

PASTOR
REGINALD E.
POPE

STEVE MELSO
CHURCH HISTORY PROJECT
For: PROF. BRENNER
5-1-95

This interview was taken in Ashland, WI on April 10, 1995. I decided to divide the interview into three parts to give both of us a break and to help us gather our thoughts (and to have dinner). Part 1 goes from his childhood to his years in Mandan, ND. Part 2 concludes his years at Mandan with "the turbulent years" and goes up to his years at Mequon, WI. Part 3 covers his years in Mitchell, SD and his District Presidency.

I. Part 1

Introduction- "Pastor Pope reminds us that the focus of this interview is not on him but on how God used him for the furthering of the Gospel."

A. Childhood

1. His father
2. Grade school years
3. High School years

B. College

1. Curriculum- compare the 1940's and the curriculum today.
2. Co-eds
3. What were some of the differences with LCMS during high school and college years. The tension was building already at this time.
4. Pastor Pope comments on some of the problems that were evident with Missouri during his college years and also at the beginning of his ministry. E.g.- common confession.

C. Seminary years and vicar program in his days. (1949-1952)

D. First call- Lemon and White Butte, SD (1952-56)

1. Responsibilities at Lemon and White Butte.
2. Some personal experiences.
3. Problems. E.g.- vacancies.
4. Offices held while at Lemon and White Butte. (visiting pastor, on board of regions for Northwestern Lutheran Academy in Mobridge)
Regents or Board of Control

E. Mandan, ND (1956-61)

1. Started congregation here - "daughter congregation".

(BREAK)

II. Part 2

A. Turbulent years (Late 1950's - early 1960's)

1. LCMS and WELS differences. The answer was simple if we could just agree with what Scripture said. LCMS did agree to this, but then they wouldn't agree with the scriptural principles of fellowship.
2. Problems in the Dakota-Montana District. The district was split on what to do.
3. It all came down to Romans 16:17- "What is a persistent errorist."
4. In 1959 the CLC broke from the WELS. What this meant for the Dakota-Montana District.
5. Many of the same principles were followed with the amalgamation in 1993 convention as were followed with the break in fellowship. (This point will be brought up again when discussing the amalgamation of the synod schools.)

B. Call to Miami, FL. (1961-64)

1. Background- responsibilities
2. Shift in policies for the synod with mission work. Not natural growth in Florida.
3. The way that exploratory work and mission work was done.
4. Extra offices. (First visitor / circuit pastor)
5. Final comments

C. Call to St. John's in Mequon, WI (1964-1980)

1. Background- situation - church with school
2. Benefits
3. Innovations. E.g.- First carpet, first pre-kindergarten in the area.
4. Communication vital for church workers.
5. Extra offices. (Chairman of Pastor's Conference, Circuit Pastor, On Board for District Stewardship, Parish Education, Institutional Committee- story-importance of Institutional Ministry, and On Board of Regents of WLC)

D. Call to Mitchell, SD (1980-1994)

1. Ascension's beginnings. The building of the church.
2. Major goal (other than sharing the gospel) was to get them self-supporting.

(BREAK)

III. Part 3 - District Presidency (Dakota-Montana District)

A. General Responsibilities

1. Call Day
2. Missions - Ex Officio
3. Support from other pastors, teachers, and laymen vital.

B. Mission Expansion to Canada for the district

1. Importance
2. Policy for the outreach into Canada.
 - a. Satellite congregations
 - b. Exploratory work
 - c. Use of summer vicars, and TCW.

C. Mission expansion into Wyoming and Montana

1. Serving members over a large area. (modern technology)

D. Calling men for the mission fields

1. Remember it is in the Lord's hands.
2. Descriptions of men can be found from individual's classmates in the district and the seminary's portfolio.
3. Making the call list

E. Amalgamation of DMLC-NWC (now MLC) and MLPS-NPS (now LPS)

1. Considerations before 1991 and 1993 conventions.
 - a. Loved to keep schools open and even have more schools, but you have to be realistic with the gifts we have.
 - b. Look at the synod offerings and decide how to make the best balance between worker training and missions.
 - c. Advantages- two faculties together on one campus, more electives (co-education)
 - d. Maintaining the integrity of the pastoral course was an important consideration.
 - e. Not "where" but who and what is being taught is important.
2. The discussion and voting was done orderly
3. Post convention concerns.
4. Conference of President's meetings to discuss the possibility of another convention.

F. Dealing with the District as a large congregation.

1. The district does the same work as the congregation. (Spreading the Gospel, Stewardship, Evangelism, Worship Committee, etc.)
2. When problems arise in the District the problem needs to be dealt with immediately.
3. As District President you expect the best from your co-workers.
4. Dealing with problems harmoniously is important. It helps greatly when to have support from those you work with (Vice- President, etc.)

G. Retirement

1. Things that are missed since retiring.
2. You never really retire. (Phone calls, guest preaching, etc.)
3. Possibility still exists to get back into the ministry (volunteer missionary, etc.)

H. Final Remarks

Conclusion: "I apologize for the fact that the last 1 or 2 minutes of the interview were cut off. In the last minutes of the interview Pastor Pope thanked the Lord for the gifts given him to serve the Church and our synod. I also thanked him for his time in making this video and for the many words of wisdom which have served me well in preparing me for my future ministry. It is my hope and prayer that this video will be informational and educational for all who view it. To God be the glory forever."