

THE DEVELOPMENT OF CHURCH PLANTING STRATEGIES  
IN THE HOME MISSION BRANCH OF  
THE WISCONSIN EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN SYNOD

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January 16, 1992

Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary Library  
1231 W. Seminary Drive. 65th  
Madison, Wisconsin

My original interest in the ministry was teaching, but God had other plans. After my graduation from Doctor Martin Luther College in 1983, I received an assignment from the General Board for Home Missions (hereafter GBHM) to participate in a pilot program of a Travel-Canvass-Witness team. Along with seven other DMLC graduates and two vicars from the Seminary, I was to work with several "exploratory" pastors in determining the feasibility of our mission in their particular area of the country (they were quite spread out). My life will never be the same.

Although it was unknown to me at the time, the Lord had blessed me with an ability to feel comfortable with strangers and communicate with them. I fell into the work of surveying neighborhoods and following up on "prospects" easily and enjoyed the excitement of being a part of sharing the gospel with those who may otherwise have never heard it. I asked questions of our supervising pastors and kept a journal of the things we did so that the year might prove to be more of a learning experience for me. I developed an interest in the strategy of how and why the Wisconsin Synod plants new churches. As I served my vicar year under the Western Wisconsin District Evangelism coordinator, that interest was rekindled and I was given several opportunities to see the process in action. During that time, it was no small learning experience for me to see a current church planter at work as I roomed with an exploratory pastor. That's how I became interested in this topic, now to convince you why you also should be interested...

The purpose of the Christian Church on earth was assigned directly by Jesus moments before his visible ascension: "Go and make disciples of all nations." That statement, recorded by Matthew (chapter 28) has

challenged the disciples of Jesus ever since it was given. So for the last 1,963 years, we have searched for the most efficient and effective methods to make disciples of God's people. Some simply needed strengthening in the true faith. Others had to be converted to the faith with the basics of sin and grace. The church leaders were responsible for deciding which was more important and how we can best use the resources that God has provided to accomplish each.

I have always been told that we study history to learn from past mistakes and successes--to try to avoid the mistakes and reproduce the successes in our culture. By this study of church planting in home mission fields, I hope to find some philosophies and strategies that YOU can apply to your specific situation and to reawaken your interest and sense of urgency to "spread the good news to every creature."

It would be a commendable task to begin with Saint Paul and survey each missionary (home and foreign) or even church organization between him and us. Perhaps I will have the opportunity to do that some day. But I don't have time today and, in fact, prefer to focus on the strategies of our own Wisconsin Synod. As an attempt to keep this short enough to hold your interest, I have narrowed the topic further to address only the development of those mission fields in the United States--our home missions.

#### EARLY SYNODICAL WORK

Before we could begin synodical mission work, we had to develop the synod. One would expect much of our attitude and philosophies to be handed down from the mother country: Germany. The first Lutheran pastors were sent in the early 1800s with two purposes suggested by

the mission societies who had sent them. The "Heidenmission" centered on converting the heathen, while the "Samelmission" sought to gather the Lutherans into functional congregations. Those first pastors consisted of Jonathan Mann,<sup>1</sup> sent by the Basel Mission Society to Washtenau County, MI, and Ehrenfried Seebach,<sup>2</sup> sent by the Langenberg Mission Society to Oakwood, WI. Both men arrived in the early 1800s. Despite the fact that each had been sent to serve a particular group of Lutherans, there was "concern almost immediately shown for extending regular spiritual care to other isolated groups of German Lutherans."<sup>1</sup> Their work is ill-recorded and seems to be somewhat haphazardly carried out.

The work of Pastor Friedrich Schmid is easier to follow. He started his work at Ann Arbor, MI in 1833. As he discovered other small groups of German Lutherans in need of spiritual care, he began walking a circuit between Marshall, Lansing, and Saginaw: an area 130 miles by 100 miles. He saw the need and felt the urgency so great that he was willing to ride his horse those great distances, while today we feel sorry for pastors who have the luxury of driving cars 20 miles to serve a second parish.

About 20 years later, Pastors Muelhauser began gathering German Lutherans together in the Milwaukee area and Pastors Wier and Heyer began gathering groups in the area of the twin cities of St. Paul and Minneapolis. Throughout this early time period, the dominant attitude was the need "to reach the children of our people."<sup>2</sup> If the men happened to be summoned to minister to an unbeliever, he was certainly willing to do so, but his primary mission, in practice, was to serve the German Lutherans who had come to the new world.

As these men served the gatherings of Lutherans in areas of concentrated population, many of the Lutherans began to scatter in a way that forbid the pastor to serve all the tiny groups. At the Synod convention in June of 1851, the concept of a "Reiseprediger" was given momentum. Lack of manpower in the States, led the Synod leaders to issue an appeal to the Barmen Mission Society for a preacher. Unfortunately, the appeal was denied because the Society felt that we were overly interested in serving our own members and lacked the conviction to reach out to the heathen.<sup>3</sup> "If you want something done right, you have to do it yourself" seemed to be the motto of Pastor Fachtman. He began the job of Reiseprediger as a private undertaking in Washington County the Fox River Valley in 1857.<sup>4</sup> His work drew attention and was addressed the following year at the Synodical Convention. Pastor Goldammer suggested the need for an official synod-sponsored Reiseprediger and was supported by Pastors Koehler and Sprengling. The convention approached the issue in good order with three evaluative questions (in order of importance): (1) Is this God's will? (2) Does the Synod have a qualified man to do the work? and (3) Can we raise the necessary funds and from where should we take them?<sup>5</sup> Response to the first question has to be a resounding "Yes!" while the other two questions are answered with a humble "No."

Word got out about our need for a capable man to preach to the outlying areas and the Langenberg and Berlin Mission Societies again came to our rescue. With their help, Pastor E. Mohldenke arrived in 1861. He did a wonderful job with 22 preaching stations and 5 vacancies. His goal was to make each of those preaching stations an established congregation. Two short years later, the President's report claimed that "we hope during the summer definitely to establish most of these stations."<sup>6</sup> Unfortunately, Pastor Mohldenke was

needed to teach at the Seminary in Watertown and had to resign from the Reiseprediger position in 1864. At the 1865 convention, the program was officially tabled until a later date (not to come for 25 years!).

During those 15 years, the Synod "tried out" a new emphasis on education rather than mission work. As a result, the preaching stations were organized by the nearest pastor and he was responsible for deciding where time and efforts would be most productive (edifying the most people at one time). As a result of the lack of synodical organization, many small and comparatively "unproductive" congregations were started. These small country churches looked to the Synod as a whole for support and we found ourselves unwillingly "tied" to those who came to expect to be served by a preacher on a regular basis even though they could not afford to support one themselves.<sup>7</sup> A remnant of that concept can be seen in some dual parish situations that still exist today.

#### THE "GLORY DAYS" OF THE REISEPREDIGER PROGRAM

As the Wisconsin Synod expanded west, the need for a Reiseprediger in South Dakota was brought to the attention of Pastor Mayerhoff (then the superintendent of the program) at the 1879 convention. He was at a loss as to who could do the job and so nothing happened until the 1881 convention noted a "growing momentum for acquiring and supporting full-time 'circuit pastors' (Reisepredigers)." Pastor Thiele tried his hand for a short time, but was replaced by Pastor Mohnhardt in the middle of 1883. All of a sudden it seemed that the Synod went into a Reiseprediger frenzy. Several areas adopted the program for

themselves and new congregations began popping up everywhere with the help of this new synodical organization. In the 20 year period from 1880 to 1900, 10 to 12 mission congregations were established each year for a total of 200 to 240 new congregations, many of which are still in operation today.<sup>8</sup> I suspect that they are all self-supporting by now.

When we joined with Minnesota and Michigan synods in 1892, we found ourselves with even more mission fields to explore. Perhaps this contributed to the growth blessings that the Lord provided during this time. At the same time, however, I don't want to take away from the men who made use of their God-given talent <sup>n</sup>is sharing the Word with those who were willing to hear it. Apparently the synod leaders (even if only on a district level) had used good judgement in choosing men to serve as Reisepredigers. The idea of choosing the right men for the job will surface again later.

As that boom started to slow (1900), the Reisepredigers began to receive more and more requests from gatherings of English-speaking groups who wished to learn more about their Savior. The situation presented a classic example of how the failure to respond to cultural diversity resulted in the failure to reach some lost souls. The 1901 synodical convention missed a great opportunity for mission work when it voted against conforming to the use of English in religious life. I do respect the concern for the purity of doctrine, but I regret that purity of doctrine was so closely associated with any particular language. In spite of all the growth that had recently taken place, we were still primarily a "Sammelarbeit" synod, bent on serving our own children rather than the heathen.<sup>9</sup>

## THE TRANSITION YEARS--THE CALM BEFORE THE STORM

Our continued growth required some "behind the scenes" changes. With growth, we needed adequate facilities for worship. So in 1901, the Synod established the "Kirchbaufond" to fund some of the building projects undertaken by our missions congregations. I was unable to find the name of the man with the original concept, but I can tell you that his innovative thinking is a good model for us to follow today. The function of this fund was to solicit loans from well-to-do members of synod. The money thus borrowed, would then be loaned to the building congregations at a rate higher than what was being paid on it, but lower than what public financial institutions were charging. The details for this "Church Extension Fund" were further detailed in 1911 to give us a program very similar to the mode of operation today.<sup>10</sup> Other changes in administration involved the suggestion that the Synod President also serve as the Mission Superintendent (to centralize and give more organization to the control of mission work?). That was suggested in 1905, but not approved until 1929.<sup>11</sup> Also, the responsibility of planning and building a beginning facility for a new mission congregation was lifted from the shoulders of that congregation and given to a Board of Trustees and Synod administration in 1920.<sup>12</sup> In a short time, this group of men had built up a certain amount of experience/knowledge in the area of architecture and what was needed to serve the needs of a particular congregation.

Lest we get too far away from the mission field itself, let me pull you back to the action. The cultural barrier (where we had "dropped the ball" in 1901) was finally met head-on and broken by the 1920 synod convention approval of a "Missionary at large" to serve in Arizona. That missionary was given the authority to preach and teach

in the english tongue.<sup>13</sup> Within the next few years, what had been a rural country began to move to the city. Of course, the preacher had to go wherever it was that his flock went so WELS pastors found themselves in the midst of a larger quantity of people and a greater percentage of pagans than he had been accustomed to. It was a relatively slow transition, but by 1925, 75% of the work done was being done in english and the gospel was being preached to many who had not known Jesus. This change of focus (from "our children" to "all nations" seems to be the only item to address until the early 40's, by which time the Reiseprediger was gone.

One attempt to continue some aspect of the Reiseprediger program was made in the early 40s with the approval of "General Missionaries." Only three were commissioned and sent to Arizona, Colorado, and some small cities of Michigan. The General Missionary was to "scout" potential sites for new missions. The result was a lot of time and effort expended for small "trial congregations" with limited futures.<sup>14</sup> I must commend the Synod for taking a chance on this particular program and the ability to let it go when the time came to do so. Lack of finances and some strong doctrinal issues consumed our attention for the next 20 years, so very little change of policy or attitude toward mission work took place. The only significant change that pointed to a growing demand for organization of home missions<sup>1</sup> is reflected in 1955, when the General Mission Board was divided into two separate Boards: the General Board for Home Missions and the World Mission Board.<sup>15</sup>

## THE "BIG BANG" OF WELS HOME MISSIONS

The doctrinal split with the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod carried unbelievable repercussions on our mission programs. Up to this point, we were willing to focus on the doctrinal aspects of our fellowship with the Synodical Conference and allow the LCMS to focus on the mission work aspects. In 1961, when we separated from LCMS, we, as a Synod, stated "We invite those who share our position to join us in supporting the scriptural, historical position of the Synodical Conference."<sup>16</sup> The flood of requests from other confessional Lutherans across the country pointed out the need for us to get organized--"immediately if not sooner!"

I'm not sure how it functioned, but apparently the GBHM was organized for 8 years before a full-time man was called to lead the charge to spread the gospel in America. Pastor Ray Wiechmann got the ball rolling, but served in this capacity for only 5 years when he was replaced with Pastor Norman Berg.<sup>17</sup>

It was during these years of growing pains that the WELS had to refocus its priorities. We were no longer able to be satisfied to serve our own people because now we had no sister synod who would see to it that confessional Lutheranism would be shared with the unbelieving world. It was during the 1960s that our goals reflected a change in strategy toward the purpose of home missions. In effort to serve more people with the true gospel, we looked to the larger concentrations of people and began placing missions in metropolitan areas of our country. Our goals stood (in order of importance) as:

- (1) To establish regional outposts in metro areas with good potential for winning the unchurched
- (2) To encircle metro areas with several

missions and (3) To serve, on request, people who share our confessional concern.<sup>18</sup> The closest we come to mentioning "our people" is the third goal, and even that is not limited to WELS members.

Up to this point we had been satisfied to open 2-4 new home missions per year. But with the break from LCMS that number skyrocketed to 10-12 each year. The demand was great and the workers were strained. Seminary graduates were the most common source of called workers for the new missions fields. Lest we alienate our active congregations, we saw to it that those requests were filled before the number of new missions could be determined. At the same time, the unique skills needed to do mission work suggested that the GBHM be given the first choices of men to do their work.<sup>19</sup> For example, in 1967 we had 28 graduates and 24 requests for men from established congregations. That meant that we had 4 men who could be sent to do mission work. Those 4 men were selected by the missions boards before the District Presidents began to fill their requests. For the sake of good order and stewardship, a "Priority Committee" was organized in the early 60s to decide which new field was the most ripe and therefore had the greatest need for manpower.

In an attempt to train these new missionaries, the Seminary in Mequon started the tradition of the winter Mission Seminar in 1961. All the students were encouraged to attend just in case they were called to serve a mission field following their Seminary training. Already in 1964, Pastor Wiechmann (at that time the Executive Secretary of the GBHM) was able to suggest methods of operation in opening missions that we still use today. He noted the need of District Mission Boards to investigate reports of needed churches by considering the local

population trends and plan ahead accordingly. He suggested that we consider acres of land for purchase instead of the small designation of lots. Pastor Wiechmann encouraged those involved in church planting to begin with a canvass of the neighborhood recognized to be a "ripe" mission field. That canvass would be carried out by pastors near the field and DMB members as necessary. Then IF the field showed itself to be conducive for starting a mission, a man would be sent to pastor the small nucleus and the prospects discovered in the new area.<sup>20</sup> The focus of the early work is the first worship service, but there were few suggestions what to do for follow-up and continued education for the prospects.

In 1966, the Seminar referred to 11 districts, with each one including the word "mission" in the name of the district. That sense of urgency was evident in the goal for that year as being 1 new mission each month and expressing a desire to increase that rate of growth to 2 per month by 1971. The concept of demographics was more thoroughly discussed than in '64 as the workbook included some examples of such studies that were eventually to be turned in to the GBHM.<sup>21</sup> In the workbook from '67, a complete example of a "mission survey" was included from Weston, WI. Many of the same elements were present as are in our demographic studies today (although the ones we use now dig a little deeper): Physical area - population, business and industry, schools, churches, etc.; Prospects for city growth - low taxes, new buildings or projects, etc.; and Prospects for church growth - especially why the WELSP?<sup>22</sup> The 1970 Mission Seminar Workbook continued the trend of greater detail and growth in the strategy of church planting. It seemed to impress that the pastor was responsible to get the congregation started, but pointed to the members as taking

over the work as much possible once the mission was established. There was a call for both informal (preaching, social functions and example) and formal (evangelism committee and special classes) training efforts.<sup>23</sup> One discussion involved the organization of a prospect file and another uses the analogy of the pastor as a quarterback of the "team."<sup>24</sup>

Another milestone publication that was begun on a regular basis in the 1960s was the "Home Mission Handbook" with its first issue printed in 1969. One such Mission Handbook had been attempted in 1958, but appeared to be more of a pamphlet than anything else. At 12 pages of a 5-1/2" X 8", one could not expect an examination that would give much detail. Ever since that time, the Handbook has tried to be more and more specific about the church planting strategies. Of benefit in that first regular issue ('69) is the distinction made between "exploratory work," "Mission status," "daughter congregations," "preaching stations" and "service to remote Lutherans."<sup>25</sup> The book gives the newly called exploratory mission pastor some guidelines as to what he can expect by way of administration and his relationship to the synodical organization. I found it particularly interesting to note the good use of technology reflected in the Handbook. In the first publication in '69, the equipment offered to the new missionary included "duplicating equipment, hymnals, Bibles, service books, Sunday School materials, a filmstrip projector and temporary equipment for rented facilities."<sup>26</sup> Since that time, WELS has made a business connection with the Sharp Corporation in the early '80s and was encouraged to delve into the world of computers by David Farley of Bakersfield, CA. in 1985.<sup>27</sup> Now the new exploratory pastors receive a Sharp 8100, a typewriter, a computer with a printer, software and telephone/answering machine equipment.<sup>28</sup>

Already in less than 10 years of active pursuit of new mission fields on our own, WELS had begun to recognize the need for thorough organization. At the same time, each new "exploratory" field presented its own circumstances. Almost all new fields at that time started with some sort of nucleus, 2-3 families, at least.<sup>29</sup> As that idea of beginning with some sort of nucleus began to standardize the church planting strategies of WELS, an entrepreneur named David Valleskey upset the apple cart. Already in 1965, he accepted a call to begin a church in San Jose, CA, where there existed neither a WELS church nor member. Because of the Lord's use of Pastor Valleskey's sense of vision and ability to organize, the conversion of nearby unchurched happened very quickly. "His" success reminded the GBHM that no matter how much we plan and organize, the Lord's will predominates and will be carried out. The many exceptions to the rules since then have led our present-day GBHM administrator (Pastor Harry Hagedorn) to comment: "One of the most important needs we have identified is the need to be flexible."<sup>30</sup>

At this point, I would like to take a moment to summarize from the doctrinal/organizational break with LCMS up to the mid-70s. As WELS began to develop its own strategies, it became apparent that the Lord would direct each new field and he alone could grant it continued growth. Concepts were advanced by way of administration, and much had begun to be put into written form for consistency and more thorough evaluation. The number of missions we had been opening (2-4/year) swelled to more than a dozen as we strived to meet the "every state by '78" slogan. Yet with all these advances, some new missionaries felt uncomfortable and unsure of their abilities. There was so much room for variation, it almost seemed that "everyone did what was right in his own eyes." There continued to be a call for organization.

## THE MID-70S TO THE PRESENT: AN "ORGANIZED FRENZY"

The 1977 WELS Board of Reports and Memorials is administratively encouraging: In our districts, where the need exists to aid administration, we are encouraging the District Mission Board to do this through the use of district missionaries as staff personnel as provided in the "Home Mission Handbook." We are also encouraging the District Mission Boards to call district mission developers whose call would be primarily to initiate new missions under the policies of the GBHM.<sup>31</sup> This seems to be the beginnings of a position now referred to as the "Mission Counselor." The new missions, while they were doing the Lord's work, lacked structure, polish and somebody to blame for their mistakes. The idea behind the Mission Counselor was somebody who had experience and knew the ins and outs of church planting. The Counselor would work in cooperation with the exploratory pastor and serve as a mediator between him and the GBHM. He became an easy target for blame on either side and has more than once been the butt of unjustified criticism. The concept didn't make many waves and the plan was put into effect with hardly a mention. But the Mission Counselor position must have been needed in the South Atlantic District as they effected the plan the same year it was presented. The third convention of the SA District, meeting in 1978, included a report by the Mission Counselor, Pastor Marvin Radtke.<sup>32</sup> Confusion surrounding the position is suggested by the fact that Pastor Radtke was not listed as "Mission Counselor" in the Synod Yearbook until 1985, under "District Officials - South Atlantic District - Mission Board."

The Northwestern Lutheran credits the Michigan District with the creation of a similar-sounding position with the name "District

Missionary:" "Broader than gathering new missions, he is also to work as counselor with mission congregations and missionaries, training advising, assisting in every way possible."<sup>33</sup> Pastor Robert Hartmann is so labeled in the '84 yearbook, designated as a "District Official - Michigan District - Mission Board." The position appears as a valid attempt at organization and gives much needed encouragement to the new missionaries.

With the introduction of Pastor/Professor David Valleskey to Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary in 1984, much of the work of the Mission Counselor was put into the head and hands of the future missionary. The position continues to exist today, but its use seems to be fading as the Seminary enables men with the ability to be creative with the presentation of Scripture without being creative with the teaching. As long as we are on the subject of future missionaries, I would like to pause for a moment to make the point that the personality that the GBHM looks for in an exploratory missionary doesn't seem to have changed. It hadn't been written down until recent years, but when it was, words like "innovative/creative," "people-oriented," and "motivated," are used--the same qualities sought in candidates years ago.<sup>34</sup>

Along with the Mission Counselor "program," other programs and positions have been attempted in the last several years that deserve mention. Demographics and speculations started to be put into effect in the early '80s with the "New Mode Mission." According to this plan, WELS sent exploratory missionaries to areas that showed the most potential for growth. While a nucleus is still helpful, the New Mode Mission represents<sup>§</sup> a final break with the idea that we ought only send missionaries where our own members need them. We look to the

largest audience rather than the most Wisconsin Synod audience to get the most opportunity to "make disciples" for our mission dollar. According to the New Mode Mission, worship services were not held for about a year after the missionary arrived. Instead, the missionary spent that time getting to know the community (on the whole), surveying individual homes to search out prospect (which had previously been done by neighboring pastors to determine viability), follow-up/witness and follow-up/Bible Study/organization.<sup>35</sup> IF, after these steps have been taken, the missionary, Mission Counsellor, District Mission Board, and General Board for Home Missions agree that there is sufficient more need in that location than in some other, the first service will be held and the "congregation" looks toward mission status. I had originally planned to include an example of a congregation that had started this way and the strategy used to develop the mission, but have since come to realize that the flexibility built into the program (no longer referred to as "New Mode," but simply "Exploratory") would make any generalizations beyond those already made, nearly impossible.

A less successful, but equally innovative program was also attempted in the mid-80s. The "Outreach Team" brought together 8 graduates from Doctor Martin Luther College and two vicars from Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary for a year of travel and training. A number of exploratory congregations were given the option of using a team (4 DMLC graduates and 1 vicar) for a short time to train the congregation in evangelism and survey the local area for prospects. Two teams were sent out each year (for a one-year term) over a period of three years. Few of those congregations looked to those outreach teams primarily as trainers. So they failed to learn the evangelism techniques needed for further follow-up and canvassing. When the team left the area, so did the

manpower needed to continue the strong start. Again, I commend the Synod for trying a new approach, but discontinuing it without delay when it failed its purpose.

Overall, this period of recent history could conclude with the same comment I made regarding the last period of history, that "Everyone did what was right in his own eyes." But there has been an important twist to that concept in the past few years. With improved administration and communication between the home missionary and Synod administrators, the variety of ideas can be more easily pooled and made accessible. The picture that comes to mind is that of a bicycle rim. 2929 Mayfair Road is the hub of that wheel and a spoke reaches out to each exploratory missionary. As the new missionary is sent out, he is equipped with all the ideas that have been set forth to that point, with the freedom to use whatever works or come up with his own ideas. Constant communication between the missionary and the Synod offices is important to maximize the use of any innovative ideas. All the spokes work together to support the work of the Lord, each one in its own way, but not without the others. Whereas we had simple diversity, we now have an efficient unified diversity.

Rather

#### CONCLUSION

During the next month, my firstborn (Lord-willing) is expected to grow up to 6 more inches within its mother's womb. More important than the size, however, is the refinement of its already-present organs. That too will happen at an astounding rate during the next few months. When I look back at this paper regarding the development of our church-planting strategies, I can't help but think the same thing

"Wow--what growth, what refinement!" I find it difficult to criticize our early lack of growth on the basis of our dependancy on others. I can't help but wonder where we would be today if we had been on our own before 1961. That comparison of where we could be and where we are is a little bit frustrating and humbling. On the other hand, I am proud to be a part of a Synod that can jump into the mission field and so rapidly become a competitive force. I am convinced that our ability to adapt and glean puts us in good <sup>shape?</sup> stead on the religious scene today.

In the past, Wisconsin Synod has recognized God-given ability in many men and has been able to put that ability to work that we might give glory to God. During the past 15 years, Wisconsin Synod has recognized opportunity and seized it. The balance between making use of opportunity and overextending oneself is a fine one. As we maintain that balance, I pray that God would continue to give us a pioneer spirit: willing to use the gifted people he provides, the innovative programs he initiates and the love of his Son that we are invited to share.

## ENDNOTES

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29. Pastor H.E. Paustian.
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32. South Atlantic District. Report of the Third Convention. 1978. p. 42
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Pastor Norman Berg: Scroggins, TX. Missionary and former (20 year tenure) Executive Secretary for the General Board for Home Missions.

Pastor Joel Gerlach: St. John's Wauwatosa, WI. Former missionary and Mission Counsellor for the Arizona-California District.

Pastor Harry Hagedorn: Administrator of the General Board for Home Missions - WELS.

Pastor Henry Paustian (ret.): Watertown, WI. Former (30 year) member of the General Board for Home Missions.

Pastor David Valleskey: Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary. Former missionary and now teaching methods of evangelism to future pastors.