board of Trustees were given permission to sell the Brookfield property. The Synod was aware of the interest that the study committee and Federation had in the land and it was agreed that they would be given the first opportunity to purchase the land. However, it was now a necessity to have the constitution and curriculum studies complete. Studies made through Clarence Hombsch investigated the costs of land purchase and building in the meantime.

The role of the third study committee was nearly completed as 1971 drew to a close. They had completed a working constitution, made the necessary curriculum studies, made the Synod aware that they were interested in the Brookfield land, began making arrangements for a contract between the High School and future College Conference and now prepared for the next step in their organization. They requested \$500 from the Federation to cover expenses expected in the organization of a College Conference. In a meeting just prior to Christmas of that year the committee finalized the details of a mass mailing to all the congregations in Wisconsin and Michigan. The mailing was to consist of: a request to consider joining the formation of the College Conference, information on probable questions, a reply sheet for possible courses of action and a copy of the tentative constitution.

#### **Provisional Board of the New Wisconsin Lutheran College**

A letter was sent out in March of 1972 informing congregations that the role of the College Study Committee was nearing the end of its assignment. It was now time for the formation of a College Conference. The Study Committee had grown from its initial five men to nine. All the necessary preliminaries had been carried out by these few men and steps should now be taken to consider future developments.

The resolutions of the April 26 meeting are as follows:

"That a Provisional Board of Directors be chosen which will take the steps necessary for establishing a college conference."

"That the nine-man College Study Committee be appointed as the Provisional Board for the College with the power to add to its number as it sees fit. (It is understood that Pastor Manthey as the Chairman of the Milwaukee Federation of Wisconsin Synod Churches in consultation with the Study Committee name the additional members to the Board.)"

The Provisional Board held elections by secret ballot and chose Hombsch as the Chairman, Dummann as the Vice-Chairman,

Ruege as the Secretary and Mr. Wilmer Guenther, who would resign in the near future and be replaced by Mr. Kuehl, as the Treasurer.

Their next order of business dealt with a letter from the Synod's Real Estate manager, Art Schaefer, concerning their request for the Brookfield property. A committee was to respond.

Continued support from congregations continued to grow. Congregations that had formerly opposed the college were now altering their views.

The priority of this Board was ascertained to be that of incorporation. Steps should be taken in this direction. A name should therefore be considered. "Wisconsin Lutheran College" had been used up to that time on a tentative basis. A new committee under Pastor Snyder should consider a name for the new college.

Thus the Provisional Board expanded to meet its new needs and specifically addressed the particular technical aspects of the emerging college.

In June of 1972 the Board voted to accept "Wisconsin Lutheran College Conference" over "Trinity Lutheran College" as a name for the College Conference. Krause was designated as the registered agent and future consideration would have to be put into the logo or seal.

By this time the possibility of opening the college was out of the question for the fall of 1972. A date for a formal organizational meeting was set for October 4. Meanwhile, on July 7 incorporation proceedings were completed by Judge Manian. At the July meeting, Krause was appointed as the President of the College. In August, the logo, as seen on the cover, was submitted and by September, a contract was drawn up between the High School and the College Conference.

This was a time when special acknowledgement was given to the Milwaukee Federation for its encouragement and financial support. High School faculty members, who gave not only their time, were also acknowledged for their monetary contributions. However, as the pieces began to fall together there were also the headaches and heartbreaks. Time was denied men seeking to speak about the new college at a District Conference. The Chairman of the Provisional Board needed to consider resignation because his own congregation refused to join the conference. Friction and disappointments ran alongside the progress of the new college.

The October 4 meeting drew 110 representatives from 43 congregations. They were informed concerning the history and the work of the Study Committee and Board. The highlights of the proposed constitution were presented. The results of this meeting were evident as Mr. Wayne Kneser, Membership Committee Chairman, reported on October 10 that the first congregations (7) had applied for membership. The budget for the first fiscal year was to come from the \$50 membership fees that were collected from congregation memberships and \$5 associate memberships. This financial independence marked the break with the Federation.

The administration was now taking shape. President Krause appointed Dr. Walter Drost as the Registrar, Dr. U. Larsen as the Academic Dean, and Paul Ruege as the Dean of Students.

Administration expenses were projected, curriculum studies continued and consideration was given to a College Center to be purchased. By the end of the year a contract for the use of Wisconsin Lutheran High School would be finalized for the use of their facilities. Although accreditation was not possible without an institution, connections were already being made with various neighboring institutions (Carroll College, MSOE, Milwaukee County School of Nursing, UW-Whitewater, etc.) for the transfer of future students' credits.

News of the new WLC was being published in the Badger Lutheran and the Northwestern Lutheran. Personal visits and presentations were made by Board members to congregations that requested information about the school. Publicity was likewise generated by letters sent to congregations, newsletters sent to pastors, and regular news releases to the NWL.

Time had once again arrived for a change. Oscar Vogelpohl was appointed as the Chairman of the Nominating Committee late that year and was accompanied by other members in January. Their duty was to make preparation for the Charter Meeting that was to take place on January 31. The Purpose of this meeting would be to adopt a constitution and elect the Board of Regents. Charter memberships were to be closed at this meeting.

On January 31, 1973, Pastor Schroeder emphasized the basis for their work and the means of success in this Kingdom work with the words of Ps 127:1. The results of the questionnaire were once again read to confirm the opinion of the congregations in favor of the school. Carroll Dumann was recognized for donations of time, materials and finances. Thirty congregations had been entered under the charter membership of the College Conference.

The new milestone was reached as the election of the permanent Board of Regents was completed. Elected were five pastors, five teachers and eleven laymen from throughout the state. This was the last meeting of the Provisional Board.

### **Board of Regents**

Immediately after the adjournment of the Charter Meeting of the new Wisconsin Lutheran College Conference in the cafeteria of WLHS, Chairman pro tem, Wayne Kneser, called the first session of the Wisconsin Lutheran College Board of Regents to order in the Board Room. The officers elected were the same as those elected officers of the Provisional Board. Three additional executives were named: Rev. Manthey, Rev. Snyder and Judge Manian.

It was at the next meeting of the Board of Regents one month later that it was announced that eight applications had been accepted for the fall of 1973. There was a good deal of work that was ahead of them before the opening of the school would be possible. Once again committees had to be established to carry on the course that the Provisional Board had begun. Clarence Hombsch reminded them of the tremendous amount of work before them. In essence, the work of this board was to finalize the efforts of the men begun years before. Legitimate organization was the most recent development.

The question of school property was still unsettled. A major issue before the Board was the purchase of the Brookfield

site, a prime piece of real estate. As presently established, they were in a position to deal with the Synod. The land had been purchased originally by the Synod for \$275,000. Two homes had been built on the land and there was the matter of taxes which brought the investment to some \$378,000. The approach of the Federation initially had been that Synod might be willing to part with the land for nothing because of the stipulations that had been made under the Missio Dei offering. The next thought was that it would only be fair that a partial payment would be necessary, since the property was to be used for the Lutheran College. In 1973, WLC was given the first opportunity to deal for the land, but at commercial rates. The Board of Trustees agreed to sell the land to the college for \$600,000 in May and to accept the offer by June. The terms were unreasonable for such a fledgling institution. An alternate solution was attempted through a Dr. Gonis, who was willing to sell a portion of the land to the college. This offer was likewise out of WLC's financial capabilities. Was it necessary for the Synod to bargain on such harsh terms? Did the College Conference have an argument in their favor as to the use of the property? In retrospect we might see the impact that this property might have had for the growth of the school. In retrospect, we saw in 1977 how the Catholics in charge of the House of Good Shepherd were willing to sell their property to WLC for \$750,000 plus back taxes (\$55,000) despite offers of \$4.5 million because they recognized the need of the college and the appropriate use of their former grounds. Could there have been more cooperation between members of our own WELS?

The prospect of a permanent campus had fallen through for the time being. Still a Student Center would be necessary for housing student activities. A few houses opposite WLHS were considered. The property at 407 Glenview Ave. was the object of special consideration. It was owned by the Catholic Archdiocese of Milwaukee and was used by priests suffering from alcoholism. The house was complete with chapel, 8 bedrooms, 5 bathrooms and a large recreation room. For \$85,000 this building was purchased just prior to the beginning of school. It must be considered, that there were only a meager few thousand dollars in the treasury of the college at this time. The faith and determination of these men continued to guide them toward their goal despite the financial risks. The newly purchased building was approved by the city of Wauwatosa just prior to the school opening for college use as women's dorm facilities and as a student center.

As the final preparations drew to a close yet another Synod Convention occurred in New Ulm that August. Representatives from the new WLC were in attendance. Kneser and Dummann attended a booth and disseminated information concerning the school. Mention of the college was made in a sermon and an essay. A request to make a report to the floor committee was passed only after a tie vote. Tension was evident. President Krause reported to the Board of Regents that attempts were made to dispel the misconceptions of the college's birth pains. He indicated his optimism in both the school and its future function in the Synod's constituency in lay education. It was evident

that continued effort was necessary to promote the purpose of WLC and the future operations of the college.

#### **The Lord Blesses Their Labor with Fruit**

On September 4, 1973, the opening service of Wisconsin Lutheran College was held with 128 in attendance. There were 23 full-time students enrolled, 14 part-time, 3 students auditing, and 8 enrolled in a income tax course. The dedication of Wisconsin Lutheran Student Center took place on October 14 with Rev. Robert Voss as the Guest Preacher. The theme was "Dedicated to Building Lives Upon a Rock Foundation", Lk 6:47-47. May this ever be the purpose of the Wisconsin Lutheran College, dedicated to the strengthening and growing of the faith among our laity.

To this day the Lord has continued to bless WLC with increased enrollment, new facilities and a qualified, concerned faculty of its own. The real fruits, however, lie in the spiritual growth and educational opportunities that are now available through this institution. Technically the new WLC is not a feeder-school for teachers and pastors, yet it is prepared and capable to equip all believers for the priesthood through His Word.