

Concordia Seminary - Saint Louis

Scholarly Resources from Concordia Seminary

Bachelor of Divinity

Concordia Seminary Scholarship

5-17-1948

The Lutheran Church in the Canadian Northwest

Edwin Regal

Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, ir_regale@csl.edu

Follow this and additional works at: <https://scholar.csl.edu/bdiv>



Part of the [History of Christianity Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Regal, Edwin, "The Lutheran Church in the Canadian Northwest" (1948). *Bachelor of Divinity*. 268.
<https://scholar.csl.edu/bdiv/268>

This Thesis is brought to you for free and open access by the Concordia Seminary Scholarship at Scholarly Resources from Concordia Seminary. It has been accepted for inclusion in Bachelor of Divinity by an authorized administrator of Scholarly Resources from Concordia Seminary. For more information, please contact seitzw@csl.edu.

THE LUTHERAN CHURCH
IN THE CANADIAN NORTHWEST

A Thesis Presented to
The Faculty of Concordia Seminary
Department of Historical Theology

In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Bachelor of Divinity

by
Edwin Regal, B.A.

May 1948

Approved by: J. D. Remington
N. G. Polan

INTRODUCTION

The Lutheran Church in the Canadian Northwest is made up of believers from all parts of Europe and the United States. In coming to this newly opened last American frontier as early as 1874 and continuing ever since, these immigrants brought their various customs, costumes, languages and dialects with them. This strange mixture of perspective

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction.	i
The Setting	1
The Planting of the Church	7
Consolidation	35
Growth and Expansion	44
Bibliography	66

establish the church in it, the author has gleaned most of this material from the few existing specific synodical reports and actual evaluations, written or verbal, of those who personally played a great part in welding the West into the operating and co-operating church that it is today. Dependence upon such factual information this thesis is therefore not so much the historical glorification of the deeds of men as it is, in the well-chosen words of the Rev. J.E. Kerkhof, a gifted laborer in this northwestern vicary since 1911 and now a professor at Concordia College in Assiniboia:

THIS STORY, a simple unadorned account of what the Lord has done for His church in the Canadian Northwest. It is not man's story, and therefore many of the deeds and sacrifices of faithful laborers of the Lord will be missed. It is rather an attempt to trace the footsteps

INTRODUCTION

The Lutheran Church in the Canadian Northwest is made up of believers from all parts of Europe and the United States. In coming to this newly opened last American frontier as early as 1872 and continuing sporadically ever since, these immigrants brought their curious customs, costumes, languages and dialects with them. This strange mixture of prospective Lutheran Canadians was providentially gathered to make a church which "in spite of its confusing overlapping of unrelated synods and without the slightest semblance of compulsory discipline still has an amazing unity in diversity."

In tracing the stirring story of the heroic devotion of those pastors and people who worked to win the frontier and establish the church in it, the author has gleaned most of this material from the few existing specific synodical reports and actual evaluations, written or verbal, of those who personally played a great part in welding the West into the operating and co-operating church that it is today. Dependent upon such factual information this thesis is therefore not so much the historical glorification of the deeds of men as it is, in the well-chosen words of the Rev. J.E. Herzer, a gifted laborer in this northwestern vineyard since 1911 and now a professor at Concordia College in Edmonton:

"HIS STORY, a simple unadorned account of what the Lord has done for His church in the Canadian Northwest. It is not man's story, and therefore many of the deeds and sacrifices of faithful laborers of the Lord will be missed. It is rather an attempt to trace the footsteps

of the Lord as He passed down the corridors of time and to note the paths of blessing along which the Lord has led His children through all their mistakes, faintheartedness, and reverses to the glorious results which today lie open before our wondering eyes."

The physical geography of Canada is those of the whole continent. Beginning on the West Coast we find that the Rockies extend northward in an unbroken line into Canada. The great central plain stretches from the Arctic Ocean to the Gulf of Mexico. The valley region of the Great Lakes and the St. Lawrence is but the continuation of the Mississippi Valley. Finally the general surface features of the Maritime provinces are those of the northeastern states.

Canada is bounded on the east by the Atlantic, on the north by the Arctic, on the west by the Pacific Ocean, and on the south by the 49th parallel extending westward to the Great Lakes. There is a dip southward to 41 degrees 4' on Middle Island in Lake Erie. Then as it approaches the Atlantic it gradually rises to the 45th parallel. All of these 5,207,166 square miles of territory are surrounded by 14,645 miles of coastline. Canada's total area may be compared to the 3,876,705 square miles of the United States and its dependent territories, and the 3,776,700 square miles of the total area of Europe.²

1. Stewart W. Wallace, The Encyclopedia of Canada, Vol. III, p. 17.

2. These figures were adapted from the Canadian Statistical Year Book, 1956.

THE SETTING

Canada is our nearest neighbor to the north. Usually we think of it as being quite different from the United States. It is part of the British Commonwealth of Nations. Its historical development is much more recent. But "the main features of the physical geography of Canada are those of the whole continent."¹ Beginning of the West Coast we find that the Rockies extend northward in an unbroken line into Canada. The great central plain stretches from the Arctic Ocean to the Gulf of Mexico. The valley region of the Great Lakes and the St. Lawrence is but the continuation of the Mississippi Valley. Finally the general surface features of the Maritimes corresponds to that of the northeastern states.

Canada is bounded on the east by the Atlantic, on the north by the Arctic, on the west by the Pacific Ocean, and on the south by the 49th parallel extending eastward to the Great Lakes. There it dips southward to 41 degrees 4' on Middle Island in Lake Erie. Then as it approaches the Atlantic it gradually rises to the 45th parallel. All of these 5,207,168 square miles of territory are surrounded by 14,820 miles of coastline. Canada's total area may be compared to the 3,438,395 square miles of the United States and its dependent territories, and the 3,776,700 square miles of the total area of Europe.²

1. Stewart W. Wallace, The Encyclopedia of Canada, Vol. III, p. 17.

2. These figures were compiled from the Canadian Statistical Year Book, 1946.

Less than one-third of the total area of Canada is in the North Frigid Zone. This far northern tundra is nothing more than a barren sheet of ice and snow subject to severe winter weather. The greatest part of the dominion lies in the North Temperate Zone. Eastern Canada has a very moderate climate. It is affected by the Atlantic gulf stream and the Great Lakes. Consequently the over-all temperature range is much the same as that of the northeastern states. Because the Middle West is so far from any oceanic influences, it suffers from seemingly severe winters. The early spring southwestern chinook almost magically melts the snow and thaws out the frozen ground. Thus the year round temperature of Minnesota, Montana, and the Dakotas is very similar to that of the central section. In passing it may be said that the average rainfall of southern Saskatchewan and Alberta is very low, making agriculture a definite problem. It has been solved to a certain extent by government irrigation systems. Finally the climate of British Columbia on the west coast is very similar to that of the northwestern states.

A glance at the map of Canada shows a grand mosaic of crystal clear lakes, lavishly strewn throughout the eastern forests, scattered sparcely in the central section, and beautifully nestled among the mountains. These are connected by gently gliding streams and rough rapid rivers which form a natural network of waterways joining the east to the west. The fertile fields of golden grain of the mid-western provinces are surrounded by and gradually lose themselves in the

enchancing evergreen-filled forests. The scenic grandeur of British Columbia's magnificent mountains, its colorful carpet of wild flowers, and its natural tourist tempting beauty have made it the Switzerland of North America.

Now that we have taken a birds-eye view of Canada as a whole we find that its physical features, its climatic conditions, and its scenic setting are very much the same as that of the northern states from coast to coast.

Canada's history goes back to the turn of the sixteenth century. Cartier, the greatest of the earlier explorers, landed on its shores several times. He had the foresight to see that if this new world was to be preserved for and be of any use to France, permanent settlements had to be established. All of his attempts during the years between 1534 and 1542 failed. Nothing of any significance either in exploration or in colonization was done for the next fifty years. Finally in 1608, Champlain succeeded in founding the first permanent settlement on the very site where Quebec now stands. Several years later he laid the foundations for Montreal. In these early years the colonists were exclusively French. In time the English began to come and settled to the south. Sporadic skirmishes between them showed that their European rivalry was not dead. Although the real contest for the supremacy in this new world did not begin until 1689, the French colonies did not fall until 1759 in their final battle on the plains of Abraham. In the Treaty of Paris, 1763, Canada was officially ceded to the British. The Constitutional Act of 1791 divided

the east into upper and lower Canada; the former was the British section, the latter the French. This division remained until confederation.

The history of the opening of the Canadian Northwest is the strange stirring story of the fur trader. These men braved the dangers of death by exposure, hostile Indians, and their crafty, cruel competitors to bring the coveted furs found in the interior to the waiting world market. The Hudson Bay Company, organized 1670, won the continental contest. In the early beginnings they had some opposition from private traders. These joined forces in 1784 to form the North-West Company because they could not keep up the competition among themselves and also the powerful Hudson Bay Company.

Within the next ten years this newly formed company had planted trading posts all through the wooded areas of the Middle West. At first their success greatly overshadowed that of the old company because they did not hesitate to forge forward when dangers threatened. Their key men were daring, adventurous, and enthusiastic simply because each one of them was a shareholder in the company. Their partnership in the firm had to be renewed every few years provided they had proven themselves worthy. The H.B.C.'s system was quite different. It was controlled by a permanent joint stock association, whose men could never be more than employees. Consequently there was no drive for them to do more than their duty demanded. But in their greedy zeal the North-West Company soon found themselves in a very desperate financial position. Their only alternative

to avoid bankruptcy was to join their rivals. Eventually in 1820 the H.B.C. agreed to buy out the North-Westerns, thus ending the furious fight for furs, and gave them complete control of the entire Middle West.

While these fortune seekers forged forward they were impressed by the far-flung fertile fields and the untouched rich resources. Their enthusiastic reports stirred the spirits of these statesmen that had already had dreams of a Dominion from sea to sea, especially since Lord Selkirk, prompted by philanthropic and patriotic reasons, had established a successful settlement in Red River, Man. Now that the pioneers were beginning to travel westward these visions had to become a reality. The eastern governmental officials realized that if they did not act quickly and grant them the protection and the representation they demanded their threat to join the States would soon become a reality. Although the leaders of the various political parties saw the danger of delay, they could not convince their people of the absolute necessity of immediate action towards a united Canada. The Catholics in Quebec feared what the English Protestant majority might do in the new centralized set-up. The Maritimes feared annexation because of their population minority. After very much patient persuasion on the part of far-sighted leaders, the factions finally came into line. As a result the Dominion of Canada was born on July 1, 1867.

Now the centralized governments really began. The westerners realized that "the most important feature of the

economic life of a colony or newly settled community is its commercial connection with the rest of the world."³ Especially those who were living on the west coast demanded a trans-continental railroad before they would join the Dominion. But before they could even begin to undertake such a tremendous task they had to buy the land that the Hudson Bay Company owned by virtue of their charter. In the spring of 1869 the company agreed to give up all its rights under the charter, its monopoly to trade, its right to govern, and its ownership of the land for the sum of \$1,500,000 and one-twentieth of the fertile land.

Now that all that land belonged to the newly born Dominion the next problem was to find financial help for this tremendous task of building the railroad. Finally in 1881 a private group agreed to lay the steel for 25 million acres of fertile land as well as certain exemption from taxes. As it turned out the corporation added little to their personal fortune in this venture. In November, 1885 the last spike was driven. Now the Dominion was united politically; and the railroad riveted it together.

3. Callender, G.S., Selection from the Economic History of the States, Boston, 1909, p. 6.

FRANKLIN D. MEMORIAL LIBRARY
CONCORD, MASSACHUSETTS
JULY 1915, NO. 1

THE PLANTING OF THE CHURCH

"In the older countries the railways follow the settlements; in North America they precede and allure them...settlements grew up along them."⁴ Thus when the government and the railroad officials sent selected agents to advertise the Canadian Northwest in all parts of Europe and the United States, they thereby also opened this new frontier for the church. "The history of the Canadian West would be much different today if it were not for the forward-looking policy adopted by the churches...The West owes an unchargeable debt of gratitude to the many nameless sky-pilots who presided over its spiritual birth."⁵ Therefore the history of the opening of the West is synonymous with HIS STORY of the planting of the church. The tale of the trying times of the pioneering days is also the stirring story of the unselfish service of those that lived their lives to plant the church of God in this newly opened vineyard. From the very beginning both the pastor and the people planned and sacrificed together in God's great work of joyfully and prayerfully sowing the precious Gospel seed into the rough prairie sod; then confidently working while waiting for the fruitful harvest. In order to get a clearer conception of the difficulties these men of God encountered in establishing our Lutheran church in the Canadian Northwest, we must briefly

4. Wallace, op. cit., Vol. III, p. 21.

5. Ibid., p. 190.

tell the story of the coming of those early pioneers.

The news of the marvelous opportunities of the last frontier became the subject of most of the fireside discussion in eastern Canada. Ranchers south of the border were attracted by the wide open spaces of the prairie parklands. Laborers in Europe were tempted by the thought of actually owning 160 acres of virgin soil just by filing for and proving up a homestead. The more money minded men were urged on by their desire to make a quick easy fortune with little or no investment. Very soon hordes of settlers from all parts of the United States, the British Isles, Denmark, Sweden, Switzerland, Norway, Germany, Russia, Poland, and the Balkans packed the Canadian immigration centers. In coming they left many cherished association of abiding value behind them; but they brought with them courage, determination, and industry. These anxious men literally swamped the land offices, eager to file for their homesteads and proceed to build the home they had come so far to establish.

Although the regular routine and the wearisome waiting at these centers often taxed their strength and their patience, the real test for their physical endurance began with their long trek westward. Unfortunately these strangers in a strange land could not travel all the way to their destination by train. There were no branch lines. The old-timers of that pioneering period still tell of their many thrilling, memorable moments, some tinted with tragedy, that they experienced while wending their way across the treeless prairies and through the

trackless forests in their canvass-covered carts. Try to picture yourself traveling by ox-mobile for days without seeing any settlements, at the mercy of wind and weather; swarms of mosquitoes and gnats to make the summer travel a torture; blizzards, snowdrifts, and sub-zero weather to make the winter a season of dethly terror; underbrush so thick and muskegs so treacherous that you could only travel several hundred yards in one day; leaving new and necessary equipment behind in some swamp to lighten the load on the mired down wagons; or fleeing from frequent prairie and forest fires to add danger to drudgery.

But the trials of such a tedious trip were only the beginning of their problems. After they had finally reached their destination, the tremendous task of erecting some crude shelter for their families and preparing the land for the first crop immediately faced them. Men, women, and children toiled together from early in the morning until late into the night in fair weather or in foul, under the most primitive conditions and amid untold privations. Unfortunately their ceaseless slaving was not always rewarded by a bountiful harvest. Try to imagine the thoughts that filled the hearts of those early pioneers as they wearily yet very willingly trudged towards their fields, only to see the summer's sun slowly scorch their grass and grain, find their crops frozen to the ground, or stand by helpless, hearing "in the distance the drum and the drone of the hailstones tearing through and

stripping the trees and flailing the fields in its mad orgy of destruction, drawing nearer, ever nearer, until with its thunderous violence it unloads heaven's artillery on his frightened fields of ripened grains, beating down, tramping into the ground until not a spear remains."⁶ Thus the reward of a year's labor would disappear just when a measure of success seemed to be within his reach.

Now how could they possibly live through the long severe winter? The government supply stations or the towns were frequently so very far away. They were left to shift for themselves. They were poor. Wild game was often very scarce. To make matters worse the settlers were almost entirely without any medical care. Little wonder then that epidemics, privations, and want would often wipe out the majority of some community. Under such circumstances the infant mortality rate was practically 100% during the earliest period. It is very remarkable that those that remained alive had neither the desire nor the courage to begin again. But with their crude equipment in their hands and a prayer in their hearts they faced another year, knowing that "all things work together for good to them that love God."

This was the bouyant hope that the settlers always displayed, not only for their own work, but also toward the ministers that came to serve them. In spite of their own personal poverty they made every effort to show those pioneering pastors the most generous hospitality. They were

6. J.E. Herzer, Homesteading for God, p. 32.

always willing to share whatever they had and ready to lend them a helping hand wherever possible or whenever it was necessary. Now as we live again those days of the early efforts to plant the Lutheran church in the Canadian Northwest, remember that the dangers, the difficulties, and the privations that the pioneers faced were constantly reenacted in the lives of our missionaries.

The first Lutherans to set foot on the shores of the Canadian Northwest sailed from Copenhagen on May 16, 1619.⁷ Their two ships, with a combined crew of 66, commissioned by King Christian IV of Denmark, landed at the mouth of the Churchill River September 7, one year before the coming of the Pilgrim fathers. Their chaplain, the Rev. Rasmus Jenson, continually conducted services for the few months that they lived. On Christmas Eve he distributed the Sacrament and preached his last sermon. There amid the Arctic ice in the hulk of their shattered ship, he comforted the sick and the dying, pointing them to God's gift of salvation in the birth of their Savior. Soon after he was also called to his reward. Although their journey and their lives ended here, their coming and their worship in the ritual of the Reformation was the beginning of Lutheranism in the North American continent.

More than two centuries passed before we find further traces of Lutheran activity in the Canadian Northwest. A small group of German Lutherans came to Manitoba in 1872.

7. W.G. Polack, Building of a Great Church, p. 3.

Again their story is short and tragic. The only record existing today is a graveyard of a few scattered tombstones bearing their names.

The Icelandic Lutherans were the first to come to play a permanent role in the history of our church in this last frontier. In 1875 some Icelanders from eastern Canada, others directly from their homeland, settled at Gimli, Manitoba. Although their brethren in Lunenburg, Nova Scotia contributed very liberally towards their physical well-being, their first year in the West was almost completely disastrous. Records show that very few survived the long severe winter of want and the dreaded smallpox plague. The few that did remain determined to continue to establish a permanent community.

In laying the foundation for their colony they also carefully considered the possibility of receiving the services of some minister. Immediately representatives began to look around for a pastor. The Rev. Paul Thorlaksson was the first to visit the settlement. He had come from Iceland in 1872. The Norwegian ministers in Milwaukee, Wisconsin prevailed upon him to enter Concordia Seminary in St. Louis. Graduating in 1875, he received and accepted the call to an Icelandic community in Shawano County, Wisconsin. Again upon the suggestion of the Norwegian Synod he left for and arrived at the Gimli-Selkirk settlement on Aug. 23, 1876.⁸ In the few weeks of his stay there he conducted burial services for 17, baptized

8. V.J. Eylands, Lutherans in Canada, p. 160.

14, and preached to approximately 500 in a single service. Shortly before leaving he offered to be their permanent pastor. They hesitated because of his affiliation with the Norwegian Synod, afraid of what it might lead to. Although he left without any arrangement to return, he was recalled in 1877. He accepted and began to serve them soon after.

The second Icelandic clergyman to visit this district was the Rev. Jon Bjarnason. He had been his father's assistant in his homeland. Eventually he decided to emigrate. Upon his arrival in 1873 he accepted a short-term professorship at Luther College in Decorah, Ia. Then he became the editor of the Chicago Norwegian newspaper Budstikken. Finally, in the fall of 1877 he responded to the call of a number of families in the new Icelandic settlement at Gimli.

Unfortunately Rev. Bjarnason was much more liberal in his theological outlook than the Rev. Thorlaksson. Consequently conflict between the two men soon divided the district. Although many of the settlers hardly had adequate shelter over their heads or didn't know where their next meal was coming from, nevertheless they spent two full days listening to a debate between the two men. As a result of the debate, more was lost than gained. The community strife was augmented. To make matters worse both ministers resigned to serve elsewhere, Thorlaksson in 1878 and Bjarnason in 1880. But in 1884 the latter returned to New Iceland and served there until 1914. Under his leadership "The Evangelical Lutheran Icelandic Synod"

was organized in 1885.

The Rev. Magnus Skaptason came directly from Iceland in 1887 after several congregations had accepted his offer to serve them. Although he seemed to render acceptable service the people did notice that he was not in complete doctrinal agreement with them. In one of his later sermons he actually denied the total depravity and future punishment. His parish immediately took action. The congregations split the issue of his resignation. Even though there were still some who did side with him, Rev. Skaptason officially left the settlement in 1891.

The Rev. Fridrik Bergmann came to Gimli in 1894. While he had been in his homeland he had also been influenced by the liberalistic tendencies of his times. Wishing to instill a new vitality into the church's present program he lectured on his liberalistic leanings. Immediately another bitter controversy began. "A veritable landslide was loosed, gathering momentum as it rolled along."⁹ Several congregations, agreeing with Rev. Bergmann, withdrew from the Synod in 1909. From that day forward the conflict continued with Rev. Bergmann and Rev. Bjarnason. Eventually both took extreme positions. Finally it became a matter of winning, rather than establishing peace and good will. The breach was never healed.

The Rev. Oddur Gislason came in 1894. He believed that a pastor should not only minister to the spiritual needs of his people, but also consider their physical well-being.

9. Ibid., p. 171.

Consequently he began to practice what he called a system of mental healing. This again led to a controversy which resulted in his resignation from Synod in 1903. Thereafter he continued his travels as missionary and mental healer without any synodical affiliation until his death in 1911.

Another among the more prominent ministers in the story of the early efforts of the Icelanders was the Rev. Niels Thorlaksson. He was called from a parish in North Dakota to serve the present Selkirk congregation. This choice was indeed a very fortunate one. His faithful work bore abundant fruit, as we shall see later. By far most of the work during this planting period of the Icelandic Synod was done in Manitoba. The Rev. Jon Clemenz did begin a congregation at Churchbridge, Saskatchewan in 1901. Records of early work done in other places seem to be missing today. The organization as such, however, grew both materially and numerically.

A letter from a certain Mr. Wagner, postmarked Berlin, Manitoba, and addressed to the Mission Commission of Minnesota, was responsible for the first minister of the Missouri Synod to come to the Canadian Northwest. Rev. E. Rolf received the letter. In the spring of 1879 he left to visit the community. Mr. Wagner met him in Winnipeg. From there they traveled some 40 miles by ox-mobile. Upon his arrival at the settlement he found a goodly number of Lutherans. Even without the presence of a pastor these people had diligently searched the Scriptures, both in public and in private. From Pastor Rolf's report we find that he served them with Word

and Sacrament with the greatest delight.

The following spring a similar letter came to Rev. Krueger of Elizabeth, Minn. Enclosed was a round trip railroad pass. His journey was by no means dull. Near the border the train was delayed for several hours because the crew had to cut the wood for engine fuel. This time a sleigh-stage was waiting for him in Winnipeg. During his brief visit he confirmed one, baptized one, and married two couples. Before he left he advised the group to call their own pastor. They did. Unfortunately no one was available.

Because Rev. Krueger was too busy in his own parish he could not come again. Consequently Rev. C. Engel served this congregation for several years, together with his other charges in northern Minnesota. For some reason the entire group left this settlement to move farther west. The greatest majority settled in the Poplar Point district where they were once more served by the Missouri Synod.

A large number of German immigrants had settled in the vicinity of Brandon and Douglas, Manitoba, and at Langdenburg, Beresina, and Assinaboia, Saskatchewan in 1889. As a result in 1890 Rev. H. Brown from North Dakota made an exploration trip through this section to visit the Lutheran colonists. He recommended that a missionary be sent to serve and establish congregations among them. Immediately the Mission Commission responded. The call to serve "in Manitoba and surrounding territories" was given to Candidate Buegel of Concordia Seminary in St. Louis in 1892. He

accepted.

Originally the plan was to proceed from Winnipeg to make his headquarters in Brandon or Douglas. However, in a meeting with laymen Riedle and Helm of Winnipeg he decided that Winnipeg would be the more strategic point because of railroad connections. In the evening of his first day there he met a number of Russian immigrants in the Riedle home. Here he preached his first sermon in Canada. This service carried much blessing with it. Wherever these people went they spread the news of this young preacher and his Synod. Very soon Buegel received requests from all over the settled West to come and preach to them.

Among the many mission stations he began to organize, Winnipeg caused him the most difficulty. He could not find a suitable location for his services, nor did he have the time for an intensive search for Lutherans scattered throughout the city. He did manage to gather a few around him. In 1892 a request from the Hoffentahl-Langdenburg district came to him. This group had once belonged to the Canada Synod. Rev. Berthold had been their pastor. But because he had said that "Apfelschnitzel" could be used in the Lord's Supper instead of unleavened bread the congregation had asked him to leave. Eventually he did, and Rev. Buegel now became their pastor.

By this time Rev. Buegel could no longer carry the entire load alone. The Mission Board agreed to send him help.

Candidate Theo. Hahn came in August, 1892. From now on Hahn

took charge of the Saskatchewan work, and Buegel restricted his efforts to Manitoba. The general crop failure and Rev. Hahn's leaving for Michigan in 1893 did much harm to the work of that Synod. In the fall of that same year Rev. Buegel also left. It was not until the summer of the next year that Rev. E. Stark came to continue the work once more. During the following few years several other missionaries came to serve the scattered communities in Manitoba and Saskatchewan.¹⁰

The early efforts of this Synod in Alberta largely center around the story of the Rev. E. Eberhardt. A large group of Lutheran and Reformed immigrants had settled near Medicine Hat. Unfortunately they had chosen the dry belt. Crop failure after crop failure left them practically penniless. They petitioned the government to move them to a new location. Consequently some left for Neudorf, Saskatchewan, and others traveled towards the Stony Plain district near Edmonton, Alberta. Because the railroad ended at Red Deer, the last one hundred miles had to be covered by ox-drawn carts. The trials of such a trip have already been described in one of the preceding paragraphs. In one of the wagons a child was born without interrupting the progress of the journey in any way. The women not only prepared the meals, baked between stops, but also helped the men drive the carts. The children chased the cattle. Some days progress was practically impossible. Eventually the tired group arrived at the small

10. Cfr. Eylands, op. cit., p. 306-313; Herzer, op. cit., p. 5-6; and Anniversary Year Book, Concordia College, p. 7.

settlement which is now called Edmonton. Here the group divided. The Reformed element in the caravan decided to settle at Beaver Hills, approximately 30 miles east of Edmonton. The Lutherans continued towards Stony Plain, 20 miles west of Edmonton.

Rev.F.Pempeit of the Canada Synod had served them in their first poorly chosen settlement. He decided to move with them. In the summer of 1893 strife arose in the colony concerning church location. As a result 20 families were expelled from the church by this young, inexperienced pastor. All attempts to patch up the schism failed. Finally this small group found itself without any spiritual guidance. They did continue to gather for reading services, but this arrangement was very unsatisfactory.

At this time Miss Margaret Ulmer, daughter of one of the expelled members, chanced to meet a certain Charles Ries, a member of an eastern Canadian Lutheran congregation. She told him their story. He wrote his former pastor, the Rev. Lansky, who in turn "referred the matter to the Mission Board of Minnesota, and this Board in turn instructed Missionary Eggers of Great Falls, Mont., to visit the colony and investigate the situation."¹¹

In the spring of 1894 the Rev. Eggers arrived in Edmonton. There he took the opportunity to preach in the fire hall before he proceeded to Stony Plain. After he had listened to complaint of the families involved he was convinced that they

11. Herzer, op. cit., p. 9.

had been expelled unjustly. Consequently he presented both the doctrine and the practice of the Missouri Synod to them. Before he left he promised to do his utmost to provide them with a permanent pastor. Accordingly, Candidate Eberhardt received and accepted the call to become the first Missouri Synod minister in Alberta. Even his well-meaning friends tried to discourage him. When the freight agent could not find Edmonton on his map, he exclaimed: "Man, you're out of the world." Nevertheless Rev. Eberhardt started out. Shortly after he arrived in 1894 he settled down and took up his task with characteristic zeal and devotion.

Like the other prairie parsons of his day, he conducted very many of his services in the homes of his members. Traveling continually in this virgin field he instructed the old, taught the young, comforted the sick, and admonished the erring. In all kinds of weather and at any season of the year he never neglected those committed to his charge as a missionary-at-large. He traveled more than two hundred miles to serve few families and establish preaching places. In spite of the trials, dangers, and hardships of such long trips he never complained.

In 1895 the Rev. G. Frank came to assist him. He stayed less than one year. Once more he was left to do all the work alone. That same year Pastor Eberhardt left for Missouri, where he was married. Mrs. Eberhardt left a beautiful, comfortable home in St. Louis to live the rest of her life in the parsonage at Stony Plain. It was her heroic spirit that helped her

husband work and serve as he did. She well deserves the memorial tablet unveiled to her memory in the chapel of Concordia College at Edmonton.

Towards the turn of the century Rev. Eberhardt established missions in Edmonton, Wetaskiwin, Calgary, Pincher Creek, and even across the mountains in Vancouver. From these main centres many other smaller stations were served. He constantly urged the Board to send someone to help him in this very promising field. After the officials received his enthusiastic reports, they immediately commissioned Rev. Kertz to relieve him by taking charge of the southern section of the province. He reports:

These places anticipate a great influx of people. Northern Alberta is developing into a mission field of great proportions for the Lutheran church. Great droves of immigrants came through Calgary in the last month. . . There will undoubtedly be much mission material for the pastor, who ought to live in Calgary (5000 inhabitants) since this is a larger congregation and because from this point of vantage he can keep his eye on the trek towards the north.¹²

Now the church definitely had more work than ever before in this new frontier. More and more men were sent to serve from strategic stations. The field was indeed ripe unto the harvest. In 1902 Candidate Gruber writes:

I have organized a congregation of 20 members in Ponoka. Everywhere the services are well attended. The people often sacrifice two and three days to hear a Lutheran sermon again. When I came to one place I learned of the family which had not heard a sermon in eight years. I visited it; and when the woman heard that I was a Lutheran pastor, she knelt down and with tears streaming down her cheeks thanked God that she finally had a chance to hear a sermon again. I serve 99 families, I have 10 places and good

12. Ibid., p. 19.

prospects of adding 4 to 6 more. I have begun to teach a school which is attended by 21 children. Since Lutherans live all over the mission field, I can only reach them by team. I must have help. In 9 months I traveled 3578 miles by rail and team. I have only one wish - that the good Lord might send many workers so that His work may progress up here in 'Sunny Alberta.' 13

In view of this we can appreciate the enthusiastic summary of the Mission Board:

The gateway to an immense field is wide open, and the Lord has already permitted us to see results. The expense dare not deter us. The Lord has given us these opportunities and He will also bless us that we can carry out the work so that in the far North congregations may blossom to the glory of His name. 14

The Mission Board did take advantage of this God-given opportunity. In order to serve the ever increasing number of immigrants, the officials sent more candidates into the northwestern vineyard. Among them were Dr. A.M. Rehwinkel, now professor at Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, the Rev. O.H. Schmidt, now executive-secretary of Synod's Foreign Mission Board, and Rev. J.E. Herzer, now professor at Concordia College in Edmonton, Alta. It is indeed very fortunate that the Missouri Synod, at such a time as this, had farsighted men at the control of her missions and her mission policies. It is said of them that they had their fingers so firmly on the pulse of immigration movements and any new developments that they were always prepared to meet the opportunities to

13. Ibid., p. 20 f.

14. Ibid., p. 22.

strengthen and extend the boundaries of the kingdom of God in these wide-open spaces.¹⁵

The next synodical group in chronological order to play their part in the planting of the Lutheran church in the Canadian Northwest was the "Evangelical Lutheran Synod of Manitoba and other Provinces." Their story begins with a request sent to President Veidt of the Canada Synod to visit the German Lutherans in Winnipeg. He came in 1888. In that first well attended worship Lord's Supper was celebrated, children were baptized, and two boys were confirmed. At the close of the service those present called a meeting so that they might organize a congregation. That same day they assumed the title "The Trinity German Evangelical Lutheran Congregation." Although President Veidt knew that it would not be easy to find a minister for this northwestern mission field, he did promise to send them a permanent pastor at some time in the near future. Fortunately the Rev. H.C. Schmieder, assistant in Philadelphia, heard of their plight. After the necessary arrangements had been made he arrived at Winnipeg with his wife and child early in 1889. He immediately began to plan to build a church. Without any hesitation he also traveled to other outlying settlements. Because he was convinced that Edenwold, Sask., occupied a more favorable position geographically, he chose that community for his headquarters in 1890. Although he continued to work hard and show great

15. Cfr. Herzer, op. cit., p. 1-27; Concordia Historical Institute Quarterly, Vol. XVI, p. 110-116; Eylands, op. cit., p. 307-322.

enthusiasm he accepted a call to the United States in 1896.

Shortly after Rev. Schmieder left Winnipeg, Rev. L. Streich was sent to continue the building program so well begun. The plans materialized so quickly that in December, 1891 they were able to dedicate their new church. This was a very happy hour for everyone. Several months later Rev. Streich resigned to accept a call to Neudorf, Sask. The Rev. M. Ruccius, who had just come from Germany, agreed to take charge of this congregation. During his ministry there until 1898 he served them together with other preaching places. Besides building a parsonage and repaying a goodly part of the church debt the congregation also grew numerically under his able leadership.

It has been indicated that these men were also active in other parts of the midwest. In 1893 several Lutheran families from Wolhynia had settled near Rosenfeld. At first they were served rather infrequently by Rev. Willing, then a traveling missionary. After he moved to take charge of the Edenwold territory, Rev. E. Berthold served them from the Langdenburg parish more regularly. At the turn of the century this small group finally were in the position to build themselves a small house of worship.

Rev. Schmieder had been the first one to work in Saskatchewan. From Langdenburg he had traveled by ox-mobile to the sod-house community of Beresina. Several families had attended his services and partaken of the Sacrament. Rev. Berthold replaced him in 1891. At that time Beresina,

Landestreu, Ebenezer, and Langenau were all part of the Langdenburg parish. Several years later Churchbridge was also added. The Edenwold-Neudorf-Davin circuit was similarly served as regularly as possible by the few yet willing men in this area.

Coming directly from Germany, Rev. Pempeit not only began but for some time was the Synod's only minister in Alberta. He had associated himself with the unfortunate immigrants who had chosen the dry belt near Medicine Hat. Naturally when they left, he traveled with them. He settled with part of his congregation near Spruce Grove, about 16 miles west of Edmonton, Alberta. From that point he served other outlying groups going as far as Wetaskiwin. Several years later Rev. FBredlow came to assist him.

Though still a very small group scattered all over the midwestern provinces, Pastors Ruccius, Pempeit, Willing, and Berthold met in Winnipeg in 1897 where they organized their synod. But with a limited number of men and means this newly organized synod did not progress very quickly. Its ministers were overburdened and in many cases inexperienced as far as climate and conditions were concerned. Consequently some of them were not quite equal to the task. The Manitoba synod had a definite advantage in that more of its ministers were trained in Germany, thus placing them in a better position to understand the European immigrants. But they were at a decided disadvantage in that they found it quite difficult to live themselves into Canadian conditions. But this union had tied

the loosely connected congregations and the widely scattered parishes together. Financial assistance of course was out of the question, but the mutual encouragement among the brethren worked wonders. It definitely helped them to do their work more effectively.¹⁶ During the later part of this planting period their strategic stations were at Rosenfeld, Gretna, and Green Bay, Manitoba; Langdenburg, Edenwold, Neudorf, and Davin, Saskatchewan; and Spruce Grove, South Edmonton, and Wetaskiwin, Alberta.

The early history of the Augustana Synod on Canadian soil goes back to 1883. A group of ministers, including the white-haired Gospel ambassador, Rev. T.H. Hasselquist, visited Winnipeg. In spite of their diligent search they could find no trace of any Swedish Lutherans in this section of the Land of the Maple Leaf. It was not until 1885 that Rev. L.A. Hocanson conducted the first Swedish Lutheran service in Winnipeg. Late in the fall of 1885 Rev. Svante Udden came to serve these same people once more. All efforts on the part of the Mission Board to procure a permanent pastor failed. Finally in 1888 Rev. Udden returned. This time he made a three month tour and survey trip. Pastor Udden preached the Gospel in Winnipeg, Rat Portage, Keewatin, New Stockholm, Fleming, Plum Coulee, Oak Lake, and Scandinavia.

Although he saw that the time was ripe he decided against any attempts at organization until he could assure them of

16. Eylands, op. cit., p. 231-254; E.G. Goos, Pioneering for Christ, p. 1-24.

regular services. Again all attempts to secure a missionary failed. In 1891 he made another trip to try to save these people for the Swedish Church. By this time many of them had joined the Anglican Church, under the preachers' pretenses that there was no real doctrinal difference between the two bodies. But when in the presence of these members Rev. Udden asked the Anglican pastor to join his synod, he refused. This revealed that he was only a proselyter. Consequently the greatest majority returned to their own church.

One of the earlier pastors in Alberta was Rev. Almgren. In spite of the fact that he served for only a very short time his faithful work bore much fruit. He preached his last sermon on February 17, 1906 at Pidgeon Lake. On his way home he was instantly killed by a falling tree. He was buried near the church that he had helped to build.

During the early efforts the Swedish Church gradually grew so that in 1913 they felt themselves in the position to organize into a separate synod. According to the statistics of 1913 the "Evangelical Lutheran Augustana Synod" had 8 ministers, 39 congregations, and 1,756 communicants, located in the vicinity of Winnipeg and Scandinavia, Manitoba; New Stockholm, Moose Jaw, and Percival, Saskatchewan; and Wetaskiwin, Camrose, and Calgary, Alberta.¹⁷

The pioneering period of the Finnish Lutheran Church

17. Cfr. Eylands, op. cit., p. 288-291; Minutes of the Twenty-fifth Annual Convention at Calgary, Alta., p. 48-63; Minutes of the Thirty-first Annual Convention at Scandia, Alta., p. 58.

was greatly handicapped by the shortage of ministers and the lack of funds. The state church in their homeland could not provide the proper kind of men to work in this new country. Consequently, when the great influx of Finns came at the turn of the century the few pastors who did come stayed only for a few years. The main centers of the Finnish colonies were at Dumblane, Invermay, and New Finland, Sask., and Winnipeg, Manitoba. These scattered settlements were served very irregularly. The Rev. Haaro Huotari served New Finland in 1896 for the first time. This small congregation had been organized in 1893. Other men made several missionary trips during this early period, but most of the mission work was restricted to eastern Canada. The Finnish pioneers realized that if their church was to survive they would have to build up a native ministry. They looked to Suomi College at Hancock, Mich. to supply their need. It took time for the college to prepare men for the ministry in the Canadian Northwest. As a result the work as a whole suffered.¹⁸

Unfortunately we know very little of the beginning of the Norwegian work. Traces of services held in Alberta date back to 1885, in Saskatchewan 1893, and in Manitoba 1894. From the results of their work existing today we conclude that they were quite active and labored with great foresight. As early as 1911 they began to plan to build an educational institution in Camrose, Alta. Although they began

18. Cfr. Eylands, op. cit., p. 261-264.

to build that same year, the present plant was not finished until 1912. Also in 1911, only eight years after the first congregation was founded in Saskatchewan, a group of ministers and laymen gathered to discuss the proposition of building a college near Outlook, Sask. Because this settlement was largely rural they decided to erect the building in the country on the banks of the South Saskatchewan River. Taking everything into consideration, this small group made marvelous progress in spite of their many handicaps.¹⁹

The work of what is now the American Lutheran Church did not begin until 1905. In 1904 a church in Winnipeg that had been served by a Manitoba Synod pastor, burned to the ground. The city was then divided into two parts by the C.P.R. Naturally each group wanted the new church in their section of the city. As it seems, the northern members did not employ the fairest and the best means to win the decision. As a result the southern section organized a congregation of their own and appealed to Dr. Ernst, then the president of the Minnesota District of the Ohio Synod.

In order to feel completely justified in filling their request he investigated the situation thoroughly. Even after he had been completely satisfied, it was not an easy matter for him to find the proper pastor for them. Some of those called replied that they could not serve in a land of perpetual

19. Ibid., p. 279-283.

ice and snow. Most of them declined because they knew so little about Canadian conditions. After almost an entire year, he finally found Rev. G. Gehrke, who was willing to go. He arrived in Winnipeg in the fall of 1905. His beginning there was not easy. The new congregation not only had to go through court about ownership of the old property, but also had to pay the entire court cost of \$2000. When everything was finally settled, the group very appropriately assumed a new name: Cross Congregation.

Using this as a starting point the Ohio Synod began to serve other Gospel-hungry settlements. Actual requests came from various parts of Manitoba and Saskatchewan. Pastor Gehrke was influential in securing the services of Pastors C. Pohlman, A. Fricke, and J. Zaetschky soon after he had assumed his duties. By 1906 fourteen of their pastors were laboring in these western provinces. In the fall of that same year they organized a conference and requested permission of the Ohio Synod to form a separate district. The petition was granted. Rev. Gehrke was the first president. Now they began to grow by leaps and bounds. By 1910 they could point to 26 ministers, serving 8500 souls, grouped largely around Winnipeg, Brunkild and Waldersee, Manitoba; Regina, Radison, Strassburg, Kipling, and Humbolt, Saskatchewan; and the Edmonton district in Alberta.²⁰

The early history of the Danish Lutheran Church begins

20. Ibid., p. 268-271.

in 1910. A group of Danes left Iowa to settle in what is now known as the Standard district in Alberta. After they arrived they immediately resumed their previous practice of gathering for public worship in their homes. The following spring some of them attended the dedication of a newly built church in Dickson, Alberta. Rev. Gundeson began there in 1904. Immediately after the dedication services the visiting Standard members took both Revs. Christiansen, president of the United Danish Church, and J. Kildsig back to their colony. That same day the greatest majority of the settlers gathered in the home of Jens Rasmussen to decide to make application for membership in the Danish Evangelical Lutheran Synod and to begin to build their own church. The Nazareth Danish Evangelical Lutheran Church of Standard was founded on May 14, 1911. Even before the church itself was finished they had organized an active Sunday School.

The first minister to visit them after the building was finished was the Rev. Brede-Johansen. He did not accept the call that the congregation offered him. It was not until 1912 that Rev. J.K. Jensen accepted the permanent position. Using Standard as his headquarters, he made more missionary journeys, especially to Calgary. During this early period the Danes restricted their work to southern Alberta.²¹

The origin of the Lutheran Free Church in Canada can be

21. Cfr. Eylands, op. cit., p. 399-400; Jens Rasmussen, History of the Standard Colony from its Birth, p. 1-24; Year Book of the Fiftieth Annual Convention of the United Lutheran Church, p. 148.

traced back to the great spiritual revival in Norway at the turn of the century. Professor Gisle Johnson and a lay preacher, Hans Nielsen Hauge, began to stress the "conversion of the individual soul and its new birth." In time similar intensive spiritual activity was transferred to Canada when such Norwegians emigrated. In 1895 the Rev. Christian Sangstad arrived at Bella Coola, B.C. with some eighty families from Minnesota. There he founded a colony and organized the first Lutheran Free Church in Canada. Somewhat later Rev. J.A. Stavny began to work in Alberta. In 1903 he organized a congregation at Ferry Point. Rev. Johanes Skonnard proceeded into Saskatchewan. He became the self-appointed Norwegian missionary-at-large. By 1904 he had established preaching places in the vicinity of Melford and Bagley, Sask. Rev. Paul Norum came to assist him in 1905. Under his leadership the work in and around Watrous progressed rather rapidly. By 1911 he had organized mission stations at Govan, Viscount, Nokomis, and at several other outlying sections of southern Saskatchewan. When because of his ill health he was forced to resign in 1911, Rev. Hagen was called to become his successor. Work in Manitoba did not begin until 1906 with the coming of Rev. O.S. Vangstad.²²

Thus the planting period of the Lutheran church in the Canadian Northwest draws to a close. The stirring story of every single servant of God that worked to win the frontier cannot be told. The only existing record of their unselfish

22. Cfr. Eylands, op. cit., p. 304-305.

service is the obvious growth of the church during this period. They came and labored not that we might tell their story, but rather so that His Story of salvation might be brought into the hearts and homes of this great new land.

Of necessity the efforts to build the kingdom of God during this period had to be extensive rather than intensive. True, their first duty was to the congregation that had called them, but they also heeded the insistant plea of other settlements in the "Hinterland." Newly opened communities continually called for more laborers, more reapers, for the West was white unto the harvest. From 1872 till 1914 more than two million emigrants were scattered throughout the 1,114,672 square miles of the four western provinces. Consequently the church was literally swamped with opportunities.

The representative mission boards strained every financial muscle and stimulated every spiritual nerve to provide both men and means necessary to bring the Gospel message to the remote settlements. The missionaries "drove or walked in weather of every kind over roads that were not there, through bush and over wind-blown prairies to bring the Word of Life to congregations, families, or often single souls."²³ The cold, cutting north winds and the swirling snowstorms added deathly danger to their other difficulties. Yet even without the comforting association of their brethren the

23. Herzer, op. cit., p. 25

enthusiastic reports show these isolated pastors' dauntless spirit. "We are here to go where the Savior sends us, and we ought to be glad that we are thought worthy to serve Him in out-of-the-way places... Thanks be to God that we can report growth and progress. Mission work here is gratifying."²⁴

In these words Rev. Herzer, who was personally a part of the pioneer planting period of the church, very aptly summarizes the characteristic zeal and devotion of the early missionaries. Dr. Fuerbringer very appropriately concludes by commending the attitude of the representative boards towards their Canadian missionaries:

At the beginning of winter we ought to remember our missionaries in Northwestern Canada who in that land, with real courage in the face of hardship and privations do pioneer work, our mission work, and shun neither extreme cold nor long distances to carry out the duty of their office. We ought to remember also the courageous ministers' wives, who, often coming from comfortable circumstances, willingly take upon themselves the work, discomforts, and privations, to be real helpmates to their husbands. At this time of year we ought especially to support them with our prayers.²⁵

24. Ibid., p. 26.

25. Ibid.

CONSOLIDATION

"The previous period has been one of constant and consistent growth and progress. Congregations had arisen overnight, stations had been added to stations, missionaries had been dispatched in ever-increasing numbers, and accounts of a glorious harvest of souls had been reported from the whole field."²⁶ Now, in a very startling and abrupt contrast, this second period opened under dark and deepening skies. The spectre of war was hovering over Europe. Canada and Canadians were in neither thought nor preparation ready for war at such a time as this. But suddenly they found themselves thrust into the middle of a cruel conflict, into which they entered voluntarily because they were part of the British Empire.

This was a calamity for Canada. A new country like the Dominion, with her limited resources in manpower and finances, needed all her energy for her own development. With the outbreak of the war in Europe, all resources were diverted into channels of destruction. Immigration came to an abrupt standstill, railway building ceased, bridges and roads so necessary could not be built, and business suffered a tremendous slump. Nearly all the larger cities had experienced a great boom in real estate just prior to this time, and thousands of people's savings of every class had gone into city property. With the coming of the war, the bottom fell out, and the hard-earned savings of thousands upon thousands were wiped out. Unemployment followed, and people were forced to leave the cities, and many even left the country to find employment in the United States. All of this had a most disastrous effect upon our city churches. Congregations and preaching stations had been founded with much labor. City property had been secured at high prices, and churches had

26. Ibid., p. 32.

been erected largely with borrowed money, and now within a few weeks and months these congregations were all but wiped out. One by one the members were forced to leave the cities, and much that had been built was destroyed. The British Empire was at war with Germany. Everything German was unpopular, to say the least. For a German church to reach out and try to do mission work among English speaking Canadians under such conditions was impossible. Many of the missionaries became discouraged and accepted calls to the States. Large areas were left to be served by one or a few men. Under these circumstances further expansion was out of the question, and for the time being the energies of the Church had to be directed into new channels, and hence this second period became directed into new channels, and hence this second period became from sheer necessity a period of reorganization and consolidation.²⁷

Thus Dr. Rehwinkel very accurately evaluates the conditions facing the Canadian church during World War I. He can speak with authority because his tireless efforts in and around Edmonton in this period placed upon him much of the responsibility of holding the ground that had been gained there.

In spite of the seeming setback Rev. C.F. Walther, superintendent of missions of the Missouri Synod, declared, "Canada is still the most important mission field of our Synod." Affirming this statement Dr. Eberhardt, himself an active missionary in the field, confidently claimed:

No one should imagine that the mission work has lost its importance. The work in that extensive territory is only in its beginning. The depression and the war will pass by. Immigration will begin again. We need only a few good years and all will be forgotten. For this reason we should keep up the work begun and should not think of retrenching, lest damage be done which cannot be easily repaired when better times return.²⁸

27. REHWINKEL, A.M., "The Beginnings of Lutheranism in Western Canada," Concordia Historical Institute Quarterly, Vol. XVI (January, 1944) p. 117 f.

28. Herzer, op. cit., p. 34.

Time has proven these words to be most certainly true. In the mighty, yet merciful hand of God even this terrible tragedy has worked together for good in the story of His church. It was mentioned before that the work during the planting period had been extensive rather than intensive. The missionaries were kept so busy following, gathering, and organizing the immigrants that they found little or no time for thorough congregational indoctrination, thus properly preparing them for church membership in this new land. The greatest majority had grown up in the European State Church. Consequently they had no conception of the condition in which the Canadian church had to operate. Now that the immigration had ceased, the prairie parsons could begin to deepen their religious knowledge and train them for proper participation both in increasing their own congregation and also contributing towards further development in other places.

Actually a more intensive exploration of every parish proved that some Lutherans had been overlooked. In the steady stream of immigrants it was absolutely impossible for a single pastor in a given territory to find every Lutheran settler. If these for some reason did not make their presence known to the missionary, they would temporarily remain unnoticed. Furthermore, as soon as the church began to concentrate its efforts in a given locality the non-Lutheran element in the community became more familiar with the church they had considered foreign. As a result, in some cases, in spite

of open opposition, total strangers became interested and eventually joined the church. Therefore, while growth was not nearly as phenomenal, the church as a whole could show an increase. But above all, the individual congregational chords were strengthened, the missionary horizon extended beyond its own boundaries, and in becoming consolidated the church could control the far-flung parishes and its moving membership more effectively.

This decade also produced a decided development in the church's educational interest. Now that their homes had been built and their homesteads established, the settlers saw the need for spiritual and secular advancement. The church recognized the fact that unless they began to provide institutions for the training of a native clergy, they would always be faced with the problem of persuading foreigners to serve a people which they neither knew nor understood. The people also realized that the depth of their doctrinal understanding would determine the future of their church in this new land. Consequently they considered the possibility of establishing schools, colleges, and seminaries. The early leaders did not underestimate the definite difficulties connected with such a venture. Nevertheless, in spite of them, they continued to discuss, plan, and advertise to arouse added interest among others. The progress was all too frequently discouragingly slow, but these patient, far-sighted men of God refused to give up. As a result the foundation for the present college and seminary in Saskatoon, Concordia College in Edmonton, and

Luther College in Regina were laid.

The first of these institutions to materialize was the Saskatoon plant. Actually the beginning goes back to Spruce Grove. There in his parsonage Pastor J. Goos began to give some young men preliminary instructions and actual pastoral training in his congregation at Spruce Grove, Alberta. In the fall of 1913 they rented a private residence in South Edmonton to carry on the work so nobly begun. When it was officially opened Pastor Goos became its principal, Pastors H.W. Harms, Theo. Hartig, Theo. Hempel, and Mr. Solheim assisted as teachers.

In the meantime plans for a permanent building in Saskatoon were taking shape. The building program began early in the summer of 1914. By February of 1915 the building was completed to the extent that the president, together with the already enrolled students, could move in. This is quickly said. Remember, the war had come to disrupt the entire economic set-up. A drought during the early part of this period not only cut the number of pledges for the plant, but also threatened the complete payment of those that had been made. It was not until 1919 that they could build a house for the Director, and then only with the help of the Mission Board. In 1920 the building was improved and enlarged. Eventually they could add a modern house for co-eds.

Dr. C. Kleiner pays an excellent tribute to Rev. J. Goos, the faithful, patient principal during these trying times:

It is easy to understand that the burden became too great for the first principal, Pastor J. Goos, and that in the summer of 1918 he resigned his office. In those years he was not only the president and dean of the institution, but he had to solicit the funds with which the building was to be completed. More than once, on a Saturday night, there was not enough money to pay the workers. Our synod should never forget under what difficulties the first president carried the duties of his office. The same holds true of Mrs. Goos, who in those years carried the responsibilities of a housemother. With much self-denial both of them gave their strength and abilities to the young institution, more than once in danger of closing its doors.²⁹

Dr. Rehwinkel, his personal friend, also adds, "Pastor Goos was a faithful, consecrated, humble servant of God. The Lutheran church in the Canadian Northwest owes very much to his unselfish service."

Pastor Harms succeeded Rev. Goos as president of the institution. Under his leadership the establishment was enlarged to include both a college and a high school department. Up to this time only pre-theological courses had been offered. Now a regular theological curriculum was introduced. On the occasion of the 25th anniversary of the Synod, Pastor Harms summarizes:

Since the beginning of the project exactly ten years have passed and with the twenty-fifth anniversary of our synod we can celebrate the tenth anniversary of our college. We have little cause for jubilation, for the ten years passed were filled with difficulties and disappointments, but have yielded little fruit. Even now, when our institution ought to enjoy the favour of our whole synod as a darling child, the fact that it has not yet conquered and won the hearts of many lies as a shadow over it.

29. Goos, op. cit., p. 20 f.

Nevertheless, we have cause to rejoice and give thanks. Though the difficulties loomed large, we have conquered them with God's help; though we were often disappointed, we have learned our lessons; though some, upon whom we put our trust, deserted and left us, others have served us so much the more faithfully; with thanksgiving to God we may say that we have seen fruits ripening also. Contributions for the support of our institution, computed in 1911 by Pastor Ruccius at \$620 per year, rose last year to \$4,000; our number of students in the last few years has ranged around 30, and, what fills us all with joy and thanksgiving, the first graduates from our institution are ready to enter the ministry in our field.³⁰

With many similar circumstances Concordia College in Edmonton also became a reality. Early in 1913 the Manitoba-Saskatchewan Pastoral Conference resolved to send a memorial to the Minnesota District, requesting aid to found a Canadian college for Canadian boys. A few months later the Pastoral Conference of southern Alberta appointed F.W. Janzow, T.O.F. Herzer, and A.M. Rehwinkel to begin the plans for a college in Calgary. A layman had temporarily offered a large building until the college could be completed. The war forced them to drop their enthusiastic scheme. Immediately after peace was declared, A.M. Rehwinkel again revived the interest for building a Canadian college. Meanwhile the Saskatchewanans were equally eager to have the institution in their own province. Eventually, after much careful consideration, a board of representatives chose Edmonton to be the home of the first Missouri Synod college in Canada and

30. Ibid., p. 22. See also Eylands, op. cit., p. 255-257, and Goos, op. cit., p. 20-22.

Rev. A.H. Schwermann as its first principal.

In its early stages Concordia College was merely the remodeled Caledonian Temperance Hotel at 10875 - 98th Street. The basement became the kitchen and dining room, first floor classrooms and principal's residence, the second and third floors became student accommodations. The tremendous task of remodeling and converting the delapidated building into a suitable college was admirably carried out under the able leadership of Pastors Rehwinkel and Eberhardt. The text for the opening address on the 31st of October, 1921 is still the motto of the college: "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom," Ps. 3:10. Thirty-five students attended in the first academic year.

Reminiscing, Dr. Schwermann recently wrote:

It is doubtful whether a solution to many of the truly perplexing problems of a new institution such as this would have been found if God in His grace had not given us the noble services of the Rev. Alfred M. Rehwinkel. Although sufficiently occupied with work as pastor of St. Peter's Church, he nevertheless kindly consented to serve as assistant instructor, teaching thirteen periods per week in history, science, geography, and German. He was ever ready to advise and to help. The monumental work performed by him in establishing our Canadian school of the prophets shall ever be held in grateful remembrance.³¹

For the same reasons and under similar circumstances the American Lutheran Church decided to establish Luther College. It had its early beginnings in Melville, Saskatchewan in 1913. Rev. H. Schmidt became its first president. Although

31. Year Book, Concordia College, Edmonton, p. 10.

the institution served well in Melville, the leaders were convinced that it would serve better if it were more centrally located. Consequently the new building was erected in Regina, in 1925, as we shall see later.

These, of course, are the three major projects the church undertook during this period. As we marvel at these accomplishments, we dare not overlook that every individual congregation carried on an intensive educational program of its own. The pastors were preparing the people for post-war work, while doing their utmost to make the dream of Canadian colleges and seminaries come true. Their efforts were blessed, their accomplishments were praiseworthy.

Once more Rev. J.E. Herzer eloquently evaluates the church's work during these war-burdened years:

So passed the war years, years critical indeed for the infant church, years which threatened to devastate the beautiful garden of the Lord which was just coming into bearing. 'The floods truly were lifted up, yea, the floods lifted up their voice, the floods lifted up their waves, yet the Lord on High was mightier than the voice of many waters.' The youthful church in carrying on her God-given task lived to learn that. 'God was in the midst of her, she was not moved. God helped her and that right early.' The church however, not only weathered the storm, but she had ridden it out safely, indeed, made headway in the very teeth of the storm. She had established herself more firmly on the western plains and mountains, 'had lengthened her cords and strengthened the stakes' and in all the turmoil of the times had made far-reaching preparations for extension and expansion so that, when the Master in the midst of the storm and sea had spoken His almighty: 'Peace, be still' and there was a great calm, the frail bark of the church (in the Canadian Northwest) was seen safely riding the sea to new conquests and victories.³²

32. Herzer, op. cit., p. 41 f.

GROWTH AND EXPANSION

Times may change, but our almighty heavenly Father, who is the same yesterday, today, and forever, promises His children amid the changing scenes of life: "As thy days, so shall thy strength be." Similarly, while the church is not of this world, but is nevertheless affected by the conditions in the world, God protected and permitted her to prosper despite the many difficulties she was forced to face. In the planting period the Lord had providentially provided pastors to preach His Word to the settlers throughout the Canadian Northwest. Then suddenly the world was at war. Again God so graciously guided the affairs of His church that, disastrous as these dark days seemed to be, they served to demonstrate directly the necessity of seeking and building first the Kingdom of God, thus preparing the people to forge forward in the post-war period of growth and expansion.

Now the time was not only ripe, but the church was also ready to launch out into every conceivable area of work in this western vineyard. "From the days of small things, when one lone worker was turning the sod of a virgin country and sowing the seed of the Gospel, on through the years of enlarged fields where soul-harvests were ripening under the smiling skies of God's grace, through all the disheartening years of unrest and war when ruin threatened, the church was permitted to see ever greater harvest returns and ever brighter prospects of the fruition of all her hopes and prayers."³³ Consequently,

33. Ibid., p. 43.

with their fingers firmly on the pulse of prevailing conditions, and from actual experience of the personal responsibility in the progressive policy the young church had adopted in this new land, both pastor and people were ready and willing for the diversified development that these last few decades have demonstrated.

The first factor that affected the development of all the Lutheran bodies was, of course, the renewal of immigration. With the beginning of the '20's Canada once more opened her doors to immigrants from across the sea. Of course, the total influx was not nearly as astonishing as it was at the end of the last and at the turn of this century, nevertheless by 1928 the number had reached the half-million mark. In the past no provision had been made to assist these strangers venturing westward. The church had learned her lesson from the tragic neglect of the immigrants in the previous period. They had been permitted to settle wherever they pleased. As a result the church suffered in that they had to spend time and money following a few families, thus reducing their efficiency simply because of the distance and the difficulties involved in serving them. But now the leaders were alive to their duty. They took steps to provide reception centres at the ports of entry and hostels in the major cities in the interior. There they could not only make that all-important missionary contact, but also relieve them of much of their anxiety, give them free advice, attempt to assist them in the choice of a proper location or job, and provide means for

their immediate physical comfort.

For this reason the members of the Manitoba Synod, the western districts of the Canada Synod, the American Lutheran Church, and the Missouri Synod cooperatively formed the Lutheran Immigration Board and the Lutheran Immigration Aid Society. Under the aggressive leadership of such pastors as Revs. W. Baepler, H. Becker, J. Herzer, C. Thies, W. Wahl, and A. Weidenhammer the new colonists were directed to "already existing congregations or into districts where they could readily be gathered into congregations."³⁴

The system of selection and direction of the immigrants functioned in this way. When the immigrant who had been interviewed and given information overseas, left Europe, the Immigration Missionaries at Winnipeg would be advised by cable. The newcomers were met at the harbor or at Winnipeg, the Gateway to the West, and interviewed to learn their wishes, to give advice, to attend to their bodily and spiritual needs, sent to their destination, and the respective pastor was advised of the hour of the arrival. Committees had been organized in most of the parishes who under the direction of their pastor would list settlement opportunities, select and make ready houses and in case of refugees, make credit arrangements to pay for their transportation. When these committees were advised of the date and train on which the family would arrive, they would be on hand to welcome the strangers and look after their first needs in order to get them established as soon as possible, thus relieving the newcomer of much anxiety. The progress of each settler was watched, and if re-settlement was indicated, this was done. The object of this welfare work was not only to facilitate the journey of the settler and to get him permanently settled, but to give him after-care until he could make his way alone. This after-care became necessary especially after 1930, when the new settler fell on evil days due to unemployment and the general depression which engulfed the country.³⁵

34. Goos, op. cit., p. 25.

35. Herzer, op. cit., p. 48.

Naturally the beginning of mission work among the immigrants was in their mother tongue, yet there had been a modest beginning to introduce English into the churches in the previous period, the actual wide-spread use of the language of the land did not become a necessity until these decades. In the early years the missionary's job was to find the scattered Lutherans, organize them into congregations, and serve them in their own language. But the abnormal, war-torn decade helped to hasten the change in the church's missionary policy. Furthermore, because they also began to reach out to the non-Lutheran element in the community, in some cases it not only became desirable but quite necessary to change the entire service into English. Needless to say, the transition was oftentimes a painful process, offering its usual difficulties, but on the whole the switch to the language of the land has developed more rapidly than in the United States so that today it is the rule rather than the exception.

This period is further marked by an intensified interest in educational development. Distance between and the few sufficiently densely populated communities of course prevented the church from planting parochial schools in most of its parishes. Wherever possible an attempt was made to provide a thorough Christian day school training for their children. During the First World War the Department of Education had closed the parochial schools taught by the pastors. At that time the church deemed it right to suffer in silence. With the cessation of hostilities and the fact that everything was

gradually becoming normal once more, those parishes privileged to have a parochial school in their midst naturally attempted to begin again. But that was not so easy. The provincial Department of Education interfered. Because the Missouri Synod school at Stony Plain became the legal test case for all Lutheran schools in the West, its history will serve to show the opposition to and the final recognition of private Christian day schools.

On August 22, 1921 the Stony Plain school board informed the Department that they would re-open the school with 29 pupils. Two months later Edmonton's chief school inspector visited them. Although he had not offered any criticism whatsoever, one week later the bare verdict arrived, declaring the school "insufficient." To make matters worse, there was no suggestion attached whereby the Board might improve its set-up to make it officially acceptable. Every effort to re-adjust the situation failed.

Upon the advice of lawyer Parlee of Edmonton, the congregation took the case to the Supreme Court of Alberta. They lost the decision. An appeal didn't change the matter either. The people were "stunned by the tyrannical application of the law."³⁶ After careful consideration, on February 25, 1923, the group decided to send a scouting committee to Mexico consisting of Pastor Eberhard, Jacob Miller, and Henry Goertz. This delegation was authorized to survey the possibilities of

36. Ibid., p. 52.

establishing a new settlement where they could give their children a proper Christian education.

At this time Mr. T.O.F. Herzer rendered the group inestimably valuable service. He was instrumental in bringing the matter to the attention of Mr. Henry Wise Wood, the president of the party in power. As a result of their combined efforts Premier Greenfield assured the Stony Plain school board "dasz der Schule keine weiteren Hindernisse seitens der Regierung in den Weg gelegt werden sollen, solange wir sie auf der jetzigen Hoehe erhalten."³⁷

On April 10, a day before the delegation returned from Mexico, the congregation was permitted to open their school with the understanding that the pupils would write departmental examinations in June. Both the perplexed parents and the anxious students wondered whether they would pass. Remember, the inspector's verdict of "inefficient" still stood. In spite of the many disturbances and interruptions during the year, the examinations revealed that the "inefficient" school was now the "most efficient" in the entire district by the amazing margin of 41%. God was truly with them.

For the present at least, the battle was won. Although this was a good talking point, it was not enough, because the question not only concerned the Stony Plain school, but every Christian Day School that had been built or would be built. Therefore the board appointed Prof. A.M. Rehwinkel to bring the case directly to the government. Together with Mayor Blatchford,

37. A.M. Rehwinkel, "Bericht der Schulbeherde des Alberta u. British Columbia Distrikts," Lutheran School Journal, Vol. LIX, (1924) p. 325.

Mr. Adair of the City Council, and Mr. Suss, a prominent merchant, Prof. Rehwinkel went directly to the Premier. They were well received. The first meeting didn't accomplish very much because the Premier was forced to leave for an important meeting in Ottawa. Further discussion with Mr. Baker, the Minister of Education, finally resulted in the following statement from him:

If this proposed change in the law (that a pupil need not necessarily be taught by a provincially qualified and accepted teacher) would affect you people only, I would not hesitate, but we have too many nationalities and creeds in this province, many of whom would want to open their own schools, and we would have no way to control them. But I want to assure you once more, as I have done before and as the Premier has written you, that, if you will conduct your schools as you are now conducting your Stony Plain school, that is, follow the course of study and the time schedule outlined by the department, we will not interfere with your schools, whether you have qualified teachers or not. You will understand, of course, that it will be easier for you to conduct a satisfactory school with a qualified teacher.³⁸

Thereupon the committee decided to let the matter rest for the time being. On April 8, 1924 Mr. Gorman, the chief inspector of the province admitted

"that the whole Stony Plain school trouble might have been avoided if they had followed a different course of procedure; that we could rest assured that they would not again proceed in the same way; that they, of course, must insist upon a certain standard of efficiency, but if any of our schools fail to reach this standard, they would get in touch with our school board, would cooperate with us, and give us ample time to make it efficient."³⁹

Now that the case had been clarified, the church immediately proceeded to make provisions for further development

38. Ibid., p. 328.

39. Ibid., p. 330.

of their parochial school system. Accordingly the board resolved:

1. dasz wir die Gemeinden ermuntern, wo irgend moeglich, christliche Gemeindeschulen ins Leben zu rufen.

Da es aber dem Schulwesen im ganzen Distrikt zum Nachteil gereicht, wenn solche Schulen nicht vorschriftsmaeszig gefuehrt oder in unpassenden Lokalen gehalten werden, so empfehlen wir,

2. dasz

a. der Rat der Schulbehoerde in bezug auf Lehrer, innere Einrichtung, Lehr- und Stundenplan und Lokal eingeholt werde, ehe eine Gemeinde eine Schule eroeffnet;

b. dasz die Schulbehoerde ermachtigt sei, von Zeit zu Zeit solche Schulen zu inspizieren und auf etwaige Maengel aufmerksam zu machen;

c. dasz jeder Gemeindeschullehrer vierteljaehrlich auf dem ihm zugesandten Fragebogen an die Schulbehoerde ueber den Stand seiner Schule berichtet.

3. eine Hauptschwierigkeit in unserer ganzen Schulsache ist die Tatsache, dasz wir keine eigenen, in Canada ausgebildeten Lehrer haben. Wir empfehlen daher der Synode, die Aufsichtsbehoerde und Fakultaet unserer Anstalt in Edmonton zu bitten, so bald als moeglich dafuer zu sorgen, dasz wir einheimische Lehrer fuer unsere Schulen bekommen.⁴⁰

As has been said, this was the legal test case from which all Lutheran bodies in Canada benefitted tremendously. From the beginning to its end it was one more example of the fact that "the Lord omnipotent reigneth and the king's heart is in the hand of the Lord, as the rivers of water He turneth it withersoever He will."

During this same period the existing colleges and seminary grew and expanded under God's blessing. In 1926 the College and Seminary at Saskatoon affiliated itself with the University of Saskatchewan, giving it the advantage of a credit exchange

40. Ibid.

through which they can combine courses towards a recognized B.A. degree. In spite of the drought and its other difficulties it has prospered through the years. With the liberal support of both the Board of Education and friends of the institution they could continue in spite of their debt. For several years Pres. Magnus and Rev. J. Goos carried the full teaching load alone, and conducted the college through its most critical period. Under the able leadership of its present dean, Dr. N. Willison, elected in 1936, the Seminary has made great strides. At present 58 of its graduates are serving in the ministry.

Since 1939 The Norwegian Lutheran Church of Canada has had a seminary in Saskatoon, operating and co-operating with our institution on our campus. For several years the American Lutheran Church has sent its Canadian students to our seminary. So has the Augustana Synod and the United Danish Church. The Lutheran Free Church, through arrangement with Luther College of the Norwegian Lutheran Church, has also had its students on our campus. The men of these different Lutheran bodies have learned to know each other and to sense the unity of the faith and the community of obligations.⁴¹

The American Lutheran Church began to build the present Luther College in Regina in 1925. This beautifully located three-story building was dedicated the following year. At first the principal, Dr. Rex Schneider, with his staff of five teachers offered courses ranging from Grade IX to second year university. As soon as they were approved of and recognized by the University of Saskatchewan, they affiliated themselves with it. The present staff of ten teachers serves an

41. Goos, op. cit., p. 33.

approximate enrollment of 200 per year. Its prime purpose is to provide and prepare both men and women for greater Christian service in the West. Today this college is actually the rallying point of the American Lutheran Church in Canada.

The present plant of the Norwegian College at Camrose was built in 1912. It has served well all these years. Plans to build an up-to-date institution are under way. The war has interfered with their present realization. This recognized high school and business college adequately serves an approximate enrollment of 150 annually.

The college at Outlook was quite similar to the one in Camrose. In 1937 it was decided to give added support to the Alberta college, and close the Outlook institution. However, the following year the Outlook college was reopened under a new name: "The Saskatchewan Lutheran Bible Institute." Today it is a combined, recognized high school and Bible school serving some 80 students every year.

In 1937 the annual Norwegian convention in Saskatoon also decided to establish a theological seminary in that city. Further conferences in Minneapolis, Minn. in 1938 and in Edmonton, Alberta in 1939 concluded that Luther Theological Seminary should open its first school year Sept. 26, 1939 in Saskatoon. This was a big step forward for the Norwegian Church. Dr. Lavik says:

It is a basic principle of church life and work that every land must produce out of its own membership its own gospel ministry. If the Norwegian Lutheran Church in Canada is to accomplish its mission in this country it must function as a fully responsible church body,

and for this purpose of necessity develop its own ministry. Luther Theological Seminary is charged with the sacred responsibility of training men that are to enter this gospel ministry, and also of training missionaries for the foreign field of the Church.⁴²

For the first few years they shared the United Lutheran Church's college and seminary, as has been mentioned, but in 1945 they resolved to erect an \$80,000 building of their own which is practically completed today.

Concordia College in Edmonton, on its beautiful, well-chosen location overlooking the Saskatchewan River Valley, was dedicated January 10, 1926. That same year the Junior College Department was added. In 1939 it became a fully recognized, provincially accredited school, attended by an ever-increasing enrollment of boys and girls, served by a faculty of six men. While a committee was soliciting pledges for the new institution, a 12-year old lad offered his pledge of one dollar. When asked how he expected to raise the money, he confidently replied: "I am going to catch 'Mooshrats.'" His spirit is typical. While Dr. Schwermann was speaking chiefly of Concordia College in Edmonton he was thinking of the noble spirit with which all Lutherans supported their Canadian institutions when he said:

Concordia stands as a constant reminder of the vision and faith of our pioneers, a concrete testimony of the open-hearted and open-handed love of our American Christians for our Canadian mission, and a monument of the undeserved kindness of a gracious God.⁴³

While the church did show an intensified interest in institutional education, it did not neglect the young people

42. Eylands, op. cit., p. 286.

43. Anniversary Yearbook, p. 15.

of its parishes. Inspired by enthusiastic pastors of vision, the youth of the church began to be trained for future active membership in the church's progressive policy. At first, of course, the work was limited to certain areas and in certain fields. Gradually a well-planned system coordinating Christian knowledge with Christian service, patterned after the Walther League and Luther League of the United States, developed. These, the two largest youth organizations represented in the West, and the groups in the smaller synods, fostered regular league leadership training courses, summer camps, zone rallies, and conferences. All have served well, not only to keep the young people within the church, but have also rendered valuable service to the church at large in aiding the mission program, alleviating physical suffering, and at the present time taking their full share of the responsibility in caring for the needy in Europe.

Simply because the various Lutheran bodies in the West are so small, they have not been able to establish very many charitable institutions. The Icelanders built the Betel Old Folks Home at Gimli, Manitoba. Plans for similar institutions in Winnipeg, Man. and Vancouver, B.C. are now in the making. The same building that once served as Luther College in Melville has been reconverted to become an orphanage and an old folks home there. The only home for young women is supported by the Augustana Synod in Vancouver, B.C. Finally the Bethany Sunset Home for the Aged at Baulf, Alta. is under the supervision of the Norwegians. Although the Western Canadians do

not own and operate any more such institutions of mercy they have always liberally supported others, both in Canada and the United States.

The depression of the thirties and the war of the forties was

"truly a time of testing, and the church was made to show that she had learned to put her trust in her Lord who had sent her out with the command: 'Go!' backed by the promise: 'Lo, I am with you, ALWAYS.' His presence has been evident in the continued success of the past. She had now to go into the darkness and put her hand into the hand of God. 'That was to be for her better than a light and safer than a known way.' Forward she went, trustfully doing the work God had given her to do while it was day, even though it was an evil day. She had no time to falter, no time to sit down and measure and weigh out her resources against her task. There was work to do, and strength from on high to do it."⁴⁴

In final retrospect, some seventy years ago single missionaries, representing several synods, fearlessly, faithfully followed the first few scattered settlements in the so-called "land of perpetual ice and snow." The stirring story of these trying times, even though it is often tinted with tragedy, is nevertheless one of happy, heroic, unselfish sacrifice in gathering, guiding, and keeping God's children for His Kingdom. Eventually more ministers ventured into this western vineyard to labor together with the people, 'mid trials and tribulations and two terrible world wars, so conscientiously that today, by God's grace, the church stands strong, humbly, prayerfully prepared for further greater service. Although they have

44. Herzer, op. cit., p. 57.

served as separate synods, the very nature of the circumstances in their serving has shown that, united in effort on the basis of God's inspired Word, they would not only eliminate reduplication of effort, but also could become a self-supporting, indigenous church, training an indigenous ministry.

Therefore, for more than four years the pastors of the various Lutheran synods represented in the Northwest have been meeting in a spirit of Christian brotherliness, trying to remove handicaps on the course towards one Lutheran Church in Canada. They are well aware of the historical hindrances, but getting together now they are not allowing any self-interest, personal, synodical, past, or present to dominate or interfere. Knowing that no advance is retrogression, the pastors all evince an earnest desire to keep on working prayerfully towards their goal with a loyal adherence to our Confessions and to God's holy inspired Word.

Consequently intersynodical conferences not only offer an excellent opportunity for an intensive confessional and scriptural study, but also provide that important personal contact which repeatedly reveals that previous prejudices can readily be removed. Thus, getting together for stimulating exegetical and doctrinal studies on the basis of a series of theses submitted by committees, with a concluding open forum where pertinent matters are aired, no real disagreement has been discovered so far. Prof. Guebert of Concordia College in Edmonton, Alta. declares:

The evident purpose of all these meetings is to bring about a better understanding, to remove differences if they exist, and ultimately to

achieve Lutheran union in western Canada. The members of the intersynodical groups believe that they have adopted the one really effective method that can bring lasting results.

Dr. Willison, dean of Saskatoon Seminary, adds:

If we believe what we profess; that we have more of the truth than any others, we must recognize the responsibility of offering that truth to Canadian people in a Canadian way. To do this we must avoid giving the impression that we are a number of isolated foreign groups. We must train ourselves to act as the Lutheran Church in Canada, competent and willing to serve the immigrant population as part of the great work of evangelization, but recognizing that we have a share, proportionate at least to our resources in bringing the unchurched of our nation to Christ. This, I am convinced, we can do more effectively through cooperative effort, as we lay aside our divisive traits and concentrate on the gospel truth which we have in common.

The Lutheran leaders of today confidently claim: "The prospects for a Lutheran church in Canada were never brighter than they are at the present time."⁴⁵

One proof for such an enthusiastic statement is the wonderful way in which the synods are cooperating to alleviate suffering in war-torn Europe. The Canadian Lutheran World Relief, in existence since April 18, 1946, is a common agency for the Lutheran churches in Canada, supported wholly or partially by the various church bodies. Dr. Schneider, the chairman of the organization, says:

I must confess that I have rarely been associated with an organization when so much was accomplished in a short time and in such a fine spirit of wholehearted helpfulness. Oneness of purpose, trust,

45. The information for the preceding paragraphs has been gleaned from articles written by Prof. A. Guebert and Dr. N. Willison.

and confidence have characterized the efforts of the members and officers of the Canadian Lutheran World Relief. It is making a unique contribution to the general field of Lutheran relief by providing homes in Canada for the destitute in Europe. Sending food and clothing is an important attempt to meet the present urgent needs, but does not offer a basic solution to poverty. 'Taking in the stranger' provides one solution to the fundamental need of these unfortunate people. Both the National Lutheran Council and the Emergency Planning Council recognize the fortunate position of C.L.W.R. in this area of permanent rehabilitation. Each organization has made available sizeable sums for this work. The task is an enormous one, and challenges the cooperation of all Lutherans, both in Canada and in the United States.

Mr. T.O.F. Herzer, an exceptionally active committee member, proposed this possible solution. Twenty-five or more years ago a society to deal with underprivileged children was founded in London, England. Thousands of such unfortunates were taken out of the cities in England, transported to Australia and Canada, and placed in Fairbridge Farm Schools (so called after their patron) until the age of 21, at which time they were integrated into the national life. These schools were supported entirely by private money from Britishers. A number of years ago a Scot, Captain Dunn-Waters, established a similar farm near Vernon, B.C., calling it "Fintry" because it became a post-graduate training school for the Vancouver Island Fairbridge farm. This worked well for several years, until the dollar shortage hit Great Britain. Then the directors decided to liquidate this farm. The secretary, Mr. Gordon Green, maintained that they should keep the idea "children" before them, but that they should place some of the displaced persons from their

miserable camps in Denmark and Germany on this farm as a training centre, and begin with fifteen families. When he found out that 95% were Lutherans, he decided to discuss this matter with Dr. Lawrence Meyer, then on the Empress of Canada. This idea was developed, that fifteen families, with children, should be selected, trained, supplied with jobs, and be replaced with fifteen other families immediately.

Mr. Green and Mr. Herzer went to St. Louis to present this project to the Emergency Planning Council, who agreed to appropriate \$25,000 as a revolving fund, provided that the money would be turned over to the Canadian Lutheran World Relief, and provided the Canadian Lutheran World Relief assume the responsibility of selecting the proper people.

Mr. Herzer assured them that the Canadian Lutheran World Relief could accept this responsibility provided Dr. Michelfelder would permit Dr. Hong and his assistants to go to the D.P. camps with Mr. Green to make the selection. Now the Canadian Lutheran World Relief has the responsibility

1. that the right people are selected;
2. that they will be integrated into the respective Lutheran congregations after they have been brought over.

Mr. Herzer summarizes as follows:

1. The Emergency Planning Council puts up the money;
2. The National Lutheran Council furnishes the selection - Dr. Hong and his two assistants;
3. The Canadian Lutheran World Relief is the agency;
4. Canada Colonization Association has the actual management of the property - because neither the Emergency Planning Council nor

the National Lutheran Council is in a position to assume such an administration.

Under the above arrangement it is believed that three groups of fifteen families each could rotate every eighteen months. This means a real worthwhile absorption for British Columbia.

Material relief is at this present time very vital.

Hilfwerk officials say:

It is impossible to separate spiritual from material distress, or, in the language of today, general relief from church reconstruction. Christ Himself stressed general relief, when He blessed those who did acts of charity. 'I was hungry and ye gave me meat.' Physical relief does have a spiritual message. It is the Gospel in calories. It is gifts from abroad that enable us to preach the most impressive message of Christian brotherhood - material help can greatly assist us to lead our people to repentance and faith - how extremely difficult is the task of the church to preach the Gospel of love to people whose past was terrifying and gruesome, whose present is misery in the naked struggle for existence, and whose future is darkness.

The faces of the people are marked with bodily and spiritual needs. Their distress requires our wholehearted love and interest, but above all our material assistance.

"Manifold are the thanks which speak from the pale and hollow-eyed faces. One can see readily that the people, although they have lost their homes, are again able to be thankful to God and His helpers, experiencing the happy feeling of being safe, and of knowing their neighbors' love. Not one of them knows a donor in Canada. But all feel these days, more than ever before, something of the world-embracing idea of Christianity and the motive which compels to lighten the sorrow across the seas."

An assuring expression found in the Lutheran World Action Bulletin states:

Shall we say that if the church is apt to be wiped out eventually, we are wasting money by sending help now? Not at all! The church may have to underground and undergo a long and bitter persecution, yet I am sure it won't be destroyed. That is why it is doubly important that we send all possible aid right away, in order to help build up in Christian forces the strength and vitality to endure the persecution and suffering which lie ahead and to survive it.

The preceding paragraphs graphically describe the urgent need. The Lutheran Church in the Canadian Northwest has not been among the least to answer the plea. In the two years of its existence the Canadian Lutheran World Relief has already supplied \$359,155.23 worth of food and 134,811 pounds of donated clothing, with even greater potentialities for the future.⁴⁶

This Canadian Lutheran World Relief is one of the praiseworthy unified efforts of active Canadian Christianity. Although this cooperation is only in externals, it does serve as an optimistic omen for a future Lutheran Church in Canada. God speed the day.

Now as we call each synod to pass for its final review, remember that individually they prayerfully sowed the Gospel seed from the very beginning. Eventually congregations could build, beautify, and enlarge their own houses of worship. Gradually more and more local congregations became self-supporting. By organizing themselves into districts, synods not only strengthened their ability to serve, but also enabled them to turn more concentrated attention to the provision

⁴⁶. The material for the preceding paragraphs has been gleaned from statistical reports of the C.L.W.R., received through the courtesy of Mr. T.O.F. Herzer and Rev. C.L. Monk.

for an indigenous ministry. Although they are still dependent upon their parent bodies, they are now in a better position to contribute greater amounts of time, talent, and money towards the common objectives, e.g., missions, education, youth work, and charities. It is, of course, impossible to tell the complete story of every organization, synodical or congregational. Each has enjoyed God's abundant blessing and has rendered consequent faithful service, always aware of its obligation to God and man. "Even the catastrophe of another and more virulent World War was not able to check the steady progress of the Gospel, so that when the sun of peace arose on a darkening world, the church stood there 'mid toil and tribulation and tumult of the war' unharmed, prepared to take up any post-war problems which the Lord saw fit to entrust in her."⁴⁷

47. Herzer, op. cit., p. 68.

ALBERTA

	<u>Stations</u>	<u>Bapt'd. Members</u>	<u>Conf'd. Members</u>
U.L.C.	54	7,737	4,716
A.L.C.	29	2,739	1,773
Aug. Synod	13	1,173	715
Norw. Luth. Ch.	47	4,083	2,952
Luth. Free Ch.	5	218	149
U. Dan. Ch.	8	888	561
Dan. Ch.	1	175	125
Finn. Nat. Ch.	1	30	20
Missouri Synod	<u>140</u>	<u>10,472</u>	<u>5,505</u>
Totals . . .	298	27,515	16,516

SASKATCHEWAN

U.L.C.	56	7,416	4,741
A.L.C.	97	12,818	8,151
Aug. Synod	25	1,659	1,025
Norw. Luth. Ch.	167	7,623	5,208
Luth. Free Ch.	19	857	571
U. Dan. Ch.	1	128	91
Dan. Ch.	4	170	109
Finn. Nat. Ch.	2	70	48
Missouri Synod	156	11,551	6,577
Slovak Synod	-	-	-
Totals . . .	527	42,292	26,521

BRITISH COLUMBIA

	<u>Stations</u>	<u>Bapt'd. Members</u>	<u>Conf'd. Members</u>
U.L.C.	3	316	216
A.L.C.	10	635	402
Aug. Synod	2	166	125
Norw. Luth. Ch.	14	1,041	630
Luth. Free Ch.	1	152	60
U. Dan. Ch.	1	26	14
Dan. Ch.	-	--	--
Finn. Nat. Ch.	-	--	--
Missouri Synod	<u>56</u>	<u>3,118</u>	<u>1,513</u>
Totals . . .	87	5,454	2,960

MANITOBA

U.L.C.	52	9,475	6,589
A.L.C.	26	5,642	3,519
Aug. Synod	7	700	391
Norw. Luth. Ch.	10	340	232
Luth. Free Ch.	2	195	158
U. Dan. Ch.	3	263	163
Dan. Ch.	-	---	---
Finn. Nat. Ch.	-	---	---
Missouri Synod	24	2,114	1,320
Slovak Synod	<u>2</u>	<u>65</u>	<u>40</u>
Totals . . .	126	18,794	12,412

Thus we conclude that in 1941 there were 96,055 Lutherans in the four western provinces. But that same year in the same section of Canada 279,332 people told the census taker that they were Lutheran. Consequently the Lutheran Church in the Canadian Northwest must not only gather and gain the 183,277 nominal Lutherans with no church affiliation whatsoever, but also fulfill its God-given obligation to the unchurched at home and abroad. The challenge is clear. The Lord hath helped us hitherto. Lord,

Thine is the Kingdom, help us to build it;

Thine is the Glory, help us to show it;

Thine is the Power, help us to trust it.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

I. Secondary Books

Callender, G.S., Selections from the Economic History of the United States, Boston, 1909.

Eylands, V.J., Lutherans in Canada, Winnipeg, 1945.

Hedges, James B., Building of the Canadian West, New York, 1939.

Long, R.H., et. al., The Lutheran World Almanac and Encyclopedia 1934-1937, New York, 1937.

Polack, W.G., The Building of a Great Church, St. Louis, 1941.

Riddel, J.H., Methodism in the Middle West, Toronto, 1946.

Wallace, Stewart W., "Canada," The Encyclopedia of Canada, Toronto, 1940, I, 353-374.

_____, "Census," The Encyclopedia of Canada, Toronto, 1940, II, 21-25.

_____, "Exploration," The Encyclopedia of Canada, Toronto, 1940, II, 307-310.

_____, "Geography," The Encyclopedia of Canada, Toronto, 1940, III, 17-22.

_____, "History," The Encyclopedia of Canada, Toronto, 1940, III, 147-191.

_____, "Lutheran Church," The Encyclopedia of Canada, Toronto, 1940, IV, 150-151.

_____, "Lutheran College," The Encyclopedia of Canada, Toronto, 1940, IV, 151.

II. Pamphlets and Reports

Canadian Lutheran: 1936, 1937, 1938, 1939, 1940, 1941, 1942, 1943, 1944.

Goos, E.G., Pioneering for Christ, Saskatoon, 1947.

Herzer, J.E., Homesteading for God, Edmonton, 1946.

Minutes of the 25th Annual Convention of the Evangelical Lutheran Augustana Synod, Calgary, 1938.

Minutes of the 31st Annual Convention of the Evangelical Lutheran Augustana Synod, Scandia, 1944.

Proceedings of the 15th (1942), 16th (1943), and 17th (1944) Convention of the Alberta and British Columbia Districts (Missouri Synod), Edmonton.

Rasmussen, J., History of the Standard Colony from its Birth, Standard, 1943.

Rehwinkel, A.M., "Bericht der Schulbehörde des Alberta u. British Columbia Distrikts," Lutheran School Journal, Vol. LIX, 1924.

Rehwinkel, A.M., "The Beginnings of Lutheranism in Western Canada," Concordia Historical Institute Quarterly, St. Louis, 1944.

Schwermann, A.H., Anniversary Year Book Concordia College, Edmonton, 1946.

Synodal Bericht des Alberta und British Columbia Distrikts: 1921, 1922, 1924, 1934, 1937, St. Louis.

Verhandlungen des Manitoba und Saskatchewan Distrikts: 1922, 1924, 1925, 1931, 1933, 1934, Regina.

Year Book 50th Annual Convention of the United Evangelical
Lutheran Church, Nebraska, 1946.

III. Correspondence

Rev. A. Goos, Saskatoon, Sask.

Prof. A. Guebert, Edmonton, Alta.

Mr. T.O.F. Herzer, Winnipeg, Man.

Rev. C.L. Monk, Winnipeg, Man.

Mr. E. H. Nielsen, Blair, Nebraska

Prof. A.R. Riep, Edmonton, Alta.

Dr. Rex Schneider, Regina, Sask.

Dr. A.H. Schwermann, Edmonton, Alta.

Dr. Storassli, Saskatoon, Sask.

Rev. J.A. Vickman, Edmonton, Alta.

Dr. N. Willison, Saskatoon, Sask.