

WHERE THE CARE OF THE SOUL IS THE SOUL OF CARE

A History of The Lutheran Home of Belle Plaine
over the last 85 years in light of the motto
listed above

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Church History A
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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to thank first of all some of the staff members of the Home who were gracious enough to give me some added insight into the history of the Home. These staff members are Mrs. Lois Dahlke, Mr. Mike Hoedike, Pastor Paul Hanke, and Tom Kaletka. I also wish to show my gratitude to Pastor Robert Schlicht who gave me full steam ahead, and whose book provided much information, and also to his wife Loretta Schlicht who also helped me out. Last, but certainly not least, I want to thank my fiance' (no, she didn't type my paper), *Ella Vogt*, for buying the book by Pastor Schlicht, and for also arranging some interviews with the staff.

Statistics! Statistics! The government is always releasing statistics about something or other everyday. It either has something to do with waste in government, or with the crime rate going down or up. Just recently, however, the government has released statistics concerning the elderly people in our society. One such statistic is that there are now more elderly people in the country, and living active lives than in previous years, and that their number is growing every day. There are numerous reasons for this growth, one of them being the advancement of high-tech medical breakthroughs for disease and other ailments with which the elderly are afflicted.

The increased number of senior citizens brings with it the added care and the support of our older citizens. The government is working to set up more facilities for such necessary care. The private sector is also working to find able centers to care for the aged. They are in effect, working to set up facilities to provide ample physical and material care for the aged.

The church has also set up as a means whereby they can extend their services, facilities for the aged and infirm. But we can ask ourselves, are they setting up such facilities to just care for the physical bodies? Or are they also providing spiritual care as well?

As future pastors, we too are going to be concerned about the health and welfare of our older members. They, too, are in need of certain things, like food and water to sustain their physical well-being. But as future shepherds in charge of a flock, we are ultimately concerned over the spiritual welfare, not only of our aging members, but with the younger members as well.

Bible students are well aware that when God created man, He created man with a soul, as Moses records, "and God breathed into

his nostrils the breath of life, and he became a living soul."

The soul was created in order to survive through eternity. The frail human body into which the soul is placed eventually decays and dies. But the soul is immortal. It is sad to read a novel, or see a TV show where the main character will sell his soul to gain mega-bucks, or to land a super job, or to obtain an expensive piece of jewelry. God warns us in His Word that the soul is of priceless worth, nothing can buy it or take its place. Jesus says, that a man is profited nothing if he should gain the whole world, and forfeit his soul. It is painfully obvious that the soul is of such great wealth, that God promises to make the soul his own in eternity.

Just as the physical body needs food and water to be sustained, so also the soul needs to be sustained with the rich meat and potatoes of the gospel of Jesus Christ. Only with the daily diet of the sweet message of the gospel does the soul grow and become enriched. It is also good for the individual as well. Many times, though, the elderly seem to be forgotten by both church and state, and suffer needlessly. The aged do have souls, blood-bought souls like the rest of us. It is with this in mind that we turn and look at one facility which caters to the souls of both the aged and also the mentally-retarded, all under one roof in a Home in Belle Plaine, Minnesota. The Lutheran Home in Belle Plaine has for its motto a saying that is totally concerned with the spiritual welfare of its residents. The Care of the Soul is the Soul of Care is the motto for the Home.

The Lutheran Home is one such facility which was set up in order to provide needed care for the elderly. But more on that later. Pastor Robert Schlicht, who is the current administrator for The Home, said to this writer, that he came up with this motto about 15 or 16 years ago.

Pastor Schlicht realized that what they were accomplishing at the home was the very same concept that Mrs. Sophie Boessling had over 85 years ago. The idea is rather quite simple. Caring for the soul is the very essence of Christian survival, whether it is of a child or an elderly person. Soul-care is the number one over-riding goal of the Home, care for the aged, as well as care for the geriatric mentally retarded. This paper is a history of how the Home has lived up to its motto: The Care of the Soul is the Soul of Care, for over 85 years. They have done this for both the aged and for the mentally retarded, which was only a recent addition.

I. The Donation of Sophie

In the latter years of the nine-teenth century, there was a growing concern for the elderly in the community of every large city in the United States. The state of Minnesota was no exception. They too, wanted to provide facilities for caring for the aged community. But the majority of organizations doing this sort of work kind of naturally fell to the responsibility of the church. In Minnesota the first homes for the elderly were started in the large cities of Minneapolis and St. Paul. There was even one started in a small town about 45 miles south-west of the Twin Cities.

In 1894 sister Annette of the diocese in Minneapolis approached her bishop with the idea of opening a home for the aged and infirm. Unfortunately the operation was not successful in Minneapolis, so they moved it into St. Paul. But even while in St. Paul it barely struggled along. In 1897 the diocese took over the home and incorporated it as an institution of the Protestant Episcopal Church, caring mainly for aged women.

There was a second Protestant attempt which grew out of the Augustana Home of Minneapolis.

This also was a venture started by the missionary efforts of the women of that congregation. The pastor of the church felt the need of a facility for caring for the aged, and so he approached the Ladies Aid Society with his problem. So in October of 1896 the Ladies' Aid Society decided to open a mission cottage as a site for benevolent activities. Their first residents included an aged woman, a blind girl, and a small child.

The last church-related home of this period was the Lutheran Home for the Aged, located in Belle Plaine, a small farming community about 45 miles south-west of the Twin Cities. It was established in Belle Plaine by the Evangelical Lutheran Synod of Wisconsin, Minnesota, and Michigan, mainly because an elderly woman who was a member of Trinity Lutheran Church, offered a piece of land and a large sum of money in order to start a facility. Mrs. Sophie Boessling saw a need for a facility for caring for the elderly, not just an old folks home where people would go to die, but a place where their souls would be enriched and sustained. In 1897 the synod unanimously accepted Sophie's offer, but they first wanted a committee to study this proposal. Apparently the committee wanted to see that the offer could be sufficiently secured. The town newspaper, The Belle Plaine Herald expressed the hope that the good work would proceed without interruption: "A charitable institution of this kind would not only be a lasting monument to the donor and synod which erected it, but would be of great benefit to our borough."¹

The committee found that the offer was secured, for on October 20, 1897 the Herald reported: "We understand Mrs. Sophie Boessling turned over the block...upon which the building is to be located, also her residence and two lots, and \$2500 in cash and notes.

It will add another fine structure to our town and should be encouraged and assisted." ² On May 11, 1898, contracts were let for a two-story brick building, 45 by 60 feet. The cornerstone was laid on July 13, and preparations were made for the dedication ceremony.

It was to be a very big day for the whole community of Belle Plaine. The Herald reported the story this way: "The Home for Orphans and Aged People is receiving its finishing touches and will be ready for the dedication services on Sunday next (Nov 6)." ³

This was to be such a celebration that special trains were hired to take the throngs of people expected to attend from the Twin Cities and from New Ulm. But there was a hitch to this plan. The trains were unable to make it, so teams of horses were hired to transport the groves of people to Belle Plaine for the special ceremony. There is a brief footnote to this dedicatory service. The local townspeople provided a potluck supper for only twenty-five cents.

II. Early Beginnings

Sophie Boessling is a lady who ought to be commended over and over again for displaying her Christian love and concern. Because of her concern over the spiritual welfare of the aged, and at the time, also for orphan children, the Home exists as it does today. She intended the Home to be a haven for the aged and orphan children whose families could not properly take care of them. Because she was concerned with their spiritual welfare, she approached her pastor with this idea. Pastor Erich Moebus, who was the pastor of Trinity Lutheran church at the time, whole-heartedly gave his approval and support.

Considering the social and economic conditions at this time, it was a bold and adventurous move on the part of Pastor Moebus. Many thought that spiritual care for the aged and orphan children was rather unnecessary.

These people felt that the church didn't really have to make an extra special effort to provide a unique spiritual setting for the aged and orphaned. The general consensus was that there were already viable alternatives to care for the aged once they can't themselves. There was a deal called the "poor farm" arrangement where the aged were shoved off to a place where they live the remainder of their lives. A type of a farmhouse tenant arrangement. This practice has not vanished in certain parts of the world. The administrator at present, Pastor Robert Schlicht, saw a similar "poor farm" arrangement when he was on a tour of the Soviet Union. Sophie Boessling and Pastor Moebus ran a solid risk of criticism for the promotion of a facility for physical and spiritual care under the auspices of the church.

There was a general feeling of support for this project from the local church, Trinity Evangelical Lutheran Church, so much support that they were bound and determined that preaching the sweet message of the gospel to the aged and orphaned children would be of utmost priority. This would be a better place for the present to prepare them for a better place in Heaven. The care of the soul was their guide, their rule with which this Home was founded.

The Lutheran Home for the Aged was originally founded to be a home for both the aged and orphaned children. But after the turn of the century the Home exclusively catered to the spiritual needs of only the elderly. Since it opened in 1898, the Home has served over 900 aging persons.

With the philosophy of caring for the soul as the number one priority of the Home, it moved ahead with plans to carry out their motives. It was a trying time in the beginning, with the economic conditions which prevailed. They wouldn't expect federal funding for another sixty-seven years.

So the Home made due with the best they could. Residents helped with chores around the Home, caring for their own chickens, raising a vegetable garden and providing funding for their care out of their own pockets. There is one example which ought to be shared to indicate what the economic climate looked like through a couple of world wars and a depression. Back in the early forties, when the residents were still admitted into the Home for the rest of their lives with one lump sum of money, one woman entered the facility with the payment of about fifteen hundred dollars. Without any more payments on her part, she lived at the Home for the rest of her life, about twenty-one years. When the Lord finally called this lady unto Himself, the Home paid the funeral expenses. Even with such trying times and conditions, the Home managed to continue operating, functioning with one big though uppermost in the minds of the administrators, that of caring for the soul. This soul-care was their number one priority back in the early part of the century, and this philosophy has endured ever since.

III. The Home Takes On A Physical Appearance

Just as when a child is in his/her growing stages and takes on their respective physical shapes as they get older, so buildings also take on a different physical shape as it gets older. Most buildings do provide room for expansion as companies grow and more services become available. The Home in Belle Plaine is an example of a facility with large growth for someone who hasn't seen it in many years. Throughout its history, the Home has grown from small beginnings to quite the operation, and quite a display of beautiful architecture.

The very first building which served as the Lutheran Home was a three-story format with a basement set on a 45 by 60 foot base.

This first structure represented about five thousand dollars worth of construction. The building was topped with a cute little cupola. It must have been a strange sight to see this building go up seemingly right in the middle of the prairie.

The Home didn't take long to complete. It was done with haste, but with careful consideration as to how the Home was to function for the community. The building was a self-contained complex, finished in the fall of 1898. It was unfortunate that Sophie Boessling, whose heart was moved to donate so much died and was buried two days before the facility was dedicated. The Home was self-contained, in that the full basement provided space for the original kitchen. Besides providing kitchen and dining areas, the basement provided for the laundry room, activity areas, resident living and storage space.

The two main floors provided the residents with sleeping space for twenty-two beds. Many of the Home's residents brought their own beds; some were given to the Home; and some couples crowded into single beds, although one could hardly say that this was not an unpleasant situation.

There was a very impressive piece of equipment for its time which was a part of the Home for nearly all of its existence. It was the boiler system located in the basement. It heated the Home as well as heating a large supply of hot water that was maintained in an extremely large water tank in the boiler room.

Like any building that goes up, one nearly always has to allow for expansion purposes, either to ^{alter} outdated facilities, or to accommodate new and larger services. The Home became an extremely useful facility for the aged. In order to continue to serve the spiritual needs of the residents currently living at the home, and then for all future residents, the Home began an expansion program.

In 1918 a construction project began just twenty years after the Home was first built. This new addition was added to the southeast corner of the original building, providing room for eight more rooms in a two-story wing. The construction matched the original building and beautifully complemented the facility.

Soon after this 1918 addition was filled, the needs grew and so did the Home. Consequently in 1925 another addition was built, this one being a single story of two adequately sized rooms. These two rooms were used extensively, but it still seemed to the "old-timers" that it wasn't quite enough. Even so, there was no more construction until 1951. This does seem quite a few years without any kind of construction going on, but it still must be kept in mind that the 1925 addition preceded the great depression, and then in the forties, the world was once again in turmoil of a war.

The next construction project began in 1951, and the effects of the depression were still felt when it came time to finance this tremendous building effort. The financing was available with funds that were already on hand. After twenty-five years with a noticeable lack in construction, the new project in 1951 was an enormous undertaking. The construction of 1951 was commonly called the "West Wing," which also provided a new chapel, new kitchen and dining areas, twenty-two beds for residential living (mostly in private rooms) and remodeling that provided new entrance and office space.

There were plans to make an enclosed lounge for the west side of the residential area, but because of lack of sufficient funds, this was deleted in favor of an open area that faced an outdoor patio. This whole project enhanced the service aspect of the Home in its overall function. More people could receive the care that the Home was able to supply. A new chapel was now readily available for the spiritual service which the Home has seen as its number one function.

To this day the West Wing stands as the oldest part of the entire complex making up the Lutheran Home.

Because of the increasing need to serve the growing number of aged at the Home, there was another construction project begun in 1959 and finished in 1961. This construction project marked the end of an era for administrator Pastor Brandes, and the beginning term for Pastor Schlicht. With the Care of the Soul, still the number one concern for the Home, this ambitious quarter of a million dollar building project was completed, this time it was called the "South Wing."

Between the years of 1961 and 1968 there were other projects being started and completed for the Home. There was a complete renovation of the rewiring for the original building, a complete installation of a sprinkler system and the repainting of the whole interior. These were done so as to buy time before the need would arise for more serious changes. Some of these changes being getting the structure up to state and local fire codes, making it safer for residents and others.

During the latter years of the 1960's, the ^{new} boiler plant of the Home was built with an eye to the future. There was so much foresight in these construction projects, that the motto The care of the soul is the soul of care was clearly in mind of the administrators. The new boiler plant was completely separated from the residents, built underground to the west of the 1961 wing. The 200,000 dollar boiler construction coincided with the building of the new worship facility for Trinity Lutheran Church.

There was not only building up of new structures, there were also old buildings going down in this phase of operation. In 1970 the original Home was razed in order to make room for a more modern building to better serve the residents with not only better spiritual care but physical care as well. The care of the soul also involves feeding the physical body. -10-

This new building project cost nearly one million dollars, but the cost was well worth it when one takes a closer look at all what was included in the new structure. Probably the most notable feature was the new chapel built at the south end of the south wing. This chapel featured seating for 250 souls, and looked like a brand new church, not necessarily a chapel. With Lannonstone wall, a high ceiling, artglass lighting and intricate chancel woodwork, the Home could be clearly seen as providing excellent soul-care for the residents. There was space in front of the chapel and in the rear for those residents^{who} were unable to move around easily enough and were required to use wheelchairs. The chapel was also barrier-free to allow for easy access to residents who are unable to get around with ease because of loss of certain functions or just because of advancing years. It should be noted that debilitating illness or whatever doesn't prove to be a handicap, for the chapel is regularly filled with residents who are thirsty for the Word of God.

Other services which the new addition provided included a new "dietary row." The kitchen was built with state-of-the-art equipment, there was a new employee's dining room, a main residential dining room and a guest dining room. The food service reflects the Home's concern for the physical welfare of the residents with a new caterer, more dietary specialists and a growing love for the residents spiritual needs. It is interesting to note that the same food service which caters to the Home in Belle Plaine also is the same caterer for Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary as well.

Other trend setting additions included a well-equipped beauty salon, a brand new physical therapy room, and just recently, as of last fall a fully equipped dental office. The dietary wing in the 1951 building now served as the laundry center for the Home.

In late 1972 this latest project was completed with the addition of seventy more beds, making the total bed capacity of the facility 128.

At the close of this construction activity, the formal ownership of the Home transferred from the Synod at large to a group of congregations making up the Lutheran Home Association. The Synod felt that they could no longer adequately support the Home. There are now over 100 congregations actively supporting the operation of the Home, each with its sole purpose in caring for the soul of each and every individual resident.

In its 1973 meeting the Association discussed the feasibility of constructing a facility for the geriatric mentally retarded. This plan was overwhelmingly approved and construction went ahead. In 1974 and 1975 the construction officially was begun with ground-breaking on November 9, 1975 and the cornerstone laid on May 8, 1977. The funding for this addition was obtained by an ambitious program called YES. It was simply a YES we can support this addition, YES we can care for the mentally retarded. This yielded huge dividends as evidenced by the beautiful addition to the west of the Home. The MR section is connected to the Home with a breezeway, and is licensed for 48 adults, and capable of caring for 64 residents. By making the MR section connected to the Home itself, these residents in both sections can be cared for with expert help, and providing spiritual care for both is still the main objective of each section. The Home and the mentally retarded section are the only facilities in Minnesota that are connected under one roof, i.e. facilities of its kind.

With all this construction going on, it would almost appear that the goal of the Home would get lost in the shuffle. But that is not the case. It is that the Care of the Soul is the woul of care that is most definitely evidenced in all the construction.

When the mentally retarded addition was built, there was special care taken that this facility would be a very pleasant home-like place for the residents. The center is barrier free and this is conducive for those residents who are also physically disabled. The emphasis is placed on learning self-care, daily living skills, appropriate social behaviors and leisure activities. In other words, the residents lead as close to a normal life as possible and are encouraged to exercise their independence.

There is one more construction project which ought to be mentioned because it is a symbolic reminder of the over-riding goal and concern of the Home. This is the huge floral clock which is on the lawn part, just south of the new chapel building. The inspiration behind this clock is the Ontario Hydro clock at Niagara Falls. The clock in Belle Plaine is symbolic in form to a crown placed over a cross. The shaft and transept of the cross are formed in sidewalk. At each end of the transept and at the top end of the shaft of the cross shrubbery in the liturgical form of a triceptra (triple cross) are carefully trimmed. The shaft of the cross, at its base, meets the symbolic globe, a large circle of cement. The overall impression to be given, then, is one of the message of the cross--of redemption through the cross of Christ--as it is spread throughout the world. The clock is a constant reminder of the rapid passage of time and hints toward the end of time in its setting at the Home, a fine symbol for a facility that is concerned not only for care here in time, but for a kind of care that has effects for eternity.⁴

IV. The Administrators

When one considers how many administrators have served in some institutions, it would seem that there was a new head every time the weather changed.

But when you consider the administrators who have served as the head of the Home, this rule doesn't apply. In the history of The Home, there have been only four administrators. The first two were simultaneously pastors of Trinity, while the third one was pastor of St. Paul's in Jordan, Minn. The fourth one also served as pastor of Trinity, but later on resigned that call to become administrator full time.

The first administrator was Pastor Erich Moebus, who served as the head for the shortest period of time. It was he who gave Sophie Boessling the support and encouragement that she needed to get The Home started. Because he wholeheartedly gave his support to a facility that would serve the spiritual needs of the aged and children, he was a natural choice as the Home's first administrator. Pastor Erich Moebus served for four years, from 1898-1902.

There was no real surprise who the next administrator would be. Pastor Moebus' successor was a shoe-in for the post as administrator as chosen by the Board of Control. Pastor C.F. Kock, the new pastor at Trinity Church was the next administrator for the Home. Under his leadership and careful accounting of records, the residents of the Home were for all intents and purposes regarded as members of Trinity. "Papa" Kock as he was known to some of the old-timers, brought attention to the Home as a good place for the aged who were looking for spiritual care. It was during his tenure that the Home had its first two construction phases, one in 1918 and the other in 1925. Pastor Kock continued the fine tradition of caring for the soul as he was the administrator from 1902 until 1934.

Pastor Kock was also the one who held the Home together during the first world war and the great depression. Pastor Kock also smoothed over the transition from the German to the English in the church services.

After Pastor Kock retired, the board went to the young pastor of St. Paul's in Jordan, about eight miles from Belle Plaine, to be the next administrator of the Home. Some say that the board wooed Pastor Brandes to become the administrator, but they only say that because Pastor Louis Brandes had a good business head. It was true that Brandes had a good business head, because he skillfully guided the Home during the financially trying years following the depression. Brandes was frugal in the way he bought commodities and in his banking policies as the administrator. It was a particularly trying for Brandes, because while he was doing the administrative work of the Home, he was still the only shepherd at his church in Jordan.

Like his predecessors, Brandes found able people to help him with the ongoing programs of the Home. He was also heavily involved with the two major construction projects during his tenure. It was Brandes who provided a nursing wing in the 1951 addition. This wing was called the Infirmary Wing for a while. Before he retired in Peoria, Illinois, Brandes made sure that future plans of the Home would be carried out under able leadership. After some twenty-five years of service, Pastor Brandes finally retired as the administrator of the Home, but not before he adequately provided for sound future leadership. Like his predecessors, Brandes carried on faithfully the motto of the Home, The Care of the Soul is the Soul of Care.

At the time of his retirement, Pastor Brandes handed the reins and responsibility of the next major construction project to his friend and fellow pastor, Pastor Robert Schlicht. Schlicht, who was now the pastor at Trinity, was asked by Brandes to help out with some of the duties at the Home. The board of governors were impressed with Pastor Schlicht, and when Brandes stepped down, they asked Schlicht to step up into the role of administrator.

Since Pastor Schlicht became the administrator in 1961, the Home has undergone significant changes, from the construction of several additions, to the ownership of the Home transferring to the group of congregations which made up the Association. Pastor Schlicht also initiated the division head concept. He was aided in this area by several very responsible staff members, including Lois Dahlke, Kathryn Tumbloom and Miss Herzberg. With this able staff Pastor Schlicht could continue the fine care which the Home is known for.

Pastor Schlicht also has been recognized nationally for his able leadership in long term health care. He has been recognized by President Reagan; and just recently he has been named the President of the 6000 member international American College of Nursing Home administrators. In 1976 Pastor Schlicht asked for and received a peaceful release from Trinity to assume the full time job of being administrator of the Home.

Under Schlicht's careful hand of leadership, the Home initiated other projects at the Home. One of them was the building of the mentally retarded section. Another service which Pastor started, and which has been fairly successful is the social services department. More will be said on that later. As I said in the beginning of this paper, Pastor Schlicht came up with the motto for the Home which is now a real trade-mark of the services which the Home offers to its residents.

V. Services for Souls

During the first fifty years of the nineteenth hundreds, the Home mainly provided custodial and nursing care for its residents. This was based on Sophie's concept of caring for the soul as the primary focus of operation for the Home.

This was the compelling reason with which Sophie Boessling approached Pastor Moebus. She desired that the church provide the necessary care for the orphan children and the geriatrics. The county poor farms provided services for various activities, but that wasn't enough for Sophie. Ever since then the Home has striven to carry on this labor of love.

For seventy-five years the primary responsibility for spiritual care lay at the feet of the administrator. Through the first three pastors, the daily devotions and services were faithfully maintained. But as the years went by, and the Home became more popular, with more and more residents requiring full time spiritual care, a new concept was begun. Pastor Brandes asked other area pastors to help out with some of the work load. Pastor Schlicht was probably more involved than other area pastors, because he was within close proximity of the Home.

Once Pastor Brandes retired, Schlicht assumed an awesome task. Not only was his own parish growing, both church and school, but the added number of responsibilities of the Home made his job much more difficult. Schlicht then enlisted the aid of other pastors also to help out with preaching at the Home, conducting devotions and other such tasks.. Some of these men included Pastor Vern Voss at Jordan, M.J. Wehausen, Dale Baumler and Steven Stern. But as the work grew, Pastor Schlicht asked for his release from Trinity in order to devote his energies full time at the Home, this in 1976.

There were then in 1976 some part time chaplains who could help Pastor Schlicht. One of them was Pastor Paul Hanke, who formerly served St. Peter in St. Peter, Minnesota. Now that there were four full time pastors at the Home, the spiritual programs and services could more readily and easily be offered, and still maintain the soul-care for which the Home was begun.

The spiritual needs of the residents is the number one concern for Pastor Paul Hanke and the rest of the staff. It was this great concern that led the Home to call Pastor Hanke as the full-time chaplain of the Home, serving exclusively the spiritual needs of the residents, this taking place in the early 1980's. Now under the able hand of the full-time chaplain Pastor Hanke, the entire scope of spiritual activity to nourish and sustain the individual souls can be greatly and more effectively accomplished.

There are weekly church services held in the chapel facility. Both the aging division and MR sections are represented here each week. With the Mentally Retarded, Pastor Hanke holds three Bible Classes according to their level of comprehension. There are 52 residents in six groups according to emotional stability and intellectual ability. There is a Bible study two times a week with the mentally retarded. Just recently Pastor Hanke confirmed five residents from the MR division. This was a joyous occasion for both Pastor Hanke and the Home. Right now there are 14 communicants in the MR division, and two times a week he holds a catechism review class with these residents.

Pastor Hanke also holds daily devotions with aging and the MR sections. Other primary spiritual soul-care which the Home provides includes the Home's own chapel choir. Many residents become involved with ushering and attending these special concerts which the choir gives. There is one concert on Christmas and then one for Thanksgiving Day. The aging and MR sections worship together, and there has never been any real major problems because as Pastor Hanke observed, the spirit of Christian love prevails. Holy Communion is offered monthly to all the WEIS residents, and nearly every one of them gladly take part in this celebration.

In 1980 the Home opened its doors to all people regardless of race, creed or color. This directive was due in part to getting the license for the Mentally Retarded section. The majority of residents are from the Wis Synod, and hail mostly from Minnesota. Today the motto for the Home, The Care of the Soul is the Soul of Care, is more than just a saying, it is a real guideline when it comes to the real heart of the Home. Primary Soul-Care is of the essence. This philosophy even is part and parcel of all the other services which are offered by the Home, not only for its residents, but also for the community at large.

The newest program begun by the Lutheran Home is that of Social Services. The social services director had to be a WELS person with a Masters degree in social work. Mike Hoedike was hired by Pastor Schlicht in 1980. This position was needed at the Home at this particular time because of the requirement that a Social Services be offered for the Mentally retarded division.

Mike Hoedike's primary goal in offering social services is to offer them with a Christ-centered focus. He said it is almost like the chaplaincy program, where he does a lot of counseling. That probably takes up most of his time. As a member of the Wis Synod, he is thoroughly familiar with the Christian approach to all phases of social work. Once again, due to the growing needs of the residents of the Home, and those of people outside the Home, the social services division opened up a branch office in St. Paul, to better serve the needs of those in the outlying areas.

Some of the services which are provided by the Social Services include the following: Information and referral services; counseling for children and teenagers; services for unmarried parents; pre-marriage counseling; marriage counseling; adoption services; mental-health services; services for the mentally retarded; counseling for the chemically dependent and their families; planning for institutional care(nursing homes etc.).

The purpose of the residential care component of the Lutheran Home's Social Service program is most efficiently and competently to serve the residents and their families of our two residential care facilities. There are also other services provided for the residential care of the two divisions.

As for the future, Mike Hoedike would like to someday see specialized counselors for the different areas, like child psychology, chemical dependency and others. Also a separate Social Worker for the aging and one for the MR.

Among the other services which the Home offers include the following: a Meals-on-Wheels program to all the shut-ins in the area; blood pressure clinics to all people; therapy of the physical kind on an outpatient basis; facilities for CPR classes, adult education; facilities for meetings of the various boards of the Minnesota district and other boards.

The Home also includes many activities for the residents. The newest activity is wood-working, and is becoming very popular for the residents., both of the aging and MR divisions. Recently someone asked how many activities there are for the residents, and the number 40 current choices was given. Some of these include: bowling; arts and crafts; exercise classes; Valentines Day party; cooking class; there is a Lutheran Home band; a literary group and many others. In order to better care for the physical needs of the residents, there is also a full-time nursing staff with a doctor on call twenty-four hours a day. Over the years the medical services have changed almost radically. More attention is being given to dietary nutritional services. Years ago people would just come to a senior home to die. But now there is more emphasis being given for making the waning years more productive, longer health care and better health care. This also is a major part in the soul-care aspect. The better the shape of the body, the better of an attitude to go along with it.

It should be noted again that the over-riding goals of The Home is to provide spiritual care for the soul as well as care for the physical body. The Home has accomplished this goal since 1898, and has devoted itself to maintaining this Christ-centered philosophy. Much help has been given to the Home in order to keep this up, and much more will be given in the future. One thing remains true: The soul is destined to reach Heaven, and as a tool of the Holy Spirit, the Home is accountable to God for maintaining its high level of soul-care. Their motto is a wonderful motto, a lasting motto, but more importantly, it is a guideline, where THE CARE OF THE SOUL not only continues to be, but always will be THE SOUL OF CARE.

ENDNOTES

1. McClure, Ethel. More than a Roof, Minnesota Historical Society, St. Paul 1968 p. 68.
2. *ibid.*, p. 69
3. *ibid.*, p. 69
4. Schlicht, Pastor Robert. The Care of the Soul., The Lutheran Home, Belle Plaine, Minnesota. 1984 p. 478-479

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1. McClure, Ethel. More Than a Roof. Minnesota Historical Society, St. Paul 1968
2. Schlicht, Pastor Robert. Care of the Soul. The Lutheran Home. Belle Plaine, 1984