

Sincerely yours,

The Pastoral Spirit of O.J. Naumann as Demonstrated by his Presidential  
Correspondence

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## **Preliminary Notes**

The following work is based primarily on and contains extensive quotations from the presidential correspondence of O.J. Naumann. This correspondence has been entrusted to the archive of the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod. Because of the sensitive nature of such correspondence, the identities of the correspondents will be kept anonymous whenever possible. Each correspondent will instead be given an appropriate title (Mr., Mrs., Pastor, etc.) and a letter of the alphabet.

The distribution and publication of the contents of this work are subject to the policies of the archive of the WELS.

Because of the stated focus of this work, an effort will be made to reproduce entire letters and complete series of correspondence, with a minimum of editorial interruptions or modifications where possible. Comments will be added before and after the text of the letters, and in footnotes. One can better sense the spirit of a letter (and the attitude of a writer) by examining its entire content in context.

The grammar, syntax, and spelling found in the original correspondence will be maintained in this work. Copies of all correspondence used can be found in the addenda.

## Introduction

God provides for his Church. This is particularly true when the Church faces particularly troubling times. The middle of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century was such a particularly troubling time for the Lutheran church in the United States.

The storm clouds of false doctrine and dissent and division began to gather over the Lutheran church during the 1940s and the early 1950s. In the late 1950s and the early 1960s the storm broke. The Synodical Conference was divided by false doctrine. Synods were wracked with dissent and disunity. This storm left confusion and sadness and uncertainty in its wake in the late 1960s and the 1970s.<sup>1</sup>

At such a time, the Lord provided for the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod. Oscar J. Naumann was elected to the presidency of the WELS in 1953. From then until his death in 1979, Naumann led and sheltered his little flock through the storm.<sup>2</sup>

But perhaps just as important as what Naumann did, is how he did it. Many men in his position would have fallen into two opposite traps. Some may have become authoritarian and arrogant, dealing with voices of dissent and criticism with an iron fist. Others may have become isolated and unsure, left reeling by wave after wave of dispute and disappointment.

By God's grace, Oscar J. Naumann walked the narrow middle road. In doing so, he displayed the heart and spirit of a true pastor of God's people. This fact is made most evident in Naumann's presidential correspondence. One's "true colors" can easily be hidden in public speeches or finely-crafted publications. They are far harder to hide, however, in one's day-to-day dealings with people from all situations and stations in life.

Oscar J. Naumann's presidential correspondence was received by the archive of the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod, along with all his other files and records. The Naumann papers were inventoried and described in 2004.<sup>3</sup> The Naumann collection is extensive. The archival description lists 10 boxes of material. These 10 boxes contain 270 folders. These 270 folders contain 3.8 meters of paper. Of those 3.8 meters, the majority is correspondence.

The following paper includes excerpts from this extensive correspondence. In general, letters of a more general or personal nature were chosen over letters dealing with official synodical business. The reason for this is two-fold. First, Naumann's part

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<sup>1</sup> A thorough treatment of these times can be found in Mark E. Braun's *A Tale of Two Synods*.

<sup>2</sup> For the complete biographical and historical details of Oscar J. Naumann's life and presidency, see Ross W. Henzi's senior church history paper "Oscar J. Naumann: The Making of a President," Martin Blechschmidt's conference paper "Oscar J. Naumann: Steadfast Leader in Turbulent Times," or Morton Schroeder's article "Oscar J. Naumann: A President for His Time."

<sup>3</sup> The complete description of the Oscar J. Naumann Papers, prepared in 2004 by Jeremiah Gumm and Benjamin Radtke, is available from the WELS Archives.

in official synodical business is the subject of other papers and articles. Second, the more general or personal letters better demonstrate Naumann's pastoral spirit.

There is no pat definition of "pastoral spirit." It is something that is hard to describe, but is easy to see. Such a spirit is easily seen in Naumann's correspondence. For the purposes of this paper, Naumann's pastoral spirit will be discussed under five headings: A Patient Teacher, A Caring Friend, A Humble Leader, An Approachable Listener, and A Trusting Defender. Admittedly, many of these traits are closely related. They tend to overlap in many letters. Yet the overall impression they give of Oscar Naumann is clear.

*Part I: A Patient Teacher*

Before there was a WELS Q&A on the internet, before there was an internet at all, it seems that President Naumann often served as a *de facto* sort of WELS Q&A. He received questions regarding all sorts of theological and not-so-theological topics.

Below is such a letter—this one on the topic of communism.

February 23, 1966

Dear Pastor Naumann:

Our family recently left the Missouri Synod and united with a Wisconsin Synod congregation because of the liberalism of our former church.

Some of our friends, who are disturbed with the Missouri Synod and other churches of various denominations, have stopped attending any church at all because they became so upset with their churches, which, in effect, were attempting to coexist with the devil.

In talking with these friends about the Wisconsin Synod we are invariably asked the same question, "What position has the Wisconsin Synod taken in regard to informing its people about the communist conspiracy?" We, of course, reply that this is only one facet of evil and that the best defense against communism is a knowledge of the Scriptures.

Usually at this point the people will ask then how can our church be so militant about the Boy Scouts and apparently so oblivious to the threat posed by the conspiracy to all religion. Frankly, we don't know what to say, hence this letter to ask you if our church offers educational material on communism or if, in the past, the Northwestern Lutheran has published articles which will help people understand how the communists operate.

We are concerned about getting these friends back into church and certainly hope you can furnish us the information we need to convince them that our church is militant in its stand against communism.

Yours in Christ,  
*Mr. A*

The question is a rather standard one, given the time it was written. What is not so standard is the depth and detail of President Naumann's reply. Characteristic of much of Naumann's writing are long strings of quotations from the Bible and the hymnal.

Dear *Mr. A*:

Your letter of February 23 reached my home on February 26. I regret that my reply has been so long in coming. Many duties have occupied my time.

When you write that you left the Missouri Synod and united with our Synod because of the liberalism of your former church, you indicate the real purpose for joining a church. No person joins a church to support liberalism, or a departure from God's life-giving Word. One joins a church in order to have the Word of God taught in all its saving truth and power and the Sacraments administered according to Christ's institution. I trust you have found this in our Synod.

One does not join a church body in order to support a political ideology or to oppose one. The church has the call to preach the Gospel and to make disciples of Christ, not to enter into politics or strive for world betterment through legislation.

There are various types of communism. It can be found among the Mennonites and Hutterites in our country or among the Doukhobors in Canada. This is a way of life, a social or political ideology, not a religion as such.

The objection we have to the Russian or Chinese type of communism is that it is atheistic and anti-religious. Hence we as a church oppose the false religious teachings they espouse, not their form of government.

Our government, not the church, and we as private citizens of our country supporting the government are the ones who must oppose the political ideology of communism and must guard against all attempts to overthrow the government that the Lord has given us. (Romans 13 and the 4<sup>th</sup> Commandment).

*continued...*

*continued...*

As a church we have no material weapons for physical warfare. In II Corinthians 10:3-6 we read: "For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war after the flesh: (For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds;) Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ; And having in a readiness to revenge all disobedience, when your obedience is fulfilled."

But the Lord has not left us without spiritual weapons with which to war against atheism. He has given us impenetrable armor to guard us against the onslaughts of the evil one. In Ephesians 6:10-20 the weapons of our spiritual warfare are described. This armor is bullet-proof. These weapons, "the sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God," are invincible. They never misfire.

Our loins girt about with truth, having on the breastplate of righteousness, our feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace; above all taking the shield of faith, wherewith we shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked, and taking the helmet of salvation we shall be well protected and ready to do battle, taking the sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God.

As Luther sings in the battle hymn of the Reformation "One little word call fell him," namely Satan, the old evil foe. Meanwhile the shield of Christian faith, wrought by the Holy Spirit through the Gospel in Word and Sacraments, renders us invulnerable. Satan's weapons glance off this armor and fall harmlessly to the ground.

That is why Paul also writes: "Be sober, be vigilant, because your adversary, the devil, as a roaring lion walketh about, seeking whom he may devour: whom resist steadfast in the faith. I Peter 5:8 and 9.

Our Savior bids us in Matthew 6:33, "Seek ye first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be added unto you." While we seek the spiritual food for our souls, the Lord will give us as a bonus the physical protection and necessities that we must have and that He considers good for us.

Hence we join a church to find treasures for heaven, salvation for our souls, peace for time and eternity. And the Lord has promised that He will never leave us or forsake us.

*continued...*



*continued...*

Preaching and hearing the Truth of God's Word is the most militant and most effective action we Christians can take against Satan and against atheistic communism. Bring the souls of men inner peace, peace with God and men, and they will have no taste or stomach for atheistic communism.

This is a type of militant warfare which we wage against atheistic communism and against all enemies of the Church of Jesus Christ. We are soldiers of the cross. Let us not be ashamed of Him and His Gospel, for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth.

It is this Gospel invitation which you want to bring to your friends who have become lax in church attendance. For as Paul wrote in I Corinthians 2 you want their faith to stand, not in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God.

If I can find a certain article which I once read in one of the church papers that come to my office, I will enclose a copy. I thought it deals rather effectively with just this question which you posed.

I hope these rather hurriedly written lines will give you an answer to your question whether our church is militant in its stand against communism. I hope it at the same time convinces you concerning the type of weapons God has given us to use in this battle.

Sincerely yours in Christ,

Oscar J. Naumann

One can't help but notice the time and thought that President Naumann must have put into such a reply. The recipient of the reply certainly noticed.

February 23, 1966

Dear Sir:

Your lengthy and Scripturally documented reply to my inquiry about our church's position on informing its membership of the menace faced by the church in the communist conspiracy was a tribute to your knowledge of the Scriptures. Knowing that your time is precious, I sincerely appreciate the trouble you went to in order to answer my letter....

Yours in Christ,  
*Mr. A*

President Naumann showed the same thoroughness and thoughtfulness in his reply to this questioner.

Dear Dr. Naumann—

I would like to receive some of your doctrinal standards and your stand on Pre-Millennial dogma. I understand that your Synod is very strict. I read in the Chicago Tribune where your group and the Norwegian Lutheran (American Evangelical) opposed the Missouri Synod....

Do I sound like a person that has a mote in his eye? And trying to push my brothers around behind their backs? From what I have studied, though, I cannot accept any form of liberalism. I respect your stand with the Norwegian Synod....

I am interested in receiving your information...I would like to know what your point of view is concerning people who would say that your group might turn out to be "anti-Evangelistic" or "dead orthodoxy."

February 5, 1963

Dear *Mr. C*:

Your letter inquiring about the confessional position of our church was received some time ago. The many meetings and official duties of the last two weeks, some out of town, have made it impossible for me to reply sooner.

To give you in simple, straight forward language the confessional position of our church I am sending you under separate cover a copy of our centennial publication, "Continuing In His Word", and a copy of Pastor Carl Gausewitz's Exposition of Luther's Small Catechism. I believe you will gain an adequate insight into the history and development of our church and of its confessional position from these volumes.

As to a millennium or a visible kingdom of Christ on earth prior to the day of judgment, we believe that when Christ returns, He will return for the final judgment.

*continued...*

*continued...*

We are today living in the day when the Word of God is being freely taught and confessed and the enemies of God are helpless before His soul-saving Word. Satan's power is broken through Christ's all-sufficient sacrifice and atonement and through His promise: He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved.

The great danger today is that people and entire church bodies question and deny the authority of God's Word, the Bible, and will not believe it, and teach it as it speaks to us. Human reason and individual preference tamper with His Word and rob the souls of the comfort and assurance which God wants them to have....

I do not consider you as one having a beam in his eye or that you are pushing your brothers around behind their backs. I consider you as one who is searching for a confessional position that upholds the teaching of God's Holy Word for the salvation of souls....

Name-calling is, of course, nothing new in this world. It is usually resorted to by those who have no sound argument to advance. We maintain that our position is the scriptural position. It is the historic position of the Synodical Conference, too, which can be proved time and again from both Missouri Synod publications and Synodical Conference publications of the past. We are neither "anti-evangelistic" or anti-evangelical as I would prefer to put it, not is our position that of dead orthodoxy. But we do refuse to let human reason or human wisdom lord it over the clear teaching of God's Word. If this is "dead orthodoxy," I am all in favor of it....

I hope that the publications I am sending you will be helpful. Should you desire more, please write again.

May the Lord keep us in His Word and faith unto our end.

Sincerely yours,  
Oscar J. Naumann

Once again, President Naumann's thorough reply won the attention and thanks of the original writer.

Dear Dr. Naumann—

I am appreciative for the Christian literature you sent me. It is a wonderful experience to contact a Christian who is so anxious to help a person. I am thankful that you belong to a true Church of Christ....

Yet President Naumann was not willing to let his helpfulness and thoroughness in answering such questions dominate his time or distract him from his other responsibilities. Over the course of 4 years, he received a series of letters from what can only be described as a “crotchety” woman. This woman seemed to get herself into numerous disputes over obscure points with those she termed “objectionable liars.” Nor was she afraid to let President Naumann know when she felt that the Lutheran Church (excepting herself, of course) was “way off base” on a variety of topics. Though President Naumann wanted here too to be a patient teacher, he would not allow himself to be her personal arbiter of disputes.

January 5th, 1968

Dear *Mrs. B*:

Your two letters arrived this morning. I shall attempt to answer both of them at once....

Sincerely,  
Oscar J. Naumann

January 11th, 1971

Dear *Mrs. B*:

I regret that the volume of official correspondence and the many meetings I must attend at this season make it impossible for me to send you an evaluation of Ehrlich's “Population Bomb” or a longer statement of my opinion on the problems of pollution....

Sincerely yours,  
Oscar J. Naumann

March 1, 1971

Dear *Mrs. B*:

I regret that I dare not use my time to write term papers or these for various people and leave my actual tasks unaccomplished....

Yours truly,  
Oscar J. Naumann

*Part 2: A Caring Friend*

We clearly see President Naumann's pastoral care and love in his letters of comfort to the sick and to the bereaved. His words are simple, beautiful, and heartfelt.

March 1, 1961

Dear Brother D:

We missed you at the meeting last evening, at which time I heard that you were confined to the hospital.

I pray that the Lord would bless and keep you in His gracious care and restore you to full vigor and strength again soon.

That you are not completely relaxed and "out of the harness" as yet was evidenced by the fact that you had sent a detailed agenda to the meeting. It was very helpful and our meeting was adjourned shortly after 10 o'clock.

Now I hope you can relax and forget things. I can easily put myself into your situation, because I took an involuntary vacation for 16 days just two years ago. It takes a while to unwind at first. But our first obligation when ill is to recognize that also this enforced vacation is sent by a kind heavenly Father who has our welfare in mind. He is blessing us all the while. His Church, also, will not be forsaken or neglected, for it is he who is the Chief Shepherd, the Author and Finisher of our salvation.

I wish to assure you that the prayers of your brethren and of the members of the Board are added to those of your family and your congregation, imploring the Lord's richest blessing upon all medication, treatment, food and rest that are being offered to you for your recovery.

He that spared not his own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, shall He not with Him freely give us all things!

With kindest personal regards.

Sincerely yours,  
Oscar J. Naumann

September 20, 1960

Dear Friends in Christ:

When word reached us in Saginaw that the Lord had so suddenly called his servant, your faithful husband and father, from his labor here into eternal rest and glory, we could hardly accept the report as true. When, however, later reports verified the first, we prayed the Lord to grant us the grace to believe His Holy Word in which He assures us: "I know the thoughts that I think toward you, saith the Lord; thoughts of peace and not of evil."

Though we considered Pastor *I* to be in the prime of life and to have many more years of service before him, the Lord without question considered his task completed and said to him: "Well done, thou good and faithful servant. Enter thou into the joys of the Lord."

Once more we are reminded of the urgency of praying to the Lord of the harvest to send forth laborers into His harvest. For he calls His servants from their labors to their rest according to his will. How grateful our congregations should be for pastors who lead them faithfully to the Bread and Water of life.

May the Lord, who alone can comfort and strengthen you in your bereavement, give you the confidence to say in humble submission to His unsearchable dispensation: "The Lord gave and the Lord hath taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord". "He doeth all things well."

Rest assured that He, who gave His Son to bear our sins and iniquities and who is the true Father of the widows and the fatherless children, will not leave you comfortless. He will strengthen and uphold you by His gracious power. "Fear not, for I have redeemed thee; I have called thee by name; thou art mine."...

May He keep you and your beloved congregation in His gracious care always.

Sincerely yours in Christ,  
Oscar J. Naumann

President Naumann also showed his caring spirit toward children. Here he answers a request from a former student with great warmth.

Dear Pastor Naumann:

I will be graduating from high school in a year, and I plan on attending the Methodist-Kahler School of Nursing and receive accreditations for three years to receive a diploma for Registered Nursing.

I was in your Confirmation class of 1958, in case you cannot remember exactly who I am.

My mother advised me to send this to you because she said you have known my family and I for a long time and would fill out my reference for me if you had the time.

So I have enclosed in this letter a reference for you to fill out if you have time.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,  
*E*

July 28, 1961

Dear *E*:

Actually, I should address you as "Miss *E*" now, because you were a grownup young lady when I left Saint Paul a year and a half ago.

How could you think I had forgotten you or your family so soon?

I am happy to learn that you are going to enter the field of nursing. I think it is a very noble profession and offers one of the greatest opportunities to serve one's fellow-man in real time of need. I believe your personality is ideally suited for this career. Were I to be sick, I would certainly welcome your smile and cheerful disposition in my room....

Kindly greet your family, grandparents, and the other relatives and friends. I am sorry that our recent visit in St. Paul was so short and that we did not have the opportunity to visit with everyone....

Sincerely yours,  
Oscar J. Naumann

Here he answers the earnest pleas of one of the Synod's "forgotten" children. His letter gives us a glimpse into his attitude toward ministerial education .

October 31, 1967

Dear Sir,

I am, this year, an eighth grader, and am probably going to go on to participating in public schools. Pretty gory isn't it?! Our town brags the best educational center in Washington, from kindergarten to a big college, all (except kindergarten, of course) teaches parts of evolution if not every single theory in the book.

I have, on my own, decided I would go to a church school. Okay, ready, brace yourself: the nearest parochial school is in Mobridge, South Dakota!! The nearest parochial college is in Wisconsin!!!

I feel this is very unfair to us kids around here. How do you expect us (children) to grow up, sincerely believing in Christ when using the name of God in vain is common place from about third grade up? Getting drunk is "in" in high school and have college professors going around with "God is dead!" on their brains?!!

Wake up! We exist!! We're not as primitive out here as you may think!

We're not ignorant of the fact that there is such a thing as church school. We hear a whisper of one existing now and then.

My parents refuse the idea of actually living away from home at my age, and for good reasons, as if I went to Mobridge.

I hope you don't take this as a mean, nasty letter. It isn't. It's just a struggling attempt to make you realize that some of us care what happens to our future before God.

Please, I know that sooner or later you will consider it important enough that children be saved around here, if not for me, at least for my future children. Somehow, someday, I do believe that our synod will stretch its boundaries of schools this way.

Praying and waiting,

*F*

P.S. Please write. Thank you for hearing me out.



December 4, 1967

Dear F:

Your letter of October 31, the 450th Anniversary of the Reformation, was received at my office on November 15. Since I was out of town that entire week on special assignment and since I have attended meetings in the interest of Christian education and worker training in Mobridge, South Dakota, New Ulm, Minnesota, and Chicago, Illinois, since that time, you will understand why my reply did not arrive sooner.

We are very much aware of the fact that our members and their children "exist" in the beautiful Pacific Northwest District and elsewhere, where we have not been able as yet to open Synodical academies and colleges. Not that we are not eager to do so, but we don't have the funds needed to do so.

You will realize that to train pastors and teachers our Synod originally founded schools where our members lived at the time. The largest concentration is still found in the general areas of our schools, though we are now expanding to the East, the West, the North, and the South. This expansion is the main reason why we need more pastors: the Lord is leading us into many new areas. He is opening many new doors for us. It also takes a great deal of money to help these new congregations support their pastors. This is one reason our funds for new schools are limited. The need to more pastors also compels us to increase the teaching staff at each school to train the growing number of students.

A number of years ago our Synod founded Northwestern Lutheran Academy at Mobridge, partly because it is so difficult of the congregations in that District and the adjacent Districts to offer elementary Christian day schools for their children. Distances are very great, our members are scattered so far apart. It poses real problems to get the children together every day and back home again in all kinds of weather. There are a few exceptions, of course, where Christian schools are being conducted.

But the Academy does make Christian secondary schooling on the high school level, available to our people. And though the distances are quite formidable, especially for students from Washington, yet you should consider that you would be in a high school where the Word of God rules supreme. In our school evolution is not taught but exposed as a theory of men that denies the existence of God and contradicts His Holy Word. Yet it is a theory that is not even reasonable, it doesn't even make sense....

*continued...*

You would at Mobridge be in the company of Christian students from good Lutheran homes, whose parents, pastors, and teachers all are deeply concerned about their soul's welfare, not only their progress in scholastic achievement.

Remember, also, that the Savior has said: "Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world." He also said: "Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them." He gives His angels charge over His children to keep them in all their ways.

These promises must be our staff and stay when we consider our future schooling and going away from home to be able to receive that kind of schooling.

I know it was not easy for my mother, a widow with eight children, the youngest 1 1/2 years old, when it came to choosing schools for us. Yet she did manage to send all of us to school, some of us to our Synod's schools and all of us to Christian day schools when they were available. I was 7 1/2 years old when my father died. I am forever grateful that my mother did send me to Christian school even though I was away from home after the eighth grade except for Christmas and Easter vacations and a few days in summer when I was not working on a farm over 100 miles from home. I was in the company of Lutheran Christian teachers and good Lutheran people when away from home and this is what was the best thing that could have happened to me.

I mention this only, because I went through an experience similar to the one you face today: "What school should I attend? Where will my faith be strengthened through daily study of the Word and through the guidance and example of Christian teachers? Where will I be corrected and warned when I stray into false paths? There will my teachers be concerned about my soul and not only about my brain and my scholastic record?"

I hope these few thoughts will help you and your parents view the question of your future schooling in another light. You know, distance isn't the greatest barrier that can separate parents and children. The type of life and conduct that is rampant in the public schools, as you describe them, can become a much greater, yes an insuperable barrier between parents and their children. I pray that no such barrier will ever come between you, your parents, your church and your Savior.

May the Lord give you and yours a blessed Advent and Christmas season.

Sincerely yours,  
Oscar J. Naumann

The following is a letter of thanks addressed to President Naumann for the care and concern that he showed to the called workers of the synod, both as a whole and individually.

September 10, 1963

Dear Pastor Naumann,

I think that the Synod must have raised our salaries at least 7-8 times since I have been teaching. Each time I have wanted to say "Thank you" to someone—to you, perhaps, as the representative of the body—yet I preferred to do it within the group I was serving. For certain reasons I have hesitated to bring up such "pietistic" suggestions. So please accept my personal thanks for looking out for our bodily welfare in such a way that we do not deserve. Every time we receive an increase in salary I look upon it as a stimulus to serve the Church better than before. It's just too bad that we live "in the flesh", and that it offers such a drag to our service. There's an answer for this too, repentance. At any rate—Thanks.

While I write, I should bring up the name of *H*. You did him a great service by giving him the little "pat on the back" at the time of his father's retirement. I don't know the exact nature of it nor is it necessary to know. But the finest medicine for him in Milwaukee has been to know that he has been accepted, that there are actually synodical workers who will talk to him, not even to mention compliment his work. I want to thank you for that too....Maybe the balm of acceptance will be a help in his rather cruel judgments of mankind, especially of Christians....

I remember the kind hospitality offered to me at the time I played at your congregation. It was also gracious of you to accept my "cockeyed" ideas at that time. This was a boost to me, too, at that time. But I never thanked you again from keeping me at your busy parsonage that time. We forget very often. Greeting to Mrs.

May God bless your office.

Sincerely,  
[Pastor] G

*Part 3: A Humble Leader*

Humility is an elusive think. It would be impossible to find entire letters in which President Naumann discussed his own humility. But we do find many examples in which Naumann displays the attitude of a humble servant of Christ and Church.

In the years leading up to the split with Missouri, Naumann received an ever-increasing number of harsh and critical letters. Some went so far as to accuse President Naumann of deceit or trickery or politicking. The following is his reply to one such accusation.

June 30, 1960

Dear Brother J:

...

I am ready at any time to surrender my call and assignment whenever the Lord through His church so requests. To me it is a riddle why the Lord does no call men who have a ready and pat reply to every question and a self-evident solution to every problem....

Naumann's humble perspective on the ministry is shown in this letter to an ailing pastor.

September 9, 1966

Dear Brother:

...

The Lord's judgments are unsearchable and His ways past finding out. When so many ministers of the Gospel are needed to staff the fields into which He has called us, He still strikes some with illness and forbids them through their physicians to carry out the duties required be their calls.

This all teaches us to recognize that we are what we are only through God's grace and goodness. Our health and strength also are from Him, just as our knowledge of the Gospel of forgiveness, life and salvation are ours only through His gracious revelation. This we ought to keep always in mind. And this He brings to our attention and recalls to our memory whenever He lays the hand of affliction on us or on one of our brethren....

Sincerely,  
Oscar J. Naumann

Less than a year before his death, President Naumann discusses his health and God's grace on his long ministry.

August 4, 1978

Dear Brother K:

...

The Lord has been very kind to me, adding one day of service after another. I am able to do my work by the use of much more medication, a somewhat limited diet, and a regular program of exercise. I accept every day as an additional opportunity to serve Him and His Church.

Sincerely yours in Him,  
Oscar J. Naumann

*Part 4: An Approachable Listener*

President Naumann welcomed and encouraged ideas and input from members of the synod, even "rookie" pastors like the one who wrote the following.

February 24, 1977

Dear President Naumann:

I feel a little "sheepish" writing this letter—sort of like a bat boy advising Henry Aaron on his batting stance. On the other hand I feel that you are the type of person who can be approached with a new idea, even by a rookie.

I have felt from time to time that the mission code of the Wis. Synod punished the fellow who was sent to places like Long Island or other high cost areas of living in comparison to the Dakotas or whatever, for code makes no distinctions on the basis of different costs of living in various locals. This does not affect me personally because I am serving neither in a mission nor do I feel under-compensated. For that matter how can one be under-compensated when he is doing the Lord's work.

*continued...*

*continued...*

Yet, I think everyone would like to see the workers in home missions in particular get a fair shake and earn a living wage. This applies even more to the increasing number of teachers who are serving under mission code scales. And I am enclosing a pay scale from Employers' Mutual Insurance Co. of Wausau, WI. One of my members who works there supplied it. I am wondering if there is any chance of future salary scales for mission pastors and teachers to reflect, as this scale does, the sometimes vastly different costs of living from coast to coast and north to south. I didn't know exactly who to give this to, so I am sending it to you. You may direct it where you will or file it in the ever-handy circular file.

Just one final note: I never realized in Sem how much I would appreciate your President's newsletters. They are always welcome here—don't know if anyone ever commented on them, but I know I appreciate them.

Hope I haven't wasted too much of your time. God's blessings to you and may you be assured that at least one of the rookies appreciates and is thankful for the way you carry out your many responsibilities.

Sincerely in His service,  
*Pastor L*

March 3, 1977

Dear Brother L:

Your letter of February 24 arrived yesterday. I hasten to respond. Please don't feel sheepish about your letter or hesitate to write. My time is your time. Someone else had that as his theme song on radio years ago. But in my case it is really true. Our whole establishment on North Avenue is a service agency. We are here to help hold up your arms in the daily battle.

You have a very valid point there concerning the mission code salary....Just for that reason your letter is timely. I will pass it along to the Synod's Salary Review Committee....I am certain they will give your concern serious consideration....

*continued...*

*continued...*

I remember distinctly having written to congregations about their “starvation wages” when I was district president in Minnesota. One congregation of wealthy farmers forced their teacher by their low salary to seek secular employment during the summer in order to be able to pay his bills. Either he had to do that or go home to his parents and ask them to feed him when the school was not in session.

This young man was a good worker and the concern for which he worked in the summer tried to persuade him to remain in their employ the year around. In this case and in some others the congregations recognized their shortcomings and raised the salaries. In fact, this young man was even able to get married and support a wife later on....

Sincerely yours in His service,  
Oscar J. Naumann

President Naumann also showed that he was approachable by his willingness and ability to discuss “everyday things” with friends and strangers alike. His letters are full of discussions of things like the weather, sports, gardening, family, children, humor, dominoes, etc.

#### *Part 5: A Trusting Defender*

In such tumultuous times, numerous accusations (both legitimate and not-so legitimate) came by way of letter to President Naumann’s desk. Yet he refused to be involved in any of them. References to Matthew 18 are common in Naumann’s letters. Also common are expressions of trust in his pastors and district presidents to handle the situations that arose in a proper way.

February 24, 1977

Dear Mr. O

I trust that you have dealt with the persons you term “rats” in you letter. You owe them the service of private admonition according to Matthew 18. If that and the subsequent step have failed, you may bring the matter to the attention of the Church, but not in the spirit which your choice of language seems to indicate. All admonition must be carried on in the spirit of love and helpfulness with the purpose of winning and gaining the brother....

*continued...*

*continued...*

Even though our convictions are deep and firm, and our grievances are very disturbing, let us pray that Lord for grace to act and speak in a spirit of Christian love and helpfulness. That alone will serve to edify the Church and to gain the brother whom we are admonishing. We dare not let our anger run away with us....

Sincerely yours,  
Oscar J. Naumann

May 10, 1954

Dear Pastor *P*:

...

During my tenure of office as President of the Minnesota District, I did hear an occasional remark or rumor concerning possible irregularities of practice in one of our congregations in the Twin Cities, but these remarks remained very general and in keeping with the 8th Commandment. I urged those who made the remarks to deal with the man involved if they had any definite information. More harm than good can be done when we fail to heed Matthew 18 and to go directly to a brother who has sinned against us....

Our Conference visitor and our district praesidium are dealing with Pastor *Q* in this manner. Since it is not a matter that has reached Synodical level but is still being dealt with in the District, I am forwarding your letter of May 1st to President George Barthels together with a copy of this letter. I shall leave it to the judgment of President Barthels—how we wishes to handle your “Official Protest”, and you call your letter.

With the prayer that the Lord may bless the dealings of our officials in this matter and speed the day when these irregularities will be corrected, I wish to remain

Sincerely yours,  
Oscar J. Naumann



## **Conclusion**

In 1960, a man wrote to President Naumann, concerned that the pastor of a church he had visited had yet to respond to a letter he had sent him. President Naumann responded by saying that “not many pastors find time to correspond indefinitely with visitors from other congregations.” He was right. Not many pastors would find the time.

But President Naumann did find the time. He found the time to correspond with people from across the synod, across the world, across the spectrum of religion. He was a patient teacher whose thoroughness earned the respect of all. He was a caring friend to those who were hurting. He was a humble leader, even when under attack. He was an approachable listener to those with a suggestion or a story. He was a trusting defender in a time of distress.

Above all, President Oscar J. Naumann was a pastor, with a pastor’s heart and a pastor’s spirit. He was a true blessing from God.

1-26-66

[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]

Pastor Oscar J. Naumann, Pres.  
Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod  
4933 N. 67th Street  
Milwaukee, Wisconsin 53218

Dear Pastor Naumann:

Our family recently left the Missouri Synod and united with a Wisconsin Synod congregation because of the liberalism of our former church.

Some of our friends, who are disturbed with the Missouri Synod and other churches of various denominations, have stopped attending any church at all because they became so upset with their churches, which, in effect, were attempting to coexist with the devil.

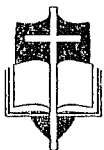
In talking with these friends about the Wisconsin Synod we are invariably asked the same question, "What position has the Wisconsin Synod taken in regard to informing its people about the communist conspiracy?". We, of course, reply that this is only one facet of evil and that the best defense against communism is a knowledge of the Scriptures.

Usually at this point the people will ask then how can our church be so militant about the Boy Scouts and apparently so oblivious to the threat posed by the conspiracy to all religion. Frankly, we don't know what to say, hence this letter to ask you if our church offers educational material on communism or if, in the past, the Northwestern Lutheran has published articles which will help people understand how the communists operate.

We are concerned about getting these friends back into church and certainly hope you can furnish us the information we need to convince them that our church is militant in its stand against communism.

Yours in Christ,

[REDACTED]



# Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod

OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT

Rev. Oscar J. Naumann

3512 West North Avenue

Milwaukee, Wisconsin 53208

Office: 445-4022

Residence: 463-6071

March 15, 1966

C [REDACTED]  
[REDACTED] e  
[REDACTED]

Dear Mr. Clark:

Your letter of February 23 reached my home on February 26. I regret that my reply has been so long in coming. Many duties have occupied my time.

O When you write that you left the Missouri Synod and united with our Synod because of the liberalism of your former church, you indicate the real purpose for joining a church. No person joins a church to support liberalism, or a departure from God's life-giving Word. One joins a church in order to have the Word of God taught in all its saving truth and power and the Sacraments administered according to Christ's institution. I trust you have found this in our Synod.

P One does not join a church body in order to support a political ideology or to oppose one. The church has the call to preach the Gospel and to make disciples of Christ, not to enter into politics or to strive for world betterment through legislation.

Y There are various types of communism. It can be found among the Mennonites and Hutterites in our country or among the Doukhobors in Canada. This is a way of life, a social or political ideology, not a religion as such.

Y The objection we have to the Russian or Chinese type of communism is that it is atheistic and anti-religious. Hence we as a church oppose the false religious teachings they espouse, not their form of government.

Our government, not the church, and we as private citizens of our country supporting the government are the ones who must oppose the political ideology of communism and must guard against all attempts to overthrow the government that the Lord has given us. (Romans 13 and the 4th Commandment).

As a church we have no material weapons for physical warfare. In II Corinthians 10: 3 to 6 we read: "For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war after the flesh: (For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds;) Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ; And having in a readiness to revenge all disobedience, when your obedience is fulfilled."

But the Lord has not left us without spiritual weapons with which to war against atheism. He has given us impenetrable armor to guard us against the onslaughts of the evil one. In Ephesians 6: 10-20 the weapons of our spiritual warfare are described. This armor is bullet-proof. These weapons, "the sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God," are invincible. They never misfire.

March 15, 1966

Our loins girt about with truth, having on the breastplate of righteousness, our feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace; above all taking the shield of faith, wherewith we shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked, and taking the helmet of salvation we shall be well protected and ready to do battle, taking the sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God.

As Luther sings in the battle hymn of the Reformation "One little word can fell him," namely, Satan, the old evil foe. Meanwhile the shield of Christian faith, wrought in us by the Holy Spirit through the Gospel in Word and Sacraments, renders us invulnerable. Satan's weapons glance off this armor and fall harmlessly to the ground.

That is why Paul also writes: "Be sober, be vigilant, because your adversary, the devil, as a roaring lion walketh about, seeking whom he may devour: whom resist steadfast in the faith. I. Peter 5: 8 and 9.

C Our Savior bids us in Matthew 6:33, "Seek ye first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you." While we seek the spiritual food for our souls, the Lord will give us as a bonus the physical protection and necessities that we must have and that He considers good for us.

O Hence we join a church to find treasures for heaven, salvation for our souls, peace for time and eternity. And the Lord has promised that He will never leave us nor forsake us.

P Preaching and hearing the Truth of God's Word is the most militant and most effective action we Christians can take against Satan and against atheistic communism. Bring the souls of men inner peace, peace with God and men, and they will have no taste or stomach for atheistic communism.

Y This is the type of militant warfare which we wage against atheistic communism and against all enemies of the Church of Jesus Christ. We are soldiers of the cross. Let us not be ashamed of Him and His Gospel, for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth.

It is this Gospel invitation which you want to bring to your friends who have become lax in church attendance. For as Paul wrote in I. Corinthians 2 you want their faith to stand, not in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God.

If I can find a certain article which I once read in one of the church papers that come to my office, I will enclose a copy. I thought it deals rather effectively with just this question which you posed.

I hope these rather hurriedly written lines will give you an answer to your question whether our church is militant in its stand against communism. I hope it at the same time convinces you concerning the type of weapons God has given us to use in this battle.

Sincerely yours in Christ,

Oscar J. Naumann

OJN:vas  
Encl.

*Doc*



[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED] Doc  
[REDACTED] March 20, 1966

Rev. Oscar J. Naumann, President  
Wisconsin Ev. Lutheran Synod  
3512 W. North Avenue  
Milwaukee, Wisconsin 53208

Dear Sir:

Your lengthy and Scripturally documented reply to my inquiry about our church's position on informing its membership of the menace faced by the church in the communist conspiracy was a tribute to your knowledge of the Scriptures. Knowing that your time is precious, I sincerely appreciate the trouble you went to in order to answer my letter.

If the Scripture you quoted is a valid reason for the church standing mute regarding communism then what justification does the Northwestern Lutheran have for printing articles such as the current one about the apostasy in the American Lutheran Church? Luther said in the catechism that the invisible church included people in all Christian churches, so how can our official position be one of condemnation for a church which certainly includes believers while at the same time we shrink from the unpleasant task of condemning a belief which is Satan incarnate?

Dr. Walther did not hesitate to condemn communism and socialism, you will discover, if you read some of his sermons. Was he wrong in preaching these sermons? To answer my own question, I think that he understood the problem whereas today the majority of the clergy have been conditioned by the newspapers and other media into believing that it is dabbling in politics to discuss communism and socialism.

Although my knowledge of theology is limited, I do know that one day you and I shall stand before the Judgment Seat and give an account of our deeds, including our stewardship of the Word of God. To me, this means that I should bend every effort to see that the darkness which has descended on most of the earth since 1917 is stayed as long as possible or rolled back, in order that as many souls as possible might hear the Christian message before the last days.

In 1917, there were some four million Lutherans alone in Russia whereas today there are none that I know of and the few Christians that are there are worshipping "in the catacombs", just as you and I shall be if we remain detached from the world around us. It makes me wonder if a Christian in Russia, Cuba, China, or any other of the slave states would say in essence that the Christian church is not involved. My conscience tells me that I am deeply involved and that my church is also involved in this matter, which is basically spiritual and not political, as so many people have been led to believe.


The reprint of the article you enclosed was quite interesting, but the author's fliprant treatment of the name of Our Redeemer on the first page in the lower right hand column led me to look askance at his opinions in the text of the article. You may have only given this article a cursory scanning before sending it to me but I ask you now to go back and read it carefully.

As I am one of the people who protested the Pete Seeger business it is only fair that you should know that my protest was not on the basis of orthodoxy (as the author says) but on the basis of extremely poor judgment by the people who made the arrangements. As a point of information, Seeger was recently honored in Moscow, and still entertains at rallies advertised in The Worker, official Communist Party organ for the East Coast.

The conclusion drawn by the author of your article that the anti-communists are dangerous is the same conclusion reached by the article in The Worker, which I enclose, and typifies the fuzzy thinking that contributes to the general obfuscation prevalent in the world today. Giving N. Harms credit for not knowing what he was doing in writing his piece I shall say that his article has furthered the Communist movement a great deal. Now, I ask you, who is more dangerous, the anti-communist or the person who is unfamiliar with the dialectical maneuvers of the Communist Party and therefore propagates the line?

You need not take time from your work to answer this unless you wish to correct me if I have erred. Again, I thank you for your time and effort.

Yours in Christ,



Dear Dr. Taumann -

I would like to receive some of your doctrinal standards and your stand on pre-Millennial dogma. I understand that your Synod is very strict. I read in the Chicago Tribune where your group and the Norwegian Lutheran (American Evangelical) opposed the Missouri Synod. of course as of late, I understand that they are trying to co-operate with world Lutheran Conference. Isn't it true that many other Lutheran groups in the world do accept officially the "Infallible Bible"?

Most Lutherans seem to be in the  
National Council and/or World Council.  
I think that the Missouri Synod is  
backing up some, too. There is no  
doubt about it.

What is your stand on smoking  
and drinking? I read an article in  
one paper where Missouri Synod leaders  
said that supervised dances are ac-  
ceptable now whereas before they were not.  
I heard of one of their pastors who certainly  
did not oppose Masonry.

Do I sound like a person that  
has a nail in his eye? And trying  
to push my brothers around behind their  
backs? From what I have studied, though,



I cannot accept any form of Weakism,  
I respect your stand along with the  
Norwegian Synod. I hear that the Slovak  
Lutherans Synod did not side with  
either the Missouri Synod or your  
Fellowship.

I am interested in receiving your  
information. Even among the National  
Association of Evangelicals there seems to  
be compromise between the orthodox individuals  
and liberal led churches. That is why  
the American Council of Christian Churches  
was founded - because of weak-kneed  
modern Theology.

I would like to know what  
your point of view is concerning people

who would say that your group might turn out to be "Anti-Evangelistic" or "dead-orthodox". Evangelistic meetings are almost taboo, according to them, and rituals and Confessions take their place - generally. What do you say of this?

I read a little Catholic booklet which stated that Luther said to Melancthon in a letter "to sin boldly but to believe more boldly." - I guess the letter ended up saying he could be justified though he committed fornication a thousand times a day. Certainly, you people must be familiar with that. Of course, Round Bainton states that Luther said that it is better to sin once in a while, rather than to develop a sense of self-righteous pride in his saintliness. I read is also a question on his temper which he showed in his "the murderous and

"Shivering Fords". I read his tracts on  
Erasmus's Free Will and Eck's debate  
and know that he was looked upon as  
a seven-headed monster but was a bulwark  
of God against Carlsbadt and Munzer.

Some would ask why you do not  
believe in a symbolical Interpretation  
of the Lord's Supper and yet are not  
sympathetic with Pre-Millennialism. I  
thought that Zechariah 14:4-9 and Isaiah 11:6  
were connected with Rev. 20:4-6 as Isaiah  
11:1 was related to Romans 15:12.

From what I have read of Luther  
I seem to come to the conclusion that he  
used logic and great judgment in most

~~101~~  
~~101~~  
~~101~~

I have seen  
students from a  
missionary Synod  
group in a tavern  
Tavern  
(entering)

many groups feel that too  
much Church Service almost  
outlaws "Lay Evangelism."

Things: I am sorry for taking up a lot  
of your time, Sir, but if you would  
I wish that you would send me any  
statements available and if money is  
requested for some of it I will reimburse  
you. Thank you  
for your time

~~101~~  
~~101~~

~~101~~  
~~101~~

February 5, 1963

[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED] t  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]

Your letter inquiring about the confessional position of our church was received some time ago. The many meetings and official duties of the last two weeks, some out of town, have made it impossible for me to reply sooner.

To give you in simple, straight forward language the confessional position of our church I am sending you under separate cover a copy of our centennial publication, "Continuing In His Word", and a copy of Pastor Carl Gausewitz's Exposition of Luther's Small Catechism. I believe you will gain an adequate insight into the history and development of our church and of its confessional position from these volumes.

As to a millenium or a visible kingdom of Christ on earth prior to the day of judgment, we believe that when Christ returns, He will return for the final judgment.

We are today living in the day when the Word of God is being freely taught and confessed and the enemies of God are helpless before His soul-saving Word. Satan's power is broken through Christ's all-sufficient sacrifice and atonement and through His promise: He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved.

The great danger today is that people and entire church bodies question and deny the authority of God's Word, the Bible, and will not believe it, and teach it as it speaks to us. Human reason and individual preference tamper with His Word and rob the souls of the comfort and assurance which God wants them to have.

We are not members of the National Lutheran Council nor of the Lutheran World Federation, because in these bodies error and departure from the inerrant Word of God is tolerated and condoned.

We do not as a church forbid all smoking and every use of alcoholic beverages. We definitely condemn excessive use of both and teach our people that their body and its health are gifts and blessings from our God and are not to be abused or endangered by any excesses.

Because of the temptations connected with dancing, especially in public places and particularly close embrace dancing, we constantly warn our people against it and the damage that may be done to them in soul and body. Our church groups would, of course, not conduct or sponsor dancing.

I do not consider you as one having a beam in his eye or that you are pushing your brothers around behind their backs. I consider you as one who is searching for a confessional position that upholds the teaching of God's Holy Word for the salvation of souls.

You observe quite keenly when you say that "the Slovak Lutheran Synod did not side with either the Missouri Synod or your Fellowship." The Slovak brethren very definitely rejected Missouri's "Theology of Fellowship - Part II", in our joint doctrinal committee meetings. But they are not ready, it seems, to take the step which consistency would require. For even though The Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod has not officially adopted its "Theology of Fellowship - Part II", yet it is practicing it more and more every day. It has officially adopted its "Brief Statement," but the confessional position of the Brief Statement is no longer in effect. It is only a paper now.

The Slovak pastors were virtually all trained in Missouri Synod schools. The Slovak Synod conducts no training schools of its own. You can, therefore, see where the confessional sympathies especially of their younger men lie.

Name-calling is, of course, nothing new in this world. It is usually resorted to by those who have no sound argument to advance. We maintain that our position is the scriptural position. It is the historic position of the Synodical Conference, too, which can be proved time and again from both Missouri Synod publications and Synodical Conference publications of the past. We are neither "anti-evangelistic" or anti-evangelical as I would prefer to put it, nor is our position that of dead orthodoxy. But we do refuse to let human reason or human wisdom lord it over the clear teachings of God's Word. If this is "dead-orthodoxy," I am all in favor of it.

There are those who reject Luther's position on Scripture and justification by faith, through grace, on the basis of the Word alone just because he spoke rather bluntly in the manner of his day and age. I am not familiar with the partial quotations which you have in your letter. One would also have to view them in their context to understand what point Luther was trying to make.

Remember that the Savior also said that the publicans and harlots would enter heaven before the Pharisees and Scribes. That does not say that Jesus condoned extortion or adultery. But He was maligned, also, as a friend of publicans and sinners.

We are trying to train and encourage our people to be more active in lay-evangelism. But here, too, their tool is the Word of God. That alone, whether spoken by ordained pastors or by unordained laymen, can bring men to Christ, to faith, and to eternal salvation.

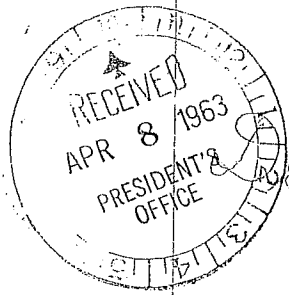
I hope that the publications I am sending you will be helpful. Should you desire more, please write again.

May the Lord keep us in His Word and faith unto our end.

Sincerely yours,

OJN:vas

Oscar J. Naumann



Dear Dr. Naumann-

I am appreciative for the Christian Literature you sent me. It is a wonderful experience to contact a Christian who is so anxious to help a person. I am thankful that you belong to a true Church of Christ.

Thanks for your recent letter which I have read. By the way, I have already purchased "The Papacy Evaluated" and "Catechism of Differences." In the latter book, I entirely agree that your Church should be separate from these other Lutheran bodies. All of these mentioned in the book, (the groups you differ with) are in the World Council of Churches. I understand (through Dr. Carl McIntire's Christian Beacon) that the World Council had association with other World religions and had a religious service called a festival celebrating unity of faiths and the Lutherans of the Missouri Synod had some representatives there! (over)

The argument is that formalism deadens the spirit and testimonials are regarded as unessential

and testimonials, says that many Confirmands are accepting this attitude. They say that this has been true experientially and by observation. Why should this be? they are taught what Christ expects of them. I have read Luther's Catechism. What more instruction in the truth do they need? Are they saying (these other groups and people) that Confirmation is Satan's tool of trickery, and substitute for salvation? Can Confirmation be that bad? your Church leaders can't instruct people at that great a loss. Bible Presbyterians also accept Confirmation - and they are Fundamentalists - are they wrong, too?

Thanks for explaining Luther's preface to the Catechism. I realized my mistake shortly afterward - after reading it a couple of times - and felt foolish.

The charge has also been made that the High Church Lutherans have retained candles and Crucifixes and even statues of Christ in some areas. These are supposed to be, according to many,



January 5, 1968

[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
Dear [REDACTED]:

Your two letters arrived this morning. I shall attempt to answer both of them at once.

Our Synod certainly agrees with the view of Mr. J. Edgar Hoover regarding capital punishment. His position is based on the clear Word of God, the Bible.

Capital punishment is not, as some argue, adding a second murder or killing to the first. The Lord, who gives life, has every right to specify that man by certain forbidden acts forfeits his privilege of life. Because God wants every person to have the full span of years which He allots to him, especially as a time of grace during which he has the opportunity to learn to know and believe in his Savior and thus to regain the image of God lost through the fall, he threatens the would-be murderer with death if he takes his neighbor's life.

Certainly this threat should work as a deterrent. But it is not an idle threat, either. ~~For a manslayer, one who by accident and unknowingly causes the death~~ of his neighbor, God provided cities of refuge, where the avenger of blood would not dare to lay hand on him. But the person who intentionally takes his neighbor's life forfeits his own right to live.

At the same time the murderer is not deprived of grace and forgiveness. His day of execution is set and he knows how brief is his time to set his spiritual house in order. We do institutional mission work and bring the Gospel to convicted murderers as well. We could not, however, with good conscience lobby for the abolition of capital punishment if our State still had it. Sad to say, it doesn't. Like most of the States, Wisconsin abolished capital punishment long ago.

There is another consideration of course. As Christians we know what God decrees concerning this matter. Not all our legislators are Christians, and, in turn, certainly not all their constituents. As a church it is difficult for us to demand of our government what we as Christians know to be proper. We can and should let our legislators know what our convictions are and what we, therefore, favor. But to demand Christian principles of all our legislators and voters is hardly possible.

The saddest of all is the fact that so many Christian church bodies no longer heed the Word of God, or set portions of it aside and call it the word of men instead.

January 5, 1968

As to our work among the Apaches I can say that the 75th anniversary of the beginning of that work is being observed this year. A color film is being prepared, the history of the mission will be published in book form. The pastor who confirmed me, Johannes Plocher, was our first called missionary in 1893. He began the work on the San Carlos Reservation and worked at Peridot, especially.

Under separate cover I am sending you a highly-prized copy of Arizona Highways, May 1963, which should convince Mrs. Robertson. I am also sending some copies of The Apache Lutheran. After you have finished with them, I would appreciate having them returned for my files.

A Blessed New Year to you and yours!

Sincerely,

Oscar J. Naumann

*1/29/68*  
*1/29/68*  
*Arizona Highways, May 1963, The Apache Lutheran - July 1966 to Dec 1967*

OJN:vas

Encl. - Under separate cover

P.S. The Centennial Volume of our Synod, "Continuing in His Word," Northwestern Publishing House 1951, \$1.00, 268 pages, hard cover, has an account of our work in Apacheland on pages 229 to 250. The book "You and Your Synod" by Professor E. E. Kowalke is presently being revised and brought up to date. I do not know whether copies of the old edition are still available. Evidently I loaned mine to some one and it has not come back to my office.

OJN

February 11, 1971

[REDACTED] er  
[REDACTED] ue  
P [REDACTED] 03

Dear [REDACTED]:

I regret that the volume of official correspondence and the many meetings I must attend at this season make it impossible for me to send you an evaluation of Ehrlich's "Population Bomb" or a longer statement of my opinion on the problems of pollution.

To legalize murder, sodomy, and lasciviousness as our nation has done is not the answer to the fear of overpopulation.

When the Creator gave man this earth as his home and dwelling place, He said: "Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it: and have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth."

Respect for our Creator and God and for the gift He has given us, as well as love for our fellowman to whom the same gift was given, should move us to take the very best care of this earth so that we can pass it along to our children as clean or cleaner than we received it from our parents.

That is my evaluation in a nutshell.

Sincerely yours,

Oscar J. Naumann

OJN:vas

March 1, 1971

[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED] 3

Dear [REDACTED]:

I regret that I dare not use my time to write term papers or theses for various people and leave my actual tasks unaccomplished.

Try your local library again and look for the following publications:

Kate Luther, by Wm. Dallmann, 1941 Northwestern Publishing House  
Luther and His Times, E. G. Schwiebert  
Here I Stand, Roland Bainton  
Martin Luther, Creative Translator by Heinz Bluhm  
Luther on Education, F. V. N. Painter

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And I do resent your comment about "our Lazy Lutheran Writers."

Yours truly,

Oscar J. Naumann

OJN:vas

September 20, 1960

The Family of Pastor [REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
W [REDACTED]

Dear Friends in Christ:

When word reached us in Saginaw that the Lord had so suddenly called His servant, your faithful husband and father, from his labor here into eternal rest and glory, we could hardly accept the report as true. When, however, later reports verified the first, we prayed the Lord to grant us the grace to believe His holy Word in which He assures us: "I know the thoughts that I think toward you, saith the Lord; thoughts of peace and not of evil."

Though we considered Pastor [REDACTED] to be in the prime of life and to have many more years of service before him, the Lord without question considered his task completed and said to him: "Well done, thou good and faithful servant. Enter thou into the joys of thy Lord."

Once more we are reminded of the urgency of praying the Lord of the harvest to send forth laborers into His harvest. For He calls His servants from their labors to their rest according to His will. How grateful our congregations should be for pastors who lead them faithfully to the Bread and Water of life.

May the Lord, who alone can comfort and strengthen you in your bereavement, give you the confidence to say in humble submission to His unsearchable dispensation: "The Lord gave and the Lord hath taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord". "He doeth all things well."

Rest assured that He, who gave His Son to bear our sins and iniquities and who is the true Father of the widows and the fatherless children, will not leave you comfortless. He will strengthen and uphold you by His gracious power. "Fear not, for I have redeemed thee; I have called thee by thy name; thou art mine."

I was very sorry that the meeting of the officials of the Synodical Conference and the Presidents of the four constituent synods at Chicago compelled me to decline your request to speak the word of comfort and assurance to you at the service tomorrow. Believe me, I declined with a heavy heart. But I am sure that others, who can be with you in that hour, will point you to the mercies of God which are new to us every morning.

May He keep you and your beloved congregation in His gracious care always.

Sincerely yours in Christ,

OJN:vas

Oscar J. Naumann

P.S. Mrs. Naumann joins me in expressing our heartfelt sympathy.

OJN

JUL 27 1961

Dear Pastor Newman:

I will be graduating from high school in a year, and I plan on attending the Methodist-Faller School of Nursing and receive accreditations for three years to receive a diploma for Registered Nursing.

I was in your Confirmation class of 1958, in case you cannot remember exactly who I am.

My mother advised me to send this to you because she said you had known my family and would for a long time, and would fill out my reference for

me if you had the time  
So I have enclosed  
in this letter a reference  
for you to fill out if you  
have time.

Thank you for your  
time and consideration.

Sincerely,

~~\_\_\_\_\_~~

~~\_\_\_\_\_~~

~~\_\_\_\_\_~~

July 28, 1961

[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED] e  
[REDACTED] a

Dear [REDACTED]

Actually, I should address you as "Miss [REDACTED]" now, because you were a grownup young lady when I left Saint Paul a year and a half ago.

How could you think that I had forgotten you or your family so soon?

I am happy to learn that you are going to enter the field of nursing. I think it is a very noble profession and offers one of the greatest opportunities to serve one's fellow-man in real time of need. I believe your personality is ideally suited for this career. Were I to be sick, I would certainly welcome your smile and cheerful disposition in my room.

I have filled out the reference blank you sent and have submitted it to the Methodist-Kahler School of Nursing at Rochester directly.

Kindly greet your family, grandparents, and the other relatives and friends. I am sorry that our recent visit in St. Paul was so short and that we did not have the opportunity to visit with everyone.

The St. John's people should be happy and grateful to have their new pastor, Reverend Burton Stensberg in their midst to share the many duties of the ministry with Pastor Petermann. May the Lord bless his ministry richly, and may his people come faithfully to hear the Word.

Sincerely yours,

Oscar J. Naumann

OJN:vas

cc: Methodist-Kahler Hospital  
School of Nursing





①

Oct 31, 1967

Dear Sir,

I am, this year, an eighth grader, and am probably going to go on participating in public schools. Pretty good isn't it?! Our town has the best educational center in Washington, from kindergartens to a big college, all (except kindergarten, of course) teaches parts of evolution if not every single theory in the book.

I have, on my own, decided I would go to a church school. Okay, ready, brace yourself: the nearest parochial school is in Melbridge, South Dakota!! The nearest parochial College is in Wisconsin!!!

I feel this is very unfair to us kids around here. How do you expect us (children) to grow up, sincerely believing in Christ when using the name of God in vain is common-place

from about third grade up?  
Getting drunk is "in" in High-  
School and have college  
professors (?) going around  
with, "God Is Dead!" on their  
brains?!!

Wake up! We exist!!  
We're not as primitive out  
here as you may think!

We're not ignorant of the  
fact that there is such thing  
as Church school. We hear  
a whisper of one existing now  
and then.

My parents refuse  
the idea of actually living  
away from home at my age,  
and for good reasons, as if I  
went to Melbridge.

I hope you don't take  
this as a mean, nasty letter.  
It isn't. It's just an struggling  
attempt to make you realize  
that some of us care what  
happens to our future before

God.

Please, I know that sooner or later you will consider it important enough that children be saved around here, if not for me, at least for my future children. Somehow, someway, I do believe that our synod will stretch into boundaries of schools this way.

Praying and waiting,

~~\_\_\_\_\_~~  
~~\_\_\_\_\_~~  
~~\_\_\_\_\_~~  
~~\_\_\_\_\_~~  
~~\_\_\_\_\_~~

P.S.

Please write. Thank you for hearing me out.

~~\_\_\_\_\_~~

December 4, 1967

[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED] 6  
[REDACTED] 28006

Dear [REDACTED]

Your letter of October 31, the 450th Anniversary of the Reformation, was received at my office on November 15. Since I was out of town that entire week on special assignment and since I have attended meetings in the interest of Christian education and worker training in Mobridge, South Dakota, New Ulm, Minnesota, and Chicago, Illinois, since that time, you will understand why my reply did not arrive sooner.

We are very much aware of the fact that our members and their children "exist" in the beautiful Pacific Northwest District and elsewhere, where we have not been able as yet to open Synodical academies and colleges. Not that we are not eager to do so, but we don't have the funds needed to do so.

You will realize that to train pastors and teachers our Synod originally founded schools where our members lived at the time. The largest concentration is still found in the general areas of our schools, though we are now expanding to the East, the West, and North, and the South. This expansion is the main reason why we need more pastors: the Lord is leading us into many new areas. He is opening many new doors for us. It also takes a great deal of money to help these new congregations support their pastors. This is one reason our funds for new schools are limited. The need for more pastors also compels us to increase the teaching staff at each school to train the growing number of students.

A number of years ago our Synod founded Northwestern Lutheran Academy at Mobridge, partly because it is so difficult for the congregations in that District and the adjacent Districts to offer elementary Christian day schools for their children. Distances are very great, our members are scattered so far apart. It poses a real problem to get the children together every day and back home again in all kinds of weather. There are a few exceptions, of course, where Christian schools are being conducted.

But the Academy does make Christian secondary schooling on the high school level, available to our people. And though the distances are quite formidable, especially for students from Washington, yet you should consider that you would be in a school where the Word of God rules supreme. In our school evolution is not taught but exposed as a theory of men that denies the existence of God and contradicts His Holy Word. Yet it is a theory that is not even reasonable, it doesn't even make sense.

For example, you do know that everything grows older and deteriorates with age.

Mr. Brad Begalka

2

December 4, 1967

It doesn't grow younger. No one has discovered a fountain of youth. This 2nd law of thermodynamics definitely proves to all scientists who deserve the name of scientists that evolution is not going on and cannot take place. The very opposite is true.

You would at Mobridge be in the company of Christian students from good Lutheran homes, whose parents, pastors, and teachers all are deeply concerned about their soul's welfare, not only their progress in scholastic achievement.

Remember, also, that the Savior has said: "Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the World." He also said: "Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them." He gives His angels charge over His children to keep them in all their ways.

These promises must be our staff and stay when we consider our future schooling and going away from home to be able to receive that kind of schooling.

I know it was not easy for my mother, a widow with eight children, the youngest  $1\frac{1}{2}$  years old, when it came to choosing schools for us. Yet she did manage to send all of us to school, some of us to our Synod's schools and all of us to Christian day schools when they were available. I was  $7\frac{1}{2}$  years old when my father died. I am forever grateful that my mother did send me to Christian schools even though I was away from home after the eighth grade except for Christmas and Easter vacations and a few days in summer when I was not working on a farm over 100 miles from home. I was in the company of Lutheran Christian teachers and good Lutheran people when away from home and this is what was the best thing that could have happened to me.

I mention this only, because I went through an experience similar to the one you face today: "What school should I attend? Where will my faith be strengthened through daily study of the Word and through the guidance and example of Christian teachers? Where will I be corrected and warned when I stray into false paths? Where will my teachers be concerned about my soul and not only about my brain and my scholastic record?"

I hope these few thoughts will help you and your parents view the question of your future schooling in another light. You know, distance isn't the greatest barrier that can separate parents and children. The type of life and conduct that is rampant in the public schools, as you describe them, can become a much greater, yes an insuperable barrier between parents and their children. I pray that no such barrier will ever come between you, your parents, your church and your Savior.

May the Lord give you and yours a blessed Advent and Christmas season.

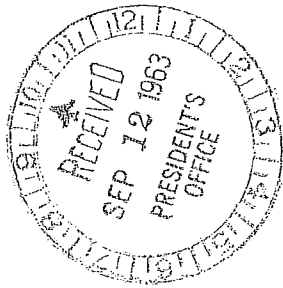
Kindly extend my cordial greetings to Pastor Paul Albrecht, too.

Sincerely,

Oscar J. Naumann

OJN:vas

18



110 North Franklin Street  
New Ulm, Minnesota  
September 10, 1963

Dear Pastor Naumann,

I think that the Synod must have raised our salaries at least 7 - 8 times since I have been teaching. Each time I have wanted to say "Thank you" to someone -- to you, perhaps, as the representative of the body -- yet I preferred to do it within the group I was serving. For certain reasons I have hesitated to bring up such "pietistic" suggestions. So please accept my personal thanks for looking out for our bodily welfare in such a way that we do not deserve. Every time we receive an increase in salary I look upon it as a stimulus to serve the Church better than before. It's just too bad that we live "in the flesh", and that it offers such a drag to our service. There's an answer for this too, repentance. At any rate -- Thanks.

While I write I should bring up the name of [redacted]. You did him a great service by giving him the little "pat on the back" at the time of his father's retirement. I don't know the exact nature of it nor is it necessary to know. But the finest medicine for him in Milwaukee has been to know that he has been accepted, that there are actually synodical workers who will talk to him, not even mention compliment his work. I want to thank you for that, too, because you should know that potentially he is the greatest musical talent ever to come into the Wisconsin Synod. I mean this sincerely without any disrespect to any other worker, including my father. We have not known such latent ability before. Now [redacted] has his problems, I know. But maybe the balm of acceptance will be a help in his rather cruel judgments of mankind, especially of Christians. I could say more of this, because I speak with him extensively when the occasion comes. -- At any rate, for this, thank you, too. *(My uncle was always good to him)*

I remember the kind hospitality offered to me at the time I played at your congregation. It was also gracious of you to accept my "cockeyed" ideas at that time. This was a boost to me, too, at that time. But I never thanked you again for keeping me at your busy parsonage that time. We forget very often.-- Greetings to Mrs.

May God bless your office.

Sincerely, [redacted]

[Handwritten signature and address redacted]

June 30, 1960

██████████ t  
██████████ 6  
██████████

Dear Brother ██████████

Your letter of June 23 has been received.

I repeat the offer of our Study Committee to meet with you or with you and your congregation concerning the matters you have mentioned and the charges you again make in your letter. I despair of reaching clarity by correspondence. And furthermore, I consider it an unjust judging of hearts and motives when you call Synod's convictions "India rubber convictions."

There is an element of human judgment involved in evaluating the situation in which we are. In the same situation one sincere Christian maybe persuaded to follow one Scriptural injunction, to bring his admonitory testimony to an orderly conclusion, while another will terminate both his admonition and his protesting fellowship at once. Thus certainly we do not charge that Scripture is so unclear that two sincere people will take opposite directions in carrying out the same Scriptural injunction.

I do not believe that you read my Report to the Nine Districts in a charitable attitude, putting the best construction on the words written.

Last week I was present at the convention of the Evangelical Lutheran Synod in Mankato when they pleaded with a pastor in their midst not to insist upon a "yes or no" answer to his question, since it, too, contained implications and involvements. He refused to hear their pleas. It was a sad spectacle. Actually his question was unfair, but his ears were shut to all pleas from many brethren.

I am ready at any time to surrender my call and assignment whenever the Lord through His church so requests. To me it is a riddle why the Lord does not call men who have a ready and pat reply to every question and a self-evident solution to every problem.

I repeat the offer of our Study Committee. You and Pastor ██████████ may be able to arrange a joint meeting. I am sending copies to President Fritze, Professor Lawrenz, and Pastor Siegler. These meetings should be arranged through the District President and with his knowledge.

Fraternally yours,

OJN:vas  
cc: Pres. H. Fritze  
Prof. C. Lawrenz  
Pres. C. J. Siegler

Oscar J. Naumann

September 9, 1966

[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]

Dear Brother:

I hope it was only a rumor for which no confirmation can be given that you, too, had suffered a heart attack. So many people are suffering attacks, accidents, and illnesses that one must not only constantly pray the Lord of the harvest to send forth laborers into His harvest, but to keep in good health and strength those who are already active in that harvest.

When last week a report of your suffering a heart attack was heard here, I prayed that the report would not be confirmed. Yesterday a neighbor pastor brought some relief when he assured us it was not a heart attack but some other unexplained sudden illness. He did state that Prof. Harold Warnke was now also "grounded" for six weeks after a heart attack. Perhaps these two cases had been confused in earlier reports.

The Lord's judgments are unsearchable and His ways past finding out. When so many ministers of the Gospel are needed to staff the fields into which He has called us, He still strikes some with illness and forbids them through their physicians to carry out the duties required by their calls.

This all teaches us to recognize that we are what we are only through God's grace and goodness. Our health and strength also are from Him, just as our knowledge of the Gospel of forgiveness, life and salvation are ours only through His gracious revelation. This we ought to keep always in mind. And this He brings to our attention and recalls to our memory whenever He lays the hand of affliction on us or on one of our brethren.

May this letter find you restored to health and strength, serving the Lord in the Gospel ministry with joy, gratitude, and diligence. And may He keep you and all yours under the shadow of His wings.

Sincerely,

Oscar J. Naumann

OJN:vas



death in June 1979

# EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN



## OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT

Rev. Oscar J. Naumann

3512 West North Avenue

Milwaukee, Wisconsin 53208

Office: 445-4022

August 4, 1978

Residence: 463-6071

*Paul [unclear]*  
[Redacted]  
[Redacted]  
[Redacted]

Dear Brother [Redacted]

Your letter of July 15 arrived here on July 20, while I was taking a two-week rest and vacation at the home of my son Thomas in a suburb of Seattle. I had spent 18 days in the hospital awaiting open heart surgery, but was after further tests found to be a poor risk for all the surgery the doctors considered necessary.

After I was released our district conventions got underway and I was busy making preparations for a special convention at Watertown, Wisconsin, on July 11 and 12. That Saturday, July 15, son Martin and I left for Seattle and returned home on Saturday, July 29.

I regret that this acknowledgement of receipt of your letter has been so long delayed. But I have arranged for a meeting of our Praesidium for next week and hope to be able to give you a reply to your suggestion after that meeting.

The Lord has been very kind to me, adding one day of service after another. I am able to do my work by the use of much more medication, a somewhat limited diet, and a regular program of exercise. I accept every day as an additional gift of His grace and thank and praise our good and gracious God for every additional opportunity to serve Him and His Church.

Sincerely yours in Him,

*Oscar J. Naumann*  
Oscar J. Naumann

OJN/rbs

RECEIVED

MAR 1 1977

WELS  
PRESIDENT'S OFFICE



*St. Paul's Evangelical Lutheran Church, Naugart*

*Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Church Synod*

Route 1, Box 159  
Hamburg, Wisconsin 54438

Mark H. Falck, Pastor  
675-6846

February 24, 1977

The Rev. Oscar J. Naumann  
President, WELS  
3512 W. North Ave.  
Milwaukee, WI 53208

Dear President Naumann:

I feel a little "sheepish" writing this letter - sort of like a bat boy advising Henry Aaron on his batting stance. On the other hand I feel that you are the type of person who can be approached with a new idea, even by a rookie.

I have felt from time to time that the mission code of the Wis. Synod punished the fellow who was sent to places like Long Island or other high cost areas of living in comparison to the Dakotas or whatever, for the code makes no distinctions on the basis of different costs of living in various locals. This does not affect me personally because I am serving neither in a mission nor do I feel under-compensated. For that matter how can one be under-compensated when he is doing the Lord's work.

Yet, I think everyone would like to see the workers in home missions in particular get a fair shake and earn a living wage. This applies even more to the increasing number of teachers who are serving under mission code scales. And so I am enclosing a pay scale from Employers' Mutual Insurance Co. of Wausau, WI. One of my members who works there supplied it. I am wondering if there is any chance of future salary scales for mission pastors and teachers to reflect, as this scale does, the sometimes vastly different costs of living from coast to coast and north to south. I didn't know exactly who to give this to, so I am sending it to you. You may direct it where you will or file it in the ever-handy circular file.

Just one final note: I never realized in Sem how much I would appreciate your President's newsletters. They are always welcome here - don't know if anyone ever commented on them, but I know I appreciate them.

Hope I haven't wasted too much of your time. God's blessings to you and may you be assured that at least one of the rookies appreciates and is thankful for the way you carry out your many responsibilities.

Sincerely in His service,

A redacted signature, appearing as a solid black horizontal bar.

F

March 3, 1977

[Redacted]  
[Redacted]  
[Redacted] 3

Dear Brother [Redacted]

Your letter of February 24 arrived yesterday. I hasten to respond. Please don't feel sheepish about your letter or hesitate to write. My time is your time. Someone else had that as his theme song on radio years ago. But in my case it is really true. Our whole establishment on North Avenue is a service agency. We are here to help hold up your arms in the daily battle.

You may have a very valid point there concerning the mission code salary. I am not sure that adjustments are made according to the higher cost of living factor. This is definitely the case in World Missions. It may not be in Home Missions.

Just for that reason your letter is timely. I will pass it along to the Synod's Salary Review Committee. Actually this committee consists of two Board of Trustees members and two Coordinating Council members. I am certain that they will give your concern serious consideration.

After speaking with Pastor Berg on this I learned that the GBHM is striving valiantly to eliminate the inequities that do at times occur in the variables of housing and utilities. Housing is, of course, furnished to every pastor. But in the field of utilities some inequities still exist. Hence the board is working on a program of having all congregations provide the utilities for the parsonage. Just when this will be completely solved I do not know, but the GBHM and the Salary Committee are working on it. Of this I can assure you.

The differential in the salaries of male and female teachers is being wiped out, especially in home missions or subsidized congregations. Many self-supporting congregations are closing the gap there, too, especially in furnishing housing or rental allowance to women as well as to men. And I can assure you that the Assignment Committee has been aware of and alerted to this for many years. But even here an old-line, self-supporting congregation told the Assignment Committee about two years ago to mind its own business. Their salaries paid to their pastor and their teachers are the congregation's responsibilities and not that of the district officials or the Assignment Committee.

Perhaps the only cure in such a case is to let that congregation go without a teacher when the available candidates make it impossible to assign every call we receive.

March 3, 1977

I remember distinctly having written to congregations about their "starvation wages" when I was district president in Minnesota. One congregation of wealthy farmers forced their teacher by their low salary to seek secular employment during the summer in order to be able to pay his bills. Either he had to do that or go home to his parents and ask them to feed him when the school was not in session.

This young man was a good worker and the concern for which he worked in the summer tried to persuade him to remain in their employ the year around. In this case and in some others the congregations recognized their shortcomings and raised the salaries. In fact, this young man was even able to get married and support a wife later on.

I shall pass your letter, my reply, and the Employers' Mutual Insurance Company's area pay scale card along to the Salary Review Committee. I know they will give serious considerations to the concerns expressed.

May the Lord grant you and yours an abundance of His grace and goodness throughout the sacred seasons of Lent and Easter!

Sincerely yours in His service,

OJN/rbs

Oscar J. Naumann

CC: Pastor [REDACTED]

Aug. 7, 1956.

[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
Dear [REDACTED]:

Upon my return from the Arizona District Convention, I found your letter on my desk.

Your right to attend the convention of Synod and also to speak as a member of Synod will not be questioned. However, I could hardly arrange for a member to address the convention in order to grant him opportunity "to expose some of the rats who in the past have been able to mislead and brain-wash some of the innocent delegates."

I trust you have dealt with the persons you term "rats" in your letter. You owe them the service of private admonition according to Matthew 18. If that and the subsequent step have failed, you may bring the matter to the attention of the Church, but not in the spirit which your choice of language seems to indicate. All admonition must be carried on in the spirit of love and helpfulness with the purpose of winning and gaining the brother.

I would suggest that you write professor Conrad Frey, 2110 Court St., Saginaw, Mich., who is chairman of the Floor Committee on union matters and ask for an opportunity to express your convictions before that committee first. They are meeting at Watertown at Northwestern College on Monday Aug. 20th at 2 p.m., a half day before the convention. As I understand your grievances, they have to do with union matters, or our relations with the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod.

Even though our convictions are deep and firm, and our grievances are very disturbing, let us pray the Lord for grace to act and speak in a spirit of Christian love and helpfulness. That alone will serve to edify the Church and to gain the brother whom we are admonishing. We dare not let our anger run away with us.

Trusting that I shall see you at Watertown, I am

Sincerely yours,

Oscar J. Naumann

OJN:dn  
c.c. Prof. Conrad Frey, Saginaw, Mich.

May 10, 1954

[REDACTED] on  
[REDACTED]  
Minneapolis 10, Minnesota

Dear Pastor [REDACTED]

Your letter of May 1st was duly received.

The letter you quote from the St. John's Messenger was written by me on the occasion of Pastor [REDACTED]'s 50th Anniversary. At the time, I knew very little regarding the details of the situation in St. John's, Minneapolis. Being no longer District President, the Conference visitor did not consult me but did consult the Acting District President, George Barthels.

During my tenure of office as President of the Minnesota District, I did hear an occasional remark or rumor concerning possible irregularities of practice in one of our congregations in the Twin Cities, but these remarks remained very general and in keeping with the 8th Commandment, I urged those who made the remarks to deal with the man involved if they had any definite information. More harm than good can be done when we fail to heed Matthew 18 and go directly to a brother who has sinned against us.

Let me state also that I was deeply grieved when you named persons and places at our Mid-winter Conferences after you had asked the Chairman for permission to present a case of casuistry. I believe that you and others residing in Northeast Minneapolis had just as great a duty toward Pastor [REDACTED] as his officials.

Our Conference visitor and our district praesidium are dealing with Pastor [REDACTED] in this manner. Since it is not a matter that has reached Synodical level but is still being dealt with in the District, I am forwarding your letter of May 1st to President George Barthels together with a copy of this letter. I shall leave it to the judgement of President Barthels--how he wishes to handle your "Official Protest", as you call your letter.

~~\_\_\_\_\_~~  
Page 2  
May 10, 1954

With the prayer that the Lord may bless the dealings of our officials in this matter and speed the day when these irregularities will be corrected, I wish to remain

Sincerely yours,

Oscar J. Neumann

OJN:lk

cc President George Barthels  
Pastor P. R. Kurth, Visitor

C O R P