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The Development of Lutheranism in the Pacific Northwest with Specific Reference to the Northwest District, Lutheran Church--Missouri Synod

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THE DEVELOPMENT OF LUTHERANISM IN THE
PACIFIC NORTHWEST WITH SPECIFIC
REFERENCE TO THE NORTHWEST DISTRICT,
LUTHERAN CHURCH--MISSOURI SYNOD

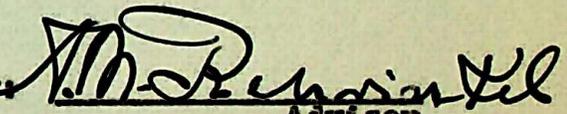
A Thesis presented to the Faculty
of Concordia Seminary, St. Louis,
Department of Historical Theology
in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of
Bachelor of Divinity

by

Theodore C. Moeller, Jr.

June 1955

Approved by


Advisor

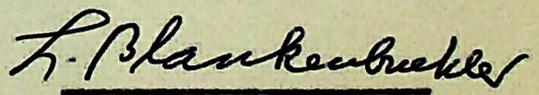

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CHAPTER I

THE OREGON TERRITORY

Eastward I go only by force; but westward I go free. . . . Let me live where I will, on this side is the city, on that the wilderness, and ever I am leaving the city more and more and withdrawing into the wilderness. I should not lay so much stress on this fact if I did not believe that something like this is the prevailing tendency of my countrymen. I must walk toward Oregon, and not toward Europe.

Henry David Thoreau¹

It is not likely that Thoreau, as he walked beside his Walden Pond, envisioned even slightly the final fulfillment of his countrymen's westward tendencies, for today, some one hundred odd years later, the picture is still a developing one. The Pacific Northwest is not the wilderness of Thoreau, but neither is it the teeming bustle of an eastern metropolitan area. John Gunther's study of the United States makes the following summary of the area:

Oregon and Washington--with Idaho as a sort of pendant--is the splendid open world of the Northwest, which means the world of the Columbia River basin. Roses at Christmas, salmon that climb ladders, the greatest timber stands in the nation, personalities like Wayne Morse and Dave Beck, the tall tales of Paul Bunyan, spacious and maximal issues like public power, wheat fields that look painted by Van Gogh, and more social energy, more social vision than in any

¹De Voto, Bernard, The Year of Decision (Boston: Little, Brown, & Co., 1943), p. 1.

comparable region in the country--these are some distinguishing characteristics of Oregon and Washington.²

The Northwest today is an area of contrasts, growing cities and expanding rural reclamation, progressive institutions of higher learning and lax elementary educational facilities, radical inclinations among an usually stable conservatism. But above all this is the predominant factor--ever-increasing growth.

The Lutheran Church--Missouri Synod has grown with the region. Not quite sixty years ago a group of their clergymen bound themselves together into a district to further the work of the church in the Northwest. As the area has grown and moved forward, so the Northwest District has expanded and developed. It is the purpose of this study to chronicle the events which have brought the Lutheran Church--Missouri Synod in the Northwest to its present position. This story, like every study of the West, finds its beginnings in the East and its future in the continued blessings of the gracious God who has bestowed so much on the labors of the men who followed the setting sun.

In 1789 a lusty republic was launching out on its career. The main impulse of this energy was westward--ever westward. And yet, as the frontier pushed into the rolling hills of Ohio--a distant West for the majority

²Gunther, John, Inside U. S. A. (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1947), p. 85.

of the new countrymen--already the commercial minds of New England were laying the foundation for a West that even the most starry-eyed did not dream of. Boston merchants were determined to trade with the Orient. The Orientals were eager to obtain furs; the northwest coast of America was a natural supply ground. It was a simple matter to buy pelts from the Indians of the Northwest; ship them to China, and bring home teas and silks.

In just such a line of business the Yankee captain, Robert Gray, chanced upon the entrance of a mighty river on the upper Pacific coast, which he named after his ship, the Columbia, thereby giving the United States a claim to the entire territory drained by its waters.³ Already in the eighteenth century Spain, Russia, France, and Great Britain had set forth vague claims to the Oregon country. With the acquisition in 1803 of the Louisiana Territory by President Jefferson's diplomatic maneuvering, the opportunity for a more solid exploration of the Oregon claim presented itself. In 1804 the Lewis and Clark Expedition traveled the length of the Missouri River, crossed the Great Divide, and explored the Columbia valley. Shortly after that expedition, the New York financier, John Jacob Astor, set up his American Fur

³Piper, Edgar B., "Oregon", Encyclopedia Britannica, XVI (1951), 886.

Company with a trading post at the mouth of the Columbia, which was called Astoria.

At about the same time an Englishman, Vancouver, thoroughly explored Puget Sound, giving names to many geographical features which have remained to this day.⁴ However, the Hudson Bay Company in its westward movement discouraged any settlement of the area in the Columbia Basin, hoping to maintain the region as a permanent game preserve for its trade. By 1818 the northwestern border of our country had become a matter of dispute with Great Britain, and in the Anglo-American Convention of that year, an agreement was reached establishing the forty-ninth parallel as the northern boundary of the United States as far west as the Rockies.⁵ Provision was made at the same time for a joint occupation of the Oregon country for ten years. Actually, this latter arrangement gave the representatives of the Hudson Bay Company control of the region. When this agreement was renewed in 1827 for an indetermined period, the only provision for eventual American occupation was a clause

⁴Deutsch, Herman J., "Washington", Encyclopedia Britannica, XXIII (1951), 390.

⁵Krout, John A., "United States to 1865", College Outline Series (1946), p. 113.

granting either nation the right to terminate the agreement by giving a year's notice.

Already American interests in the valley were expanding. While prior to 1830 the contact of the United States with the territory was limited to the visits of trappers and traders, during the next two decades a flow of migration began. In the main this was prompted by the propaganda of enthusiasts like Hall J. Kelly, who had organized a society for the settlement of the territory, and the trail breaking of Nathaniel Wyeth, who in 1832 and again in 1836 had proved the practicability of a wagon route to the area. This steady stream of immigrants, which reached considerable proportions in 1843, gave rise to the demands of the extremists that the United States acquire all of Oregon. The slogan, "Fifty-four forty or fight!" was a reference to the northern boundary of the territory.

In 1845 the human rivulet following the Oregon Trail rose to a broad stream. More than three thousand people came into the Willamette Valley alone. This mass movement made Oregon an American community, doing as much as diplomacy to secure it for the United States. Eighteen-forty-six was the year of decision. As Bernard De Voto comments in his book:

The nation began the year in crisis. It was a crisis in foreign relations. The United States was facing the possibility of two wars--

with Great Britain and with Mexico. But these foreign dangers had arisen out of purely domestic energies. They involved our history, or geography, our social institutions, and something that must be called both a tradition and a dream.⁶

After much diplomatic maneuvering, conflict was avoided and a peaceable settlement was reached, fixing the boundary at the forty-ninth parallel. In 1848 the entire area of the Northwest (Oregon, Washington, Idaho, and parts of Montana and Wyoming) was given territorial status.⁷

Missionary activities among the Indians in the Pacific Northwest had been undertaken in the earliest days. Already in 1798 a German, Baron August von Schirnding, proposed the establishment of a Christian mission on the Pacific Northwest coast.⁸ His plan never materialized, but projects of a similar nature arose from time to time. The Lewis and Clark Expedition had made a strong impression on the Indians in the Pacific Northwest, religiously speaking, and this impression had been strengthened by their associations with the trappers,

⁶De Voto, op. cit., p. 6.

⁷Piper, op. cit., p. 886.

⁸Winther, Oscar, The Great Northwest (New York: A. A. Knopf, 1947), p. 113.

mountain men, and fur traders. Christianity was first introduced among the Flathead Indians sometime between 1812 and 1820 by a wandering band of Iroquois from a mission near Montreal, Canada. Their chief, Big Ignace, was a zealous teacher of the Catholic faith.⁹

The first religious influence, however, did not come from missionaries. Among the employees of the Hudson Bay Company were Presbyterians and Episcopalians, who conducted services for both the trappers and the Indians. At Fort Walla Walla, Pierre Pambrun, chief trader, gave Catholic instructions. Indian teachers, like Spokane Garry, trained at the Red River Settlement under the sponsorship of the Hudson Bay Company, held services and taught the Minor Historical Catechism.¹⁰

In the meantime, the missionary needs of the Northwest were not forgotten on the Atlantic Coast. In 1810-1811, plans for a mission project in the Pacific Northwest were being formulated at Andover Theological Seminary.¹¹ During the same years, the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions was formed. This board represented

⁹Fuller, George W., A History of the Pacific Northwest (New York: A. A. Knopf, 1931), p. 125.

¹⁰Ibid., p. 124.

¹¹Winther, op. cit., p. 113.

the Presbyterian, Congregational, and Dutch Reformed Churches, using Boston as its home office. Separate mission societies were also being formed. The Baptist society originated in 1813 and the Methodist Board in 1819. Both these groups were to exert an effort in the missionizing of the Northwest.

In 1819 the American Board dispatched its first missionaries to the Hawaiian Islands. A mission was established in 1820.¹² Because of the numerous maritime contacts between the Islands and the Pacific northwest coast, these missionaries suggested to the Board that the Pacific northwest might be suitable location for mission work. In response to this, the Board, under its Prudential Committee, sent Rev. J. S. Green from Hawaii to the northwest coast on a tour of reconnaissance. Green didn't land, but he investigated the ports and suggested that a mission be established near the mouth or lower part of the Columbia River. However, the Board delayed action on Green's proposal.¹³

Methodist lay missionaries were among the first to go west to work among the natives. It is not unusual

¹²Ibid., p. 113.

¹³Ibid., p. 114.

then, that we would find them among the first agricultural settlements in the Willamette Valley. While their labors were in the main among the settlers, nevertheless their influence was no doubt valuable. The first direct move to establish missions in Oregon was made by the Methodist Missionary Society. Their interest in missionizing this area came about in a rather unusual way. A delegation of Nez Perce and Flathead Indians had come to St. Louis to see General Clark of expedition fame. They had only a slight knowledge of Christianity, were attracted by it, and sought out Clark for further information. The story became highly imaginative and sentimentalized through retelling, but the result was a wide circulation through the pages of the Methodist magazine, The Christian Advocate. Shortly after this the Mission Board announced the appointment of Jason Lee to be their missionary to the Flatheads. Thus, Jason Lee and his nephew Daniel, together with two lay assistants, left St. Louis in April, 1834, by boat.¹⁴ Arriving in early autumn, Dr. McLoughlin, the longtime and famed ruling representative of the Hudson Bay Company, advised them to settle in the Willamette Valley, where the Indians were friendlier, thus keeping them out of his territory north of the Columbia

¹⁴Ibid., p. 115.

River. Unfortunately, this move also kept them from serving the Nez Perce and the Flatheads. Lee established a mission in French Prairie late in 1834. Subsequently, branch missions were set up at The Dalles and Fort Nisqually.¹⁵

The work was difficult from the beginning, and the results seemed useless. The adult Indians were hopeless, but Lee held out hope for the children, who began attending his mission school. In an endeavor to reach an even wider group, he sent pleas to the Board to provide reinforcements. They responded in 1837 by sending twenty more workers. The next year Lee returned to the States to recruit additional laborers and at the same time to generate interest in migration.¹⁶ These reinforcements mark a turning point in the work of the mission. As the addition of more settlers brought attention to secular concerns, the interest in missionary work dwindled. The Board, realizing this prevailing attitude, replaced the Lees with Rev. George Gary, who attempted to disassociate the mission from much of its secular activities. However, the mission was known from this time on as the nucleus of the American colonization, and it became the mecca for all those later pilgrims to whom the name

¹⁵ibid., p. 115.

¹⁶Piper, op. cit., p. 887.

Willamette Valley became synonymous with Oregon.

Almost simultaneously with the Methodist Mission Board, the American Board was stirred to action. The Rev. Samuel Parker of Middlefield, Massachusetts, was approached for such a mission in 1833, but circumstances prevented his two associates and himself from getting to St. Louis until the next year. They had planned to cross the plains with a caravan, but it had left six weeks prior to their arrival. Traveling part way along the trail west, Parker left his associates to work among the Pawnees, while he returned east to look for additional workers. During the fall and winter of 1834-35, he held missionary meetings in western New York. It was on this tour that he met and became acquainted with Marcus Whitman and Narcissa Prentiss, later to become Whitman's wife. In a study of these two missionaries, M. Trinklein quotes:

Although Parker did not realize the full significance of the drama then in its preliminary stages, we now both know that one of his greatest services to the cause of both church and state was to find these two characters and to interest them in Old Oregon.¹⁷

In 1836 Whitman arrived in the territory, establishing a mission at Waiilatpu (near present Walla Walla). Thus,

¹⁷ Trinklein, Michael, Missionary Endeavors of Marcus Whitman (Unpublished Bachelor's Thesis, Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, 1955), no page.

the first Christian missionary work among the Indians in the Washington area was begun. The unfortunate massacre of Whitman and his group eleven years later brought an end to this first phase of work in that region.

In 1838 two Roman Catholic priests arrived to serve not only the Indians, but particularly the French-Canadian fur traders in this region. Fathers Blanchet and Demers set up their first mission on the Cowlitz River. Father Blanchet was later elevated to the bishopric of Walla Walla.¹⁸ Some individuals have suspected the endeavors of these men as contributing factors in the Whitman massacre, but this statement is without proof. Rivalry did exist, to be sure, but missionaries, no matter what denomination, were an important part in the settling of this country. They were the vanguard of the western movement.

At the same time as these efforts were being exerted in Oregon and Washington, the area of what is today Idaho was being opened to the Gospel. In 1836 the American Board sent Rev. H. Spaulding into that territory. He set up a school for the Indians near present-day Lewiston. Here also the first printing press in the Oregon Territory

¹⁸Winther, op. cit., p. 119.

was found, and on it a primer, hymnbook, and Gospel of Matthew in the Nez Perce language was produced.¹⁹ In 1842 Father DeSmet, a Jesuit who had worked in the Washington territory for the previous two years, established a mission among the Coeur d'Alene Indians. Limited immigration, due to the unfavorable agricultural conditions, hindered the expansion of mission work in this area.

As has been already noted, Germany had an interest in missionizing the Pacific Northwest already in the eighteenth century. An attempt to bring fruition out of these verbal efforts was tried by the Barmen Mission Institute. This was a nonconfessional group in Germany whose design was to establish missions among the American Indians, and in a secondary way, to serve the Germans occupying the adjacent territories.²⁰ They advised their missionaries to remain ecclesiastically independent, joining neither the Lutheran nor the Reformed groups. P. Heyer and T. Niess were sent in 1836 as missionaries to the Oregon Territory. Niess became sick, causing a delay in St. Louis, and Heyer then accepted a call to serve a German congregation near St. Charles, Missouri. A substitute,

¹⁹Borah, William E., and Byron Defenbach, "Idaho," Encyclopedia Britannica, XII (1951), 64.

²⁰Schneider, C. E., The German Church on the American Frontier (St. Louis: Eden Publishing House, 1939), p. 53.

L. Nollau, was sent to replace Heyer with instructions to work among the Flathead tribes in Oregon. However, just as they were to set out, Niess took sick again and died. J. Mühlhäuser was sent to join Nullau and proceed with the project. When he established himself in the East, however, the Barmen Mission Institute decided to abandon the entire project and requested Nollau to return to New York. It is interesting to note that their abandonment of this endeavor was based upon the conclusion that the current Saxon immigration under Stephan would take care of this western mission work.²¹ The Barmen Institute did finally succeed in placing one of its men on the Pacific Coast, when in 1849 H. Kroh moved to California with the idea of establishing the Reformed Church on the west coast.

At the time these endeavors of the Barmen group were meeting such obstacles, a wave of German immigration to the Oregon district began. While the exact number is unknown, it is obvious that the families which had pushed the frontier steadily westward were reappearing in the valley of the Columbia to found a new state.²² Among the Germans who came into the territory we see Henry L. Yesler, who founded Seattle in 1852, constructing a sawmill at that

²¹Ibid., p. 56.

²²Faust, Albert B., The German Element in the United States (New York: The Steuben Society of America, 1927), I, 503.

place. While Olympia was the first American settlement in the Washington territory (1845), it was the efforts of Yesler and other German settlers which brought the increase to the area. It was obvious that the time was ripe for work among the German Lutherans in this new acquisition of the United States.

And yet, it was the work of another German, from the Grand Duchy of Baden, Captain John A. Sutter, which inadvertently turned the course of Pacific development. As late as 1846, there was no dependable, detailed map of California in existence. A direct path to California was unknown until Fremont's party of 1843 wandered by accident down there from Oregon, and while such books as Hastings' The Emigrants' Guide to Oregon and California²³ were being circulated, the California section was minimized. In fact, there were from six to seven thousand Americans in Oregon in 1846, while only some eight hundred in California.²⁴ This, however, did not deter the expansionist policies of the American diplomats at this time from seeking also the acquisition of California. The value of this possession became most evident when Captain Sutter decided to expand the capacity of his mill by deepening the mill race. Thus

²³De Voto, op cit., p. 43.

²⁴Ibid., p. 49.

it was, as De Voto puts it in his book:

On that Monday morning Marshall turned the water out of the tail race as usual, and toward mid-afternoon got down into it to see how much progress had been made. Not much, for they were down to bed-rock. A few inches of water covered the granite shelf. Marshall saw something shiny under that water. He stooped to pick it up.²⁵

The Gold rush had begun!

The effect of this on the Oregon territory was almost disastrous. The lure of quick wealth drew many settlers away from the Northwest. In an effort to check this mass departure, Congress in 1850 passed the Donation Land Act. This provided that every male inhabitant who had settled in Oregon before the first of December, 1850, should receive 320 acres of land, and a similar amount for his wife; each male settler dating from December 1, 1850, to December 1, 1853, should receive 160 acres of land and an equal amount in addition if he were married. The one condition imposed upon these settlers was that they should remain four years.²⁶ Over eight thousand registered under this Land Act. This created a well-to-do land-rich class of settlers who remained permanently. Thus Portland and surrounding area developed a stable settlement, among which were a number of German Lutherans. The time had come for Lutheran work to move westward with the destiny of the country.

²⁵Ibid., p. 352.

²⁶Faust, Loc. cit.

CHAPTER II

HASTEN FORTH TO OREGON

Hasten forth, O swift Evangel
Hasten on to Oregon.
'Waken men in spirit mortal
With the tidings of God's Son.
Hasten forth, belov'd, haste onward
To the far Pacific shore;
Idols dumb hurl down dishonored
And acclaim Christ evermore.

Hermann Fick¹

On the interior pages of the February 8, 1848, Der Lutheraner an article entitled "Aufruf zu einer Missions-Compagnie nach Oregon" appeared.² The author, Hermann Fick, in addition to several paragraphs describing the need for our church to work among the Germans in the territory, composed a five-verse poem appealing for mission-mindedness in the Far West. While there was no immediate discernible effect, at the Delegate Convention of Synod at Fort Wayne in 1852, the matter was brought before the convention. Dr. Walther told the assembled delegates that William Loche had written him of a Pastor Fleischmann and a Mr. Vonetti who were planning to work among the Germans in California. These men were willing to come to St. Louis and place themselves at the disposal

¹Fick, Hermann, "Aufruf zu einer Missions-Compagnie nach Oregon", Der Lutheraner, IV, No. 12 (Feb. 8, 1848), 95.

²Ibid.

of the Missouri Synod. Unfortunately, nothing of this offer materialized.³

When by 1856 no action had been taken, C. J. H. Fick of the Northern District argued that the concern of California missions was a Synodical matter, and therefore their responsibility. The question was brought before both the Western and Northern District conventions again that year, but though all agreed that such endeavors would be desirable, no concrete action was taken.⁴

However, Der Lutheraner once more exerted its influence in this matter, printing in 1859 an anonymous letter from a resident of San Francisco.⁵ It was a passionate plea for the need of the pure Gospel among the increasing number of settlers in the San Francisco area:

. . . . I must let you know that things look bad among the Christians and in particular among the Lutherans. The good old Lutheran doctrine is being totally forgotten because there is not an orthodox church here. . . . there are five German churches here, one in Sacramento, one in Stockton, and two in San Francisco. . . . also four small Methodist churches.⁶

³Suelflow, August R., The Heart of Missouri (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1954), p. 55.

⁴Ibid.

⁵From a letter printed in Der Lutheraner, XVI (Dec. 13, 1859).

⁶Kretzmann, P. E., "The Beginning of Lutheran Church Work in California," Concordia Historical Institute Quarterly, IV, 1 (April, 1931), 25-31.

This letter which reached Walther had the desired effect. In the light of the widespread interest generated by the publication and appeal for funds in Der Lutheraner, a call was extended to a June, 1860, graduate of the St. Louis Seminary, Jacob Matthias Buehler.

This pioneer worker of Synod on the Pacific coast was born in Baltimore, Maryland, in 1837. He went to the St. Louis Seminary, and while there was instructed and confirmed by Walther. Just prior to his acceptance of the Call to serve in California he had worked among the English-speaking Lutherans in the Baltimore area as a vicar. Thus it was that on August 25, 1860, Buehler arrived in San Francisco to begin the work of the Missouri Synod.

One of his first acts upon arrival was to call upon a German preacher by the name of Moshake, of whom he had heard on his trip to the coast. This man had preached in a small church on Greenwich Street, but had been deposed from office. After meeting Buehler, he declared his willingness to have Buehler take over his congregation.⁷ However, Buehler did not accept this offer without examining the situation further, because he did not want to tamper in the affairs of other men. He wanted first to get a better idea of religious conditions prevailing in

⁷Ibid., p. 27.

in the city.

He attended the services of Rev. Rahn of the United Church in the morning of the first Sunday there, and in the afternoon listened to Moshake preach at the Greenwich Street church. That evening he inserted the following comment in his diary:

I went to bed with my head full of thoughts of all kinds. I had thoroughly convinced myself that the bright and refreshing light of the Gospel has for us Germans been totally extinguished, except for some faint glimmering of it in the churches of the sects; and I went to sleep after calling on the Lord for wisdom and power to proclaim the faithful Shepherd.⁸

With these thoughts weighing on his mind, he accepted the invitation of Moshake to take over the services in the Greenwich Street church, preaching his initial sermon there the following Sunday, September 2, 1860. A congregation was organized under his direction in November of that year,⁹ and he was called as their Pastor at the same time.

With work satisfactorily under way in San Francisco, he began to examine the expansion possibilities of the work in the California area. Journeying to Sacramento in the spring of 1861, he organized a congregation there,

⁸Ibid.

⁹November 8, 1860.

drafted a constitution, and a call was extended to W. Bartling, but it was not accepted.¹⁰ This, plus the fact that the additional men he had requested from the East not materializing, caused the default of the work in that area, and the church came under other influences.

In 1862 Buehler married Louise Wyneken, the daughter of President Wyneken, in San Francisco. Thus, by relation and religious sonship, he was on close terms with two of the most influential men in Synod. He continued to request additional men to serve the expanding areas of California, but with the country in the throes of the Civil War, pressing needs in the East, together with the uncertain stand of the church in this matter, caused great delay in accomplishing anything specific in the line of sending additional men to the Pacific coast.

And even as the work progressed in San Francisco, trouble was looming on the horizon. The property on Greenwich Street had to be razed to make way for the widening of the streets and spread of the city. On this occasion a group withdrew, retaining the name, Erste Deutsche Evangelische-Lutheranische Gemeinde, and the property. This latter group soon accepted a man by the name of Hansen as their pastor. Buehler, holding firm to confessional Lutheranism, gathered the remaining faithful,

¹⁰Suelflow, op. cit., p. 56.

and they built a new basement structure, dedicating it on Christmas Day, 1863. Pressure was brought to bear now to reunite the two groups under a quasi-Lutheran, quasi-rationalistic platform. Buehler resisted, and although some opposition came from within, St. Mark's, as it was now known, remained faithful.¹¹

By 1866 work was begun for the completion of the church building, and the congregation granted Buehler an eight-month vacation so that he might visit the East and Europe. During this time a candidate, Ebert, served the congregation.¹² He returned at Christmas time, at which time also the completed church unit was dedicated. During his absence, however, agitators had again attempted to effect a union between the two churches. Buehler was asked for a more liberal administration of his pastoral office. Finally, during Holy Week of 1867 the culminating troubles resulted with the request that he take an unscriptural lodge position. No longer able in conscience to serve them, he resigned the Pastorate of St. Mark's. This entire problem is the subject of a thesis being prepared by E. Stohs,¹³ and it shall be sufficient to state here

¹¹Hansen, A., "Jacob M. Buehler," Concordia Historical Institute Quarterly, X, 3 (October, 1937), 92.

¹²Ibid.

¹³Stohs, Eldon, Jacob M. Buehler (Unpublished Bachelor's Thesis, Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, 1955), no page.

that the division did not take place as a result of this last matter of confessional Lutheran loyalty. Buehler himself commented, "Ich habe eine unGemeinde verloren."¹⁴

Even while he was handing in his resignation, a group of members approached him, urging him to form a new congregation; thus, on Easter Sunday of 1867, he began a new effort, preaching in a rented hall. He quickly gained a new following, even though he was subject to the most unfair maligning, by both public press and other groups, and was offered money to leave the city.¹⁵ On the seventeenth of May, 1867, St. Paulus Church was organized, the congregation which Buehler was to serve for the remaining thirty-four years of his life.

A. Hansen, a pastor in California since 1902, comments on the life of Buehler:

Rev. Buehler entered into Synod's missionary work when things in California were shaping up more after the conventional picture of American life following the turbulent Gold rush years; when in civic, school, church, and business life more settled conditions had to be striven for and required reliable and strong leadership; when the Civil War was upon the country; when Buehler could not begin work with a nucleus of Missouri Synod people; when "Lutherans" of all stripes had to be dealt with; when circumstances had to direct and alter many cases and had no equal pattern in Synod's realm. One feels that had Buehler not been of the giant

¹⁴Letter from The Rev. A. Hansen, Oakland, California, to Eldon Stohs, dated January 18, 1955. In possession of Eldon Stohs.

¹⁵Hansen, "Jacob M. Buehler," op. cit.

stature he was, his efforts and successes would not have been what they proved to be under God's mercies. This was an apostolic work in a decidedly complex period of California history.¹⁶

There is no question that the splits in the congregation he had begun had a disturbing effect on Buehler personally, and yet, as Rev. Hansen states, the giant that he was enabled him to weather the storms.

It would be grossly unfair also to construe from this strictness that Buehler took a non-cooperative spirit in the work of the Lutheran church in the true sense. On the contrary, he urged and encouraged the introduction of a Norwegian mission in the San Francisco area. He contacted the Norwegians in Milwaukee, informing them that he was performing the ministerial acts among their people in town, and suggesting that they send a Pastor to serve the group, promising them his help in any way possible.¹⁷

As Buehler had noted himself, the work among Lutherans in the sense that it was Lutheranism being preached was almost negligible in these early years. While a sizeable Scandinavian population had been developing after the Gold rush, any sort of religious service to them was indifferent. A Swede by the name of "Janne" Tenngren, who had come to California in 1851, conducted services by reading sermons

¹⁶ Letter from The Rev. A. Hansen, op. cit.

¹⁷ Bjork, K., "Hvistendahl's Mission to San Francisco 1870-75," Norwegian-American Studies and Records, XVI (1950), 10.

and devotional material.¹⁸ By 1860, however, when efforts were made to organize a Swedish Lutheran congregation in San Francisco, he had returned to Sweden. J. J. Lindgren was called from Sweden; he came to San Francisco, but returned home when he found that the Danes and Norwegians would not affiliate with a group harboring Swedes. Upon his return he warned his countrymen of the "perils" of America and particularly California, an item which made no little contribution to the neglect of Lutheran work there.¹⁹

In 1870, then, the Norwegians sent Christian Hvistendahl of Milwaukee to San Francisco. Upon his arrival Buehler immediately lived up to the words he had written, for Hvistendahl wrote:

He took me into his house as a brother, guided me to the leading Scandinavians who had some interest in the church, and arranged for us to hold services, without rent, in his church building, which is conveniently located.²⁰

There was the problem of older Scandinavian pastors in the city who attacked this connection with Buehler. In addition, Rev. O. Groensberg organized a congregation which also took membership in the Norwegian Synod.²¹ The latter, however, seems to have been a welcome addition to the work in the

¹⁸Stephenson, George M., The Religious Aspects of Swedish Immigration (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1932), p. 303.

¹⁹Ibid., p. 304.

²⁰Bjork, op. cit.

²¹Hansen, "Jacob M. Buehler," op. cit., p. 93.

area.

Meanwhile, the work of Buehler was progressing nicely. In 1872 St. Paulus opened the first Christian Day school on the Pacific coast. A school association established by Buehler was its sponsor until 1881 when the church undertook its control alone.²² Hvistendahl was very much enthused with the school and hoped to put a Scandinavian department into it when it organized.²³ However, this plan did not materialize. Nevertheless, he remained a strong supporter of the school, writing back to his friends in Milwaukee in 1873 of its influence and the fact that "it already has about one hundred pupils, the first school of its kind on the Pacific coast."²⁴ He remained an ardent admirer of Buehler until he left California, a fact attested by one of his last letters in which he comments:

We have been very happy to send our daughter to the school (Buehler's) where discipline is enforced and instruction is based upon a Christian foundation. . . . Association with Pastor Buehler is my greatest inspiration.²⁵

Eighteen hundred and seventy-six saw the return of Hvistendahl to the East, where he continued to serve the

²²Ibid.

²³Bjork, op. cit., p. 21.

²⁴Ibid., p. 23.

²⁵Ibid., p. 30.

Norwegians there. Upon leaving, he advised against migration to Oregon, where, as he put it, "life is still more wild and unchristian than in California."²⁶ He did offer suggestions though for reliable information should people choose to go to Oregon, directing them to a Mr. Hjerpeland of Portland, who had traveled throughout that area. Noteworthy also is the report he gives of the unreliability of Rev. A. Fridrichsen, a Norwegian pastor in Portland, who had much to contribute to the Missouri Synod in that area.²⁷

Oregon at this time was not served by Missouri Synod Lutheran pastors. There is little doubt that Buehler saw the need there, but the press of the first ten years in California pushed this to the background. Anders E. Fridrichsen, an eccentric and unclerical Norwegian Pastor, who had worked in the Midwest, came to the coast from Texas in 1870. He stopped in San Francisco on the way, attempting to organize a congregation there but was unsuccessful. No record is available of any contact with Buehler, but almost immediately after his arrival, he pushed north to settle in Portland. Arriving there in 1871, he organized a congregation in April of that year, the first

²⁶Ibid., p. 58.

²⁷Ibid.

Scandinavian Lutheran church to be established in Oregon.²⁸

It seems that he went to Portland at the invitation of an English Lutheran pastor there, with the express purpose of working among the Scandinavians. The Census of 1870 showed a total of 112 Norwegians in both the state of Oregon and the territory of Washington. However, letters appeared in the Norwegian papers in the East encouraging settlement and migration, explaining the great natural resources and the fact that the completion of the Northern Pacific railroad made migration much easier. These articles did much to dispel the widespread notions of the freezing climate and unfavorable farming conditions, as the following example illustrates:

But an ounce of experience is worth a pound of argument, and I would advise the ladies who before long will want to take a trip to Puget Sound via the Northern Pacific Railroad not to bring their (ice) skates.²⁹

Fridrichsen held an equally high opinion of Oregon, writing east after his arrival that "Oregon will be the greatest state in the Union on account of the extraordinary fertility of its soil and the mildness of its climate."³⁰

²⁸Solum, Nora O., "Oregon and Washington Territory in the 1870's as seen through the Eyes of a Pioneer Pastor", Norwegian-American Studies and Records, XVI (1950), 68.

²⁹Ibid., p. 72.

³⁰Ibid., p. 75.

Not restricting his activities to Portland, Fridrichsen organized a congregation of fourteen people at Oysterville on the Washington coast in 1871 and accepted their call as Pastor. Over the course of the next eleven years he served congregations and held services throughout the entire Northwest, for the most part among the Norwegians, but also to German and English communities. At the same time he never ceased to stimulate and attempt to organize immigrant groups to come out and settle this country.

It is no doubt this publicity of the Oregon land and climate which brought the first Missouri Synod work to that area. August Kentner, pastor in the Minnesota Synod, resigned his pastorate and came to Oregon in 1876 for reasons of health, settling at Middleton (near present-day Sherwood), a community on the Willamette Valley just west of Portland. He began to preach to the many German settlers in the area, and two years later organized a congregation, the first and oldest Missouri Synod church in the Northwest,³¹ (St. Paul's), constructing a building that same year (1878).

A second, and evidently unrelated, effort to establish the Missouri Synod in Oregon was made by the Western District. Buehler attended the Western District convention in

³¹Simon, Martin P., Missouri Lutherans in Oregon (Unpublished paper on file in Archives of Northwest District, Portland, 1934), p. 7.

1880 for the first time in twenty years. The necessity of work in Oregon and California was pressed hard, and aside from the men who for various reasons (health and Call) were in California, the need for an aggressive missionary in Oregon was met with the calling of Rev. Edward Doering of the Chicago area.³² It was extremely difficult for the district to get men to serve such a distant field, particularly in the light of the needs at home, but Doering accepted the call and arrived in Oregon in September, 1881. Working out of Portland, he immediately began canvassing the Germans of the area, and in town this work laid the foundation for Zion Lutheran Church.

This entrance of Doering into Portland brings the Norwegian, Rev. A. Fridrichsen, into the picture again. Fridrichsen was an energetic worker in Portland. He built both a church and parsonage on the corner of East Seventh Street and Lincoln Avenue. This property, as far as we can determine from the extant records, belonged to him by virtue of the fact that he built it with his personal funds. What records are available state:

According to the protocol of the congregation (which used this building), he was a member of the Joint Synod of Ohio and other states. But when this synod could not assume charge of the work in Portland, he willed his property to the Missouri Synod with the wish that the money be used for mission work on the west coast. He died in 1882.³³

³²Ibid.

³³Solum, op. cit., p. 90.

Already before he died in 1882, these buildings were used by Doering for services, the first service in Portland of the Lutheran mission being held Sunday, September 4, 1881. When Fridrichsen died, there was evident ill will over the wishes he expressed about the disposal of the property, to the point that the Norwegian paper of Minneapolis, Norden, reported in February of that year:

There was a great deal of resentment over this (the will leaving the property to the Missouri Synod) and the will may be declared invalid.³⁴

Unfortunately the outcome of the matter is not too clear. Enough is the fact that this Fridrichsen of whom the Californian Hvistendahl spoke so poorly, contributed materially to the work of our church in Portland.

Doering was drawn also by the work of Kentner to the communities lying west of Portland. Coming to a settlement near Cornelius, he began rounding up prospective hearers for a service. Simon comments on this activity:

It had been tried before, and those whom he sought discouraged him with the prospect of another failure. But a hospitable house was found, and date set, and the singing of the familiar hymns changed the atmosphere from one of discouragement to one of enthusiasm. It was decided to have services every four weeks in the various houses. When houses were too small for the number of people attending, the building of a church was decided upon. Plans were made in 1882, and the church built that same year. This manner of beginning and

³⁴Ibid.

extending mission work, is fairly representative of Doering's methods.³⁵

In 1883 Doering also took over the work which Kentner had begun in Sherwood.

The pioneer members of this group remember such items as the first mission festival. Kentner preached in the rain, protected by Doering standing next to him with an umbrella. The signal for this and for regular services was the blowing of stumps by Doering on his nearby farm the Saturday before the appropriate Sunday. An odd substitute for a church bell, but evidently quite serviceable.

Without question, Doering was to the Northwest what Buehler was to California. He tirelessly traveled the entire territory, preaching, visiting, baptizing, and instructing. Almost every congregation founded before the turn of the century can find the seeds of their group in Doering's work. He was a tireless traveler, and a diligent chronicler of his work; a factor that in no small measure contributes to our knowledge of early toil in the area.

A brother Pastor writes of him:

Pastor Doering was a very modest, unassuming man, of simple habits. He was not graced with great oratorical gifts, but rather somewhat hampered in his enunciation by brogue, nevertheless by preaching the Gospel in its simple beauty, to the best of his ability, his efforts were crowned with

³⁵Simon, op. cit., p. 8.

success. As he was of sound bodily health, and an indefatigable worker, he could quite regularly cover his large field.³⁶

His field was large indeed, and the need for additional men was ever present.

Buehler went east to the Synodical convention in 1884 and again put forth pleas for more men on the coast. No help was immediately forthcoming, but another Pastor, Moritz Claus, had come to Oregon to regain his health in 1885. He was to become the second regular pastor in the area in two years. At about this time also (1885-86), a pastoral conference was formed, called alternately the California Concordia Conference or the Pacific Conference. The men in Oregon were included with Buehler serving as its first chairman.³⁷ The distances involved in such a "local" arrangement were tremendous, much less the district connections (Western - St. Louis), and realizing this, the Western District Convention of 1885 urged by resolution that the area form its own district.

The Delegate Synod met at Fort Wayne in 1887. Rev. J. H. Theiss of Alameda, California, attended as the coast representative, and after presenting an appeal for more men, was given official encouragement for the forming of a separate district. Upon his return the St. Paulus

³⁶Kosche, M. C., Economic Development and Church History of the Pacific Northwest (Unpublished paper in Archives of Northwest District, Portland, 1949), p. 7.

³⁷Suelflow, op. cit., p. 58.

congregation called on all the congregations on the Pacific coast to assemble at San Francisco for the purpose of district organization. On September 21, 1887, this was accomplished under the leadership of Dr. H. C. Schwan, President of Synod. Four congregations, four voting pastors, five advisory pastors, and two teachers constituted the first roster of this new synodical district. Buehler was elected president of the District as well as chairman of the Mission Board.³⁸

Oregon formed the northern conference of the district. Early in 1887 M. Claus had regained his health sufficiently to serve the church and was called to the Sherwood-Cornelius field. In addition Fr. Selle, a candidate, was called into the eastern area of Washington-Oregon with Pendleton, Oregon, as his headquarters. Both Claus and Doering attended the founding session of the district, Selle being unable to because of illness.³⁹ Doering worked as a Reiseprediger, using Portland as his headquarters. Prospects were looking up for the new District and its Northern conference.

While Doering had begun his work in Portland and preached there first, the work among the settlements west

³⁸Hansen, "Jacob M. Buehler," op. cit., p. 96.

³⁹Suelflow, op. cit., p. 58.

and downstate took up the greater portion of his time. However, he began to conduct regular afternoon services in Portland while serving Sherwood and Blooming, and in 1885 he felt the group had sufficient strength to organize. This was accomplished in January of 1886 with ten voters signing a constitution. Thus, Zion Evangelical Lutheran Church came into being. Immediately thought was turned to constructing a church building, for although afternoon services were still being held, the rented site was not adequate. After five years a building was constructed and dedicated.

Almost immediately after the founding of the new district, however, tragedy struck in the continued illness of Selle. He was compelled to travel east in 1888 for better medical care and died enroute. Thus, the promising mission fields in eastern Oregon suffered--a condition which has persisted to this present day. To relieve this need, President Buehler came up to Oregon in 1889 to take a first hand look at the situation, with a view to calling another man into the Western Oregon area. The previous year (1888) J. H. Theiss had traveled through the area to report to the mission board of the activity there. Candidate J. Ehlen of the Seminary was called to serve this area. Arriving in California that year, he was ordained by Buehler in St. Paulus and then went north to serve in the Eastern area of the field.

Meanwhile, Ehlen, leaving Idaho for California for reasons of health, stopped in Tacoma, Washington, en route. Although it was evident that he had not intended to remain, on June 1, 1890, he preached to a small group of Lutherans there and after the service nine men remained to organize and adopt a constitution for Zion Lutheran Church of that city. The following Sunday officers were elected and the decision to call a man was reached. Candidate H. Haserodt was called and accepted, being ordained in St. Paulus, San Francisco, by Buehler in September. The next month he arrived, after also examining the Seattle area for mission possibilities. Ehlen, meanwhile, continued to California, was installed at Fresno, and died shortly thereafter. Thus, a man they had hoped to gain for the work in Eastern Oregon again was called home by the Lord, but his ground work paved the way for the first resident Missouri Synod pastor in the Puget Sound area.⁴⁰

Thus, notwithstanding the additions to the field, the total number remained almost constant. Claus had left the Sherwood-Blooming field to go to California, and H. A. C. Paul had been called to replace him. In addition, J. W. Theiss had accepted the call to serve a new congregation

⁴⁰"Fiftieth Anniversary Booklet, Zion Evangelical Lutheran Church, Tacoma, Washington" (on file at Concordia Historical Institute, St. Louis, 1940).

Doering had started in Portland. This parish lay on the east side of the Willamette River, in what was called Albina. Doering began his work there in 1888, although it appears that a man by the name of Dietrich--an independent--had served among these people for a year or so previously. With the arrival in 1889 of Theiss, the congregation ran into some difficulties and a group withdrew. However, by the following fall, the group and Theiss were in a position to buy the church building from those who had remained, and the actual organization of Trinity, Portland, took place in December of 1890.

In the meantime, Haserodt of Tacoma explored the territory wide about him, preaching in Seattle, Everett, Snohomish, Centralia, Chehalis, and other places. Since Ehlen had been forced to leave the Eastern Oregon area because of his poor health, Candidate M. Baade, who was ordained by Buehler in 1890 at St. Paulus for work in the Sacramento area, went instead to the Puget Sound region, there initiating work in Seattle and organizing Trinity church in 1890.⁴¹

Thus, the work of the district was expanding. The third convention (the second had been held in 1889 at

⁴¹"High-spots in the History of Oregon and Washington District" (1933). Mimeographed booklet on file at Concordia Historical Institute, St. Louis.

St. Paulus with Buehler as essayist and Schwan representing Synod) found marked improvement in the supply situation, although hardly enough for the need. The year 1890 saw the Northern conference consisting of seven pastors. / This small number brought about a continual shifting of forces to meet needs from place to place. The economic conditions which were gripping the nation during the end of Harrison's presidency and inception of Cleveland, also reached out into the Northwest, and many promising settlements had to be abandoned to meet changing conditions.⁴²

Eighteen hundred and ninety-one brought only one additional man to the Northwest, C. J. Heuer, who took up work in eastern Oregon, serving Pendleton and Warren. Southern Oregon had received a man to work in two parishes, Mt. Angel and Salem which Doering had been serving on a sporadic basis. G. Meyer was ordained and installed by Doering for this work in 1890. An industrious worker, he almost immediately organized a school and explored further south into the Grant's Pass and Medford area where he began holding services. While Mt. Angel was his home base, Meyer succeeded in establishing a solid organization in Medford, so that the following year, Candidate J. H. Witte was ordained by Buehler and sent to that area, in addition

⁴²Kosche, op. cit., p. 3.

to serving the other towns to the south which Meyer had explored.

However, Sherwood felt strong enough to call a man of its own (prior to this Paul had been serving it from Blooming), and Heuer left the Eastern Oregon area in response to that call. Witte, in turn, was called to replace Theiss in Portland who was forced to resign because of a throat condition. Thus, once more two growing areas were left without men to serve them so that established congregations might be served; this tragic condition prevailed to the degree that both areas (southern and eastern Oregon) have suffered to this present day.

A replacement for eastern work at Endicott, Washington, was found in Candidate F. Schoknecht, who in 1892 took up the work scattered about the entire area. This work at Endicott proved fruitful, developing into a fairly stable congregation and replacing Warren and Pondleton as the center of the work in the eastern part of the district. At the district convention of that year (the fourth convention), again in San Francisco at St. Paulus, Buehler planned to make a determined effort to survey more frequently the northern field. The difficulty of this was becoming increasingly evident, and agitation was being made for a separate district organization. Men had been coming into the district, but at a dribble, and rapid changes made the

problem of serving such a wide area increasingly difficult. When it is considered that the area Buehler had to survey stretched from northern to southern boundary of the United States and east into Utah, Nevada, and portions of Montana, the demands made upon him and his devotion to these certainly paint an impressive picture.

In the years immediately following new fields were opened in Eastern Washington with the coming in 1893 of F. Verwiebe to Spokane, Washington. There he began work which led to the founding of St. John's congregation. In that same year Candidate W. Behrens introduced the Missouri Synod to Salt Lake City, an area just surveyed by Buehler. Both these men, however, were to leave these areas within the next two years, and the work was once more abandoned. In justice it must be said that in almost every instance a strong ground work had been laid, and if there was a renewal of the work within a reasonable period, growth resulted from these origins. Snohomish, Washington, was organized in 1892, and was served by Baade from Seattle, and then later from Tacoma. It was to wait six years, however, before it could secure a resident Pastor.

The years 1895-97 saw only two new men enter the area. Candidate H. Hagist was called by the Mission Board to take up work in Oregon, and he became the first resident Pastor in Salem. The work progressed, but difficulties resulting from a factional strife in the congregation left

it unserved again in 1897 after the resignation of Hagist due to illness. Rev. Th. Fleckenstein was called to replace J. Witte, who was forced to resign because of throat trouble. He was installed at Trinity, Portland, in 1897. Much of the slack during this period was due to the general economic conditions of the country as a whole. Thus, the needs of the Northwest were once more unable to be met.

The following year, 1898, brought four new candidates to the area in an endeavor to take up the slack caused by the previous years. Of these, however, only H. Ebeling, who went to Snohomish as their first resident pastor, could be classified as bringing a new spot into resident service. And even this was misleading, for he had to take over the Seattle and Everett work which had previously been handled from Seattle by Baade. Candidates J. Duchow, A. Spleiss, and W. Lankow all filled vacancies in well-established congregations--Mt. Angel, Sherwood, and Tacoma--thus simply maintaining the status quo without any increase in regular stations served.

Not only was the slow increase a consideration, but active work of other Lutheran groups in the Northwest was growing rapidly. In 1880 the Augustana Synod began an expansion of the Pacific coast which resulted in the founding of the Pacific Conference in Tacoma in 1888,

including at that time California.⁴³ With the concentration of effort in the Northwest, a Synod of the Northwest, comprising the Augustana group, was organized in St. Paul, Minnesota, in July, 1891, consisting of seven congregations, and was admitted to the General Council in 1893.⁴⁴

The General Council also decided to push into the area, stressing English mission work. In 1888 G. H. Gerberding went out to the Northwest and canvassed the cities of Portland, Tacoma, and Seattle. Members of the General Synod were already in the area, but a loose agreement was worked out that declared the Northwest General Council territory, with the work in California being a sphere of influence overseen by the General Synod. This work eventually resulted in the formation of the Pacific Synod in 1901, superceding the above-mentioned Synod of the Northwest in the General Council.⁴⁵

The Joint Synod of Ohio also organized on a district basis at this time, meeting at Tacoma in 1891 and forming a Pacific District comprising twelve pastors and one

⁴³Stephenson, op. cit., p. 304.

⁴⁴Ibid., p. 470.

⁴⁵Trabert, George H., English Lutheranism in the Northwest (Philadelphia: The General Council Publishing House, 1914), p. 92 ff.

teacher. The following year this became known as the Washington District.⁴⁶ For a fuller picture of the Lutheran situation in the Northwest in this last decade of the nineteenth century, the table on page forty-four shows the weakness of the Missouri Synod work in an area into which it almost marched alone.

It would be an unfair judgement to attempt to lay blame on any specific factor. Without question the distance played an important role in slow development. Economic conditions within the Synodical body and the lack of locally trained clergy contributed. But as these conditions improved, and the work in the Northwest continued at a slow pace with ever greater opportunities on every hand, the men who had spent a number of years in the territory were convinced that the only remedy would be a Mission Board and District management of their own. This conviction grew more pronounced, especially in the light of recurrent changes and lack of new supply (see Table 2 on page forty-six), and it crystallized into the form of a petition to the Synod, requesting permission to organize a separate district.

⁴⁶Sheatsley, C. V., History of Evangelical Lutheran Joint Synod of Ohio and Other States (Columbus, Ohio: Lutheran Book Concern, 1919), p. 255.

TABLE 1

Lutherans in the Northwest*
1891

Church	Pastors	Cong.	Communicants
IDAHO			
Augustana Swedish	2	3	139
Augustana Norwegian	1	1	57
Joint Synod of Ohio	1	1	?
Norwegian	-	2	?
Total	4	7	196
OREGON			
Augustana	2	6	436
Danish	1	2	40
Gen. Council Mission	1	1	?
Joint Synod of Ohio	1	?	?
Missouri Synod	5	7	330
Norwegian	1	1	50
United Norwegian	1	1	?
Other	2	?	?
Total	14	18	868
WASHINGTON			
Augustana	5	7	406
Gen. Council Mission	1	1	?
Hauge	1	?	?
Iowa (German)	5	?	?
Joint Synod of Ohio	5	4	120
Missouri Synod	1	1	48
Norwegian	1	1	40
United Norwegian	6	8	425
Other	5	?	?
Total	25	22	1039

*Roth, J. D., Handbook of Lutheranism (Utica, N.Y.: L.C. Childs & Son, 1891), pp. 457, 464, 467.

This petition was brought before the delegate convention of that year, 1899, assembled in St. Louis at the end of April. The General Body conditionally sanctioned the founding of a new district within its synodical family, provided the California and Oregon District churches approved. A poll of these churches was undertaken, and the results were affirmative.⁴⁷ In pursuance of these resolutions, an organizational meeting was called for August of that year, which meeting was to be held at Zion Lutheran Church, Portland. The Northwest District was in the process of being born.

⁴⁷Kosche, op. cit., p. 9.

TABLE 2

Pastors in the Northwest

1878--1899

Name	Year began	Year left	Reason	Present at first conven- tion.
Baade, M.	1890	1895	Call	no
Behrens, W. H.	1894			yes
Claus, M.	1887	1889	Health	no
Doering, E.	1881			yes
Duchow, J.	1899			yes
Ebeling, H.	1898			yes
Ehlen, J.	1889	1890	Health	no
Fleckenstein, T.	1897			yes
Hagist, H.	1895	1897	Call	no
Haserodt, H.	1890	1894	Call	no
Heuer, C. J.	1891			yes
Kentner, A.	1878	1883	Resign	no
Lankow, W.	1899			yes
Meyer, G.	1890	1895	Health	no
Paul, H. A. C.	1890			yes
Poppe, A. H.	1894	1898	Call	no
Schoknecht, F.	1892	1893	Call	no
Selle, F.	1887	1888	Health	no
Spleiss, A.	1899			yes
Theiss, J. W.	1889	1893	Health	no
Verwiebe, F.	1893	1895	Call	no
Witte, J. H.	1893	1897	Health	no

TABLE 3

Number of Pastors

California--Oregon District 1887--1898

No. of Pastors

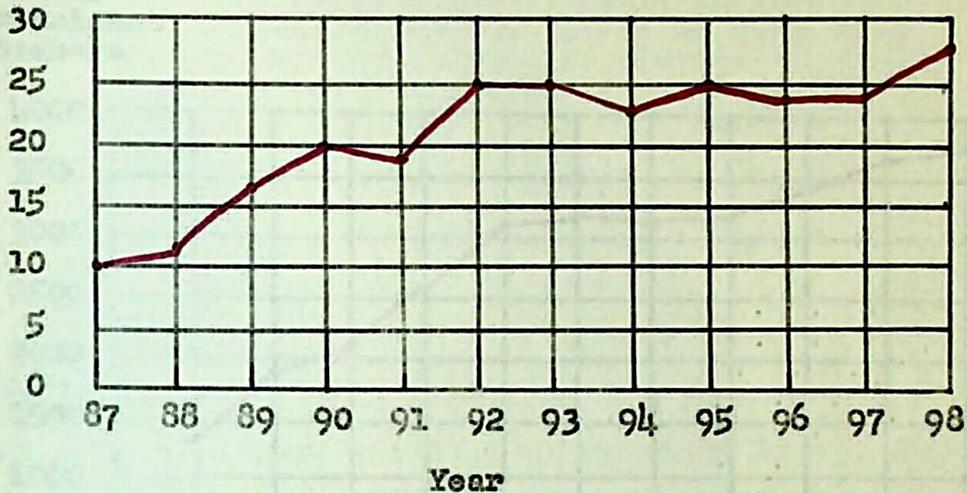


TABLE 4

Number of Congregations and Preaching Stations

California--Oregon District 1887--1898

Number

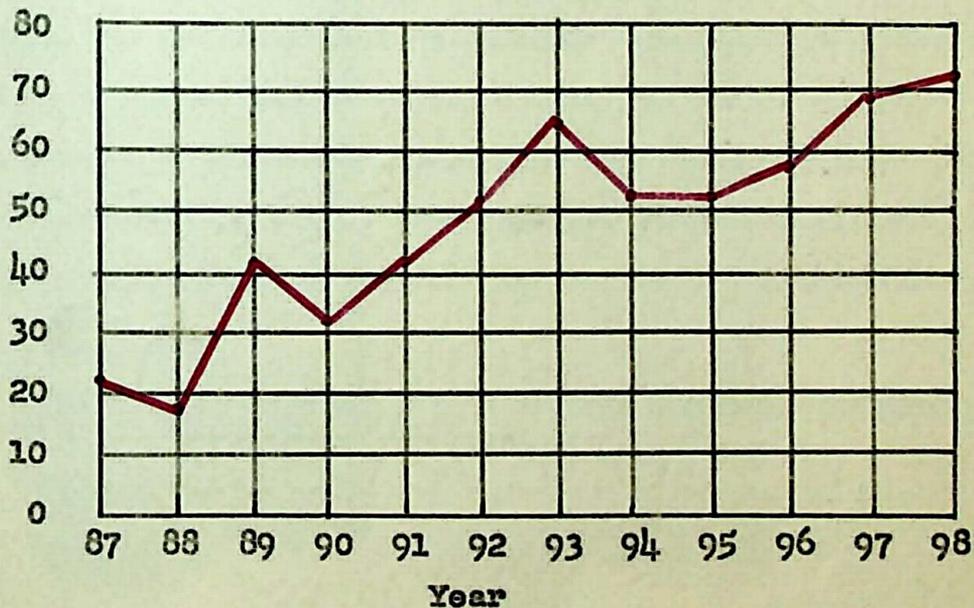
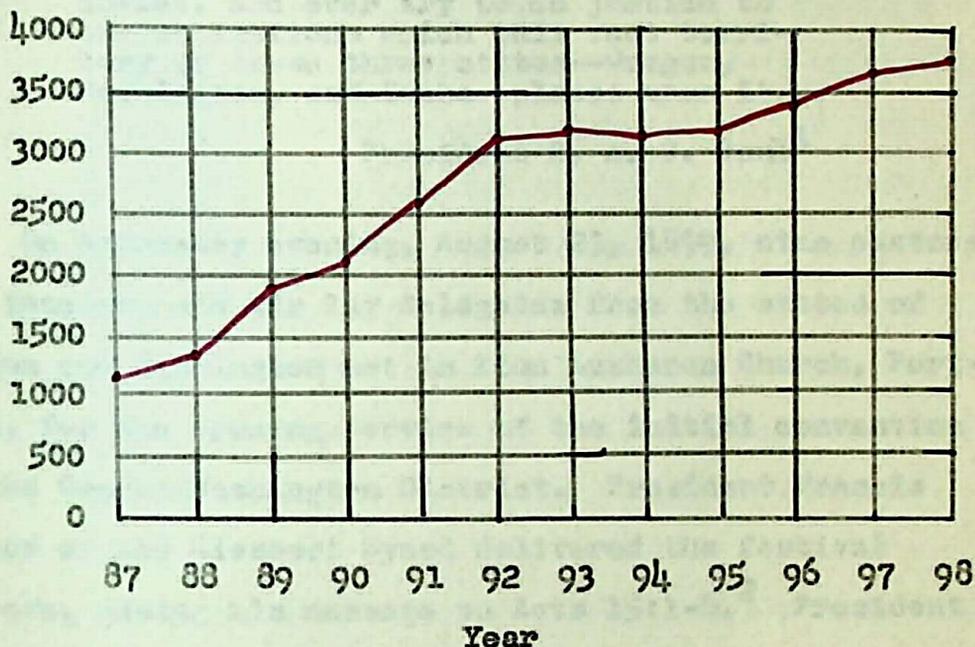


TABLE 5

Growth of Communicant Membership
California--Oregon District 1887--1898

Number
Communicant
Members



CHAPTER III

THE BIRTH OF A DISTRICT

May this district, though small in number and weak in its resources, be ever conscious of its tremendous mission duties, and ever try to do justice to the obligations which this vast territory of these three states--Oregon, Washington, and Idaho--places upon it.

President H. A. C. Paul¹

On Wednesday evening, August 23, 1899, nine pastors, one teacher, and six lay delegates from the states of Oregon and Washington met in Zion Lutheran Church, Portland, for the opening service of the initial convention of the Oregon-Washington District. President Francis Pieper of the Missouri Synod delivered the festival address, basing his message on Acts 15:1-6.² President J. M. Buehler of the California-Nevada District was there to open the sessions and to deliver the convention essay, "Die Ausbreitung des Reiches Gottes die höchste und köstlichste Aufgabe der rechtgläubigen evangelisch-lutherischen Kirche."³ Organization immediately took place with Rev. H. A. C. Paul of St. Peter's, Blooming,

¹Oregon and Washington District, Synodal-Bericht, 1901 (St. Louis: Concordia, 1901), p. 5.

²Ibid., p. 3.

³Ibid., pp 6 ff.

Oregon, elected President of the new district. The words at the head of this chapter are taken in part from his address to the gathering at that time.

Mission-mindedness was the keynote of this first convention, and the welcoming words of President Paul echo throughout the entire proceedings. A lengthy discussion was undertaken concerning the best means of accomplishing the goals demanded in so great a territory,⁴ and two afternoon sessions were devoted to the reports of all the various men in the field, as no Mission Committee had been set up at that time. At the conclusion of these reports, the group urged the immediate calling of a man for the Seattle area, and also Camas Prairie, and decided that the Spokane area of Washington deserved the next consideration.⁵

Immediately the question of financing came up. The funds from the sale of the property which Rev. Fridrichsen had bequeathed the District for Mission work was to be applied to this work.⁶ A proper division of these funds was to be made between the California-Nevada District and their own. A mission committee was established; this was to consist of two laymen, two pastors, and the President

⁴Ibid., pp 28 ff.

⁵Ibid., p. 30.

⁶Ibid., p. 30.

of the district. The first Mission Board of the Oregon-Washington District included Mr. Theo. Schulze, Mr. H. C. Dittrich, Rev. W. H. Behrens, Rev. Theo. Fleckenstein, and President H. A. C. Paul.⁷

After a discussion of the mutual problems of the two Pacific coast districts, a resolution for joint study of these problems was passed, so that they might best fulfill the obligations of Synod at large. Dr. Pieper closed the first convention with prayer, after which the delegates sang "Ach bleib mit deiner Gnade."

With the district organization accomplished, the men returned to their fields with the confidence that now the Northwest would receive the emphasis long due. The heart of the work lay again in the Reiseprediger Ed. Doering, who for the next twenty years traveled throughout the region conducting services. At first the conditions were quite difficult. In a postcard sent District President Luessenhop on October 22, 1902, we get an idea of the conditions under which Doering worked:

That you might have some idea as to where I now am, this report that I am eighty miles from the railroad, in the vicinity, that is, a day's journey from Klamath Falls, Klamath Country, Oregon. Have about twenty families to visit, which will take about twelve to fourteen days.

⁷Ibid., p. 31.

Have a horse and "cart" with which I now sail about; now if I don't get caught in the mountain peaks or in the trees, and also don't get stuck in the snow, which is already pecking down from the mountains, then will probably return to civilization.⁸

The problem of funds for these trips was always present. The monetary expenditures seem slight, but as the following report of Doering to the board shows, the available funds did not always even meet the slight demands:

The traveling expense incurred as a result of Pastor Paul's installation should most likely be paid out of the Synodical (i. e., District) treasury. If I return the \$3.00 which Pastor Paul advanced to me before I went to Grass Valley, there will be a deficit of ten cents in the fund. Not much traveling can be done on that. Therefore, please make out an "order" to the treasurer for a check for \$50.00: \$10.00 for traveling expenses and \$40.00 for salary. He can send me a check; I think I will be able to cash it.⁹

It was in just such a day-to-day struggle that Doering existed throughout his years of "circuit-riding." He especially concentrated his efforts on the rural scene, visiting individual homes, making contacts in the isolated areas. In many places this led to the establishment of congregations; elsewhere, it simply served the scattered families who otherwise would not be touched by the church. In general, he attempted always to instruct and establish,

⁸"Script for Fiftieth Anniversary Movie" (Unpublished manuscript, Archives of the Northwest District, Portland, Oregon).

⁹Ibid.

but too frequently this became impossible. Doering was a careful chronicler of his work and sent these reports to the Mission Board. The forming of the District solved many problems for the region's mission endeavors, but it was not able to cut down the distances between the stations. How these distances were covered was not so much left to individual taste, as to plain necessity. We would draw once more from the Mission Board reports of Doering to use this one trip as an example of the work he did, year in, year out, for forty years:

As I begin to write a report on my missionary journeys, I shall follow the notations as they appear in my journal. On Wednesday evening, January 22 (1902), I departed from Portland and arrived in Latah (this trip took him into Washington) on the morning of the twenty-third. There I met a family by the name of Haering, which years ago belonged to Pastor Koelter's congregation, Chicago, and more recently in Nebraska under a pastor of the Iowa Synod. These are people with whom I can stay and where there is still a desire for church. Visited Farmer Glindemann of Holstein, who has lived here three years, came from San Francisco, six children, three of which should be instructed. From there I went to a family by the name of Koehler, moved here last summer from Nebraska, no property as yet, do not know if they can remain here, would have five children to send to school, ten children in the family. The man has a Bible, encouraged him to read it diligently, no hymnbook. From here I went to Mr. August Brinken, big farmer, here eighteen years, of Holstein, family of five boys. Stayed here overnight.

January 24 -- Friday, snowstorm, could not get out. Instructed the children.

January 25 -- Visited several families and announced that a service would be conducted in the school house on Sunday.

January 26 -- Sunday, held service; attendance: ten adults, eight children.

January 27 -- Monday, traveled on foot. Visited Kingbaum, Uncle Brinken, Dan, Hannoverian, not yet belonging to any congregation, promised to come to Latah. Then I came to Laitz, Pliesner, Lucksdorf, Zierk, Louis Buenger, Bunger Steen. These people are mostly Holsteiner and are being served by Pastor Bertram of the Ohio Synod, every four weeks. Stayed with Steen overnight.

January 28 -- Tuesday. Left Bertram's territory and went toward Rosalie, twelve miles away. Ate dinner with August Miller, Evangelical, had a lengthy discussion on Conversion, Lord's Supper, and Absolution. In the evening I arrived at Rosalie. Here there is a German Methodist church and congregation. An Evangelical pastor is also stationed here for the area.

January 29 -- In the morning I did find a Lutheran, Karl Hussman, of Darmstadt, who said that there were supposed to be some Lutherans living six miles from here. He gave me several names and I was on my way to look them up. And I found four Lutheran families from Wuerttemberg. In the Schlotz family there are three girls, twenty-one, nineteen, and sixteen years of age, who should be instructed. At the father's request I asked them: 'Of what faith are you?' no answer. Then I thought: How shall they know anything about that of which they have not heard and learned? Then I spoke to them about Baptism, explained to them what God the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost had done for them. I also instructed them in reading. That was on January 30.

January 31 -- Instruction in the morning; Service after dinner. After that service, Mr. Schlotz drove me to the Thornton station in his sled. Here I learned that the train, if on time, came through at 3 a.m., but the train was late. I was at the depot at four-thirty and had to wait until five-thirty in the icy cold, ten degrees below zero. That was pretty much for an Oregonian.

February 1 -- Returned safely to Latah, made several calls in town.

February 2 -- Sunday. Still very cold. Preached in the Methodist church to seven persons. Sunday evening

I traveled to Spokane, arrived at Pastor Paul's at seven-thirty, preached at 8:00 p.m. to twelve persons.

February 3 -- Day of rest. Read Lutheraner and Rundschau.

February 4 -- Went to Medical Lake. Arrived at Mr. Krahn's at five in the afternoon, but the people were disturbed by my appearance on the scene, since a pastor of the Ohio Synod had already come earlier. I stayed overnite anyway and in the conversation we became quite intimate, but this thought always forced itself upon them, that I had come four weeks too late.

February 5 -- Wednesday. Visited Fuhrmann, Tesch, Tahnke, Stein. Three families moved here in the Fall from one of our congregations in Minnesota. I considered it my duty to win the people back and preached to them on Thursday in the schoolhouse. After the service, we spoke about regular church services, and it became evident that the people had promised in writing that the Ohioan could serve them. Since I had my doubts about this matter, and also because the people are interrelated, I wanted to speak to President Paul about it, and therefore did not promise the people definitely whether I would come again or not.

February 7 -- Friday. I returned to Spokane. President Paul was of the opinion that Medical Lake should not be given up so quickly, and it was decided to hold a service in Medical Lake on Sunday, the sixteenth. The necessary announcement was made in accordance with this.

February 8 -- Saturday. Trip to Odessa, city of the Russians. Here almost everything is German. Our people live twelve miles south of here; they have founded a congregation, six members have joined, three have announced their intention of joining, still others want to come from the East. As soon as the Ohioans heard that a school was to be built, they began to hold services nearby in a schoolhouse. Ohio is always right on the spot, they have their "pioneers" stationed everywhere. The Mission Board is certainly not familiar with the importance of this field. Therefore I shall describe it a bit. The so-called "Big Bend" is a district unequalled. (Refers to the loop of the Columbia River in North-central and

western Washington). The prairie extends about 150 miles long, 150 miles wide, and is covered partly with bunchgrass, partly with sage brush. Since people have discovered that the soil is exceptionally good for the raising of wheat, the farmers are moving here from cold Minnesota and Dakota; yes, they are coming by the hundreds to establish homes here. Therefore, it is absolutely necessary that help be given to the congregation at Odessa to obtain a pastor who can gather and serve our people.

February 9 -- Sunday. I held a real Missourian service in this congregation. The people desire very much to be served with preaching every three weeks, but I could not promise them that, however, did promise to come on Good Friday. It was decided to have services on Maundy Thursday and Good Friday. Reading services are held every Sunday. These people deserve to be helped. There are twenty children for school.

February 10 -- Monday. I rode westward to Wilson Creek. As I arrived there, I found half the town under water. The creek had overflowed; I rode out into the country on a boat, for which the brave boatman demanded his "nickel." I was told that a year ago, only one hut stood here, now over fifty houses have been built, three hotels, stores, a bank, even a newspaper office, two schools, and the like. The roads are practically impassable, the snow is beginning to become soft, the "coulees" (ravines) are running full of snow water. On Tuesday I found an opportunity to ride in the direction of a German settlement. I rode along, but still had to walk two miles and then found the Germans. They moved here last Fall from Minnesota, but are Evangelical and are being served every two weeks. I met one young man here who comes from Pastor Ude's congregation and had bought property here. His brother-in-law, from the same congregation, is coming in March, has also bought land; others are also coming. Here is another place where Lutherans could be gathered.

Wilson Creek, thirty miles from Odessa, could be served together with Odessa. How things will develop there, the future must tell. The Lutheran who is there knows that we want to serve them as soon as the people from the East arrive.

From here I rode to Hartline on the Northern Pacific, twenty miles north of Wilson Creek. The land is all farm land and is open to settlers.

Since the roads are impassable, I could not undertake an expedition, and returned by train to Medical Lake, where services had been announced for Sunday, February 16. The service was held, but only six persons came. The people have decided to permit themselves to be served by Ohio. So also this place has been lost to Ohio. Too bad!

Even though I could not report any great results, this report nevertheless shows how constantly necessary it is that an itinerant preacher visit the places where there is a prospect that more families will gather.

Odessa absolutely must be provided with a minister.

Since there is now a vacancy at Endicott and the confirmation instruction which had already been begun should be concluded, I shall go there and finish it.

Most respectfully, Your humble servant of

the Word,

(signed) Ed Doering¹⁰

Together with this report came an expense account for this trip. The total cost was twelve dollars and twenty cents.

Doering noted that he received ten dollars from Treasurer Beiersdorfer. In addition, he received two dollars and twenty-five cents from offerings. Thus, he managed to come out a nickel ahead at the end of the month's labor.

But the work of the church was not simply to hop from place to place in the hope that eventually a group would be organized. While Doering continued to scour and serve the back country, the district began to enlarge on its settled areas. Seattle, which Rev. H. C. Ebeling had been serving from Snohomish, received its own resident missionary, Rev. H. Bohl, in 1900. By 1901 the congregation gained sufficient strength to organize, and the

¹⁰Ibid.

following year erected a building.

The concern of the Mission Board for Eastern Washington was met with the acceptance of the District President, H. A. C. Paul, of the Call to the Spokane area, also in 1900. In the same year St. John's congregation of that city was organized.

The last of the places considered most vital by the first mission discussions, Camas Prairie (Idaho--areas of Grangeville, Denver, and Lowe are all included usually in early references to this region) received a man in 1900, Candidate William Koss. In addition, the services of several students were used in work in this section of Idaho. Unfortunately, it was to be several more years before even a congregation could be organized and buildings erected.

However, the challenge of missions was being met. Five new men were added to the district roster at the 1901 convention (the second), three of them going as resident pastors in new fields. But this was simply meeting the most urgent needs. More men were needed. But at the convention disheartening words in this line came from President Pieper of Synod. He reported:

There was a lack of ministerial and teacher candidates and that this lack would be more pronounced in the next year. Therefore he suggested to the District that as many young men as possible be sent to our institutions. But since the distance from this coast to the East is so great and experience teaches that few boys are sent so far, he recommended that

the young people receive their first training here in the Northwest.¹¹

This sowed the seeds for the eventually founding of the Northwest's own training school, Concordia College, Portland.¹² A school committee was also set up at this convention to further the cause of Christian education in the District.

During the succeeding years more men entered the district, and at the end of the fifth year of its existence there was almost a growth of 150 per cent over the initial group. Among these was W. Luessenhop, who accepted the Call to Trinity, Portland, in 1901. A Pastor writes of him:

He was well versed in all branches of theological knowledge, eminent also for general learning, capable of an impressive display in the use of language, a logician and brilliant debater, a man with a lofty mien and a rare gift of discernment.¹³

It is no surprise, then, that he was the second president of the District, elected at the third convention held at Blooming, Oregon, in 1902.¹⁴ The Mission Board was comprised of almost an entirely new group, and the emphasis on Christian education as the foundation of a solid Lutheran

¹¹Oregon and Washington District, Synodal-Bericht, 1901 (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1901), p. 65 (translated by K. Lorenz).

¹²A full treatment of the development of the College will be found in Chapter VII of the thesis.

¹³Unpublished manuscript, Archives of the Northwest District, Portland, Oregon.

¹⁴Oregon and Washington District, Synodal-Bericht, 1903 (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1904), p. 81.

congregation in the mission areas took predominance. Work was begun in Central Washington, covering the areas mentioned by Doering in the report printed earlier. Yakima, Odessa, Menno, all were new additions to the district, being served regularly. But there was a darker side too. A number of promising areas were lost through competition to other Lutheran groups. Both Iowa and Ohio were becoming more active in their work in these parts and losses to these groups were suffered. Additional manpower in the form of students was used extensively but still the needs of the promising areas were not being met. The tables at the end of this chapter illustrate the growth of the District, and while there was disillusionment frequently, the expansion remained constant.

The demands for a college and locally trained men continued to press upon the District. California-Nevada also saw the urgency of local training, and for some time the two attempted a joint effort. This was not accomplished, but in the diversity of minds, there grew the multiplicity of action; two schools, Concordia College, Portland, opening its doors in the fall of 1905, with F. W. J. Sylwester as Director and Professor, and California College, Oakland, opening the following year.

President Luessenhop had left the District, returning to the East, and W. H. Behrens of Portland was his successor. While not the dynamic personality his predecessor was, he

nevertheless was a gifted theologian and capable leader. New faces were continually appearing in the district now, and new fields finally receiving their due consideration. Northern Washington was opened with work in Havillah and surrounding areas. The upper reaches of Puget Sound, Bellingham and environs, which had been served from Everett and Seattle received a resident man, and the work in Idaho was pushed, particularly in the south. There work at Payette led to other surrounding areas: New Plymouth and Twin Falls. Although it was small, it still marked progress in meeting the possibilities of a developing fruitful farm country. And in the far east of Idaho, Squirrel, the mother congregation of Ashton, was served regularly by Rev. H. A. C. Meyer, who also did much of the preliminary exploring in the other Idaho parishes.

Nearly every man in the field at this time was also an "Explorer." His job was to develop new areas as well as serve the station he was called to. Typical of this work is a report in 1902 by a missionary:

I find people everywhere, Germans, former Lutherans, backsliders, doubters, distressed and spiritually indifferent. The soil is hard, very hard. Everywhere I find a desire to instruct the children. The people would be glad to entrust their children to me for instruction.

I was sent out as "explorer." Here you have the results of my investigation. Now what? Is it enough, or not? Shall I go still farther, investigate still more territory? If the Mission Board can reach the decision to provide instruction in religion for the children, I could, on my second trip, take the names of the children who desire

instruction. Naturally, we then also have the responsibility to continue to care for the spiritual welfare of the children who have been instructed. If we on our part, wish to prevent the Germans from returning to heathenism, then we must instruct the children, the baptized children. That is certainly also mission work. Don't be frightened by the expense, don't be afraid of what it all might cost.¹⁵

Pressing needs always evident, responsibility to follow up and consolidate the work begun, mission-minded conception of cost, all these factors weighed heavy on the hearts and minds of the men as these first years wore on.

The new demands of growth brought changes in District administration. Formerly the District President and Vice-president had been visitors-at-large ex officio. The Convention at Sherwood in 1906 created three circuits, an Oregon, and East-Washington, and West-Washington circuit.¹⁶ The Indigent Student Fund, created in 1903, and the Church Extension Fund were transferred to independent committees from the Mission Board at this time also.¹⁷

New faces continued to appear and changes during these next years multiplied. Fields such as Kennewick, Washington, Twin Falls, Idaho, and Shefflin (Cornelius), Oregon, were organizing and calling men. Another congregation had been started in Portland, Immanuel, on the east side of the river in an area known as Sellwood. The College

¹⁵"Script for Fiftieth Anniversary Movie," op. cit.

¹⁶Oregon-Washington District, Synodal-Bericht, 1906 (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1906), p. 44.

¹⁷Ibid., p. 47.

had acquired the services of an additional instructor, Vicar Lorenz Blankenbuehler of the St. Louis Seminary, and the full four year Academy program was completed, as well as occupancy in their own building. The capital of Washington, Olympia, organized a congregation in 1903 through the efforts of the Tacoma congregation. This congregation in turn pushed the work into the Olympic Peninsula. The Eastern Washington area, which had been hard put early in the district's history due to the shortage of men, also expanded with the organization of a congregation at Walla Walla.

At the 1907 convention of the District it was resolved to organize officially, incorporating the District. This was carried out, with the name chosen: "Oregon-und-Washington Distrikt der Deutschen Evangelisch-Lutherischen Synode von Missouri, Ohio, und andern Staaten."¹⁸ Southern Oregon also came into serious consideration again at this time. In 1905 a man had been placed there, George Engel, and work progressed rapidly. However, in a few years the pressure of the work wore away his health, and he was forced to resign. It was decided to have Doering serve this territory again until a man could be placed there, which was finally done in 1911, with the coming of F. Zehe.

A district President was also lost again, W. H. Behrens

¹⁸Oregon and Washington District, Synodal-Bericht, 1907 (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1908), p. 79.

accepting a call to Chester, Illinois, and later to the faculty of the Seminary at Springfield. L. Stuebe of Blooming was elected to succeed him, and it fell to him to guide the district through the difficult war years which were approaching. During the first years of his presidency all the geo-political factors favored expansion in every direction. While a "country Pastor" at heart, he nonetheless was in contact with the expanding needs of the district in every direction and exerted strong leadership.

With the coming of war in 1914, the pressure of the German language problem was being brought into sharp focus. Although in a sense far removed from the more war-centered areas of this country, industrial and otherwise, the anti-German feeling was evident. In instances the language barrier was carried into the courts in one way or another, so that one veteran of those days reported of a case before a judge in which this issue arose, and which led the judge to declaim forcefully, "If a German battleship steamed up the Columbia and docked at Portland, whose side would you be on?" It might not have been a practical consideration, war-wise, but such events brought times of crisis to the work of the church.

But growth continued. Idaho organized four more parishes, Rupert, Idaho Falls, Nampa, and Buhl. Southern Oregon added a congregation at Lebanon, and in Washington Chehalis and Centralia, formerly independent congregations,

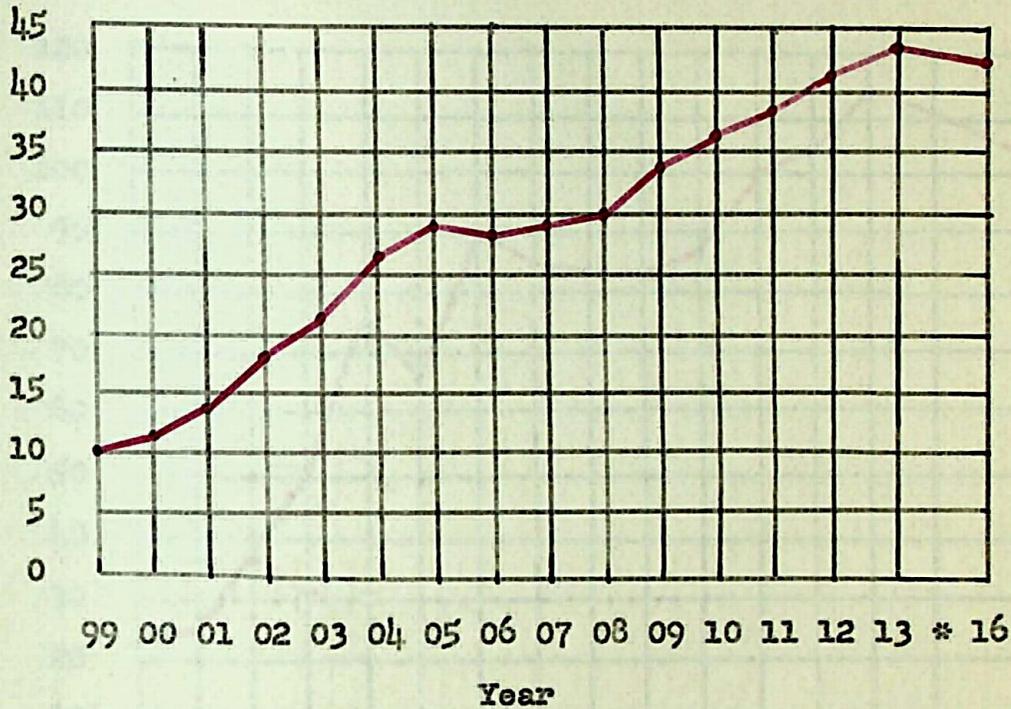
joined the district, along with Wenatchee, a preaching station, and were officially organized. Slower progress, to be sure, but the trying times not only affected the fields, but also the supply of men.

The world was rapidly being torn apart in the expanding ravages of a war that threatened to engulf almost every nation. Industry was mobilizing, the Northwest was developing with this industrialization, and the focus was turning from the rural to the urban scene. All this, together with the language problem, had a natural effect on the growth of the church. Progress was slower at this time than either before or after. But though these were painful years, they brought with them a redirection of efforts which was to result in even greater expansion in the decades to come.

TABLE 6

Number of Pastors

Oregon--Washington District 1899--1916

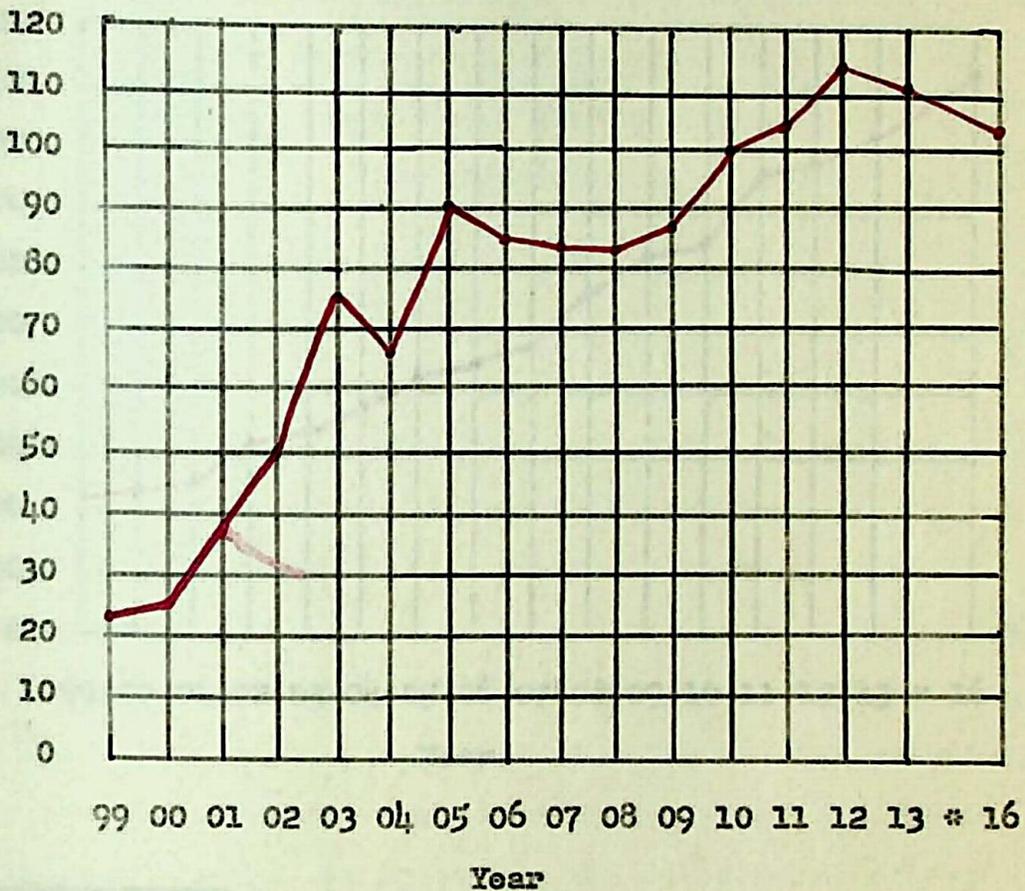
No. of
Pastors

*No statistical summary taken years 1914, 1915, as a result of resolution of Delegate Synod.

TABLE 7

Number of Congregations and Preaching Stations
Oregon--Washington District 1899--1916

No. of Cong.
and Stations



*No statistical summary taken years 1914, 1915, as a result of resolution of Delegate Synod.

TABLE 8

Growth of Communicant Membership
Oregon--Washington District 1899--1916

No. of
Communicant
Members



*No statistical summary taken years 1914, 1915, as a result of resolution of Delegate Synod.

CHAPTER IV

WAR AND PEACE

At our last two conventions I deemed it necessary to call your attention to the extraordinary conditions surrounding us. The scene has been changed. The World War has not come to an end, it still causes the whole creation to groan and travail in pain together until now; but we have been engulfed. What a change!

President L. Stuebe¹

The war had drawn the United States into active participation in April of 1917. While the struggle was in the main confined to Europe, the increased lines of communication, the industrial growth of the Pacific Coast, and the completion of the Panama Canal all brought the Pacific Northwest into closer proximity than the actual distance would give appearance. As the war had progressed in its early years (1914-1916), an antipathy to everything that was German developed; this naturally had its reaction among our congregations where the language was almost universally German. In addition, the development of war industry was taking a goodly portion of the young people away from the rural areas and leading them to the industrial centers.

¹"Oregon and Washington District," Proceedings of the Thirteenth Convention (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1919), p. 5.

In 1917 the delegate Synod met. The following year the thirteenth convention of the district met at Tacoma, Washington. For the first time in the history of the district the entire sessions were conducted in the English language. President Stuebe explained the conditions demanding this, and the convention fully approved. The words heading this chapter are his concluding remarks on the situation. The unanimous approval, however, did not prevent an uneasy attitude and nervous tension from being present. Each felt that this was not a one time occurrence, but that this was the coming condition. The sudden change from their accustomed language, the bond which had kept church and family together in many individual's thinking, left them in a state of verbal frustration that was not easily overcome.

Without question, however, this language transition, though forced, was distinct blessing to the district. It may not have been recognized at the time, but Rev. F. Schoknecht, one of the pioneer Pastors (1893) who spent almost his entire ministry in the district, wrote in the District Messenger in April, 1929:

If the Lutheran Church owes a special debt of gratitude to any of our later presidents, it is Woodrow Wilson. No matter what attitude one holds over against his policies, this remains an undeniable fact, that under his management of affairs the Lutheran church above others, in its German, Norwegian, Swedish, and other branches, was liberated from its foreign language captivity, a bondage which crippled the mission work also of this district for many years.

Now, at last, we have Christian schools doing justice to the inheritance of American children, by teaching them the creed and prayers in their language, and our services are open to wider circles.

. . . . The sword cut the Gordian knot which educators² had vainly tried to untie in the years before the war.

At the 1919 convention, however, the majority of the business was conducted in German, although there were some English reports. It was claimed that so sudden a shift of language for the majority of the men had hampered understanding, and, likewise, their presentation of their thoughts.³ From the convention of 1918 on, however, more and more English was employed until the gradual evolution into its complete usage was accomplished.

Already in 1913 the proposal of the Mission Board to employ a full time Director of Missions had been presented to the convention, but was voted down.⁴ In 1918 it was reintroduced, and this time the district went along with the resolution. It was not until 1920, however, that a Call was issued, and the services of Rev. W. F. Georg were secured.

Just as the missionary efforts of Buehler had dominated the work at first on the coast, and then the labors of Doering in the Northwest, so the concern of missions now

²Simon, W. P., Missouri Lutherans in Oregon (Unpublished manuscript in the Archives of the Northwest District, Portland, Oregon), p. 15.

³Oregon-Washington District, Synodal-Bericht, 1919 (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1920), p. 5.

⁴Oregon-Washington District, Synodal-Bericht, 1913 (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1913), p. x.

finds its personification in the work of Pastor Georg. A pastor in the rural areas of Iowa, he had been called to the presidency of Bethany College, Mankato, Minnesota, in 1912. In 1917, however, the college was closed because of the war, and Rev. Georg helped organize the National Lutheran Education Society and solicited funds for educational purposes during the next two years. It was at this time that he received and accepted the Call proffered by the Mission Board to become Superintendent of Missions for the District.

The duties of this position were at first loosely defined, and reached final formulation some years later as follows:

. . . visit all mission places; to serve temporarily vacant fields; to advise the Mission Board in calling missionaries for the various fields; to attend the meetings of the Mission Board; to present the missions and their needs in self-supporting congregations; to attend the various conferences as far as possible; to be the official visitor of the missionaries; and to be under the direction of, and to be responsible to, the Mission Board."

To this was appended the somewhat superfluous note, "to start new fields."⁶ His arrival in the district in 1920 was to introduce an era of thirty years' service in the Northwest, culminating in his death in October of 1950. During this time he served as Superintendent of Missions

⁵"Oregon-Washington District" Proceedings of the Nineteenth Convention (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1928), p. 30.

⁶Ibid.

until 1948, when the office was abolished, its functions having been taken over by the Executive Secretary.⁷

Rev. Georg himself recalls the following at the time he was considering the call at the convention of the General Synod:

It seems that my friend, with whom I had an interview did not get a very good impression of me, because of my corporal physique. After his return from the convention he made the remark to an official of the district: "I think we made a mistake in calling Rev. Georg." When asked why, he answered, "He's too heavy--he cannot get around."⁸

This prediction did not hold true. In reviewing his work at the time he retired from the office of Mission Director, the following statistics were made known. He had laid hands on sixty-eight pastors. He had traveled over one million miles by train alone, not to mention other means of transportation. Seventeen congregations and missions were begun by him personally. In addition, the regular work of a parish minister was present in that he averaged seventy-two sermons a year and approximately two hundred and forty pastoral and mission visits.⁹ An enviable record for a man who was too rotund "to get around."

⁷"Northwest District Supplement," Lutheran Witness, Vol. LXIX, No. 1 (January 10, 1950).

⁸"Script for Fiftieth Anniversary Movie," op. cit.

⁹"Northwest District Supplement," op. cit.

Summing up his efforts, former District President Weert Janssen observed:

Much of the credit for the great increase in our district, increase in the number of pastors, church buildings, parsonages, is due under God to Rev. Georg who has been superintendent of missions for thirty years. He spent most of his time not in superintending missions, but in starting them and strengthening them. He was not interested in anything but missions. He talked about nothing but missions. He spent many a night in depots and on trains, sitting up while we were asleep. When the depression came, he reduced his own salary. His home was always open to everyone. Yes, Rev. Georg "roughed it for Christ" in Oregon, Washington, and Idaho.¹⁰

The missionary outlook which dominated the first convention of the District was still the keynote of the labors, and it took its lead now in the person and office of the Director of Missions.

The arrival of Rev. Georg marked a change in the policy of mission work. Pioneer conditions were passing. Doering, outside of Portland, had centered his attention more upon the country settlements. But the field was too large now for systematic visits of any frequency to single families. Georg carried out the policy emphasized by the District convention which called him, and set his sights on the cities. The last horse "resigned from the mission service of our church in this state in Mt. Angel in the Spring of 1922" writes Rev. Zehe in the Messenger.¹¹

¹⁰"Script for Fiftieth Anniversary Movie," op. cit.

¹¹Simon, op. cit., p. 18.

That year the district resolved to pay three hundred dollars toward the purchase of a car by a missionary. The automotive age had arrived.

In keeping with improving the conditions of the missionaries, the Board had raised the salary from fifty to fifty-five dollars a month in 1918. The District convention of the next year upped the minimum to eighty dollars, a liberal figure for the times. At the same convention the question of stressing the school as well as the teaching of English was brought up once more. The attitude was best expressed in this abridged quote:

It would be questionable wisdom to return to teaching religion in German. Our children are thinking in the English language. . . . The Word of God is for daily use.¹²

Also the Mission Board reported on the importance of institutional work. It was decided to grant a leave of absence from his congregation to some minister so that he could give his time to this work and test its potential. But no one could be obtained. After a year had gone by without finding anyone, this work was added to the duties of the new Director of Missions.¹³ To do such work with any thoroughness would obviously be impossible for a man burdened with so much responsibility already; but at least the institutions received more attention than had heretofore

¹²"Oregon--Washington District," Synodal-Bericht, 1919 (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1920), p. 41.

¹³Simon, op. cit., p. 18.

been given them. Georg continued to serve them sporadically for the next years, assisted wherever possible by the nearest pastor.

If we would characterize the last decade as one of difficulties, the twenties were certainly years of expansion. Rev. J. A. Rimbach, of Trinity, Portland, was elected President in 1918 and introduced this new era. Well acquainted with the demands of the district, having served in various offices for the twelve years previous, he led the work into the twenties. For reasons of health, however, he felt constrained to refuse reelection, and Rev. Weert Janssen of Yakima, Washington, was elected to the office in 1921.

Under his leadership, the District met two crises which occupied the foreground at this time. The one centered about a church discipline problem at Grace Church in Portland. This congregation had originally been formed as a result of a class of adults which Rev. Rimbach of Trinity had instructed and confirmed in English. To meet their needs for English services, offered only occasionally at this time, they organized a congregation in 1909, using the facilities of Trinity for worship. For the next ten years they were served by several men, each man coming after an extensive vacancy. Nevertheless, the membership grew, and property was acquired. In 1919 they called Rev. C. H. Bernhard and rapid growth was experienced.

At the same time they achieved self-supporting status.

In 1921, however, a quarrel arose which was to lead to its eventual separation from the Missouri Synod. A few ladies in the congregation had been taken up for admonition, and then for church discipline. They were cited before the congregation and did not appear. Instead, a protest was lodged before the congregation. The case was appealed to the Visitor of the circuit, but remained unsettled, and from 1921 on remained in continuous dispute. At the succeeding District conventions it was taken up, as well as brought to the attention of the President of the general body, Dr. F. Pfotenbauer. Visitations, committee studies, and personal appeals were made throughout the ensuing years without effect. Pastors became personally involved in the issues, and the matter became a veritable mountain, far out of proportion to its beginnings. Finally, in 1927, the Convention resolved that

Grace church acted hastily and wrongfully in excommunicating the ladies, and thereby invalidated the excommunication; and we plead with Grace congregation to correct its erring view on this.¹⁴

President Janssen once more attempted to deal with the group, but to no avail, so that the 1929 convention resolved to sever its relations with the offending congregation "until it sees its error."¹⁵ An appeal to this

¹⁴"Oregon-Washington District," Proceedings of Nineteenth Convention, 1927 (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1928), p. 33.

¹⁵"Oregon-Washington District," Proceedings of Twentieth Convention, 1929, op. cit., p. 38.

decision was carried to Synod by Rev. J. Duchow of Havillah, Washington, who had espoused the cause of Grace church, but the general body upheld the district decision.

Bernhard, meanwhile, was forced to resign because of illness and the congregation voted to affiliate with the Wisconsin Synod, which accepted them and supplied them with a Pastor. No reconciliation has been effected.¹⁶

The second item of major interest in this decade was the Oregon School Law fight. The School Board of the district was almost completely taken up with this matter from 1922 to 1924. A law had been passed in 1922 requiring the attendance of all children at public schools. While it is usually affirmed that this was aimed directly at the Roman Catholic church, it would have dealt a fatal blow to our system also. Lutheran and Roman Catholic fought side by side together with leaders of private schools, and finally, in 1924, the State Supreme court unanimously declared the law unconstitutional on the principle that it violated the rights of parents. Thus, our schools were preserved, but the long battle had taken a heavy toll of the finances of the district and the extension of Christian education.¹⁷

¹⁶The files of Concordia Historical Institute as well as the District Archives contain a wealth of material covering every aspect of the case.

¹⁷Synod also aided the group, and the complete record of the fight is preserved in the Concordia Historical Institute.

The latter could not be solely attributed to the School Fight. Already in 1919 at the convention of the district, President Rimbach had warned

Let us be careful that by the change into the English language we do not lose our schools. English churches need these fully as much as German congregations. We have our schools not for the German language, but on account of the Word of God. The school is the nursery of the church. When the school flourishes then also the church will flourish. When the school falls into ruin, the congregation will decline.¹⁸

It was unfortunate that this view of the school as the preserver of the German language was too prominent and brought with it consequent repercussions in the School Fight. However, his words did not go unheeded, and while the schools declined, they did not disappear.

But this was the decade of expansion. While these matters seem to take the limelight, the work of the church progressed quietly but with vigor. The 1921 convention had amended the constitution so as to eliminate the word "German" from the official name of the District.¹⁹ The same year a District paper was established. For a few years previous the Mission Board had been sending out a monthly bulletin, and this served as the precursor of the Messenger. The Portland Pastoral Conference was assigned the work of supervision and Pastor Rimbach was named Editor. It was a bilingual publication and a small subscription

¹⁸Unpublished manuscript in the Northwest District Archives, Portland, Oregon.

¹⁹Synodal-Bericht, 1921, op. cit., p. 22.

fee was charged.²⁰ In 1924 R. Messorli of Oregon City replaced Rimbach as editor and several years later, 1927, the paper was sent out free to all congregations until the postal regulations prohibited this. A gradual switch to an all English publication was accomplished, and Pastor J. P. Maier of Tillamook took over the editorial reins in 1933. Thus, the printed word also brought the attention of the district to missions.

Rev. Georg traveled far and wide exploring fields. And bearing the mission potential of the school in mind, the District resolved in its 1924 convention to add to his duties those of District Superintendent of Schools.²¹ During this period the following congregations and preaching stations were begun and in many cases served personally by Georg: in Oregon: Oregon City, 1921; Roseburg, 1921; Tillamook, 1921; Bend, 1923; Calvary, Portland, 1925; Olney, 1926; Seaside, 1927. In Washington: Dishman, 1923; Klickitat, 1924; Longview and Kelso, 1925.

The growth in the cities also added to the district. Hope, Zion, and Calvary, all of Seattle, were organized at this time. Tacoma and Spokane each added another congregation. New fields in central Washington were explored and served, as well as Southern Idaho. The Tables on pages 83.

²⁰Simon, op. cit., p. 20.

²¹Synodal-Bericht, 1924, op. cit., p. 41.

84, and 85 picture graphically the growth experienced during these years.

In 1922 another innovation designed to spread the Kingdom was introduced in the form of a mail mission. Its object was to serve the Lutherans in the District who were too far from any local congregation. The Mission Board handled this and reported in 1924 that a mailing list of over two hundred names was being regularly supplied with church papers, printed sermons, tracts and the like.²² Correspondence on spiritual problems was invited. Once again this placed another burden upon the Director of Missions who handled this at its inception, and again in 1930, the interim finding Teacher F. Westerkamp of the Mission Board assuming the responsibility.²³

The 1927 District Convention at Snohomish, Washington, duly noted the expansion. For better administration a Board of Directors was asked to be created, but this plan did not meet with the approval of the convention as a whole. Instead the Church Extension Board which had served separately over the years was absorbed into the Mission Board so that these areas would not overlap.²⁴ Mission-

²²Simon, op. cit., p. 20.

²³Ibid., p. 21.

²⁴"Oregon-Washington District," Proceedings of the Nineteenth Convention, 1927, op. cit., p. 37.

mindedness remained central in the district's thinking, and it was resolved to increase service to the State Institutions and to begin mission work among the Indians on the Colville Reservation. The responsibilities had to be met on every front.

It was a prosperous decade. The work expanded and the district grew. The outlook was most encouraging. New buildings had been promised by Synod for the school at Portland, and the supply of men was increasing. Every reason for undiminished optimism was present. But just around the corner lay the ominous "crash" of 1929. That "Black October 29th" was to cast its dark shadow from coast to coast, and the times of Depression lay at the door.

TABLE 9

Number of Pastors

Oregon--Washington District 1917--1928

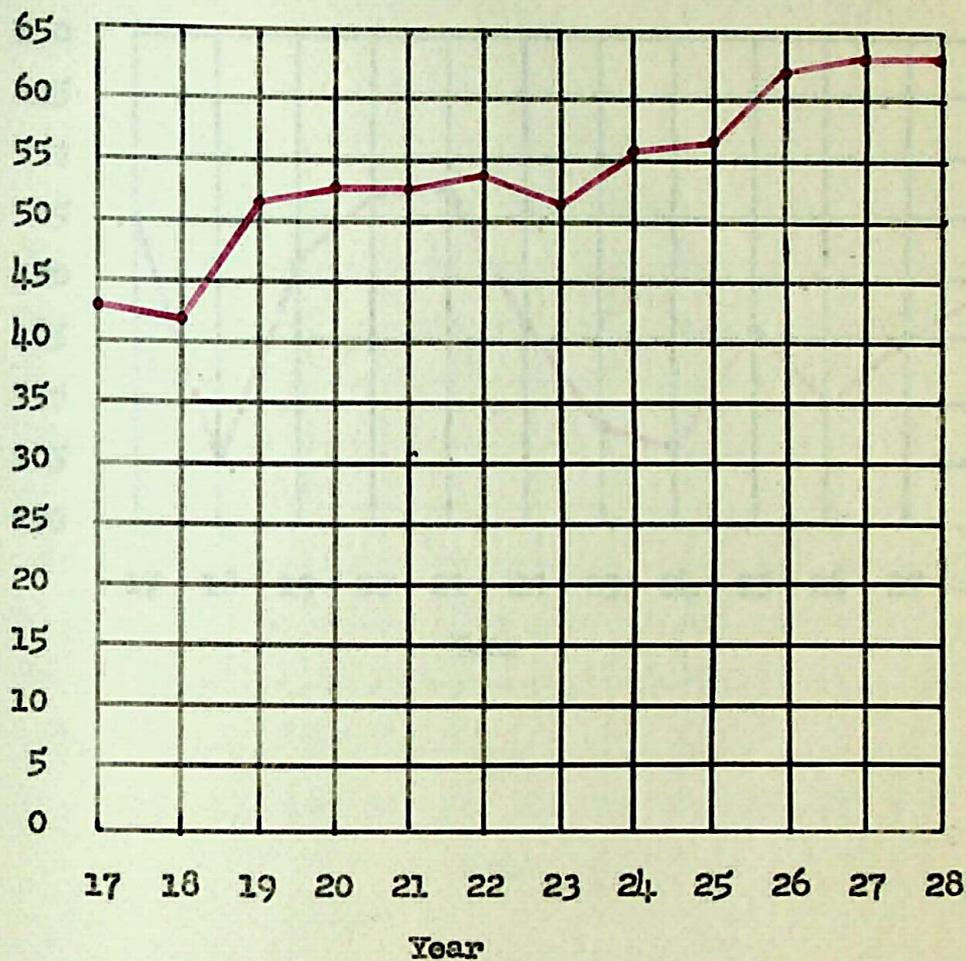
No. of
Pastors

TABLE 10

Number of Congregations and Preaching Stations
Oregon--Washington District 1917--1928

No. of Cong.
and Stations

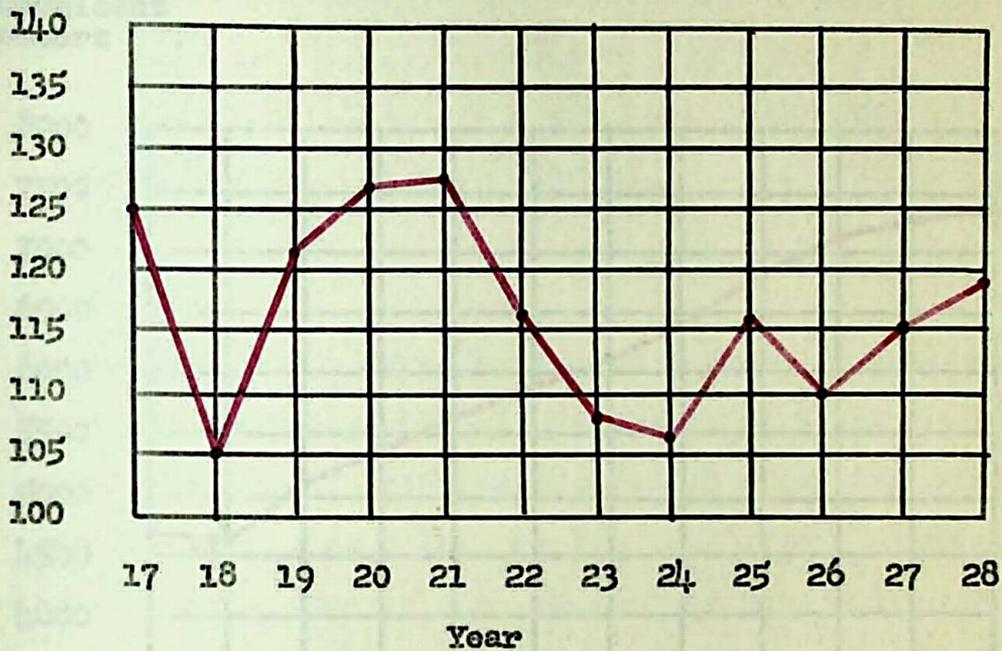


TABLE 11

Growth of Communicant Membership
Oregon--Washington District 1917--1928

No. of
Communicant
Members



CHAPTER V

THE YEARS OF DEPRESSION

May I insert a warning against littleness of faith. Because of lack of faith of some small leaders, it was impossible to place many candidates that graduated in the thirties. . . . The real great men in our church pleaded, nearly on their knees, but in vain. . . . The Lord grant that when the next depression comes, we may do as our Fathers did in 1894; They did not close colleges; they opened several of them.

Rev. Weert Janssen¹

These words by Rev. Janssen were actually a commentary on the situation looking back upon it after World War II. However, it fell to his lot to guide the affairs of the district during the greater half of the trying depression years. Having been elected to this office already in 1921, he was to guide the destinies of the District for fifteen years. Without question the last seven were the most difficult.

Actually, two major items that were decided during this time were carried over from the previous years. Both involve the expansion of mission work in the Northwest, and both felt the Depression affect them. The first of these

¹"Movie Script for Fiftieth Anniversary Film," Unpublished manuscript in Northwest District Archives, Portland, Oregon.

matters concerned the division of the District. Such a policy was not new to Synod and certainly not to the District, for it had evolved from such a division.

At the Convention of 1927 an overture was introduced designed to divide the District into two parts: a Washington District, comprising that state and the northern section of Idaho, and an Oregon District, consisting of that state and the southern portion of Idaho. However, there was not sufficient time left during that convention to give the matter proper discussion and so it was carried over for fuller discussion at the next convention.

The plan was offered so that the work of the Church might be carried on more efficiently in a more manageable area. Two basic reasons offered for the division were population and territory. In an information sheet provided at the convention the following reasons were given as working in its favor: (abridged)

The aim of this overture is reduction of the vast territory in our District for the purpose of carrying on the work of the church more effectively and intensively. Synod has always based the boundary lines for its districts on State lines. The division of our territory is not serious. It will not affect our stand toward the General Synod or the relationship to the congregation. It will change nothing but a boundary line. It is simply a rezoning. If it is done in interest of efficiency, then it is good business.

It is also good business, because it will not cost more, but rather have the opposite effect.

Because:

- b. The presidents work increases in larger districts. In some Districts the district pays the salary of an assistant

- pastor in order that the president may have time to do the work.
- c. More officers will not increase our payroll as our officers are not paid.
 - e. It will make our dollars perhaps reach a little further or do a little more work in the mission field.
 - f. It will not work a hardship on General Synod who now and always have subsidized our mission work. We will not require a larger subsidy because of a division.²

A number of other considerations played an important role in the discussion at the convention the following year (1928). Better representation of the Northwest at Synodical conventions as well as greater lay participation in District affairs were among these arguments.

The plan was that if the 1928 convention approved the division of the District, they would lay the petition before the General Synod of 1929 and then consummate the division at the 1930 convention of the original District, this group electing its new respective officers and boards. The division of the property was to be effected on the basis of communicant membership as well as the funds and equipment of the various boards. No change as far as the relationship to Concordia College, Portland, was planned.³

The table immediately following illustrates the change on

²Unpublished manuscript in the Northwest District Archives, Portland, Oregon.

³Ibid.

the basis of the 1927 figures.⁴

TABLE 12

Comparative Strength of Proposed Districts

District	Pastors	Souls	Comm.	Total Funds
Oregon	32	5687	3369	\$13,783.71
Washington	30	5269	3214	\$ 9,849.38

Thus, the matter was carried into the 1928 District convention at Portland. Considering the importance of the situation, it was referred to a committee for study.

The matter was brought to the convention floor again at Tacoma, Washington, in 1930, and it was resolved to refer the matter to the individual congregations for a decision.⁵ The 1931 convention at Portland gave the entire matter a thorough discussion, but again the decision was postponed with the following resolution:

To elect a committee of six men, three pastors and three laymen, carefully to study the question of the division of the District, and that they publish, so far as possible, all arguments pro and con three months before the 1933 sessions of our District convention. The following were elected to serve on this committee: Revs. Nitz, Engelbrecht, H. Gross; Messrs. A. Engel, J. Neils, Hugo Schmidt.⁶

⁴Ibid.

⁵"Oregon-Washington District," Proceedings of the Twenty-first Convention, 1930 (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1930), p. 43.

⁶"Oregon-Washington District," Proceedings of the Twenty-second Convention, 1931 (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1931), p. 54.

During these next two years the matter was discussed throughout the District and from these discussions a new development evolved.

The congregations in Southern Idaho had for a number of years felt cut off from the large section of the district. The difficulties imposed by distance were already present in the earliest days and held up the development of the region for some years. With the fever of separation in the air, these brethren came to the 1933 Convention at Hillsboro, Oregon, with the counter resolution that they be granted the right to petition Synod for a District status. This had its effect on the previous plan for division and the committee reported the following:

- 1) That the request of the Southern Idaho brethren to petition Synod for the formation of a separate Synodical District be granted.
- 2) That there be no Synodical division between Oregon and Washington.⁷

Thus, the planned division of the Oregon and Washington District was dropped for good. There is little question as to the influence the Depression had on this. The time was not ripe for an expansion in those directions.

The Idaho brethren carried their petition to the Delegate Synod at Cleveland in 1935. They cited as the first and immediate reason the question of distance which

⁷"Oregon-Washington District," Proceedings of the Twenty-third Convention, 1933 (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1933), p. 33.

was involved. Idaho was almost seven hundred miles from the coastal areas where the work of the District was most heavily concentrated. Good administration dictated a closer arrangement in a promising mission field such as theirs. They also indicated the unusual quality of their mission problem. Idaho was a predominantly Mormon area (as it is in the main today), and no consideration of this in missionary techniques can be adequately given on the larger scale of the entire Northwest. Finally, they were convinced that they could almost be financially self-sustaining on the basis of their past contributions and district support.⁸

The petition received careful consideration at the Delegate Synod, but again the shadow of the economic situation cast its share of gloom upon any such expansion plans. In its report, the convention committee agreed that the distance problem was a serious matter, but that the other factors outweighed this and rejected the memorial on the following grounds:

The fact that the new district would be a small one, consisting of only twelve pastors, twelve congregations, with two thousand souls; in view of the further fact that the pastors of Idaho are all comparatively younger men; and in view of the additional fact that this new district would be in need of some subsidy.⁹

⁸"Evangelical Lutheran Church of Missouri, Ohio, and Other States," Proceedings of Thirty-sixth Regular Convention, 1935 (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1935), p. 205.

⁹Ibid., p. 206.

The committee report was adopted by the convention. Thus, all the division plans which had evolved over the eight year period came to naught, and the District structure has remained unchanged to date.

The second matter occupying the attention of the District at the turn of the decade was the introduction of a new territory into the District area. The field of Alaska was deemed ripe unto harvest. Actually, the work of the Church in Western Canada in a number of areas adjoining the Oregon-Washington District did not respect specific district lines. This was natural due to the physical aspects of the area. The territory of Alaska stood in this matter in an odd position. Natural access was difficult from either region. In 1928, however, the mission work was begun at Anchorage.¹⁰ The work actually came under the Home Missions Board of Synod, but was handled in many respects from the Northwest.

Alaska has been for many years the most misunderstood possession of the United States. Ever since the time of its acquisition, when the name "Seward's Icebox" was given in impolite deference to the Secretary of State who engineered its purchase from Russia, the facts of this bountiful and productive land have been frequently obscured in the myth and legend of total Eskimo population and per-

¹⁰"Upon This Rock," Fiftieth Anniversary booklet of the Northwest District, 1949, Archives of Concordia Historical Institute, St. Louis.

petual sub-zero weather. This has carried over into the area of church work, which forces upon the uninformed the subsequent painful admission that almost a half-century before the Oregon Trail and the Gold Rush, the Eastern Orthodox as well as the Lutheran Church was functioning in that area.¹¹

Naturally, the first church in the territory was the Russian Orthodox communion. Missionaries went along with the first explorers and built churches, extending their work also to the native population. An imperial order of Catherine the Great in 1793 sending eleven missionaries to the territory marks the official beginning of church work in Alaska.¹² It became an independent diocese in 1838 and numbered 10, 561 communicants some three years later, of which 8, 532 were natives.¹³

No exact date for the founding of a Lutheran congregation or church can be given. It can be fairly certain, however, that by 1839 a Lutheran congregation had been established. The causes for this are no doubt found in the policy of the Russian rulers of that time in attracting as many skilled workers from Germany and the Scandinavian

¹¹Simon, John E., "Some Facts about Russian and Lutheran Churches in Early Alaska," Concordia Historical Institute Quarterly, XI, 2 (July, 1938), 56.

¹²Ibid., p. 57.

¹³Ibid.

countries as possible. Rev. John Simon, in his study of the early Alaskan religious situation, quotes:

To provide for this population, a Lutheran minister was sent to Sitka in 1839 and remained until 1845. He was the celebrated Rev. Uno Cygnaeus, who afterwards became famous as the founder of the Finnish Primary School.¹⁴

Rev. Cygnaeus also worked among the native population, creating at this time a system of education focusing on manual training, for which he became noted. The work among these Indian tribes was difficult, for they were commonly considered the most treacherous of any American Indian group.

By the spring of 1841 a church building for the Lutherans was in existence. It included a small, but excellent, pipe organ brought from Germany, an unusual item for any church west of the Mississippi at that time, much less in Alaska.¹⁵ Visitors reported that the Lutherans were a blessing there, for even the Orthodox priests were noted as inveterate toppers with little concern for the natives. The financial needs of the church were provided by the Russian-American Fur Company. With the purchase of the Alaska Territory by the United States, however, the Lutheran church came to an end there, and for almost thirty years there was no activity. The arrival of Rev. T. L. Brevig of the Norwegian Synod in 1894 brought its reintro-

¹⁴Ibid., p. 58.

¹⁵Ibid., p. 59.

duction.¹⁶

Two years later the Alaskan Territory came into national prominence with its Klondike Gold Rush. The eyes of every adventure hungry individual turned toward this new territory, and from this date a gradual settling of the land took place. In 1928 the Missouri Synod began its work at Anchorage. This was soon doomed, however, due to the economic conditions prevailing in the United States and the resultant cutbacks in slow and distant mission fields. Thus, the mission at Anchorage was closed in 1932.

However, conditions became more favorable again in 1935, and, at the request of the General Mission Board, the District Board took over this field, as well as engaging in new work in the Matanuska Valley.¹⁷ Rev. F. M. L. Nitz and Rev. Georg traveled to Palmer (in the Matanuska Valley) and canvassed the area that year, deciding to establish the mission at Palmer, with Anchorage being served as a preaching station.¹⁸ St. John's Lutheran Church was organized in Palmer in 1937, dedicating a building that same year. Pastor R. M. Frieling served as their first resident pastor.

While the question of District division and the entry into Alaska were items of major consideration during these

¹⁶Ibid., p. 62.

¹⁷"Convention Section," The Lutheran Messenger, XV, 5 (July-August, 1936), 4.

¹⁸"Upon This Rock," op. cit.

years, there was no let up in the usual work of the District. The promising outlook of the Twenties was dimmed, but the mission view was not lost in spite of the trying conditions. The 1930 convention laid plans for a mass canvass of the District to include every town with a population of one thousand or above, such a canvass to include mass meetings if possible.¹⁹ Send them out, two by two, was the plan. It was hoped that the funds would be available for the extensive use of this method. If possible, the larger city congregations were to employ vicar-candidates so that the supply of graduates of the seminaries, which was now equaling and surpassing the demand, could be adequately used.

The next year saw little change in the situation. The plan remained mission-centered, and new fields were continually being evaluated. But the economic pressures were pushing hard. A resolution at the 1933 convention was introduced which would have abolished the office of Field Secretary (Director of Missions).²⁰ It was defeated, but the very presence of it indicates the strain under which the men were working. The needs were increasing, the men were available, but the funds were lacking.

¹⁹"Oregon-Washington District," Proceedings of the Twenty-first Convention, 1930 (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1930), p. 34.

²⁰"Oregon-Washington District," Proceedings of the Twenty-third Convention, 1933 (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1933), p. 22.

In an effort to increase the manpower without additional expense, all mission salaries were cut one hundred and fifty dollars per annum in 1934.²¹ The Mission Board had to report sorrowfully, nonetheless, that while a minimum of six candidates could have been used, and were available, only one could be called. And yet, monetary problems were not the only ones which faced the convention. In 1934 they had to deal with the problem of the movies--a situation that strikes one humorously today--but was considered a great threat to the church then. Several resolutions were passed, condemning motion pictures for moral laxity, and censuring pastors who condoned attendance by members of their congregations at offensive pictures.²² In all fairness, however, it should be noted that at this time the movie industry did not control the content of the picture to the degree that it does today.

In the area of Indian mission work an attempt was made to save. The Synodical Board for Home Missions began handling this, for, after the beginnings of the work in the Colville mission did not fare too well, the interest in the work shifted to Fort Hall, Idaho, with the program taken over completely by the General Synod.²³ In 1932 Rev. F.

²¹"Oregon-Washington District," Proceedings of the Twenty-fourth Convention, 1934 (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1934), p. 31.

²²Ibid., p. 41.

²³"Evangelical Lutheran Synod of Missouri, Ohio, and Other States," Thirty-fifth Regular Convention, 1932, p. 113.

Geiswinkler was sent by the Board to the Yakima reservation in Washington, but this eventually was discontinued in 1938, being declared a barren field.²⁴

The parochial school was suffering to a large extent at this time. After the previous decade's battles against state law and language problems, the economic conditions struck a weakened situation. But the plea for more schools was continuously voiced, and the District School Board attempted in every way to further the cause of Christian Education, both on the parish level, and in the support of the college at Portland.

In 1936 Rev. F. M. L. Nitz was elected president of the District. The conditions of the nation were improving. Economic reforms instituted by the federal government were proving valuable, not only from a fiscal standpoint, but induced increased migration to the Northwest and created mission possibilities in such fields as C. C. C. work. The Mission Board could report that year that six of the seven candidates serving as vicars could be given regular calls.²⁵ Rev. Weert Janssen had led the District through these trying years. His own work was enviable, for there is hardly a town in Central Washington boasting one of our churches

²⁴"Evangelical Lutheran Synod of Missouri, Ohio, and Other States," Proceedings of the Thirty-seventh Regular Convention, 1938 (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1938), p. 166.

²⁵"Convention Section," The Lutheran Messenger, XV, 5 (July-August, 1936), 4.

which is not in some way indebted to his labors. From regular church buildings to tents and trailer missions, he brought the Word of God to these people. In his own words he comments:

Over one hundred congregations, pastors, their wives and children brought much happiness into my life through their friendliness and hospitality. It has been a wonderful life for an unworthy sinner.²⁶

Rev. F. M. L. Nitz too was a pioneer in the District. He accepted the call to Bellingham, Washington, immediately upon his graduation from the St. Louis seminary in 1903 and remained there for his entire ministry. Prior to his election to the presidency, he had served as a Vice-President of the District. Under his leadership in these reconstruction and war years, the District pushed ever onward with renewed vigor into the mission field.

At the 1937 convention an extensive resolution calling for the establishment of a Board of Directors was introduced.²⁷ This Board was to consist of nine men, the President, Treasurer, two pastors, one teacher, and four laymen. Its purpose was to consolidate the various existing boards under one unified group. This motion was given over for discussion during the following two years to a committee. No action was taken in 1939, but it was

²⁶"Script for Fiftieth Anniversary Movie," op. cit.

²⁷"Convention Issue," The Lutheran Messenger, XVI, 10 (September, 1937), 20.

again resolved that a complete study be made for report the following year.

The 1940 convention at Tacoma brought the discussion of the Board of Directors' proposals to a head. While rejecting the original resolution submitted in 1937, it resolved that the District should have a Board of Directors, and that a committee be set up which would formulate a more workable plan for the next convention in 1942. It was understood that if no suitable substitute was developed, the resolution creating the Board would not go into effect.²⁸

The picture was brightening. An era which was entered upon through the door of economic tragedy was once more stabilized. The mission appeal of the church had not been lost, although it was sometimes stalled. New fields had been entered. Christian education in the District had suffered to a large degree, but the future looked brighter in this area also. The keynote of the moment now centered on better organization to meet expanding needs. Beginnings in this respect are found in the district-wide canvasses attempted and the introduction of the District Edition of the Lutheran Witness with the consequent elimination of the Lutheran Messenger in 1937 in the blanket subscription

²⁸"Oregon-Washington District," Proceedings of the Twenty-seventh and Twenty-eighth Conventions, 1939 and 1940 (n. p., n. d.), p. 31.

plan. But war had broken out in Europe, and the United States was being drawn ever closer. The prospect of another wartorn period was casting its shadow over the bright hopes of the District's fifth decade.

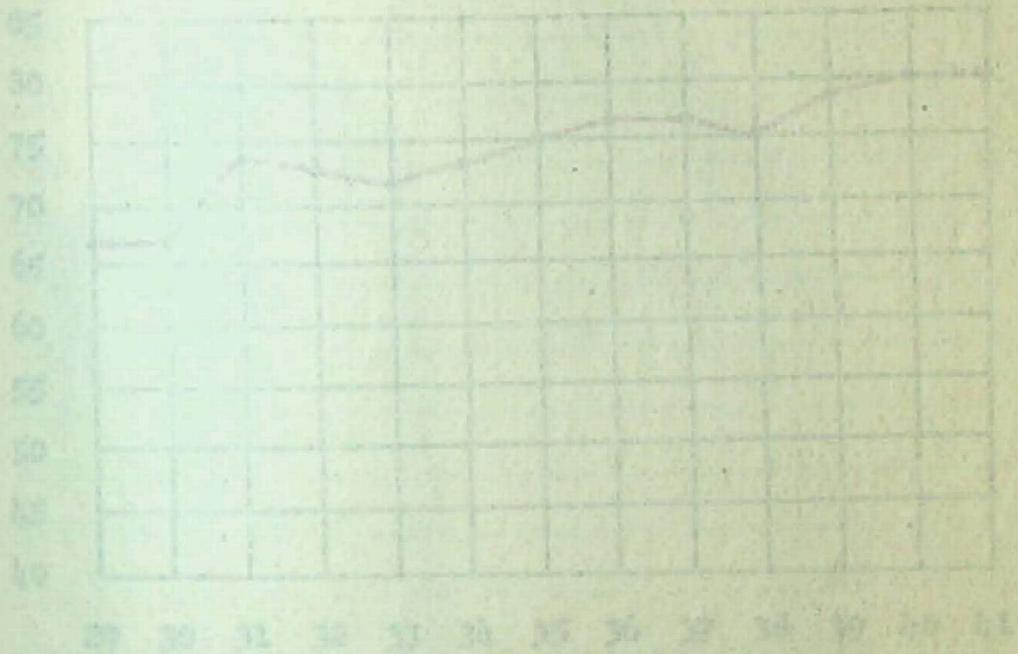


TABLE 13

Number of Pastors

Oregon--Washington District 1929--1941

No. of Pastors

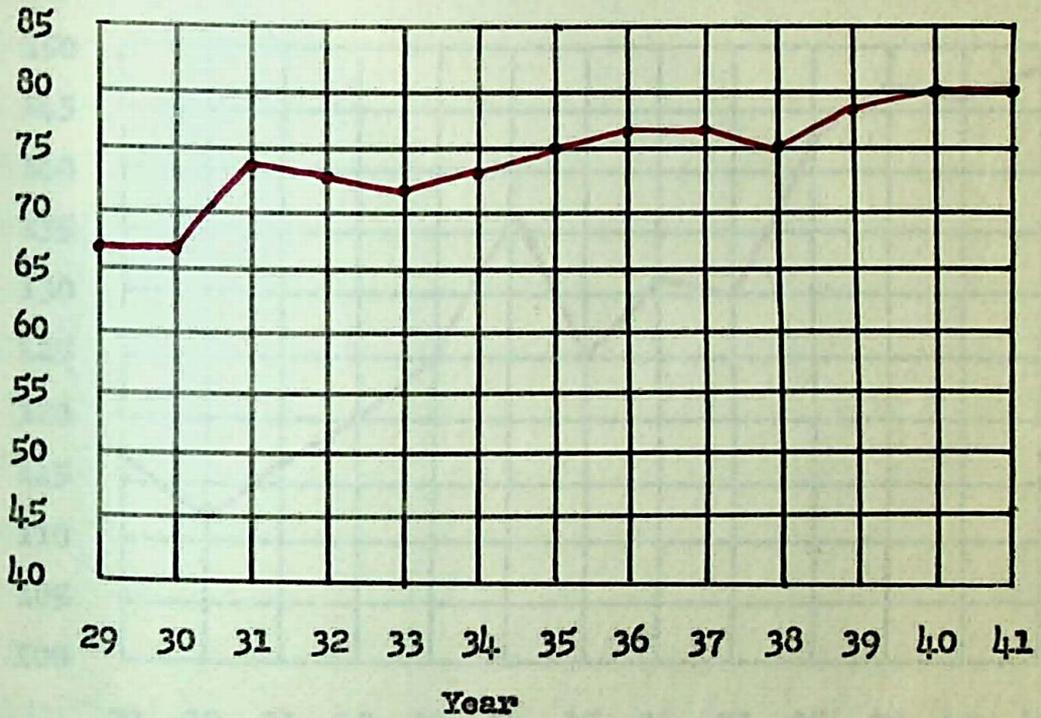


TABLE 14.

Number of Congregations and Stations
Oregon--Washington District 1929--1941

No. of Cong.
and Stations

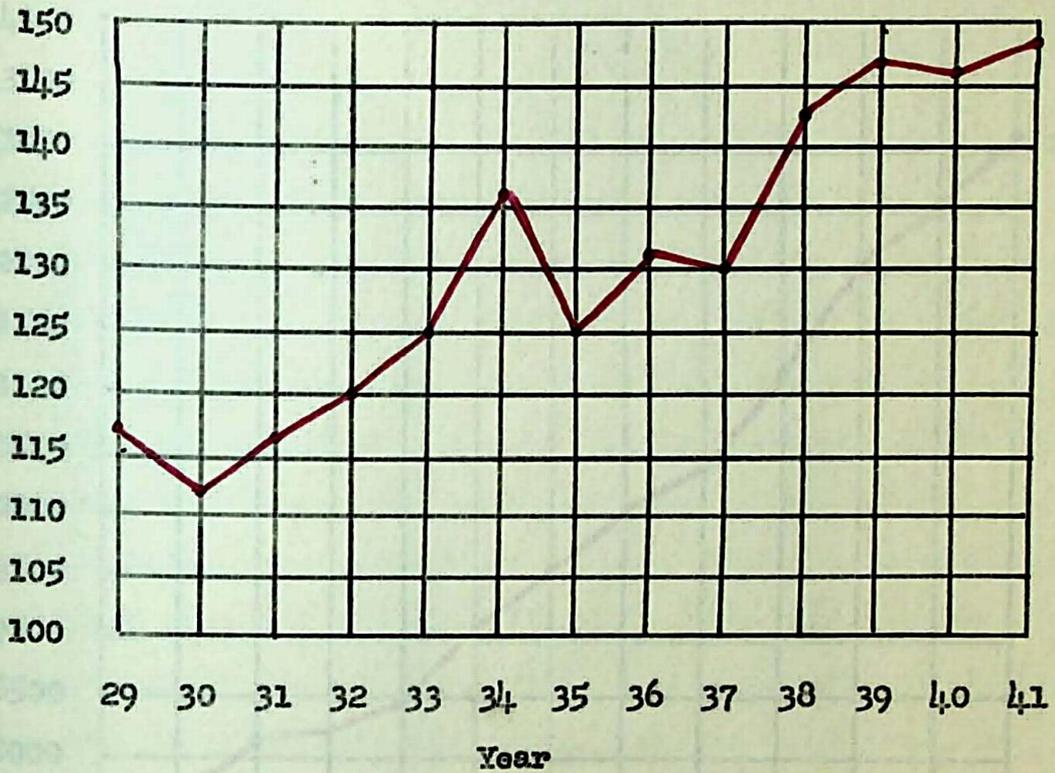
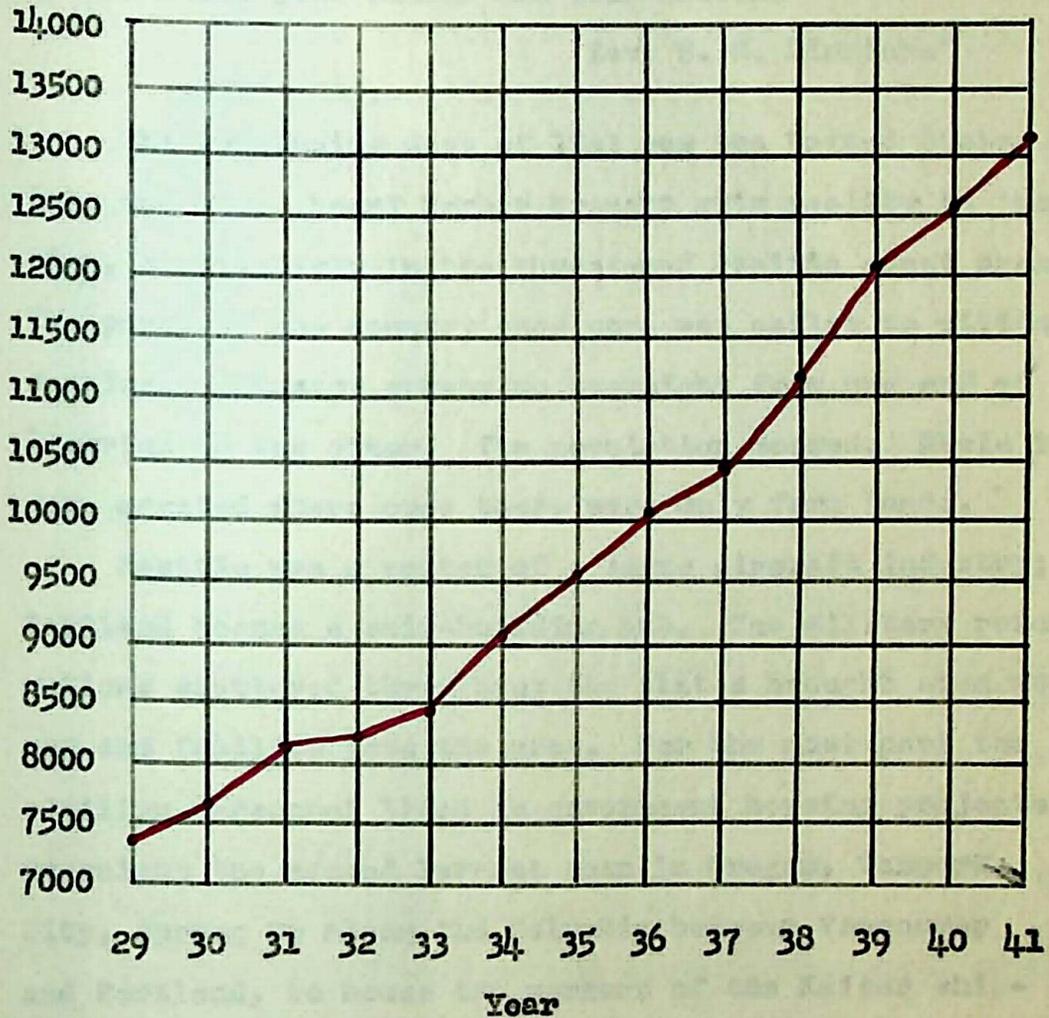


TABLE 15

Growth of Communicant Membership
Oregon--Washington District 1929--1941

No. of
Communicant
Members



CHAPTER VI

FIFTY GOLDEN YEARS

Shout Hallelujah, O Zion, ye saints of Salvation
Lift up your hearts in thanksgiving and glad jubilation
All through these years
Crown'd with successes and tears
God blest your church and your nation!

Rev. E. W. Hinrichs¹

The concluding days of 1941 saw the United States drawn into the war. Pearl Harbor brought grim reality to the nation, particularly in the threatened Pacific coast area. The youth of the country once more was called to military service. Industry sprang up overnight from one end of the District to the other. The population soared. Whole towns were created where once there were only farm lands.

Seattle was a center of a large aircraft industry; Portland became a ship-building hub. The military reservations scattered throughout the states brought even more men and families into the area. For the most part the civilian personnel lived in government housing projects. Overnight the second largest town in Oregon, Vanport City, sprang up along the Columbia between Vancouver and Portland, to house the workers of the Kaiser shipyards. Other areas experienced similar developments. For this new situation a new method evolved. Conservation

¹"Upon This Rock," Fiftieth Anniversary Booklet, Northwest District, in Concordia Historical Institute, St. Louis, Mo.

workers, as they were called, moved into these projects to bring the message of the Gospel. The attempt was made to place full time men in each situation, but where this was not possible, vicars, women parish workers, and pastors from adjacent congregations filled the gaps.

The 1942 District convention met at Albany, Oregon. The report of the Mission Board was most encouraging. Twelve candidates had been placed in the District, and new fields were opened. Some construction had been accomplished before the wartime restrictions hindered further efforts, and the use of portable chapels in promising fields was attempted.²

The report also was read on the prospective Board of Directors. The following proposal (abridged here) was adopted:

The District Board of Directors shall be made up of six pastors, one teacher, and five laymen. . . . the following standing committees:

- 1) Mission Committee. Two pastors and one layman.
- 2) Committee on Stewardship and Finance. Two pastors and one layman.
- 3) Church Extension Committee. One pastor and one layman.
- 4) Committee on Christian Education. One teacher and one layman.
- 5) Committee on Student Support and Young People's Work. One pastor and one layman.

. . . .
The District President and District Treasurer shall

²"Oregon-Washington District," Proceedings of the Twenty-ninth Convention, 1942 (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1942), p. 42 ff.

be ex officio members of the Board of Directors. The District convention shall elect three men from the Board of Directors to serve as Trustees.³

The election of the men for the Board was to be handled so that at least one pastor from each conference circuit was on the Board. The following men were elected to the first District Board: Pastors W. Hillmer, C. Amling, M. Zagel, E. Hinrichs, Geo. Schmidt, Teacher W. Kersten, Messrs. P. Neils, F. Reils, T. Reese, G. Nickles, and G. Hilken.⁴

To meet the needs of the service people, three service centers were located in the District, at Portland, Tacoma, and Spokane. These met the recreational as well as the spiritual needs of the Lutheran boys away from home. Local congregations and societies contributed of their time and means to assist in this. Typical was the Center in downtown Portland which the Army-Navy Commission of Synod was enabled to establish through the efforts of local Lutheran Laymen's League groups. Rev. F. Krinke, who had served the Tacoma Center, carried on the work here through the end of the war. He also contributed columns from time to time in the District Supplement slanted at aiding the service man to adjust. Where such centers were not feasible, the local pastor and congregation undertook the work.

³Ibid., p. 40.

⁴Ibid., p. 53.

In 1943 the District Office, and with it the position of District Executive Secretary, was established. Suitable rooms were acquired in a downtown Portland building to serve as a center for District activities. Rev. William Hillmer was called as first Executive Secretary. Reporting to a convention later, he cites the following pertinent paragraphs of the call:

To do all that is possible for him to do, within the limits of his calling, for the upbuilding and efficient administration of District affairs; to take charge of the District Executive Office; to strive for the general advancement of the kingdom of Christ.⁵

Through his efforts, a smooth functioning executive arm of the Board of Directors was established. This office is the nerve center of District affairs, as well as a meeting place for the Board of Directors and various committees.

The war did not shorten the District view, however. Already in 1943 plans were laid for the post-war expansion of the District. The convention that year at Dishman, Washington, set up "The Lord's House Project." Its purpose was to increase the working capital of the Church Extension Fund, so that the building programs of the new missions would not be hindered by lack of funds. As

⁵"Oregon-Washington Edition," The Lutheran Witness, LXVII, 16 (August 10, 1948), p. 9.

soon as building would be permitted, there would be many requests for aid, and these had to be met.⁶

The wartime expansion also hit Alaska and the mission there. It was deemed advisable to call a second man into the field, and Rev. G. Nitz accepted the call as second resident Pastor in the territory.⁷ A church building was erected at Anchorage. This was also used as a service center for the Lutheran military personnel in the region. However, Rev. Nitz did not restrict his labors to Anchorage, but he also set up a preaching station at Fairbanks which he served regularly.

Yet with all these innovations to meet the new challenges, we find also the revival of an old office, that of "circuit rider." Former President W. Jansson, having recovered from a siege of illness, was called to fill this position with these specific activities:

To visit such towns and communities in the three States comprising the Oregon-Washington District as are not readily accessible to a Lutheran pastor and cannot be conveniently served by one;
 . . . to explore the mission possibilities of such towns and communities; to keep in touch with his flock by mail, where the number of people does not warrant making a regular visit.⁸

Part of the financing of this circuit rider mission was

⁶"Oregon-Washington District Edition," The Lutheran Witness, LXIII, 2 (January 18, 1944).

⁷Ibid., LXIII, 4 (February 15, 1944).

⁸Ibid., LXIII, 24 (November 21, 1944).

undertaken by the Lutheran Women's Missionary League of the District.

Notwithstanding the fact that the war was obviously drawing to a conclusion, it was decided that the conservation work should not be discontinued. Its purpose had been to "conserve" the migrating Lutherans, and the need to serve this moving group remained. A good bit of this work fell into the hands of the new circuit rider; among such efforts was his development of the congregation at Richland, Washington, the "atom town" on the upper Columbia River. The housing projects did not disappear with the war, for though industry was cutting back its war contracts, the population was not leaving, but many stayed to seek other work.

The District convention at Portland in 1946 was the first to be held in peacetime in six years. An atmosphere of new and greater fields to conquer prevailed with promising mission prospects throughout the District. The war years had brought their attention to many needs; full time institutional work was begun in Washington and Oregon in 1944. The use of women parish workers in canvassing and surveying mission fields proved helpful in alleviating the manpower shortage.

Christian education in the District also rebounded with the conclusion of the war. Concordia College finally achieved permanent status and a grant for a new building.

A large part of the District convention was taken up with the consideration of District-sponsored high schools. In Yakima, Washington, in 1945, a committee had been set up to investigate the problem, and a complete analysis of the situation was presented.⁹ While final decision was left pending until the 1948 convention, education was at last receiving a vital share in the long range planning.

These immediate postwar years saw a district building boom, both in mission and established congregations. New fields were opened. The increased population brought on by war work did not diminish as some had foreseen; this brought natural expansion and new missions in the urban areas. The "Each one Reach One" campaign reached its high point during these years and brought many additions to the churches in the District.

The year 1948 brought two tragedies to the District. On January 25, President F. Nitz missed his first church service in forty-five years because of illness. Though he was determined to preach that morning, the strength was not there, and he suffered a heart attack, dying that afternoon. The words of the Yakima church paper pay the following tribute:

He had rendered unto us and our Church in the Northwest a service which only God can measure. He gave

⁹"Oregon-Washington District," Proceedings of the Thirty-second Convention, 1946 (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1946), p. 29 ff.

freely, and without any earthly remuneration, of his ability and time that the work of our Savior in our District might be furthered. His doctrinal instruction and his practical advice were ever freely rendered to both pastors and congregations, faithfully as unto the Lord.¹⁰

The burdens of the expansion program fell upon the shoulders of the First Vice-President, C. H. Bensene of Seattle. The new President had come to the Northwest from Oklahoma in 1940, accepting the call to Zion, Seattle. He had served as Vice-President of the District since 1945.

A second calamity befell the District in the Vanport City Flood of Memorial Day, 1948. A housing project built during the war years, this conservation project had developed into a mission congregation of some eighty communicants, served at this time by Rev. R. Aumann. The entire town was wiped out by the rampaging Columbia, and though there was a considerable loss of life and property, all the members of the Lutheran mission were spared physical harm. The congregations of the District rallied to help the group, and services were held temporarily in the Concordia College Chapel.

A disaster committee was set up, and help flowed in from all parts of the District. Approximately five thousand dollars was collected and distributed to the victims. In addition, the International Convention of the Walther

¹⁰"Oregon-Washington District Edition," The Lutheran Witness, LXVII, 4 (February 24, 1948).

League, meeting in Portland during the summer, received an offering of almost eight hundred dollars at its banquet, which it gave to this disaster relief program.¹¹

The District convention met at Snohomish, Washington, in 1948. The abolishment of the office of Superintendent of Missions was resolved, the work falling upon the Executive Secretary. In twenty-eight years what changes had been wrought through the efforts of Rev. Georg, the only holder of the office! Much of the itinerant work of the Superintendent of Missions was taken over by the circuit rider. A report of the new circuit rider, Rev. Hy. C. Schulze, showed the extent to which this office functions:

Frequent trips are made to visit the scattered Lutherans in the byways of our District. . . . Thus far (two years) he had traveled approximately fifty thousand miles, called on some three thousand, four hundred homes, and given about four hundred and fifty hours of religious instruction. . . . One hundred and seventeen places in our District are being served; also two in Nevada and one in South Dakota.¹²

In addition to the personal visits, extensive mission work by mail is included in the program.

The committee which studied the District-sponsored high school resolutions reported a definite need for such schools, but the convention did not feel that it was in a

¹¹Ibid., LXVII, 22 (November 2, 1948).

¹²Ibid., LXVII, 16 (August 10, 1948), p. 4.

position to offer financial backing for such endeavors in the light of increased mission responsibilities in new fields. Plans were also laid for the celebration of the Golden Anniversary of the District during the next year. It was to enter this year with a new corporate name, "The Northwest District of the Lutheran Church--Missouri Synod."¹³

The importance of Stewardship and Finance committees received recognition with the passing of a resolution authorizing the Board of Directors to engage a full time Secretary of this group.¹⁴ The years 1946 and 1947 saw the District reach and pass the million dollar mark in funds raised for home purposes, and this office would be the focal point of efforts to push this higher and higher. However, no funds had been provided for such a post, and it was decided that the extensive budget obligations already present would force the postponing of this call for the time being.¹⁵ The Executive Secretary was asked, meanwhile, to give greater emphasis to this area.

The question of District division arose again, and it was resolved that the Southern Idaho brethren be given permission to join with the Utah brethren (of the Colorado District) in forming a new district, pending the approval

¹³Ibid., p. 12.

¹⁴Ibid., p. 12.

¹⁵"Northwest District Edition," The Lutheran Witness, LXVIII, 2 (January 25, 1949).

of the 1950 Synodical convention at Milwaukee.¹⁶ The memorial to this effect was denied there for the following reasons: There seemed to be sufficient evidence that the Utah group did not wish to join with them; It would mean another subsidized district for Synod; No memorial to this effect was received from the Colorado District. For these reasons the action was considered premature.¹⁷

The Jubilee year, 1949, had hardly begun when the District lost the services of its Executive Secretary. Rev. Hillmer accepted the call to be Assistant Executive Secretary of the Board for Home Missions of Synod. His last report presented to the District indicates the wide range of work he undertook:

155 days traveling in the interest of the District, gave 18 addresses on the work of the Church, preached 22 times, attended 56 conferences and meetings, held 26 meetings with mission congregations, 60 private conferences with men in the field, conducted three seminars, had four one-day conferences with field workers, trained women parish workers, and promoted Evangelism Workshops.¹⁸

Rev. Amos Schmidt of Vancouver, Washington, was called to be his successor. Shortly after he took office the District acquired its new office in the Administration Build-

¹⁶Ibid., LXVII, 16 (August 10, 1948), p. 11.

¹⁷"Lutheran Church--Missouri Synod," Proceedings of the Forty-first Regular Convention, 1950 (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1950), p. 556.

¹⁸"Northwest District Edition," The Lutheran Witness, LXVIII, 7 (April 5, 1949).

ing of Concordia College. Under Rev. Schmidt's capable leadership, the District Office has continued to be the helping hand of the District. In his report to the 1952 convention he states:

This next year will mark the Tenth Anniversary of the establishment of the District Office and the Office of Executive Secretary. . . . Is the District Office necessary? Is it worthwhile? With the burden of parish work heavy upon every pastor, it is our conviction that no pastor or group of pastors should be asked to devote the amount of time to the District work which would be required if there were no District Office.¹⁹

To properly take cognizance of the Anniversary of the District, President Bensene issued the following proclamation:

WHEREAS, The history of the Northwest District for the past fifty years amply testifies to the abundant blessing of our God; and
 WHEREAS, Our hearts cannot but overflow with thanksgiving and praise, and we also desire opportunity to bring a thankoffering of the gifts which God has showered upon us;
 THEREFORE, I, Carl H. Bensene, President of the Northwest District of the Lutheran Church--Missouri Synod, do herewith proclaim the year of our Lord nineteen hundred and forty-nine a Year of Jubilee for the Christians of the Northwest District; and I do furthermore encourage each congregation to set aside August twenty-one, the tenth Sunday after Trinity, for festival services of thanksgiving and praise to our glorious God; and
 I do, finally, urge every congregation within the confines of our District to sponsor a generous

¹⁹"Northwest District," Proceedings of the Thirty-sixth Convention, 1952, p. 62. Mimeographed booklet.

thankoffering in connection with its observance;
 this in accordance with the goals and objects
 approved by our District.

(signed) Carl H. Bensene²⁰

The 1948 convention had designated that forty per cent of
 this offering was to go toward the Administration Building
 of Concordia College and sixty per cent to the District
 Church Extension Fund.²¹

The Jubilee convention was held in Portland, Oregon.
 A Golden Anniversary Film had been prepared, as well as
 a pageant, and other festival events to mark the occasion.
 The anniversary booklet, "Upon This Rock," was also circu-
 lated at this time. But a remembrance of past blessings
 did not consume all the convention time. The advances in
 the mission field were as promising as in past years. Ad-
 ministrative changes recommended in the form of offices of
 Executive Secretary for Stewardship and Finance and Director
 of Education were tabled for study until the next convention.
 The District also authorized a loan and initiated sponsorship
 of the construction of a gymnasium for Concordia College.²³

The years following have witnessed the continued
 growth of the District. The expansion in church construc-

²⁰"Northwest District Edition," The Lutheran Witness,
 LXVIII, 14 (July 12, 1949).

²¹"Oregon-Washington District Edition," The Lutheran
 Witness, LXVII, 16 (August 19, 1948), p. 10.

²²"Northwest District Edition," The Lutheran Witness,
 LXVIII, 15 (July 26, 1949), p. 11.

²³Ibid., p. 10.

tion is one important feature of the last few years. Not only new buildings, but many of them represent the latest and best in church architecture. At first the Korean "war" brought a temporary building scarcity, but soon construction returned to its normal pace. New missions were opened in the urban areas, as the population of the Northwest continued to grow. The addition of the Junior College department at Concordia, Portland, brought a sizeable increase in enrollment, particularly in ministerial and teacher-training fields.

Seattle was host to the 1951 convention. The matter of acquiring a full time Executive Secretary of Stewardship was tabled once more; the resolution calling for a Director of Education was defeated.²⁴ It was also resolved to hold all subsequent District conventions at Concordia College, due to its excellent facilities and central location.

The graphs at the end of this chapter show the tremendous growth which the District experienced in the years during and immediately following World War II. Under God's grace, each succeeding convention has recorded mission growth; the obligation placed upon the District by President H. A. C. Paul has not been forgotten. And there are still new fields developing on every hand. The 1952 conven-

²⁴Ibid., LXX, 18 (September 4, 1951), p. 11.

tion report of the Mission Committee included a careful survey of possibilities now opening up in the District.²⁵ Even in the larger, settled regions there are places which have been untouched by our church.

The District convention of 1954 authorized the Board of Directors to call a Counselor of Stewardship and Parish Education, thus combining the two separate posts which had been proposed over the last several conventions. This same convention also took occasion to honor the services of Mr. A. K. Engel, District Treasurer for the past forty-five years. His recollection of the District dates back to the earliest days of our first congregation in Seattle (1901), and the devotion which he has shown to the cause of the church is indicative of the personal sacrifices made by so many laymen of the Northwest for the furtherance and spread of the Kingdom.

The concluding words of President Bensene's Anniversary message illustrate the power and the strength of this growth:

And now we are about to turn another page in the history of the Northwest District of the Lutheran Church--Missouri Synod. The Lord will continue to shower His blessings upon us if we continue faithful in His Word and in the administration of the blessed Sacraments. Let us remain faithful unto death. Let us cling unto His Word and be assured

²⁵"Northwest District," Proceedings of the Thirty-sixth Convention, 1952, pp. 41 ff. Mimeographed booklet.

that His name shall be glorified and His Kingdom
come.²⁶

This faithfulness to the pure Word of God has been the characteristic of the District since its first missionary put his feet on Northwest soil. And the growth which has been sketchily chronicled on the past pages will be insignificant compared with the future expansion under this same Word and Grace in the great Pacific Northwest.

²⁶"Upon This Rock," Fiftieth Anniversary Booklet of the Northwest District, on file in Concordia Historical Institute, St. Louis, Missouri.

TABLE 16

Number of Pastors

Northwest District 1942--1953

No. of Pastors



42 43 44 45 46 47 48 49 50 51 52 53

Year

TABLE 17

Number of Congregations and Stations

Northwest District 1942--1953

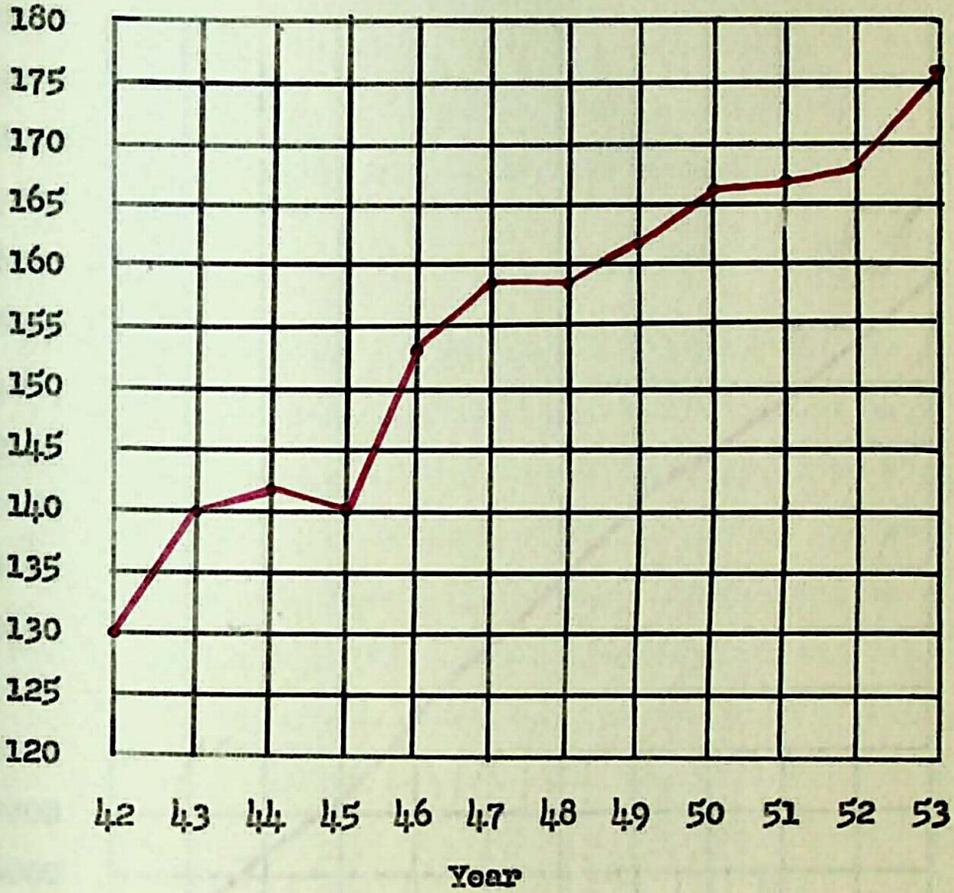
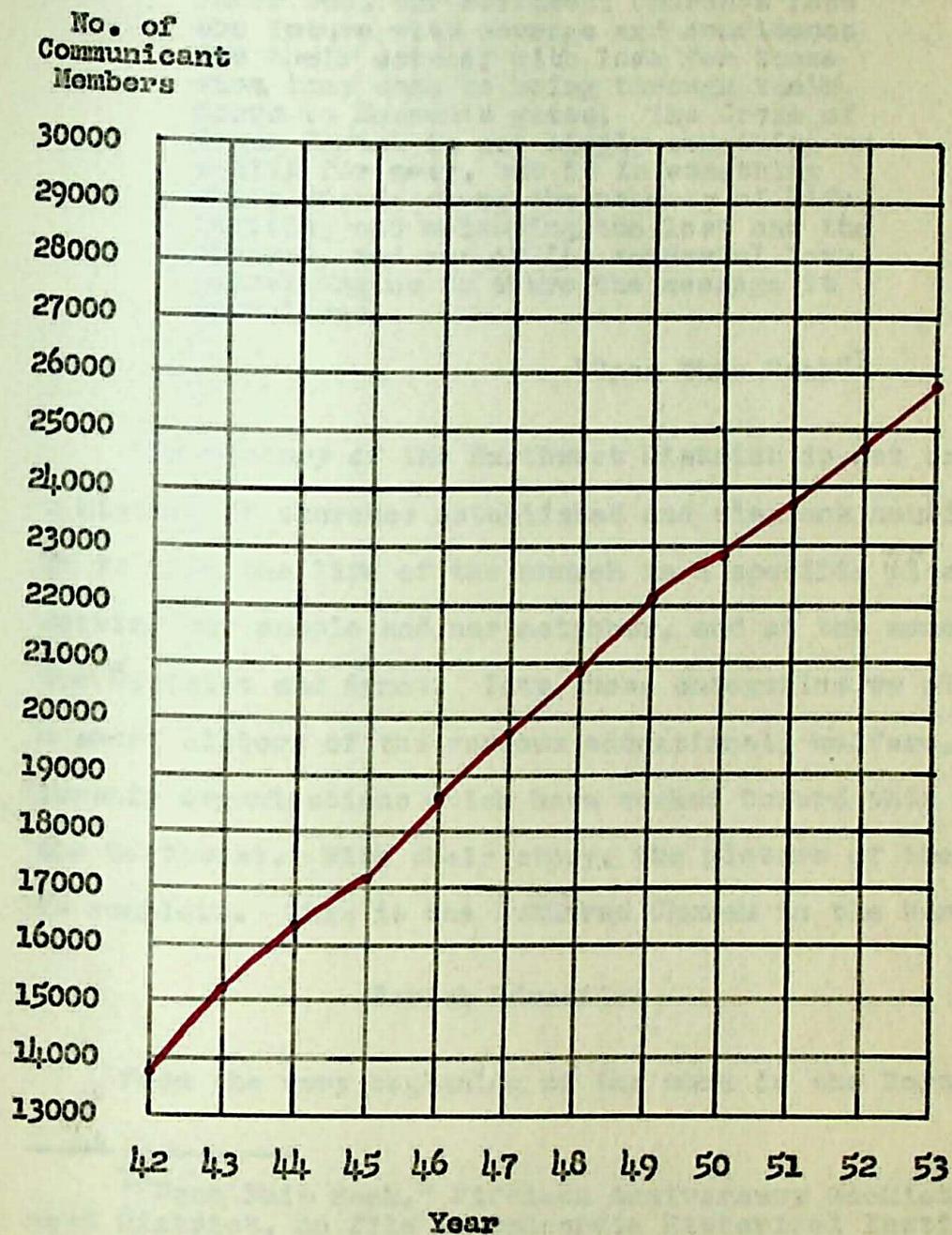
No. of Cong.
and Stations

TABLE 18

Growth of Communicant Membership
Northwest District 1942--1953



CHAPTER VII

THE DISTRICT AND THE LOCAL CONGREGATION

Under God, our Northwest Churches face the future with courage and confidence for their estate; with love for those whom they seek to bring through their doors to Heaven's gates. The Cross of Jesus Christ is not simply something on a hill far away, but it is something which stands along the roadway of life, inviting and welcoming the lost and the strayed, and out of its wonderful love, compelling us to share the message it symbolizes.

"Upon This Rock"¹

The history of the Northwest District is not only a history of churches established and missions nourished. It is also the life of the church in a specific place, serving her people and her neighbor, and at the same time, the District and Synod. Into these categories we place here a short history of the various educational, welfare, and fellowship organizations which have worked toward this end in the Northwest. With their story, the picture of the District is complete. This is the Lutheran Church in the Northwest.

Parish Education

From the very beginning of the work in the Northwest,

¹"Upon This Rock," Fiftieth Anniversary Booklet, Northwest District, on file in Concordia Historical Institute, St. Louis, Missouri.

the parish school was stressed as a vital missionary link. Already in 1880 beginnings were made at Cornelius, Oregon, by Rev. A. Kentner, although it was not until 1887 that Rev. M. Claus formally organized the first parochial school in the District.² In the succeeding years wherever a church was founded, a school was urged and, in most instances, established almost at once. The usual situation found the Pastor serving as teacher; however, at the convention organizing the District, Christian Markworth, of Zion, Portland, was present as the first called teacher in the Northwest. In the years following, several other teachers were called to the various schools, in many instances serving a lifetime in that place for the cause of Christian education. Teacher R. Kuhnau, of Trinity, Portland, is an example of such devotion. Until his forced retirement this year because of ill health, he served fifty-two years as a teacher at Trinity, principal for many years, and member of various District boards.

However, teachers were not always plentiful, and where they might be had, the funds were not available all too frequently. The pastor remained the key figure in the school picture for the most part (see Table 19, page 126), and typical of the efforts expended by them for a well-run, though often primitive, school is this report by Rev. Emil

²Simon, Martin P., "A Brief History of Lutheran Education in Oregon," Concordia Historical Institute Quarterly, V, 2 and 3 (July and October, 1932), p. 76.

TABLE 19

Parochial School Education
Northwest District 1899--1953

Year	No. of Schools	Teaching Staff		Stud.	No. of Pupils
		Pastor	Male		
1899	8	6	1	0	233
1904	23	18	5	0	485
1909	29	20	9	1	595
1913	36	26	9	3	835
1919	27	15	12	0	758
1924	23	13	11	2	801
1929	20	7	13	4	640
1934	16	3	12	1	644
1939	17	5	15	2	722
1944	18	2	22	5	991
1949	19	3	22	9	1260
1953	19	1	25	11	1413

Luecke, then of Shefflin, Oregon:

Our little school at Shefflin was begun in the fall of 1909. We used the church. School benches were provided by fastening long boards with hinges to the back of pews. Later we pushed the pews back and used a number of second hand school benches. When we built our little school (dedicated October 5, 1913) we became almost at once a 'standard' school, a type of accreditation then in vogue in Oregon. Our children, particularly in the upper grades, regularly took the State final examinations. We made every effort to conform to the course of study recommended by the State at that time.³

In 1916 the District convention created a District School Board which then assisted in the conducting and establishing of schools.⁴

With the coming of World War I, however, the schools suffered to the point where they have never fully recovered. German language remained a barrier, for in many instances this was the sole reason for the school. The gradual decline in the use of the language, as well as the Oregon School Fight (see Chapter IV) of 1922, brought a steady decline in schools and number of pupils in the years following.

Attempts were made to enter into the field of high school education as early as 1924 in Albany, Oregon. Rev. H. Messerli undertook the ninth grade instruction there for several pupils. The continuance of this was not tolerable because of distances involved. The Lutheran Education Society, which was organized to assist Concordia College, took a

³Ibid., p. 78.

⁴Ibid.

hand in attempting to begin a Lutheran high school for girls in 1925, but this project never got past the discussion stage.⁵ In 1930 Trinity Lutheran School of Oregon City, Oregon, established a Junior High School, and this was later expanded to a high school, which continued, under trying conditions, until several years ago. The pressure of expanding curricula and additional expenses forced its collapse. Over these years, however, it did produce a number of graduates.

The Sunday School received its greatest impetus during World War I with its emphasis on English. Prior to this, any congregation which had its own parochial school, as a rule, did not bother to establish a Sunday school, not realizing the great mission potential this would have. However, with the dirth of parochial schools, this agency of Christian education soon grew until today there is hardly a congregation in the District that does not have a Sunday School and Bible Class. Together with the Sunday School, the Saturday school idea grew, and in more recent years, the Vacation Bible School has become an important factor in parish education.

Concordia College, Portland, Oregon

Already in nineteen hundred and one a possible method

⁵Ibid., p. 80.

for offsetting the manpower shortage in the District was the establishment of local training facilities. When a similar shortage appeared in 1903, discussion once more focused on the necessity of home-grown clergy, specifically urged by the words of Dr. F. Pieper, "You must raise your own crop!"⁶ However, the optimism which Synod's president had was not shared by the majority of that district convention, and the matter was tabled. In 1904 the interest of the California-Nevada District in the founding of a preparatory school stimulated thinking in terms of a joint project. A committee was set up to appraise the situation with them, and unable to agree upon a location, each district went its own way. The report delivered to the 1905 convention pointed up this difference in location, but also stated that it was not a matter of great alarm, citing a letter from Dr. Pieper to this effect.⁷

In the meantime, a college committee which had been established in 1904, circularized the district for information concerning the number of pupils that might be expected to enter the school if it should open in the Fall of 1905. Because only six applications had been received,

⁶Nauss, Allen, "Concordia College, Portland, Oregon," Concordia Historical Institute Quarterly, XXV, 4 (January, 1953), p. 176.

⁷Ibid., p. 178.

by February of that year, a second letter was sent re-opening the entire question. The congregations responded by voting to open the school that Fall, and in addition, not to ask the General Synod for financial support for the school. Pledges amounting to one thousand dollars a year for the next three years were subscribed for its support. The facilities of the new school room in the basement of Trinity, Portland, were made available for classes. The problem of housing seemed irreconcilable until Mr. Adolf Kuempel, a member of the school committee and also of Trinity, agreed to room and board the students in his own home. The committee, which had been asked to constitute a Board of Control until the next District convention, called a member of the graduating class of the St. Louis seminary as the school's first teacher. President Luessenhop installed Candidate F. W. J. Sylwester as professor of the new school on September 10, 1905, at Trinity Church, Portland.

Dr. Sylwester had attended the preparatory schools at St. Paul and Milwaukee, completing his training in St. Louis. Prior to his call to Portland, he had served as an instructor at Concordia, St. Paul, Minnesota. A diligent student, he continued his studies at the University of Oregon and in 1928 received his Master of Arts degree from that school. In 1954 the Faculty of Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, recognized his unstinting labors in the field of Christian education by conferring upon him the degree of Doctor of Divinity,

honoris causa. Through fifty years Dr. Sylwester has almost single-handedly symbolized the cause of Christian education in the Northwest. A modest, unassuming man, who never could bring it upon himself to accept the title of president but called himself simply director, he has continued to serve the school as librarian after his retirement from the directorship in 1946, and this year marks his fiftieth year of service at the college.

On September 11, 1905, Concordia College in Portland entered a family of thirteen Missouri Synod educational institutions above the grade school level. Prof. E. H. Brandt writes of this first year:

When the next convention met at Sherwood in 1906, the Board of Control submitted a report through which there rings a decided note of confidence. He who reads the report carefully can readily sense the challenge that had to be met. But there is not much said about it--forward, on, on!⁸

That same convention decided to acquire land for the college, and this was accomplished in the Spring of 1907 with the purchase of a five acre plot in the northeast section of Portland. Problems had arisen, meanwhile, in the Kuempel household, and he asked to be released from his promise to house the students for the next year. Confronted with this emergency, the District resolved to construct a six thousand dollar building; this was accomplished with-

⁸Ibid., p. 180.

out delay, the cornerstone being laid on August 25, 1907. Through the gracious invitation of several members of Trinity, the students were housed temporarily, finally moving into their new home the third week in December. The school was located in a new section of the city, being almost one-half mile away from the nearest homes. It was a simple wooden structure, built to accomodate twenty-five students, as well as a supervisor. Three years later an additional half-acre of property adjacent was acquired.

As each year was added to bring the total curricula to include four years of high school, the teaching load became increasingly heavy for one man. Thus, in 1907, as the third year was begun, the services of Vicar Lorenz Blankenbuehler were secured for the next two years. In addition, outside help was arranged for such things as singing and piano lessons. However, it soon became necessary for an additional full time faculty member to be acquired. The financial responsibility had hitherto been borne solely by the District. In the light of this new need, however, Synod, in 1911, voted to pay the salaries of the present professor as well as any faculty members needed in the future.⁹ A second regular professorship was granted in 1911.

During the years that followed prior to World War I, the enrollment steadied around twenty, with all pre-theo-

⁹Ibid., p. 183.

TABLE 20

Faculty Members--Concordia College
Portland, Oregon

Name	From	To
F. W. J. Sylwester	1905	--
L. F. Blankenbuehler	1907	1909
	1911	1920
August Mueller	1910	1911
E. H. Brandt	1921	--
A. O. Fuerbringer	1922	1923
Walter Bouman	1923	1924
Karl Lorenz	1924	1948
Curtis Stephan	1925	1929
Lando Otto	1941	1942
Arnold Lutz	1942	1943
Carl F. Nitz	1943	1945
Allen Nauss	1945	1946
Thomas Coates	1946	--
Arthur Wahlers	1946	--
R. P. F. Rossmeyer	1947	1948
Walter Rubke	1948	1949
Omar Stuenkel	1948	1952
Paul Schulze	1949	1950
Karl Keller	1950	--
Alfred Roth	1950	--
Donald Lorenz	1950	--
Walter Boss	1951	1955
Theo. C. Moeller, Jr.	1951	1952
Paul Harms	1952	--
Walter Keller	1952	1954
Karl Rutz	1953	1954
George Wellor	1954	--
Miss Lala Handorf	1954	--
Paul Theilo	1954	1955
Richard O. Reinisch	1955	--

logical students continuing their training at sister institutions with Junior College departments. The war had not noticeable effect on the school at first, but in 1918 only one new student enrolled. Appeals were made by both the District and the school for more students. In addition, the Lutheran Education Society, a district-wide organization, was established in 1919 to further the goals of the college. The increased enrollments of the subsequent ten years reflect the success of their efforts in this area.

Lorenz Blankenbuehler had been called as the second regular professor in 1911. He remained there until called to Concordia College, St. Paul, Minnesota, in 1920. This vacancy was filled with the election of Rev. E. H. Brandt that same year. In addition, due to the increased enrollment, student help was secured from the St. Louis Seminary. In 1923 the District turned the entire property, valued at thirty thousand dollars, over to the General Synod debt-free.¹⁰ This included the new gymnasium constructed in 1921. That same year Synod voted them a third professorship; this was filled with the calling of Rev. Karl Lorenz.

From 1923 through 1931 the problem of relocation arose. It was felt that the present property would not permit sufficient expansion. However, in that latter year, it was finally recommended that the school remain at its pre-

¹⁰Ibid., p. 22.

sent site. Additional dormitory space was urgently needed, and funds were voted for this and other necessities during the next years. However, the Fiscal Conference of 1927 requested a moratorium on any building operations. Portland's needs were not considered important enough to justify an expenditure. The same conflict occurred in 1929, and this, coupled with the depression, made no funds available. A survey taken that year of all the synodical institutions revealed the needs of the college, but instead of an appropriation, the recommendation was put forth to close the college. The appeal of the District memorializing its retention was tabled until the 1935 convention. At that time cooler heads were prevailing, and the depression scare had somewhat diminished; it was decided to continue the school, and while building plans were considered again, only the most urgent repairs could actually be undertaken. The depression had its effect upon the enrollment, but with the improvement of economic conditions and the removal of the threat of closure, the situation brightened considerably as the new decade dawned.

The 1941 convention at Fort Wayne, Indiana, appropriated sixty-five thousand dollars for the construction of a new building. Once again these high plans were frustrated by a request for a special survey of the trends in church work in the Northwest and their relation to the college. While this survey was being conducted, the

United States was catapulted into war. But an even more shocking bombshell hit the District. The report of this survey committee advocated the closing of the school. In a crucial meeting with the Board for Higher Education in St. Louis, the life of the college was saved, and its expansion assured through the persuasive efforts of the following men: Rev. Erich Eichmann, Secretary of the Board of Control of the college, F. Sylwester and E. Brandt, faculty members, as well as President F. M. L. Nitz of the District, and Rev. M. Zagel, a pastor from Idaho representing the District.¹¹

The synodical convention of 1944 authorized the funds necessary to erect the long-awaited dormitory. In addition, the college was granted a portion of the Peace Thank-offering of Synod. This same period brought administrative changes. Rev. Carl Nitz was engaged by the District to serve as Dean of the college, and through his efforts a great amount of publicity was achieved in the three-state area with a consequent growth in enrollment. A fourth regular professorship, which was to include the office of President, was granted by the 1944 convention. This position was filled in February of 1946 with the calling of Dr. Thomas Coates, then Assistant Executive Secretary of the Walther League.

¹¹Ibid., p. 171.

Nineteen hundred and forty-six marked the inception of a new era. The cornerstone of the new building was laid in November of that year, and the expansion program was under way. Through the succeeding years additional buildings were acquired, in 1948 the Administrative Building, in 1950 the gymnasium, a gift of the District, in 1951 the Chapel and Library, in 1953 a President's residence, and in 1954 a Dining Hall. But as rapidly as the buildings were acquired to accomodate the larger enrollment, the number of students increased to the point that at present all the available space is filled. This was prompted on the one hand by the rejuvenated campus and increased District awareness, and on the other by the addition of the two years of junior college. The school, from its inception, had proposed the full six-year program, abut although it petitioned for this at various times, it was not until the adoption of the "Portland Experiment" that this was accomplished. This plan provided for the removal of the first two years of high school as the college years were introduced. However, after the first year, opposition arose to this, and the second year of college was added without the dropping of the sophomore year of high school. Since this time requests have been made for the reintroduction of the freshman year of high school, but they have been without avail.

With the college addition, enrollment had centered

around the one hundred mark. Of these figures, the greatest numbers are in the fields of pre-theological and pre-teacher training. Another unfulfilled wish was finally realized in the introduction of coeducation on the college level in September, 1954, thus giving the school a complete teacher-training program.

Under Dr. Coates' leadership a considerable increase was also accomplished in the teaching staff. In addition to five regular professorships, five instructorships, and Seminary assistants, part-time teaching help comprises the staff. A full cultural and athletic program has been developed, and accreditation has been acquired for the high school department. Thus, the school, which once could have been characterized as Synod's step-child, has taken its rightful productive place in our system of higher education.

Lutheran Laymens' League

While the Lutheran Laymen's League came into existence shortly after the first World War, it was not until the late thirties that local men's clubs in the Northwest affiliated with the national body. The first charter granted by the national organization was issued to Zion Lutheran Laymen's League of Corvallis, Oregon, on November 13, 1939. Gradually, additional congregations took out charters with the hope of organizing a district in the Northwest. With

the advent of World War II, however, an extensive expansion program could hardly have been undertaken; nevertheless, through the efforts of Colonel Lawrence W. Meinzen, a Lutheran Laymen's League of Greater Portland, embracing a number of local congregations, was established. Through the war years, under the leadership of Dr. Earl Muck, they undertook as a special project meeting the needs of service men and women stationed in the area. In this respect they assisted in setting up the Lutheran Service Center in Portland.

However, it fell to the state of Washington to have the privilege of organizing the first district within the national body in the Northwest. The organizational meeting took place on November 2, 1945, at Seattle, with the first district convention held at Olympia the following year. Through the efforts of energetic membership chairmen, it acquired third place among the districts in percentage of communicant members enrolled. In addition to sponsoring numerous Lutheran Hour rallies and seminars, it has made major contributions in the area of Christian education, specifically through a scholarship program and district parish education efforts. This group also has brought national recognition to the area, sponsoring the convention of the main body at Seattle in 1955.

Shortly after the birth of the Washington District, the Oregon District was organized in January, 1946, at

Zion, Portland. On two occasions they sponsored huge Lutheran Hour rallies addressed by Dr. Walter A. Maier, in Portland, and they have placed the support of that radio mission first among their projects. These include, among other things, a scholarship program and seminars.

Idaho joined with Utah in the forming of a district in 1947. While the initial membership of this group was small, they nevertheless undertook many noteworthy projects. These included preparation of a directory of churches in the two states, a scholarship for Concordia College, Portland, and the underwriting of the expenses of a mission at Sun Valley, Idaho.

The combined efforts of these consecrated laymen have achieved many fruitful results in the Northwest. Their zeal in the support of the expansion program of Concordia College, as well as their backing of numerous mission projects, serve as concrete memorials to the dedicated men of the Northwest.

Lutheran Women's Missionary League

It is difficult to imagine a church without a Ladies' Aid. And so it was that at the first district convention a word of thanks for the services of one of these groups is already noted. For many years the work of the ladies' organizations remained within their own congregations and parishes. In addition to providing meals and service for

congregational and district functions, they applied themselves to the other manifold tasks that women perform.

When in 1941 Synod approved a memorial recognizing the desires of the women of Synod to organize nationally, this led to the formation of the "Federation of Lutheran Women." In 1942 the original name was changed to "The Lutheran Women's Missionary League." The organization of the women of the Northwest took place that same year at Trinity, Portland, where fifty-two women, representing twenty-two societies, adopted the constitution and elected Mrs. George Nickles as their first President. The district followed the same geographical pattern as the synodical district, namely, the states of Washington, Oregon, and Idaho.

Two years later the district held its first convention at Zion, Portland, with seventy-three delegates representing fifty-five societies, in attendance. The fifth anniversary brought membership figures of ninety-two societies and almost three thousand members. That same year the Idaho societies requested and were granted permission to withdraw and form a district with those groups in the state of Utah. Since that time, the district in the two remaining states has continually grown and expanded its many projects.

Among the initial projects undertaken by the District was the furnishing of the Northwest District Office in Portland, the contribution of one thousand dollars a year toward the support of the circuit rider, and additional

funds for the provision of deaconess assistance in mission fields.

At the same time the district has contributed to the many national programs of the Lutheran Women's Missionary League. It also has representation on the national executive council by virtue of the election of Mrs. Selma Fischer to the office of second vice-president of the main body. In 1952 it was host to the national convention in Portland. Truly the local district is fulfilling the motto of the body, "Serve the Lord with gladness."

Youthwork in the District

Luther, in speaking of the future of the church, said, "This matter depends above all upon our youth--if God would preserve His Church and Word, it must be done through our youth." These words did not go unheeded in the Northwest District, and the needs of the youth were early supplied by "Christenlehre" and "Jugendverein." Of course, in those early days it was a relatively simple matter, without the competition of the automobile and extensive outside entertainment, for the church to keep track of its young people.

World War I, however, brought a major change. The emphasis was shifted from German to English. The boys of 1917 came home from far away places men. The age of organization on a national level had begun. In that light

both Oregon and Washington established districts within the Walther League in 1921. During those early years Idaho united with these groups, but in 1938 it combined with Utah to form a separate body. Among the projects of those early years was the Wheatridge campaign and Hospice work. An effort was also made in 1926 by the Oregon District to organize a summer camp. This was finally accomplished in 1933 in conjunction with a Sunday School teachers' group. Thus, the way was paved for successive summer camp programs among the districts. In recent years the Lutheran Service Volunteer Schools and similar national programs are taking predominance.

The Northwest District itself takes an active part in the guidance and counseling of these societies through its Young Peoples' Board. This was established at the 1929 convention. The President was to appoint a Board for Youth Work, consisting of six or more members: one pastor, one teacher, and one layman from both Washington and Oregon, as well as one or more representatives from Idaho to be chosen by these men.¹² Since the inauguration of the Board of Director's form of administration, this group has been reduced in size and is a regular committee of that body, guiding and providing counsel for youth work throughout the district.

¹²"Oregon-Washington District" Proceedings of the Twentieth Convention (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1929), p. 40.

Work Among The Deaf

The first work among the deaf on the Pacific coast by the Missouri Synod began in the fall of 1914 when Rev. N. F. Jensen was called to serve the entire field. He made his headquarters in San Diego, California, and each month traveled over the entire region, a trip of some five thousand miles.¹³ In 1917 the Northwest received its own missionary, Rev. G. W. Gaertner, who resided in Seattle and served that area and Oregon, specifically, Portland and the State Institution at Salem. In 1919 Rev. J. Beyer came to Portland as the first resident deaf pastor. He left, however, in 1923, and the field was once more served from Seattle. With a re-evaluation of the stations, three men served the District area the next year, residing in Seattle, for the Western Washington regions, Portland, for the Oregon area, and Spokane, for Eastern Washington and all of Idaho. The situation remains the same today, with those cities serving as headquarters for the work.

Typical of the mission potentialities and gratitude with which this work is received is the following comment

¹³Simon, Martin P., Missouri Lutherans in Oregon (Unpublished manuscript on file in Archives of Northwest District, Portland, Oregon, 1934), p. 61.

of Rev. E. Eichman, for many years deaf missionary in Portland:

Nowhere in any state is there a field which is situated so conveniently, and where the Word of God has met with such ready response, as in Portland.¹⁴

At the present time the work in the district is being handled by Rev. John A. Boyer in Seattle, Rev. A. L. Hauptman in Spokane, and Rev. George Ring in Portland. These men serve ten stations.

Colored Mission Work

The work among the Negro in the Pacific Northwest has not been too extensive, due in the main to a lack of concentrated population area of that race. The concern of the Missouri Synod for this work, however, was present from the beginning. Already in 1901 Rev. H. C. Ebeling was named representative of the District for the work of Negro missions, and each year he presented the cause of the General Board at the Conventions and throughout the district.¹⁵ With the steady increase in industrialization, though, the negro communities have developed in the urban areas. Assimilation into the local congregation has been the policy as is the case in Portland, where Trinity congregation,

¹⁴Ibid., p. 62.

¹⁵Oregon-Washington District, Synodal-Bericht, 1901. (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1901), p. 31.

situated in a fringe area, has several families among its membership. Good Shepherd congregation of Seattle was established in 1950 as an interracial mission in the downtown area. Purchasing the old church building of Trinity, the Mission Board inaugurated the first work in the district specifically aimed at the negro group. Under the leadership of Rev. George Derwig a flourishing congregation has developed.

University and Student Work

Although it was not until 1953 that the District acquired its first full time Student Pastor, Rev. F. Bartling, who serves the campuses of Washington State College and the University of Idaho, the neighboring pastors have undertaken the work with much success. P. Harting of Philomath, Oregon, serves Oregon State College, and Rev. W. Maier of Eugene, Oregon, works with the University of Oregon group. The University of Washington is served by Rev. A. Hillmann, and Olympic Junior College is handled by Rev. E. Schramm.

While it would be a distinct advantage to have pastors working full time at these places, the present situation, nevertheless, offers a full range of social and religious activities for the Lutheran student. Gamma Delta, the Lutheran Student group, as well as partici-

pation in the activities of the local congregation, offers a well-rounded social and spiritual program.

Institutional Work

As we have seen already in Chapter IV, institutional work had been an early concern of the district. In those early years, however, the burden of the work had to remain upon the pastor of the congregation neighboring the institution. In 1944 Rev. Emil Becker was called as Institutional Missionary for Oregon, centering his efforts at Salem, where the majority of the state institutions are located. The Seattle region is served by Rev. W. G. Weiss. Beside these two full time missionaries, many other hospitals and sanatoria in the district are served by local pastors.

Work in the field of child welfare has also been undertaken in Seattle through the Associated Lutheran Welfare Agency. This agency offers services to families as well as conducting a children's home. Rev. R. Spannaus supervises the work.

Conclusion

Through the various media presented in this chapter the district brings to all people in the Northwest the ministry of education and service as well as the comfort

APPENDIX A

Congregations of the District

Place	Date Organized	Name
ALASKA		
Anchorage	1926	Anchorage
Juneau	--	--
Palmer	1935	St. John
IDAHO		
Aberdeen	1933	St. Paul
Ashton	1906	Zion
Blackfoot	--	--
Boise	1941	St. Paul
Boise	--	--
Bonnars Ferry	1940	Immanuel
Buhl	1943	St. John
Buhl	1915	Trinity
Burley	1949	Zion
Caldwell	1941	Grace
Eden	1916	Trinity
Emmett	1921	Our Redeemer
Filer	--	--
Glenns Ferry	--	--
Gooding	1945	Calvary
Grangeville	1930	Trinity
Homedale	1936	Calvary
Idaho Falls	1913	St. John
Jerome	1936	St. Paul
Mountain Home	--	--
Nampa	1917	Zion
New Plymouth	1906	Immanuel
Parma	1932	Trinity
Pocastello	1926	Grace
Rupert	1914	Trinity
Salmon	--	--
Twin Falls	1907	Immanuel
Wallace	1941	Bethany
Weiser	1943	Concordia
Wendell	1950	Christ
OREGON		
Albany	1891	Immanuel
Ashland	1948	Grace

Place	Date Organized	Name
Beaverton	1942	Pilgrim
Bend	1926	Trinity
Boardman	--	--
Brookings	--	--
Burns	1929	First
Condon	--	--
Coos Bay	1908	Calvary
Cornelius	1882	St. Peter
Cornelius	1905	Zion
Corvallis	1907	Zion
Cottage Grove	1947	Trinity
Enterprise	1950	Grace
Eugene	1920	Grace
Forest Grove	1932	Mt. Olive
Gold Beach	--	--
Grants Pass	1928	St. Paul
Grass Valley	--	--
Gresham	1935	Redeemer
Hermiston	1953	Bethlehem
Hillsboro	1917	Trinity
Hood River	1905	Immanuel
John Day	--	--
Klamath Falls	1924	Zion
Lakeview	--	--
Lebanon	1911	Bethlehem
Marion	1946	Mt. Calvary
McMinnville	1939	St. John
Medford	1928	St. Peter
Milton	1944	Calvary
Milwaukee	1954	Beautiful Savior
Molalla	1947	Grace
Mount Angel	1890	Trinity
Myrtle Creek	--	St. Matthew
Myrtle Point	--	--
Newport	1945	All Nations
North Bend	1948	Grace
Oak Grove	1952	Concordia
Oakridge	--	St. Luke
Oceanlake	--	Oceanlake
Ontario	1942	Pilgrim
Oregon City	1921	Trinity
Pendleton	--	--
Philomath	1950	Peace
Portland	1925	Calvary
Portland	1949	Good Shepherd
Portland	1947	Holy Cross
Portland	1953	Holy Sacraments
Portland	1927	Hope
Portland	1909	Immanuel
Portland	1942	Our Savior

Place	Date Organized	Name
Portland	1932	St. John
Portland	1948	St. Michael
Portland	1890	Trinity
Portland	1881	Zion
Princeton	--	--
Redmond	1951	Faith
Reedsport	--	--
Roseburg	1936	St. Paul
St. Helena	1947	Calvary
Salem	1899	St. John
Salem	--	--
Sandy	1907	Immanuel
Scapoose	1943	Grace
Seaside	1950	Faith
Seneca	--	--
Sheridan	1901	Trinity
Sherwood	1878	St. Paul
Springfield	1947	Hope
Sutherlin	1946	St. John
Sweet Home	1944	Bethel
The Dalles	1954	Faith
Tillamook	1926	Redeemer
Toledo	1942	St. Mark
Westfir	1953	St. Luke
WASHINGTON		
Aberdeen	1918	Calvary
Auburn	1938	Zion
Bellevue	1953	Pilgrim
Bellingham	1905	Trinity
Bingen	1953	Our Savior
Bremerton	1939	Memorial
Chehalis	1914	Peace
Coulee City	1949	Bethel
Dayton	1939	Redeemer
Endicott	1899	Zion
Everett	1901	Immanuel
Grand Coulee	1934	Zion
Hartline	1935	Victory
Kennewick	1909	Bethlehem
Kirkland	1935	St. Paul
Klickitat	1925	Grace
Lamona	1905	Zion
Longview	1926	Grace
Marlin	1903	Salem
Nolson	--	--
Monroe	1948	Peace
Moses Lake	1950	Grace
Mount Vernon	1927	Trinity

Place	Date Organized	Name
North Richland	--	Bethel
Odessa	1902	Immanuel
Olympia	1908	Trinity
Orcville	--	Faith
Pasco	--	--
Port Angeles	1938	St. Matthew
Port Orchard	1945	Bethany
Port Townsend	1952	Grace
Prosser	1949	Messiah
Pullman	--	University
Puyallup	1921	Immanuel
Republic	--	--
Richland	1947	Redeemer
Seattle	1948	Ascension
Seattle	1941	Beacon
Seattle	1942	Bethlehem
Seattle	1940	Calvary
Seattle	--	Good Shepherd
Seattle	1952	Holy Cross
Seattle	1918	Hope
Seattle	1951	McMicken Hts.
Seattle	1947	Messiah
Seattle	1943	Mt. Olive
Seattle	--	Northgate
Seattle	--	Our Redeemer
Seattle	1942	Our Savior
Seattle	1901	Trinity
Seattle	1919	Zion
Sequim	--	St. Matthew
Shelton	1938	Mt. Olive
Snohomish	1892	Zion
Spokane	1927	Faith
Spokane	1949	Holy Cross
Spokane	--	--
Spokane	1927	Pilgrim
Spokane	1926	Redeemer
Spokane	1900	St. John
Spokane	1939	Calvary
Sunnyside	1939	Calvary
Tacoma	--	Good Shepherd
Tacoma	1951	Grace
Tacoma	1924	Grace
Tacoma	1890	Zion
Tonasket	1942	Hope
Tonasket (Havillah)	1905	Immanuel
Vancouver	1943	Memorial
Vancouver	1908	St. John
Veradale	1951	Hope
Walla Walla	1909	Trinity
Wapato	1922	Hope
Washougal	1942	St. Matthew

Place	Date Organized	Name
Wenatchee	1913	St. Paul
White Salmon	1953	Our Savior
Winlock	1905	St. Peter
Yakima	1902	Bethlehem

Place	Date	Name
TRURO		
Ball		St. John
Ball		St. John
Ball		St. John
Twin Falls		Memorial
CHUCK		
Cornelius		St. John
Cornelius		St. John
Gregg City		St. John
Fortland		Martha Luther
Harbinger		St. John
Healy		St. John
Harvard		St. John
WASHINGT		
Emerson		St. John
Seattle		St. John
Shelton		St. John
St. Helens		St. John
Spokane		St. John
Spokane		St. John
Tacoma		St. John
Vancouver		St. John

*Schools active at present time in the District with the number of teachers given from the 1953 Lutheran Annual.

APPENDIX B

Christian Day Schools in District*

Place	Name	No. of Tchrs.
IDAHO		
Buhl	St. John	2
Buhl	Trinity	1
Eden	Trinity	1
Twin Falls	Memorial	6
OREGON		
Cornelius	Zion	1
Corvallis	Zion	2
Oregon City	Trinity	2
Portland	Martin Luther	2
Portland	Trinity	4
Sandy	Immanuel	1
Sherwood	St. Paul	1
WASHINGTON		
Kennewick	Bethlehem	4
Seattle	Concordia	3
Shelton	Mt. Olive	1
Snohomish	Zion	2
Spokane	Central	2
Spokane	Redeemer	3
Tacoma	Concordia	1
Vancouver	St. John	1

*Schools active at present time in the District with the number of teachers drawn from the 1955 Lutheran Annual.

APPENDIX C

Summary of California--Oregon District Conventions

- 1st Convention: September, 1887.
St. Paulus, San Francisco
Essayist: J. M. Buehler
Topic: Kirchengemeinschaft
Officers: Pres.: J. M. Buehler; Vice Pres.: G. Runkel;
Sec.: J. H. Theisz; Treas.: J. H. Hargens
Synodical Representative: Pres. H. C. Schwan
- 2nd Convention: January, 1889.
St. Paulus, San Francisco
Essayist: J. M. Buehler
Topic: Den rechten seligen Gebrauch der heiligen
Schrift.
Synodical Representative: Pres. H. C. Schwan
- 3rd Convention: January, 1891.
St. Paulus, San Francisco
Essayist: J. M. Buehler
Topic: Die Aufgabe der christlichen Kirche dem
Materialismus der Zeit gegenüber.
Officers: Pres.: J. M. Buehler; Vice Pres.: G. Runkel;
Sec.: J. H. Theisz; Treas.: J. H. Hargens
Synodical Representative: Pres. H. C. Schwan
- 4th Convention: January, 1892.
St. Paulus, San Francisco
Essayist: J. M. Buehler
Topic: Was ist zum Aufbau unserer Kirche an dieser
Küste erforderlich?
Synodical Representative: None.
- 5th Convention: April, 1894.
Zion, Oakland, California
Essayist: J. M. Buehler
Topic: Das Moralgesetz
Officers: Pres.: J. M. Buehler; Vice Pres.: G. Runkel;
Sec.: J. H. Theisz; Treas.: J. H. Hargens
Synodical Representative: Pres. H. C. Schwan
- 6th Convention: June, 1895.
St. Paulus, San Francisco
Essayist: J. M. Buehler
Topic: Thesen über das Evangelium
Synodical Representative: None.

7th Convention: July, 1897.
 Zion, Oakland, California
 Essayist: J. M. Buehler
 Topic: Der Alleinseligmachende Glaube
 Officers: Pres.: J. M. Buehler; Vice Pres.: G. Runkel;
 Sec.: J. H. Theisz; Treas.: J. H. Hargens
 Synodical Representative: Pres. H. G. Schwan

8th Convention: July, 1898.
 St. Paulus, San Francisco
 Essayist: J. M. Buehler
 Topic: Unser Glaube an die ewige Gottheit Jesu
 Christi dem Wankelmuth unserer Zeit gegen-
 über auf dem Gebiet der Religion.
 Synodical Representative: None.

THIS WAS THE LAST CONVENTION OF THE CALIFORNIA--OREGON
 DISTRICT.

9th Convention: July, 1900.
 Location: Oregon
 Essayist: H. A. ... Topic: ...
 Officers: Pres.: ... Vice Pres.: ...
 Sec.: ... Treas.: ...
 Synodical Representative: Pres. P. Meyer

10th Convention: July, 1901.
 Location: ...
 Essayist: ... Topic: ...
 Officers: Pres.: ... Vice Pres.: ...
 Sec.: ... Treas.: ...
 Synodical Representative: Vice Pres. P. Meyer

11th Convention: July, 1902.
 St. Paul, Oregon, Oregon
 Essayist: ... Topic: ...
 Officers: Pres.: ... Vice Pres.: ...
 Sec.: ... Treas.: ...
 Synodical Representative: Vice Pres. G. C. ...

APPENDIX D

Summary of Northwest District Conventions

- 1st Convention: August, 1899.
Zion, Portland, Oregon
Essayist: J. M. Buehler
Topic: Die Ausbreitung des Reiches Gottes die Höchste und köstlichste Aufgabe der rechtl. ev. luth. Kirche.
Officers: Pres.: H. A. C. Paul; V.P.: W. H. Behrens; Sec.: T. Fleckenstein; Treas.: George Beiersdorfer.
Synodical Representative: Pres. F. Pieper
- 2nd Convention: May, 1901.
Trinity, Portland, Oregon
Essayist: H. A. C. Paul
Topic: Schriftgemäße Lehre von der Bekehrung.
Synodical Representative: Pres. F. Pieper
- 3rd Convention: July, 1903.
Cornelius, Oregon
Essayist: H. Bohl. Topic: Vollkommene Heiligung.
Essayist: H. C. Ebeling. Topic: Hausgottesdienst.
Officers: Pres.: W. Luessenhop; V. P.: W. H. Behrens; 2nd V.P.: H. A. C. Paul; Sec.: A. Spleiss; Treas.: G. Beiersdorfer.
Synodical Representative: Pres. F. Pieper
- 4th Convention: July, 1904.
Zion, Snohomish, Washington
Essayist: W. Luessenhop
Topic: Heilsgewisheit
Synodical Representative: Vice Pres. P. Brand
- 5th Convention: July, 1906.
St. Paul, Sherwood, Oregon
Essayist: W. Luessenhop
Topic: Heilsgewisheit (cont'd)
Officers: Pres.: W. H. Behrens; V. P.: L. Stuebe; 2nd V.P.: H. Bohl; Sec.: A. Spleiss; Treas.: G. Beiersdorfer.
Synodical Representative: Vice Pres. C. C. Schmidt

- 6th Convention: June, 1907.
 Zion, Portland, Oregon
 Essayist: W. Luessonhop
 Topic: Heilsgewiszheit (cont'd)
 Synodical Representative: Vice Pres. C. G. Schmidt
- 7th Convention: July, 1909.
 Zion, Tacoma, Washington
 Essayist: W. Luessenhop
 Topic: Heilsgewiszheit (cont'd)
 Officers: Pres.: L. Stuebe; V.P.: H. Bohl;
 2nd V.P.: J. A. Rimbach; Sec.: A. Spleiss;
 Treas.: G. Beiersdorfer.
 Synodical Representative: Pres. F. Pfothenhauer
- 8th Convention: July, 1910.
 Trinity, Portland, Oregon
 Essayist: J. A. Rimbach
 Topic: Dasz die Bibel Gottes Wort und als solches
 zu gebrauchen ist.
 Synodical Representative: Vice Pres. J. Strasen
- 9th Convention: June, 1912.
 Trinity, Seattle, Washington
 Essayist: F. Schoknecht
 Topic: Die Gnadermittel
 Officers: Pres.: L. Stuebe; V.P.: J. A. Rimbach;
 2nd V.P.: F. Schoknecht; Sec.: A. Spleiss;
 Treas.: A. K. Engel
 Synodical Representative: Vice Pres. J. Hilgendorf
- 10th Convention: July, 1913.
 Cornelius, Oregon
 Essayist: O. Fedder
 Topic: Das Christentum in seiner etaetigung.
 Synodical Representative: Vice Pres. J. W. Miller
- 11th Convention: July, 1915.
 Zion, Snohomish, Washington
 Essayist: W. Janssen
 Topic: Jesus Christus unser Heiland nach John I.
 Officers: Pres.: L. Stuebe; V.P.: J. A. Rimbach;
 2nd V.P.: F. Schoknecht; Sec.: A. Spleiss;
 Treas.: A. K. Engel
 Synodical Representative: Pres. F. Pfothenhauer
- 12th Convention: June, 1916.
 Trinity, Portland, Oregon
 Essayist: W. Janssen
 Topic: Jesus Christus unser Heiland nach John I (cont'd)
 Synodical Representative: Vice Pres. H. Speckard

- 13th Convention: July, 1918.
 Zion, Tacoma, Washington
 Essayist: J. A. Rimbach
 Topic: Our Faith as confessed in the Creed.
 Officers: Pres.: J. A. Rimbach; V.P.: F. Schoknecht;
 2nd V.P.: W. Janssen; Sec.: O. Fedder;
 Treas.: A. K. Engel.
 Synodical Representative: Vice Pres. F. Brand.
- 14th Convention: July, 1919.
 Zion, Portland, Oregon
 Essayist: L. Stuebe
 Topic: Die erste Christengemeinde zu Jerusalem ein
 Vorbild für unsere heutigen Gemeinden.
 Synodical Representative: Vice Pres. J. Hilgendorf
- 15th Convention: July, 1921.
 Trinity, Seattle, Washington
 Essayist: L. Stuebe
 Topic: Die erste Christengemeinde zu Jerusalem ein
 Vorbild für unsere heutigen Gemeinden
 Officers: Pres.: W. Janssen; V.P.: C. J. Beyerlein;
 2nd V.P.: J. A. Rimbach; Sec.: F. Zehe;
 Treas.: A. K. Engel.
 Synodical Representative: Vice Pres. G. A. Bernthal
- 16th Convention: July, 1922.
 Salem, Oregon
 Essayist: Prof. J. H. C. Fritz
 Topic: Drei wichtige Fragen für die Kirche der
 Jetztzeit Loge, Begräbnis, Kirchenzucht.
 Synodical Representative: Pres. F. Pfotenhauer.
- 17th Convention: July, 1924.
 St. John, Spokane, Washington
 Essayist: Dr. F. Pieper
 Topic: Einige Sätze über den Unionismus.
 Officers: Pres.: W. Janssen; V.P.: J. A. Rimbach;
 2nd V.P.: C. J. Beyerlein; German Sec.:
 F. Zehe; English Sec.: H. C. Schulze;
 Treas.: A. K. Engel.
 Synodical Representative: Vice Pres. C. F. Dietz
- 18th Convention: June, 1925.
 Cornelius, Oregon
 Essayist: C. J. Beyerlein
 Topic: The Christian Day School an Excellent
 Missionary Institution
 Synodical Representative: Vice Pres. G. A. Bernthal

19th Convention: June, 1927.

Zion, Snohomish, Washington

Essayist: M. C. Knuth

Topic: Wie erziehn wir unsere Christen zur
Liebesthätigkeit

Officers: Pres.: W. Janssen; V.P.: J. A. Rimbach;

2nd V.P.: F. M. L. Nitz; German Sec.:

F. Zehe; English Sec.: P. Hilgendorf;

Treas.: A. K. Engel

Synodical Representative: Pres. F. Pfothenhauer

20th Convention: June, 1928.

Trinity, Portland, Oregon

Essayist: F. M. L. Nitz

Topic: Vom Beruf ins Predigamt

Synodical Representative: Vice Pres. F. J. Lankenau

21st Convention: June, 1930.

Zion, Tacoma, Washington.

Essayist: H. H. Koppelman Topic: The Proper Re-
lation between the Local Congregation and
the Synod.

Essayist: J. A. Rimbach Topic: Die Augsburgische
Confession in ihrer Bedeutung für die
Gegenwart.

Officers: Pres.: W. Janssen; V.P.: J. A. Rimbach;

2nd V.P.: F. M. L. Nitz; Sec.: F. Zehe;

Asst.: P. Hilgendorf; Treas.: A. K. Engel

Synodical Representative: Vice Pres. F. Randt

22nd Convention: June, 1931.

Zion, Portland, Oregon

Essayist: H. H. Engelbrecht Topic: The Missionary
Activities as Recorded in Acts Models for
Present Day Mission Work

Essayist: J. A. Rimbach Topic: Die Augsburgische
Confession in ihrer Bedeutung für die
Gegenwart

Synodical Representative: Vice Pres. J. W. Behnken

23rd Convention: June, 1933.

Trinity, Hillsboro, Oregon

Essayist: H. H. Engelbrecht

Topic: The Missionary Activities as Recorded in Acts
Models for Present Day Mission Work (cont'd)

Officers: Pres.: W. Janssen; V.P.: F. M. L. Nitz;

2nd V.P.: P. Schaus; Sec.: P. Hilgendorf;

Asst.: F. Zehe; Treas.: A. K. Engel

Synodical Representative: Vice Pres. H. Grueber

24th Convention: June, 1934.

Trinity, Seattle, Washington

Essayist: H. W. Gross Topic: The First Commandment
 J. Gihring Topic: The Second Commandment

Synodical Representative: Vice Pres. F. Randt

25th Convention: June, 1936.

St. Paul, Yakima, Washington

Essayists: H. Brockmann Topic: The Third Commandment
 H. Messerli Topic: The Fourth Commandment
 H. E. Ebeling Topic: The Fifth Commandment

Officers: Pres.: F. M. L. Nitz; V.P.: P. Schaus;
 2nd V.P.: W. Janssen; Sec.: P. Hilgendorf;
 Asst.: F. Zehe; Treas.: A. K. Engel

Synodical Representative: Vice Pres. F. J. Lankenau

26th Convention: June, 1937.

Trinity, Portland, Oregon

Essayist: P. Schmidt Topic: The Sixth Commandment
 H. A. Kahle Topic: The Seventh Commandment

Synodical Representative: Vice Pres. Karl Kretzschmar

27th Convention: June, 1939.

Zion, Snohomish, Washington

Essayist: Dr. W. Arndt

Topic: Walther on the Position of the Lutheran Church
toward the Scriptures

Officers: Pres.: F. M. L. Nitz; V.P.: E. Eichmann;
 2nd V.P.: P. Schaus; Sec.: R. Rimbach;
 Asst.: F. Zehe; Treas.: A. K. Engel

Synodical Representative: Vice Pres. F. J. Lankenau

28th Convention: June, 1940.

Zion, Tacoma, Washington

Essayist: P. Schaus Topic: The Eighth Commandment
 K. Lorenz Topic: The Ninth and Tenth
 Commandments

W. F. Dannenfeldt Topic: The Resurrection
 of Christ and the
 Life of the Church

Synodical Representative: Vice Pres. Herman Harms

29th Convention: June, 1942.

Immanuel, Albany, Oregon

Essayist: G. F. Schmidt Topic: Stewardship of Time
 and Talents

T. Brackmann Topic: Office of the Keys
 Officers: Pres.: F. M. L. Nitz; V.P.: E. Eichmann;
 2nd V.P.: G. Schmidt; Sec.: R. Rimbach;
 Asst.: V. Schulze; Treas.: A. K. Engel

Synodical Representative: Vice Pres. Arthur Brunn

36th Convention: June, 1952.
 Concordia College, Portland, Oregon
 Essayist: Theo. Brackmann
 Topic: The Doctrine of the Priesthood of the Believers
 and the Enlistment and Training of the Laity
 Synodical Representative: Pres. J. W. Behnken

37th Convention: June, 1954.
 Concordia College, Portland, Oregon
 Essayist: Dr. A. Schwermann
 Topic: The Last Things
 Officers: Pres.: C. H. Bensene; V.P.: E. Jaech;
 2nd V.P.: Th. Brackmann; Sec.: V. Schulze;
 Treas.: A. K. Engel
 Synodical Representative: Pres. J. W. Behnken

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