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**THE HISTORY AND FUNCTION OF TRAILER MISSIONS
IN THE 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

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June, 1961

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Reader

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A hundred years ago our pioneer missionaries in Michigan used the open-air method to spread the Gospel—the way that the heathen. Later our missionaries were among the first preachers called by the "free press" as it gradually spread a trail westward over the Rockies and to the West Coast. During our first ten years after Christ's Day 21, our Church preached that open Gospel in the same way, using the volume of a trailer.

The special purpose of open air evangelism by means of trailer stations was to bring the story of the love of Christ to communities where there were no churches.

Evangelical Service of Open Air Evangelism

Open Air Evangelism is nothing new. It was extensively practiced in the Eastward trail as well as the Westward. Paul preached to his whole generation in the open air (Acts 17:22). Stephen conducted an open air message (Acts 13:16). The message of the Tabernacle and Temple was open air. The prophets preached in the open air. The only reported sermon of the Savior was an open air message (Sermon on the Mount). The apostles followed this practice. Peter's first message

John Deery, "The Church on Wheels," *Evangelical Messenger*, 1917 (August, 1917), 113.

CHAPTER I

EARLY HISTORY

Introduction

A hundred years ago our pioneer missionaries in Michigan used the speediest means at their disposal to spread the Gospel--the pony and the buckboard. Later our missionaries were among the first passengers pulled by the "iron horse" as it gradually blazed a trail westward over the Rockies and to the West Coast. During and for a few years after World War II, our Church preached that same Gospel in the same way, using the modern means of a trailer.

The special purpose of open air evangelism by means of trailer missions was to bring the story of the love of Christ to communities where there were no Lutheran churches.¹

Scriptural Survey of Open Air Evangelism

Open Air Evangelism is nothing new. It was extensively practiced in Old Testament times as well as the New Testament. Noah preached to his wicked generation in the open air (Genesis 8:20). Abraham conducted open air messages (Genesis 12:7). The messages at the Tabernacle and Temple were open air. The prophets preached in the open air. The only recorded sermon of the Savior was an open air message (Sermon on the Mount). The apostles followed this practice. Peter's Pentecostal

¹Anna Brauer, "The Church on Wheels," Concordia Messenger, XXIV (August, 1946), 115.

Sermon was an open air message (Acts 2). Paul preached at the river side at Philippi in the open air (Acts 16).

Good stewardship of the Gospel means that we preach the Gospel by all means--by every means. While it is difficult to get an unchurched individual in a church, it is comparatively easy to get him to attend an open air message. He can stand, sit, come or go as he pleases. Good stewardship of the Gospel demands we preach the Gospel to him on his terms. Good stewardship of the Gospel means that we use the most interesting and effective means of presenting the Gospel. We cannot add to the power of the Word; but by using inefficient means, we can detract from it. Visual means can effectively be used in presenting God's Word. The Old Testament prophets used them by God's command. (cf. Ezekiel, Daniel, Hosea). When Christ wanted to emphasize His position over against the accusers of the woman taken in adultery, He drew on the ground (perhaps similar to a chart). It has been demonstrated that eighty-five percent of our mental stimuli comes through the eye gate. Visual means can and should be used for interesting and effective Gospel preaching. Good stewardship of the Gospel demands that we preach the Gospel where it can be heard and listened to, so it can be understood easily and believed in by the help of the Holy Ghost.²

Modern Covered Wagon

During World War II there were many areas in our country that had grown to major significance in the war effort. These communities were not made up of tens of thousands, but of hundreds. They were made up of people with souls. Many of these had no access to the preaching of the Gospel except if it were brought to them as the circuit riding missionaries in the days of our forefathers brought it to pioneers trekking westward in the covered wagon and to lonely settlers in the vast expanse of the prairies. In a changing world, it became necessary for the church to adopt new methods of approach. It was good

²Alvin W. Maack, "Open Air Messages," KFUO Sermon, (January 4, 1944), p. 1.

economy in this shifting America to "bring the church to the people rather than bring the people to the church."³

Having this in mind, The Emergency Planning Council of Synod requested the Rev. Alvin W. Maaek of Union, Missouri, (now of Stealeville, Illinois), and the Rev. William L. Duerr of Beaufort, Missouri, (now of Santa Ana, California), to assemble a church which might be brought to the people. These two men, who were interested in visual education, had held open-air evangelistic services for a number of years, and possessed personal equipment valued at \$1,000 for such work.

With a mobile mission outfit consisting of house trailer, car, tent, motion picture projector, filmstrip projector, films, chairs, platform and amplifying system, the two pastors worked out a program in which the Word of God was presented visually as well as orally. Special emphasis was placed on charts, motion pictures, and slides. And so, fully equipped, carefully prepared, and with a real determination to work, these two pastors began their pioneer work in trailer missions in the summer of 1943.⁴

Early Experiments

The first territory to be visited was the Ozark region. Religious services were held in small, picturesque towns nestled among the hillsides, such as Neosho, Carthage, Barnhart, Beck, Flat River, Union, and

³"The Church on Wheels," The Church at Work in the World at War, 1943, p. 11.

⁴A. W. Maaek, "Bringing the Church to the People," The Lutheran Witness, LXIII (July 4, 1944), 222.

Beaufort, Missouri. As a result of the trailer mission visit, the congregations in these towns received a spiritual "shot in the arm." They also received much publicity which helped bring them to the attention of the unchurched people in the community.

The second area to be explored by the two pastors operating the trailer was Mount Greenwood, located in the far southwestern area of Chicago. Open air services were conducted on three evenings of the first week; on Sunday, services were conducted in the tent. Forty children attended Sunday school that Sunday morning, and the audience numbered forty-three at divine services. During the next week, four evening meetings were held, and on the second Sunday a much larger crowd attended services. That evening, Synod's moving picture, "The Power of God," was shown before three hundred people. Then the weather changed, and it was impossible to continue with the open-air services. An empty store was located close to the tent area, and was converted into a chapel. There was an increase in attendance Sunday after Sunday, and after two month's work the little mission was given over to the Northern Illinois District Mission Board, which provided a permanent worker.⁵

⁵Brauer, op. cit., p. 116.

CHAPTER II

THE PURPOSE OF A TRAILER MISSION

Evangelistic

The main purpose of the trailer tent missions was evangelistic. These men with trailers went out with the assurance that God had given them when He said, "My Word shall not return to me void" (Isaiah 55:11). They brought the teachings of Christianity as confessed in our Lutheran church to the attention of the unchurched in a promising community where we were not represented.¹

Spiritual Shot in the Arm

The purpose of the initial attempts in Carthage, Flat River, Union, and Beaufort, Missouri, was to give publicity to existing missions and congregations, and to increase the effectiveness of organized congregations by carrying the Word to the unchurched and wayward. These missionaries brought the teachings of Christianity as confessed in our Lutheran church to the attention of the unchurched in a community where we were represented by a local congregation. After the Lutheran church had been favorably introduced to the community with its dignified program and Scriptural message, the pastor of the local Lutheran church no longer seemed a stranger, but a progressive servant of Christ who was interested in all people. The people

¹"Purpose," Trailer Mission Minutes, (May, 1946), St. Louis, Missouri, p. 3.

in the community felt free to call upon him for spiritual aid. They realized that the members of the local Lutheran church were not "clannish" as they had supposed, but were good Christians whose fellowship they enjoyed. Open Air messages favorably presented the Lutheran church to the community.²

The trailer missionaries also provided spiritual nourishment in isolated territories for scattered Lutherans and others. Isolated groups were reached on a regular bi-weekly or monthly schedule. The members of the local congregation once again felt a new pride in the progressiveness of their church; they felt a new pride in the sweet Gospel which was so intently listened to by those of other denominations and the unchurched; and they felt a new pride in their church when outsiders gave them favorable comments about the program which their church was offering.

Analysis

The ultimate aim in trailer evangelism was to do intensive, though brief, work in selected unchurched communities with the purpose of establishing circuits in the most promising areas.

Such an area was located about an hour's drive northwest of Portland, Maine. It consisted of the small towns of Poland, Welschville, and West Minot. Each town had a fine church building but no regular minister. There were from sixty to seventy families within reach of the church in each case. The response to the Trailer Mission programs

²Wm. L. Duerr and A. W. Maack, "Value of the Program," Open Air Evangelism, p. 2.

in these communities was so encouraging that the Atlantic District Mission Board decided to send a permanent worker there as soon as such a man was available. The people in rural Maine were no more irreligious than those in the urban areas. The only difference was that there were no services for these adults and no Sunday School for children in these towns. When the church bell was rung to call the people to meetings, it was the first time its sound had been heard for several years.³

Some Trailer Missions were given permission to hold services in factories once a week. The owners of the factories welcomed an arrangement of this kind. "A 'church on wheels' with a missionary in charge brought the message of salvation at a noon hour meeting to the workers."⁴

The editor of the Pentecostal Evangel writes, "There are 10,000 villages in the United States without a church, and there are 30,000 villages without a resident pastor."⁵ These facts challenged the missionary program of the church.

The Rev. Charles W. Squires of Limerick, Maine, a former colporteur of the American Tract Society, stated in a pamphlet, Religious Destitution in Maine, "There is great need for a determined and consecrated effort both within and without the state to see that the

³Herbert Kern, "The Trailer Chapel in Maine," American Lutheran, XXIX (January, 1946), 10.

⁴Anna Brauer, "The Church on Wheels," American Lutheran, XXIV (September, 1941), 7.

⁵Ibid., p. 8.

neglected communities of Maine have adequate Christian services."⁶

The Trailer Mission had a place in the church's missionary program. The radio and trailer were linked together for reaching the people who could not be induced to "come and see" until they had "heard" the call of God's Word in their hearts.

⁶Ibid., p. 9.

CHAPTER III

THE TRAILER UNIT

The Trailer

A complete trailer unit consisted of many items: a trailer, a tent, an electrical system, an organ, chairs, and many other smaller pieces of equipment.

The trailer used was approximately twenty-seven feet long. It had electrical brakes which could be connected to the car battery. A trailer hitch was connected with the frame of the car, and the car was equipped with over-load springs and six-ply tires in the rear.¹

A suitable size tent was 30 x 44 feet, with one end round and the other end gable. The approximate cost at that time (1946) was \$380.00.²

The Electrical System

The long, heavy lead-in wire brought the electricity in from the source. It was plugged into the "step-ladder control." Lights which needed to be turned on and off were plugged into the side of the step-ladder which had the on-off switch. There was another heavy, shorter wire which lead the current to the front end of the tent. Ten lights

¹G. K. Schmidt, "Minutes of the Trailer Mission Conference," (May, 1946), St. Louis, Missouri, p. 4.

²A. W. Maack and Others, "Equipment for Trailer Mission," Manual for Trailer Mission Service, (September, 1943), p. 6.

were strung on the poles, and outside lights were fastened to the top of the tent poles with tape.³

Suitable sound amplifier equipment consisted of the following: a 30-watt sound amplifier; crystal microphone with floor stand; twenty feet of microphone cable; two FM speakers with cables; and phonograph or turn-table with pick up. The men would place the second speaker connection into the first speaker rather than into the amplifying unit. In this way it was possible to send the sound much further.

One of the greatest aids in Trailer Mission work was the use of movies and filmstrips. Since it was impossible to obtain new projectors at this time, Synod made available several movie projectors which were used to show the film, "The Power of God." Sound films were available for rental through Synod's Visual Education Service. Some suitable films available included "Pursuit of Happiness," "Now is the Time," "Law and Grace," "The Door to Heaven," and "His Bequest." The price was from \$30.00 to \$50.00 per subject.⁴

For still pictures (flashing hymn on screen, etc.), a 300-watt model AAA SVE projector was used. Both projector and film were rented from the Society for Visual Education, Chicago, Illinois.

Other Equipment

Other pieces of equipment used were an organ or piano for solo or small group singing, camp stools, large posters with facts about the

³Schmidt, op. cit., p. 5.

⁴A. Mazek, "Equipment," op. cit., p. 7.

Lutheran church on them, suitable charts to illustrate and use with the messages, a large supply of tracts, a mimeograph machine, and a lectern. The lectern was a three-in-one affair, used as a pulpit when the board was set at an angle, used for the SVE projector when set flat, and used for the chart rack when the upper rod was inserted. Not every item of equipment mentioned above was needed in every instance. For example, a tent was impossible in the northern climates except for a few months of the year. In some southern states a tent was unnecessary and an open-air service altogether satisfactory. Local conditions and the ingenuity of those who were responsible for the Trailer Mission decided what items of equipment were needed in any particular section.

The Location

Our men learned that for a successful Trailer Mission (with or without a tent), it was especially essential to select a site along a traveled highway or street which was used frequently by pedestrians also after nightfall. A corner lot was preferred to a mid-block location. In the case where a local congregation was using the Trailer Mission as an auxiliary publicity method to attract the unchurched, a location near the property of the congregation was used.

According to the missionaries, the ideal site for a Trailer Mission was a corner lot, ample in size (150' x 150'), level, high, dry, rough places filled in, grass well trimmed, and no weeds. Sometimes a street was blocked off for the program. Most city commissioners were glad to grant permission for this.

The trailer and tent needed electric power 110--120 v. AC. A

commercial place usually supplied this power without charge because of the business the program attracted.⁵

A most carefully planned service was relatively wasted if it was in some obscure section of the community.⁶

The Cost

The Trailer Mission outfit was not inexpensive. Under wartime priority restrictions, a complete outfit with automobile, chapel, trailer, tent (seating 150) with chairs, platform, loud-speaker system, moving picture projector, reels, slides, literature, mimeograph equipment, charts, etc., cost approximately \$3,500.00 per unit.⁷ The latest trailers were miniature chapels equipped with altar, crucifix, and lectern. Private services for twenty-five people could be held in these trailers. There were even times when the missionary and his wife made the trailer their home.

⁵Wm. Duerr and A. Maack, "Good Location," Open Air Evangelism, p. 3.

⁶Ibid., p. 4.

⁷Ibid., p. 9.

CHAPTER IV

PLACING THE UNIT INTO OPERATION

Overcoming Objections

There were two fields that were the prime objectives of Trailer Mission work:

1. Fields which Mission Boards of Federations had their eyes on. In this case the specific objective would be to evaluate the field as to its possibilities for a future church. The Trailer Mission had a distinct advantage, for it could combine all other methods with itself. Canvassing could be carried on during the daytime, an estimate of the possibilities could be made, the information could be gathered--and all this in a shorter time and with no loss in investment if the field should prove to offer no possibilities for our church.
2. Fields in which we had existing missions, but which needed a new emphasis, a shot-in-the-arm. Trailer Missions supplied a new punch with advertising and publicity.¹

In general it had been found that the men experienced little difficulty in gaining the cooperation of the pastor and people in the latter type of field mentioned. Occasionally the objection was raised that they (the missionaries) were lowering the dignity of our church. It was necessary to educate the people according to evangelistic lines, and above all, persuade them to see a unit in operation. The opposition was usually overcome in that way. Other churches offered no opposition. Some even wanted to cooperate, in which case caution and tact had to be exercised.²

¹G. Schmidt, "Minutes of the Trailer Mission Conference," (May, 1946) p. 2.

²Ibid., p. 3.

Canvassing

Canvassing was a vital part of Trailer Mission work. It was a daytime activity of the workers and helped more fully to gain the information about possibilities in a given field. It was one of the ways in which they could utilize any volunteer help in connection with the tent services. Canvassing was about the only way that the missionaries could sift the churched from the unchurched.

Publicity

The missionaries learned that publicity was very essential. Weeks before they scheduled the first tent service, the men completed arrangements for the site of the meeting. They prepared window cards for the neighborhood (where a large city was involved) or throughout the territory (where a smaller city or a rural area was concerned). Large advertisements were put into the newspaper. Two days before the mission service, a large display sign was placed on the chosen site. Attractive handbills with a religious picture were distributed throughout the neighborhood. (Small boys did this after school hours for a small remuneration). It was even found profitable to put handbills in parked automobiles. If there was a local congregation in the community, the missionaries would ask the members of this congregation to attend the tent services. In this way the members formed a nucleus of the attendance at the services.

Wherever a local congregation existed, the announcements during the Trailer Mission Service gave publicity to this fact, mentioning the

pastor and presenting him, noting the location of the church and the time of service. Where no local congregation existed, the announcements included a direct reference to the fact that the Trailer Mission Service was being conducted by the Lutheran Church ("The Church of the Lutheran Hour"). This held good unless there was a very strong local prejudice against the Lutherans. However, whenever it became a question of confessional loyalty, the word "Lutheran" was used without reservation regardless of temporary consequences.³

After every service, there was an opportunity for an interested stranger to meet the missionary or the resident pastor. If the stranger seemed interested or had a burdensome problem, an appointment was made at once.

The Order of Worship

The Trailer Mission service was approximately one hour and fifteen minutes long. The service was somewhat informal. An order of service used most frequently included the following items and followed a time schedule similar to the following:

- 7:30--8:00 Presentation of recognized standard Gospel hymns in solo, chorus, and instrumental setting over the loud speaker system. (The Lutheran Hour Chorus has some very acceptable renditions.) The type of music must recognize the intellectual and cultural level of the expected audience.
- 8:00--8:10 Opening remarks, singing of hymn, ex corde prayer, carefully thought out for the occasion and the anticipated audience, etc.

³A. Maack, R. Caemmerer, and W. Birkner, Manual for Trailer Missions Services (Union, Missouri: mimeographed, 1943), p. 14.

- 8:10--8:25 Hymn singing, possibly preceded by very brief remarks about the hymn, author, origin, content, etc. Sectional singing under a competent leader is effective.
- 8:25--8:35 Explanatory Scripture reading of a text pertinent to the evening's message.
- 8:35--8:55 Appropriate Religious Film.
- 8:55--9:00 Gospel Hymn (audience standing).
- 9:00--9:20 The Message (with charts).
- 9:20--9:25 Singing of Hymn.
- 9:25--9:30 Announcements and Benediction.⁴

During the sermon all of the charts were used in a sequence, beginning with man's responsibilities, down through the atonement, and ending with an appeal to accept Christ as Savior. It was pointed out that care should be taken with the choice of the last chart left on the stand, as that chart continued to preach a sermon for the rest of the evening.⁵

The collection was taken either during the service or outside the tent. Nobody had to give, but all were given the opportunity.

Although the tent service was of an informal nature, it still required a great deal of planning. The missionaries had to have a good working knowledge of the equipment they were to use as well as the things they were going to say.

Music

A Trailer Mission Service that utilized every possibility to gain

⁴Ibid., p. 12.

⁵Schmidt, op. cit., p. 6.

its objective included a good musical program. Moody had his Sankey, Billy Sunday had Rodeheaver, and Billy Graham has George Beverly Shea. There was method in this. The musical part of the service gave the audience an opportunity to participate actively and served as an introduction to the message of the evening by helping to put men into the right state of mind.

Regardless how much appreciation for good church music we might have, the musical setting for the Trailer Mission Service had to adapt itself to the level of the audience and not to anyone's developed aesthetic feeling.

As a rule the recognized and standard Gospel hymns were used.

If a hymn sets forth the doctrine of Scripture correctly, or makes the proper application to the Christian life, if it is set to a tune that pleases our audience and enables the group to join immediately and wholeheartedly, that hymn should be used, regardless of its musical value, its origin, its composer, or our personal preferences.⁶

There were two methods used in furnishing the people with the hymns: 1. slides which projected hymn verses on the screen; 2. mimeographed sheets of hymns. There was a leader for the hymn singing who steered the audience into the rhythm of the hymn and also showed that the Gospel was being treated in song.

Often trailer missionaries arranged for a musical prelude before the opening of services, particularly when they had pitched their tent far out in the hills. By electrical transcription, recordings of sacred choruses and instrumental music were sent out for one-half hour over the countryside inviting the people in this manner to come to the tent

⁶A. W. Maack and others, op. cit., p. 13.

meeting. Pastor Benjamin Schumacher, an ardent missionary in the Indiana hill country, has given an inspiring account of one of the meetings he helped conduct. He writes:

It was a wonderful sight to watch the arrival of the people as the strains of familiar Gospel hymns from records made by the Lutheran Hour Chorus and Spitalny's All Girl Choir pealed through the air at eventide. Some people arrived from places three miles distant, some walked, a few carried their chairs, others came in trucks from other spots and villages, while still others came in their cars. People of the better class came as well as lowly hill country dwellers.⁷

When quartets, duets, soloists, or choirs could be obtained from a local congregation, or a neighboring local congregation, this opportunity was grasped eagerly. In Leesville, Indiana, a kind, elderly gentleman volunteered that he could sing mountain song spirituals and accompany them on his own "geetar." Pastor Schumacher invited the good brother to bring the "geetar" and sing, which he did in good mountain singing fashion. Then "Brother" Schumacher invited those who knew the words to join in the singing, and it was surprising how many, particularly women, know the words and lustily joined in the singing of these mountain music spirituals.⁸

The hymnal used in the Indiana missions was called "Trailer Mission Hymnal" and was edited and compiled by the Rev. B. Schumacher and Rev. F. Wambsganss. This hymnal included some of the hymns found in our Lutheran Hymnal such as "Abide With Me," "God Bless Our Native Land," "Jesus, Lover of My Soul," "Jesus Savior Pilot Me," "Rock of Ages," and

⁷A. W. Maack, "Trail-Blazing for Christ," Lutheran Woman's Quarterly, (October, 1944), p. 5.

⁸F. Wambsganss, "Leesville," A New Vista in Missions--Trailer Missions (Ft. Wayne: mimeographed, 1944), p. 4.

several others. The more common Gospel hymns found in this hymnal were "Blessed Assurance," "Bring Them In," "I Love to Tell the Story," "Sweet Hour of Prayer," "Tell Me the Old, Old Story," "The Old Rugged Cross," and several others.⁹

The hymnal used in the Eastern District was called Trailer Mission Hymns. It included many of the above mentioned hymns plus several others such as "In the Garden."¹⁰ A portable organ seemed to be the most acceptable form of accompaniment for these services.

The Sermon

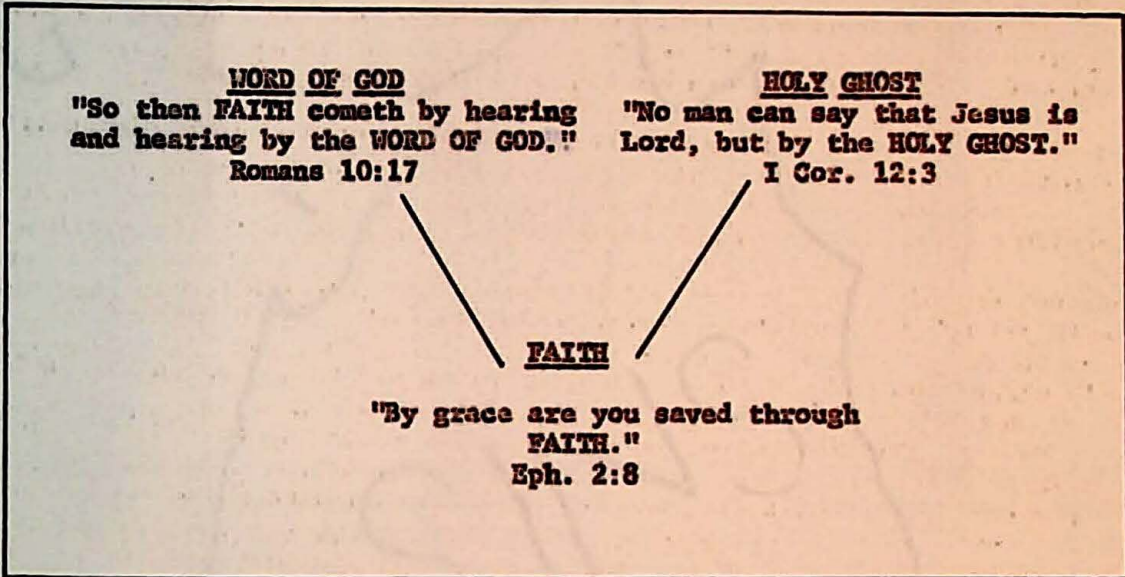
This remained the real essential for the success of a Trailer Mission Service as far as men could guarantee success. The most desirable location, the newest equipment, the most adequate publicity, the best adapted musical program constituted only an anti-climax if the sermon did not measure up.

This statement should not lead anyone to suppose that the content of Trailer Mission Preaching (evangelistic preaching) differed fundamentally from the content of the sermon presented to an audience gathered in a cathedral-like structure on a Sunday morning. Not at all. Sin and grace, the eternal counsel of a merciful God who wants all men to be saved, formed the substance of Trailer Mission preaching also. But the method of presenting this divine and eternal truth must recognize the fact that the audience seated under the canopy of heaven or under a tent

⁹F. Wambagans and B. Schumacher, Trailer Mission Hymnal (Ft. Wayne: mimeographed, 1944).

¹⁰Trailer Mission Hymns, (New York: American Lutheran Publicity Bureau, 1946).

made by man's hand had had only the slightest contact with Christianity. The Word of God was presented in simple truths which a sixth grader could understand. Only basic doctrines were taught and these were simplified with the use of charts.¹¹



The speaker had six or eight such charts for a ten to twenty-minute message. Sermon topics more commonly used were: "Where is Complete Happiness to be Found?," "The Truth About Sin and its Forgiveness," "The One and Only Door to Heaven," and "The Power of God,"

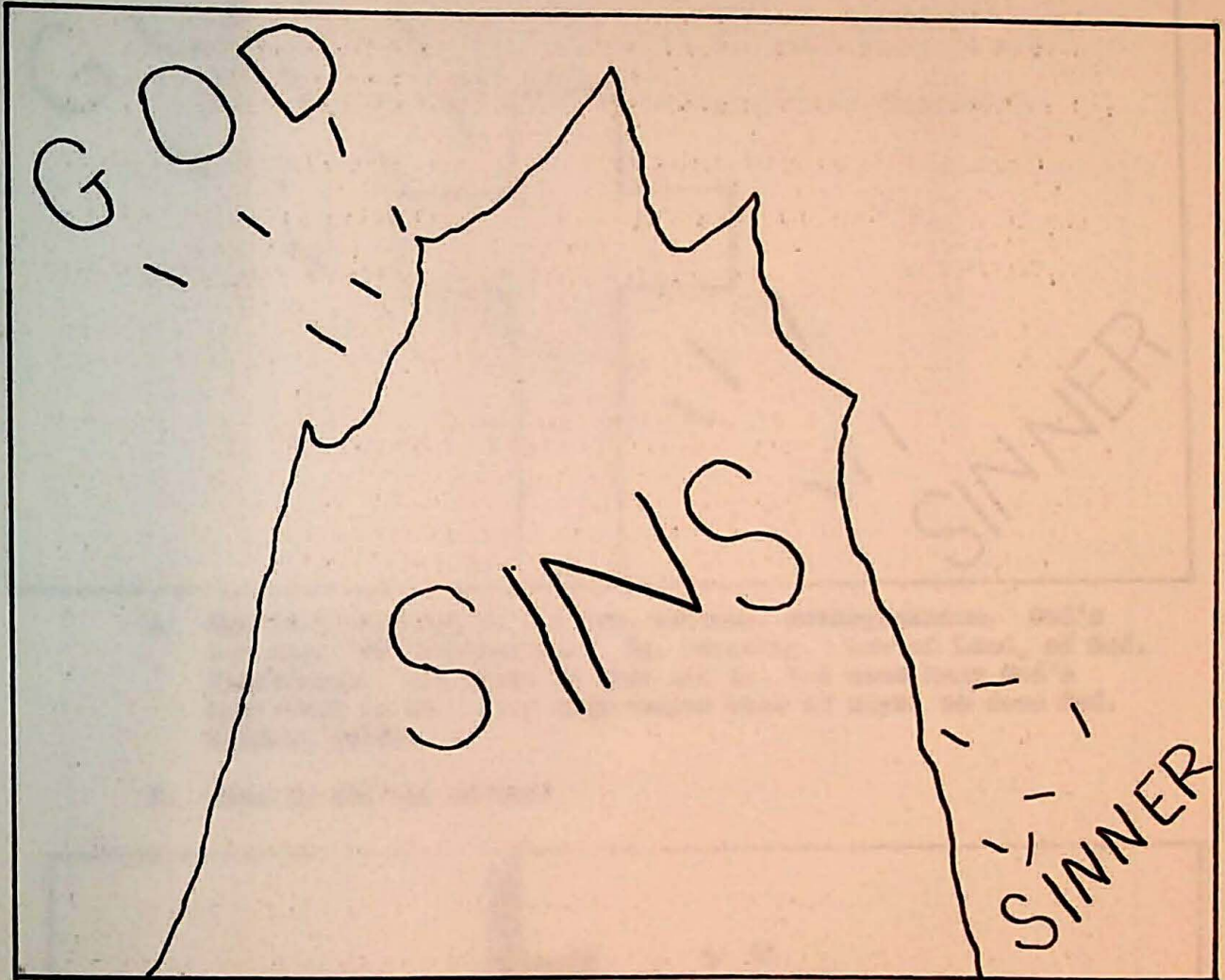
Here is a sample outline, complete with charts, of one of these "open air messages":¹²

Open Air Message: The Truth about Sin and its Forgiveness

Introduction: We want truth--from Government, from Doctor, from God.

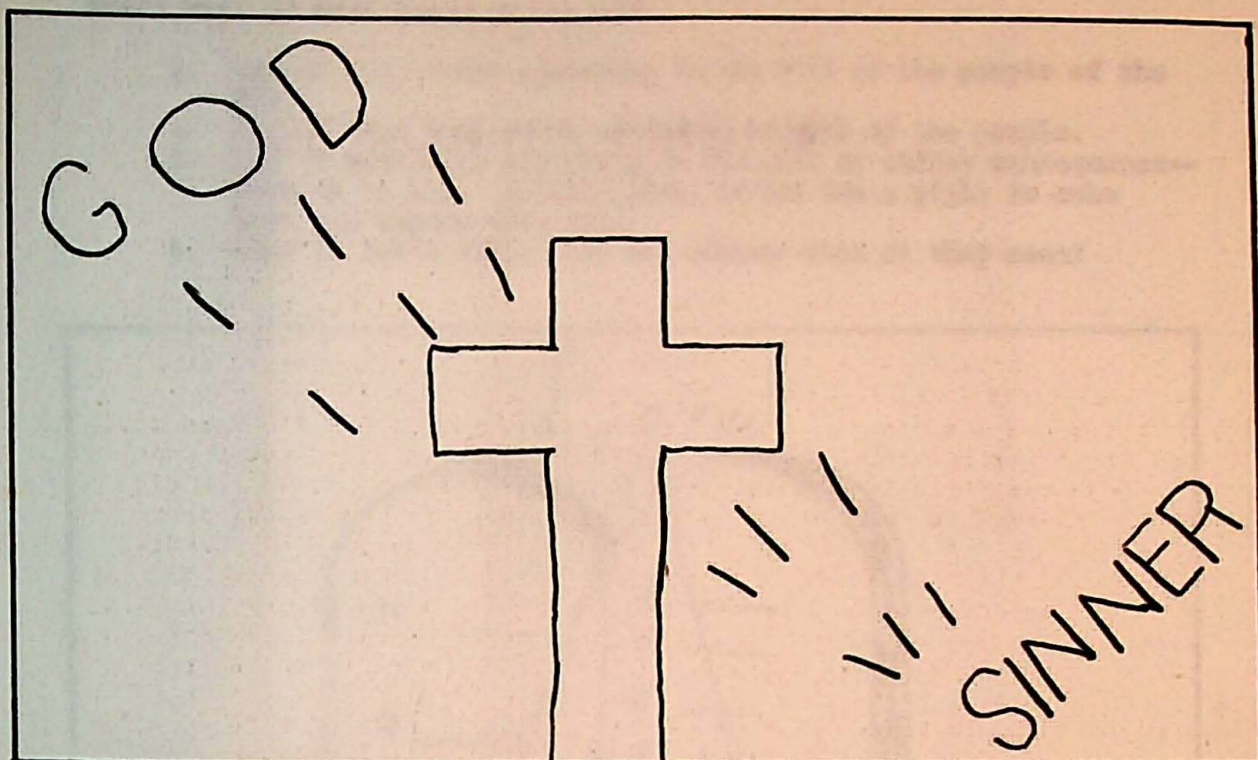
¹¹W. L. Duerr and A. W. Maack, "Presenting the Word," Open Air Evangelism, p. 2.

¹²Ibid., p. 3.

1. The Truth about Sin

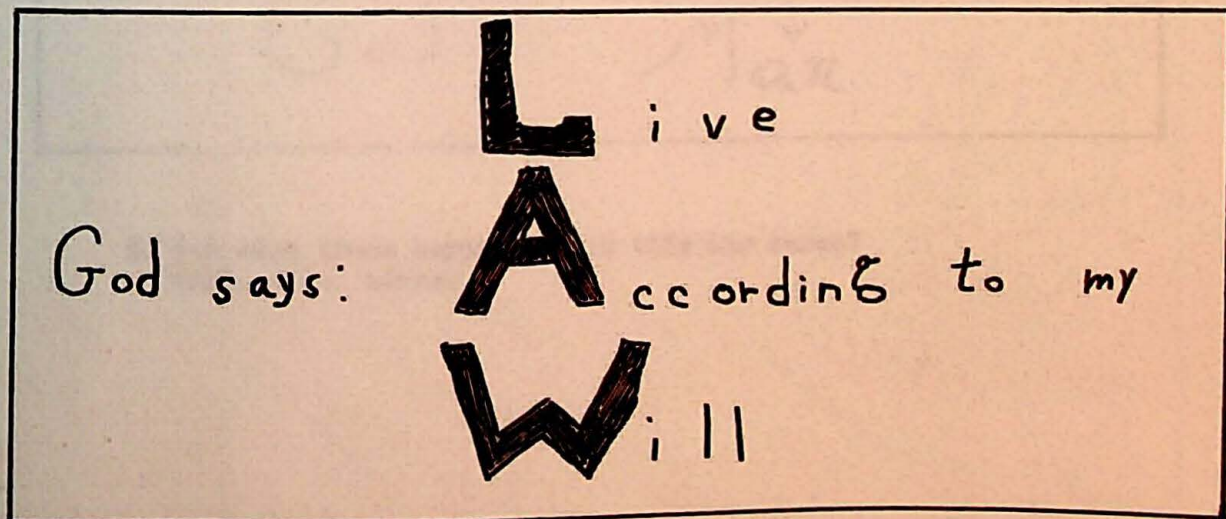
Man cannot communicate with God because of the huge mountain of man's sins which stands between the sinner and God.

Man can only communicate with God through the Christ of the Cross.



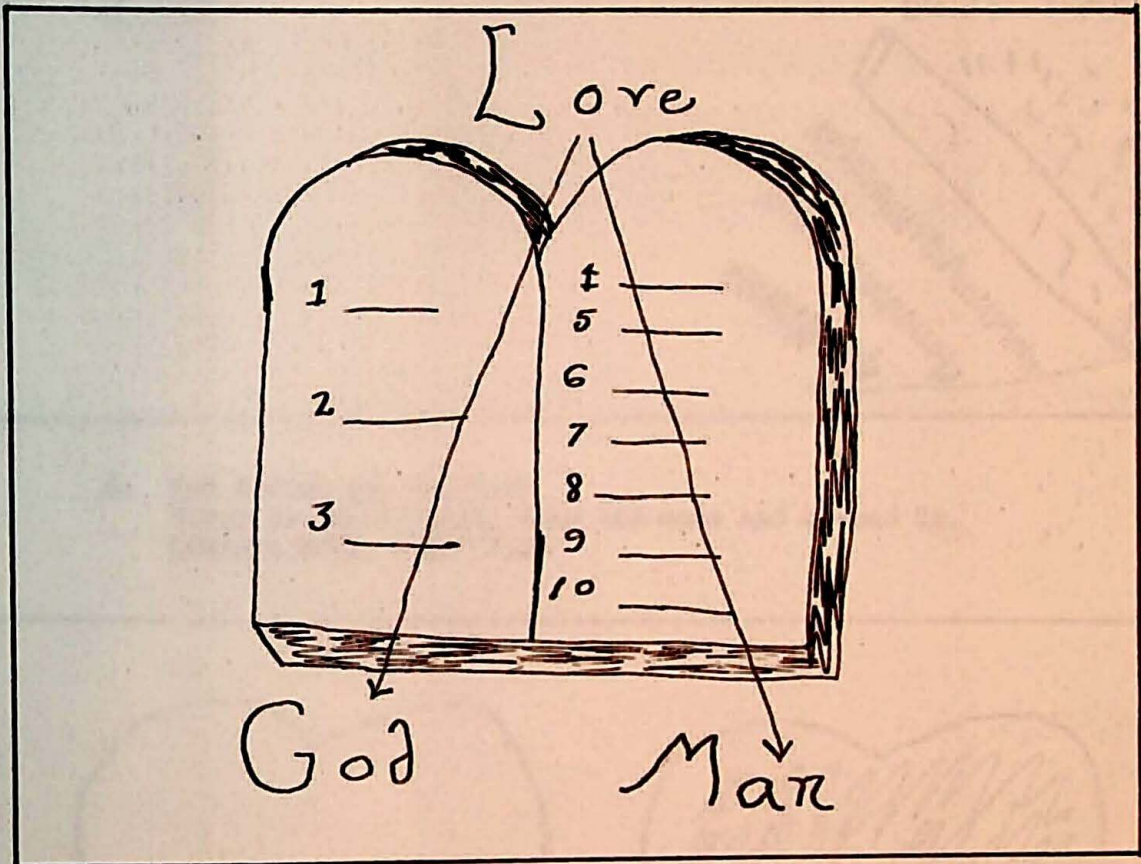
A. Sin is a breaking of the law, offense, transgression. God's Law says "No Trespassing." Eg. Stealing. Law of Land, of God. Punishment. All agree on what sin is, but must know God's Law--what it is. Stop sign--means what it says; so does God. Numbers 26:26.

B. What is the Law of God?

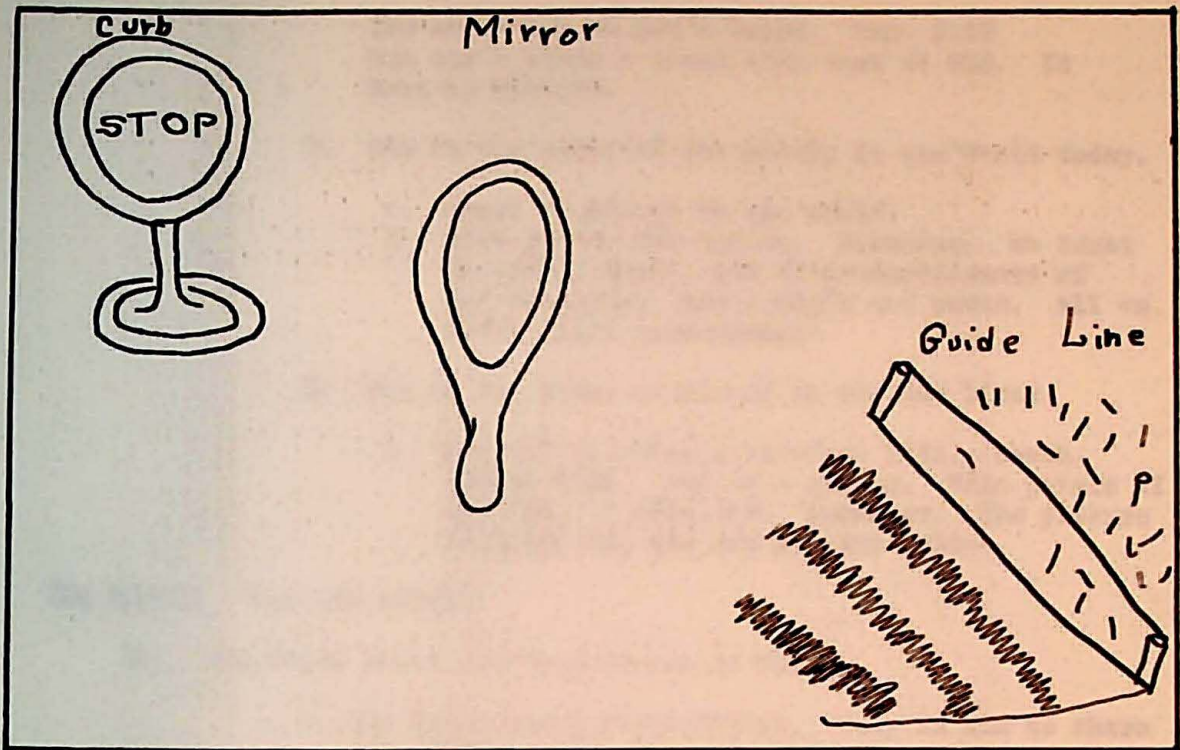


God's Will is made known in the LAW

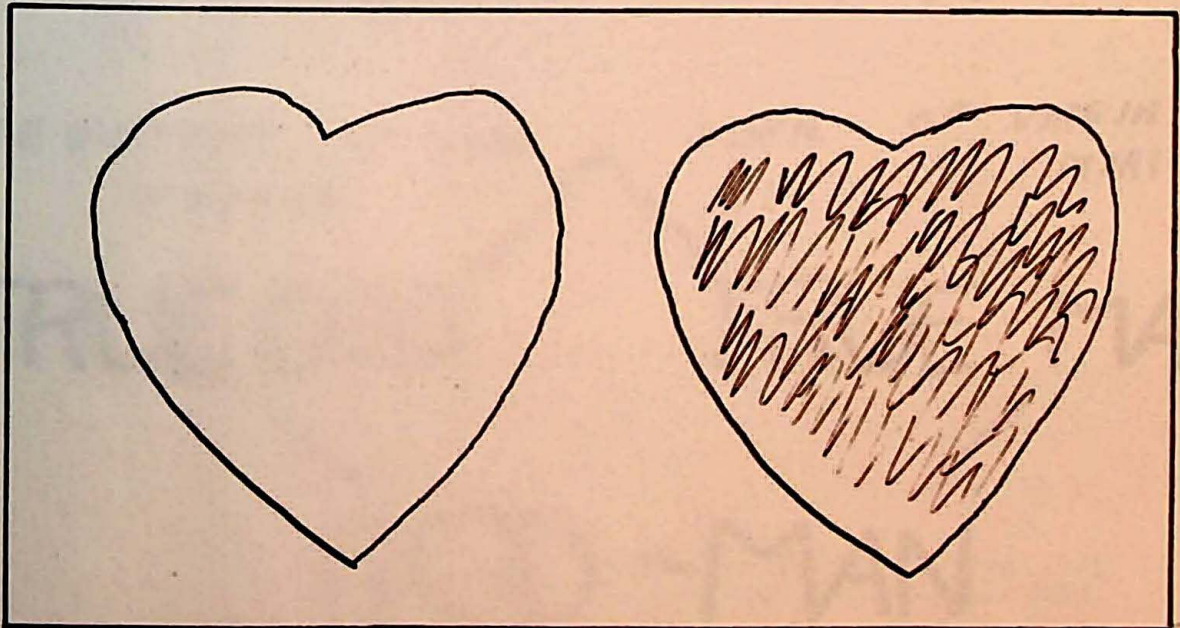
1. Law of U.S.--Live according to the will of the people of the U.S.
2. Law of this city--Live according to will of the people.
3. Law of God--Live according to His Will or suffer consequence--even as in U.S. As this city, so God has a right to make laws and expect obedience.
4. What is God's Will. The two tables--what do they mean?



5. For what three purposes does this Law serve?
Curb, rule, mirror.



6. How did we get the Law?
First in man's heart, then sin came and dimmed it.
Genesis 8:21 Eccl. 7:20



The condition of man's heart. Rom. 7:19
Man can't bring a heart like that to God. It must be cleaned.

C. Sin is the cause of the misery in the world today.

- 1. Cause of misery in the world.
- 2. Also in our own nation. Divorces. We trust in god of money, god of productiveness of our factories, man's might and power. All vs. God's first commandment.

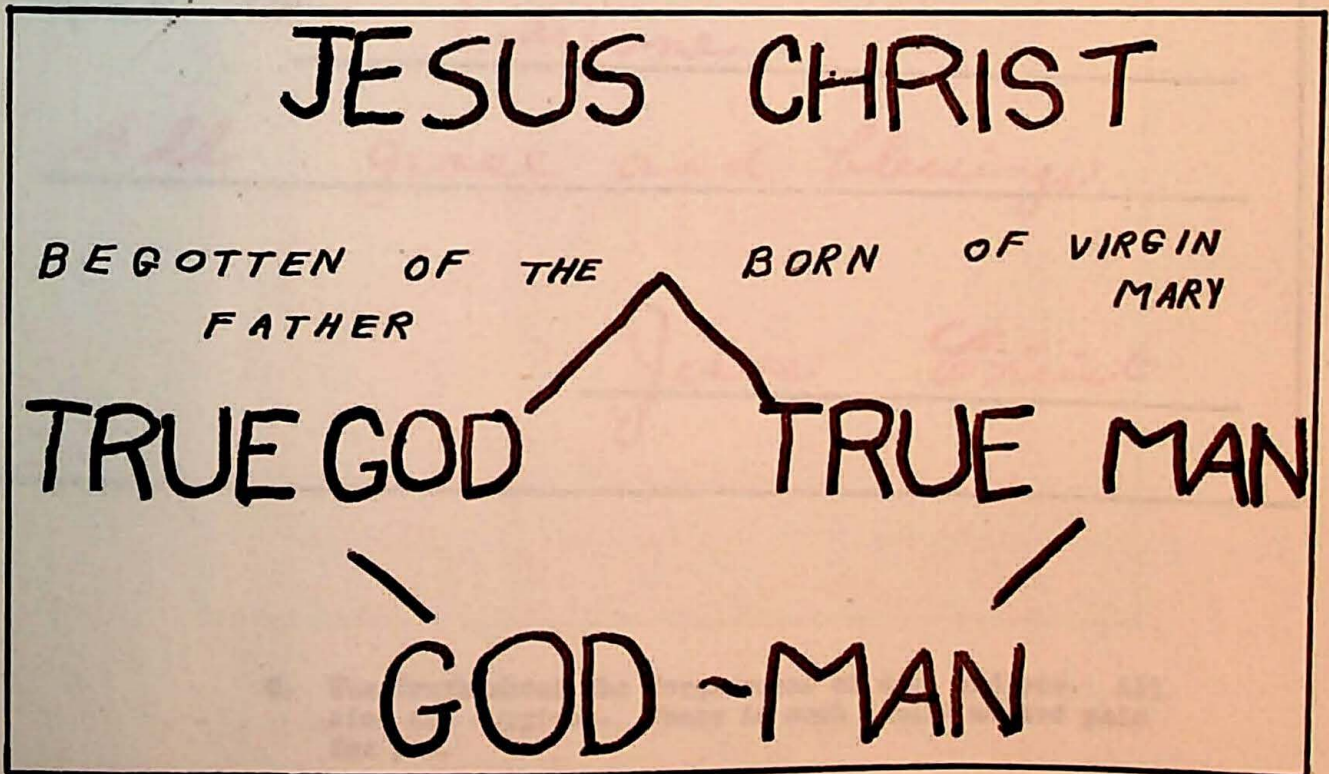
D. Sin is the cause of misery in our own lives.

- 1. None of us lives a carefree life. Death. Romans 6:23. Man is a sinner. Fine points of the law. I John 3:5. Murderer. The picture is black for you and me--but wait--

THE MOVIE: "LAW AND GRACE"

II. The Truth about the Forgiveness of Sins.

A. The Truth about Jesus Christ. Only in Him is there forgiveness. Who is Jesus Christ?



B. The Truth about His death for sin.

- 1. Why He had to be God
- 2. Why He had to be Man
 Substitutionary death. 2 Cor. 5:21; Gal. 3:13;
 Is. 53:6.

Since Christ paid for all sins: God sees Christ and is satisfied; the sinner sees Christ and is satisfied.

BANK OF HEAVEN

DATE Now

PAY TO
ORDER OF

Everyone

All grace and blessings

Jesus Christ

C. The Truth about the forgiveness of sins and you. All sins are forgiven. There is such a bill marked paid for you.

BILL ^{TO}
 NAME: *Everyone*

DEBT - - - - - SIN

DEBT - - - - - SIN

DEBT - - - - - SIN

DEBT - - - - - SIN

TOTAL: *Eternal Death*

PAID

By my blood

Jesus Christ

This is offered to you. Accept it. Believe it.

MY



MY
SAVIOR'S



B L O O D



Your heart cleansed by Christ's blood.

This is the central teaching of the Christian religion.

Accept it today.--Do it now!

THE MOVIE: "NOW IS THE TIME"

Films were used which either introduced the subject or which further explained or emphasized the subject under discussion for the evening. Two subjects were used per night. Here is a list of movies and sermon texts usually used during a week of Trailer Mission services:

- Wednesday--"Book of Books," "Law and Grace;"
 Acts 24:25. "A Convenient Season"
 Thursday --"Prodigal Son" or "Blind Beggar of Jerusalem"
 or "A Certain Nobleman;"
 Luke 15:11-32. "The Parable of the Two Lost Sons"
 Friday --Children's program included a flannelgraph lesson,
 showing of colored slides, recitation and singing by
 children; movie "We Too Receive;"
 Heb. 2:3. "The Neglect of Salvation"
 Saturday --Movie: "Power of God"
 Sunday --"This Amazing Universe," "Door to Heaven;"
 Ex. 32:26. "Who is on the Lord's side?"¹³

Tracts

The tract offered an opportunity for another personal approach to the people. On the first night the tract, "God's Way of Salvation," was given out. This was the main tract. On the second and succeeding nights as the people came near the tent, they were asked if they had received this particular tract. That gave the missionaries the information whether these particular individuals had attended the previous evening.¹⁴

Length of Stay

No arbitrary rule could be established regarding the number of

¹³Ibid., pp. 3, 4.

¹⁴Schmidt, op. cit., p. 10.

services which constituted the ideal arrangement for a community. Conditions varied too greatly. One service was hardly ever sufficient; four weeks of continuous services were too much. Experience indicated that one week and two weeks had been found preferable. In the latter case, there was an "off" night, usually Monday. The length of stay at one place was determined by the purpose. The purpose tied in with the overall purpose of the field in mind.

Concerning the relative importance of days, it was found that the best attendances were on Thursdays. Sunday nights were good. Saturday night depended on the location. What was important was that the Lutheran nucleus turned out in force on all the days.

The Follow Up

It was important that we get hold of people who had received our message and who had been moved and inspired by the Word of God heard in our services. There had to be some way to keep tab of people who became favorably inclined to our church and doctrines.

The altar call was one means. This, however, too closely resembled other tent missions.

Calling for confessions was inadvisable. In general it was hard to control. Then too, there was the doctrinal error involved if people thought that they no longer sinned after they had been "saved."

An appeal to join a study group was perhaps the best way; it combined the good points of the altar call. The missionaries asked the people to delve more deeply into the Word of God and gave them an opportunity to join such a study group. This led directly into an adult

class. The nucleus formed from these adult classes eventually led to the forming of a new congregation. If there was a congregation already in the vicinity, these "new" people were introduced to the existing congregation and its pastor.

CHAPTER V

REPORTS AND STATISTICS

General Observations

Wherever the Trailer Mission was tried, it had received God's richest blessings. During the early part of World War II, there was a fully equipped trailer mission at work in Montana, on the Alaskan Highway, in the Southern California District, in the Atlantic District, and in the Central District. Detailed planning for the use of the Trailer Mission had been done also by the California and Nevada District, and the Southeastern District. The Northern Illinois District Mission Board put a Trailer Mission to work in Chicago in the fall of 1943. Rev. A. H. Semmann, chairman of the Northern Illinois District at that time reports as follows:

The mission which started with the trailer and tent last summer is getting along most wonderfully. Those brethren did a very fine job and laid a very good foundation upon which our man has been able to build. A congregation has now been organized in Mount Greenwood (111th Street in Chicago's South Side). They have 13 voters to start with and 86 communicants and some over 130 souls. Prospects are very good.¹

In the Atlantic District the Lutheran Women's Missionary League financed the Trailer Mission.

The Rev. W. Sonsthagen from the Montana area said that a Sunday school of 142 pupils was organized in one of his stations on his circuit as a result of trailer missions. Far up in the Yukon on the

¹Semmann, A. H., "The Church on Wheels," The Church at Work in the World at War, p. 12.

Alaskan Highway, Missionary L. Jones told of the joy and gratitude with which a group of construction workers isolated from the rest of the world received a Lutheran sermon, and with what gratitude members of our church were filled because of an opportunity to attend Holy Communion far away from home.

It is the conviction of our Council that the method of Trailer Mission work in the church is an efficient, modern, successful, and economical way of reaching the most people in the shortest possible time with the least expenditure of money and manpower.²

By 1945, Trailer Missions were actively at work in the Southern California, California--Nevada, North Dakota, Montana, and Texas Districts, but discontinued in Alaska. Trailer Missions were planned for the coming months in the Central, Central Illinois, Western, and English Districts. In Southern California, Northern California, and Montana, there were full-time missionaries in this field of evangelism.³

Workers came from three sources. The Atlantic District called the Rev. Herbert Kern for this type of work. He was assisted by Mrs. Kern. Other Districts secured pastors who were willing to devote vacation time or obtain leave of absence from their congregations. Iowa West employed students. Some of the Districts hired students to work as technicians. Most of the workers attended a conference for specialized training. Trailer Mission units were supplied by the Home Missions Board. Three units were used by seven Districts. The Atlantic District had its own unit.

²Ibid., p. 13.

³J. W. Behnken, Missouri Synod Clergy Bulletin, (February 22, 1945), p. 3.

Attendances at services were very good. For instance, at 286 services which were held in forty-six different communities in 1946, the attendance was 27,397. In thirty-one of these locations there were no assurances of an audience of any kind. In the other fifteen places there were small mission stations. At 198 services, conducted in thirty-one localities not having a Lutheran church, there was an average attendance of 96 persons in the tent. What drew the people? It was the WORD presented with interest and effect through the Trailer Mission methods.⁴

The Atlantic District

The church played an important role in New England at the time of the first settlers. A church was the first building to be erected and was given the most prominent location in the town. By 1944 the people had neglected their churches to such an extent that many of them were used only by the pigeons in their steeples. The Protestant population forgot God, and it seemed that God had forgotten them, for their towns were on the downgrade at the same angle as their churches. Many of the towns were too impoverished to afford the services of a minister and the Protestant church bodies felt there were too few people in the towns to make a mission station profitable. Children that saw our Trailer Chapel thought it was a red cross wagon because of the cross on the rear door. This was the only type of cross with which they were familiar.⁵

⁴A. W. Maack, "Attendances at Services," Trailer Mission Reports, 1946, p. 2.

⁵H. Kern, "Go Out Into the Highways!" Atlantic Bulletin, (October, 1944), p. 19.

The first season, the Trailer Chapel in the Atlantic District appeared in ten towns and cities, one week at each place. The first five locations were small towns with churches that were either temporarily or permanently vacant. The sound of the true Gospel had not been heard in any one of these towns for a generation or more. A young couple in Sharon, Vermont, informed Pastor and Mrs. Kern, the missionaries in this vicinity, that they had received more spiritual help from one week of their meetings than from years at other services.⁶ During the last five weeks, the Trailer Chapel visited larger towns and cities. A source of great satisfaction to our missionaries throughout the summer was the fact that the tent meetings attracted people who never went to church or heard God's Word otherwise.

At the end of the 1944 Trailer Chapel season, a parish in the state of New Hampshire was developed around Enfield. Several months before, the community church of Enfield, a combination of Congregationalists and Universalist societies, asked the Atlantic District for pastoral services. The Rev. M. Haenschke, the Rev. W. Brun, and the Rev. H. Kern served here. Plans called for the continuation by the Enfield pastor of the activity in two of the territories visited by the Trailer Chapel.⁷

At the end of the 1946 summer's work, the church groups in West Minot, Welchville, and Poland, Maine, indicated their willingness to be

⁶H. Kern, "Your Trailer Chapel," Lutheran Witness, (Atlantic District Edition), LXVIII (January 25, 1949), 3.

⁷H. Kern, "Go Out Into the Highways," Op. cit., p. 19.

served by one of our men. Unfortunately, no suitable men were available at that time.⁸

In the summer of 1947, a week of meetings was held in North Montpelier, Vermont. This was one of the neediest communities that was visited. For an entire year previous to the arrival of the District's Chapel, no church service or Sunday school had been conducted in town. Before that, when occasional church services and Sunday school classes were held, they were so far from being really Christian that they were virtually useless. At the close of one of their meetings, a man handed Pastor Kern a fifty-cent piece with the words, "I wish I could give you fifty dollars instead."⁹

In 1947 the Trailer Chapel received a request from a church group in Corinth Center, Vermont. This village is about twenty miles southeast of East Barre, where the Rev. E. Marohn had been pastor since last fall as a result of trailer work done there in July, 1946. Corinth Center was entirely a farming community. It was more rural than any community now being served in the Atlantic District. In order to determine the possibilities of the community, the District arranged for a week of meetings in July. The last four miles to the location were gravel road. The final eight-tenths mile was too rugged for even the plucky six-cylinder Pontiac of the missionaries. So the men had a farmer pull them up the last stretch with his tractor. The attendance at Corinth Center was encouraging. The average for five nights was

⁸H. Kern, "Atlantic District," Trailer Mission Reports, p. 27.

⁹H. Kern, "Go Into the Highways," op. cit., p. 20.

eighty-five. Around twenty-five Seventh Day Adventists were on hand each evening. In the final meeting on Sunday, 150 were present. Despite all this encouraging interest, the District could not put a minister here because of the minister shortage and of the many larger mission fields in the District in need of a minister.¹⁰

The summer of 1949 was the fifth season the Trailer Chapel had rolled over the highways and byways of New England, New York, and New Jersey. The number of weeks that meetings had been held with the Trailer was now equivalent of an entire year. Of this time, sixteen weeks were spent in Vermont, more than in any other single state. Originally Vermont seemed one of the least promising areas for Trailer work in the District. The population of this state is very thinly distributed and the hills and mountains, though a delight to the traveler, are a nightmare to the motorist pulling a heavy trailer. Yet circumstances had made it clear that the Lord wanted our men to concentrate upon this state.

An example of the unusual degree to which certain places in Vermont had reacted to God's Word is Topsham, located about thirty miles southeast of Montpelier, the state capital. The elderly minister of Topsham died in the spring of 1948, and during the summer the congregation was without a minister. About one hundred people lived within a radius of a mile from the village center. The average attendance at the five tent meetings was ninety. About one-third of those who came had never been seen in a religious service. On the morning they took

¹⁰H. Kern, "The Trailer Chapel Season Number Four," The Lutheran Witness, (Atlantic District Edition), LXVI (November, 1947), 2.

down their tent, Pastor and Mrs. Kern were given a note of appreciation which began:

I'd like you to know that I'm deeply grateful for what you and your wife have done not only for my children and for me, but also for this community. You've been a great inspiration. So many people have attended your services that never go to church. We need someone like you two so desperately.¹¹

Wherever they went, the story was the same. Here were two Lutherans traveling in a spiritual wilderness bringing a message of life which many of their listeners seldom and some never heard.

Iowa West District

Services were held in the Iowa District for several years; however, the only written report that I could find was for 1946. In this year, Trailer Mission services were conducted at seven places between June 11 and July 28. John Deterding and Gus Kettler, students at Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, were in charge. The seven places they visited were: Lorimor, Osceola, Lein, Mt. Air, Council Bluffs, Sloan, and Castana. Forty-three services were conducted with a total attendance of 2,521. Three promising mission stations were uncovered. At Castana, services were held by a nearby pastor the following Sunday. In Lorimor, one of our men planned to begin a few weeks later. As soon as we were able to acquire property, a mission was opened in a section of Council Bluffs. The remaining four fields that were visited showed little hope for that time.¹²

¹¹H. Kern, "Your Trailer Chapel," The Lutheran Witness, LXVIII (January 25, 1949), 2.

¹²J. Deterding and G. Kessler, "Iowa West District," Trailer Mission Reports for 1946, p. 6.

Southeastern District

A glittering galaxy of golden stars twinkled in the blue of God's heaven, and through the whispering pines came the call to worship: "Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord God of hosts, heaven and earth are praising Thee." Summoned by these soul-stirring words broadcast over a public address system, strangers came to our Crusade of the Cross in North Carolina, lighting their way by lanterns and flashlights, carrying babies swaddled in blankets against the night air, and leading their little children by the hand. It would almost seem as though they were compelled to come in, for never before had we in our District embarked upon a venture of such pure faith with no nucleus of Lutherans as a rallying point for the planting of the Cross. Under the energetic and visionary leadership of the Executive Secretary for Missions, the Rev. J. L. Summers, a trailer and tent with all the equipment were borrowed from Synod's General Home Mission Board. A technician whose work it was to play the organ, operate the visual aids equipment, visit "contacts" during the afternoon was secured in the person of "Ted" Griese, a student of Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, Missouri.

It was certainly with misgivings, yet believing in the vital need of the work, that some of our men went into "Trailer Missions." The missionaries wondered how many folks would turn out to hear a message under the banner of Lutheranism, how many would come to the church of the Lutheran Hour--for the name "Lutheran" was virtually unknown in the Blue Ridge region of the Carolinas. The missionaries came expecting to preach Christ crucified to groups of a dozen or maybe thirty folks.

To their amazement, their audiences ranged from sixteen (on a night when the rain teemed just at meeting time) to two hundred and thirty-three. They might have been skeptical if they at one location had not witnessed a group of sixty-five grow to two hundred and twenty-five in a single week--not just casual passersby, but people who returned night after night, bringing kinfolk and friends to hear their messages of hope and peace in Christ. As the people put it, "No matter who preaches, the message is always of the same high quality."¹³

In describing these Carolina people, Rev. Summers says:

By no means regard these folk of the Blue Ridge as primitive "hill-bill" living in "lean-to shacks" and going about barefooted. Many of them are well-trained, have a secondary education, and are owners of prosperous businesses. They are clownish looking after their own interests. They are good citizens, not unprogressive, self-reliant and are frequently called upon to use native talents to earn a living or to carry on government. They will be the last people in our nation to starve.¹⁴

No effort of man that deals with the lives of men and women is ever without touches of human interest. Trailer Missions were no exception. These people were hungry and soul-starved for the Word. One man said, "I've heard more real preaching in that little tent than I've heard for the past twenty years in my church."

Matthew, a bright-eyed, black-haired youngster, and his dog came out to the tent with the query, "When does the show start?" He explained that he had just left the Assembly of God Revival meeting "because the loud preaching hurts my ears."

¹³J. L. Summers, "Trailer Mission in the Carolina Blue Ridge," Trailer Mission Reports in 1946, p. 7.

¹⁴Ibid., p. 8.

Mrs. "I" said, "I hate to see you go, this is the finest thing that ever came to Newland. Before you leave town, stop by the store."

She gave our men \$10.00 to support the trailer type of program.

Another lady grasped the preacher earnestly by the hand and said,

I'm not a learned person among the great people of this world, and I don't in a theological way know just what you fellows have, but I know it must be the real thing. I have been trying to get my brother-in-law into church for fifteen years and have never succeeded. You've had him in this tent every night but one for the last two weeks.¹⁵

Here is the report showing the attendances at the services held by Trailer Missions during the summer of 1946 in North Carolina:

1st Week	Newland	477
2nd Week	Newland	585
3rd Week	Crossnor	348
4th Week	Crossnor	418
5th Week	Pineola	811
6th Week	Pineola	958
7th Week	N. Wilksboro	590
8th Week	N. Wilksboro	591
9th Week	Taylorville	875
	Total	5663

Today regular services are being held at North Wilkesboro. At Taylorville there was a small congregation in existence; however, it needed a real "moral boost." Trailer Missions gave this congregation the help it needed and now new interest is manifest in this parish.¹⁶

Western District

St. John's Lutheran Church at Purdy, Missouri, is located in the northern part of Barry County. This is the only Lutheran church of

¹⁵Ibid., p. 9.

¹⁶Ibid., pp. 11 and 12.

our synod in this large county. To the south of Purdy there lies an area forty miles in depth to the Arkansas border and almost an equal depth both to the west and east. It was a field that had never been explored by the Lutheran church.

Knowing the above facts, St. John's Lutheran Church decided to make a start toward contacting the people of this large area. It seemed that Cassville was the most logical place to make a first step, being the county seat of Barry County. Accordingly, the congregation decided to concentrate its first efforts in Cassville, and after some study of various agencies, the members came to the decision to experiment here with the Trailer Mission. It proved to be a happy choice. Speakers at the sessions of the Trailer Mission were Pastor A. Maack and Pastor John Gassner, together with the local pastor.

Attendance figures showed that a total of 800 persons attended the Trailer Mission during the ten evenings. Three hundred of this number were members of St. John's Lutheran Church at Purdy. Results were encouraging in such a venture as this. The pastor had a list of forty people who had given the definite promise to attend a Lutheran Bible Class in Cassville.

All in all, we have received the richest blessings of God upon the work of the Trailer Mission in Cassville. If we had done nothing more than to advertise the Lutheran church, we could feel that time and money had been wisely spent.¹⁷

In 1947 survey work in southeast Missouri communities had been done by the circuit in order to determine the area with most mission

¹⁷L. J. Wyssman, "Western District," Trailer Mission Reports, 1946, p. 7.

possibilities. For two weeks a trailer unit was employed at Campbell. Campbell, according to a circuit spokesman, "was a thoroughly non-Lutheran town of about 2,000, yet the average attendance for the tent meetings was very good."¹⁸

The Trailer also spent a week at Kennett, a town of 12,000. A storm which tore the tent to quite an extent, halted further trailer work at that time.¹⁹

Central District

The teeming populations of the southern Indiana hills lay before the eyes of the surrounding Lutheran congregations. These Lutherans went into action; they formed the Lutheran Mission Federation for the purpose of embracing mission opportunities of its territory and to foster them according to ability. A survey showed room for intensive mission work. Fifteen thousand people lived in an area of 400 square miles, and 90% were without church or Gospel preaching.²⁰ About the only church activities in which the people participated were an occasional funeral or perhaps a revival meeting now and then. Here was definite room for intensive work on the part of a Lutheran agency. What the people needed was the pure Word of God, the Bread of Life.²¹

¹⁸"Trailer Missions in Cape Circuit," The St. Louis Lutheran, II (June 29, 1947), 11.

¹⁹Ibid., p. 11.

²⁰W. F. Beck, "Reaching into the Hill Country," The Lutheran Witness, LXV (May 21, 1946), 147.

²¹A. W. Maack, "Trail Blazing for Christ," Lutheran Women's Quarterly, (October, 1944), p. 5.

In 1944, a young missionary was called and arrived in Medora, Indiana, a village of 722 inhabitants, located in Jackson County. The young missionary was Pastor Benjamin Schumacher. To the Missionary Federation as well as to the young missionary, this was an entirely new venture. Having grown up in California, Pastor Schumacher found the people of the southern Indiana hills country very strange. But, filled with a holy resolve to do the work for which he had prepared himself and to which he had dedicated his life, Missionary Schumacher came into this field with a love for lost souls and a determination to work. "Brother Ben"--this is what the people affectionately called him--touched his work with a vision; and the Lord touched it with a blessing. Often the crowd before him was wary, unable to see why anyone should be interested enough in them to send a costly trailer mission outfit.

After four years and faithful work, Medora had a flourishing and promising mission and was the headquarters of missionary activity that extended over 35 of the 350 square miles which the missionary was called to explore. Little did the members of the Missionary Federation dream, when five years before they contemplated calling a hill country missionary, that in so short a time a joint Lutheran service of the congregations in question would be held, not in Seymour, or in Columbus, or within the confines of any of other well established congregations, but of all places in Medora, Jackson County, Indiana. But the unexpected had come to pass. More people came to this town than ever during the past fifty years.²²

²²F. Wambsganss, "Medora and Other Stations," A New Vista in Missions (Ft. Wayne: mimeographed, 1944), p. 13.

When "Brother Ben" noticed that the young people were going astray in one of the towns, he decided to do something to help these boys and girls. He warmed the hearts of wood owners, lumber company men, saw mill workers, cabinet workers, and financial groups to such an extent that in May, 1946, a debt-free youth center building was dedicated.²³

Large families without cars found it difficult to get to church. That meant much individual instruction in the homes, and work with smaller groups. Since this took so much time, Pastor Schumacher took one of our wealthier laymen through the territory and showed him the humble homes and rehabilitated church. After hearing of the transportation problem, the layman and several of his friends gave the financial help needed to purchase buses. In three weeks the attendance was doubled at the four mission stations.

In six years of untiring labor, "Brother Ben" had brought Christ into the humblest homes, taught the Word to individuals and to crowds, and relieved spiritual and physical wants. In these years he confirmed 95, baptized 90, and filled three churches with 350 souls.²⁴ "As we read this we are reminded of the words of the 118th Psalm: 'This is the Lord's doing; it is marvelous in our eyes.'"

Another place visited by the Trailer Mission in 1944 was Kurtz, a tiny spot north of Highway 50 in the neighborhood of Freetown and Brownstown, Indiana. It, too, had seen better days. A third-class railroad passed through it. Passenger traffic had been discontinued

²³W. F. Beck, op. cit., p. 148.

²⁴Ibid, p. 149.

and the railroad station was in a bad state of repair. A few dilapidated buildings used as stores remained as mementos of better days. Adultery was rampant, and common-law marriages were frequent.

Things did not move along too smoothly in Kurtz at first. In the first place, our men were strangers to the people. "Brother Ben's" fame had not traveled that way, and as a result his work at first was looked upon with suspicion. But when the people noticed what brand of religion we offered and that this group was not of the jumping, shouting kind, they soon opened up and became more approachable. Attendance at Kurtz for the seven evenings that the Trailer Mission was there was 876. As a result of our Trailer Mission, missionary activities were started in Kurtz.

On the last evening in Kurtz, a group had come from the neighboring Norman Station and asked Pastor Schumacher to establish a mission also in that place, assuring him of the good will of most of the people residing in that community.²⁵

At first Rev. Schumacher wanted to penetrate into Kentucky for the fifth week of Trailer Mission activity. Instead, the Lord Himself showed the workers where the tent should be pitched during that week. This was truly a Macedonian call (Acts 16:9) which came to them to conduct their Trailer Mission for a week in Norman Station, a tiny spot in the neighborhood of Kurtz. The good will of the people in Norman Station exceeded that of the entire field and the average attendance each evening of Lutherans was 245.

²⁵F. Wambsganss, op. cit., p. 16.

Writes Rev. Harry Droutz, the newly called second hill country missionary:

Norman Station, Indiana, was by far the most receptive of the five places where the Trailer Mission held services. The people were delighted with the services and showed by word and action that they were hungering for the Gospel of Christ. In the seventy-odd contacts made in the homes, the desire to begin the work is ripe. Norman Station is indeed a wonderful first fruit of our Trailer Mission.²⁶

Pastor F. Wambsganss of Fort Wayne, chairman of the District Mission Board, who had been working with the missionaries in the hill country, urged enlargement:

Thousands of fellow redeemed are at our door, still without God, without Christ, without hope, bound upon our conscience. What a responsibility! What a challenge! May the Lord give us, the possessors of the Gospel of the Crucified Christ, vision to see the mission opportunities at our door. May we daily include this mission work of our fellow Lutherans in our prayers! May the love of Christ constrain us to support this noble effort with our generous gifts.²⁷

The first place visited by the Trailer in 1946 was Leesville. Leesville, a small community with a mass population of about 150 people, with a surrounding rural population of about 300, was started by the Trailer Mission, in 1944. Upon completion of the first Trailer Mission, our men received an invitation from the defunct Methodist Church to start preaching in their building. After a year of such services, the town was revived religiously, and the average attendance in services was about 63 a Sunday. This inspired a few straggling staunch Methodists to revive their church, apparently thinking they would retain the bulk of their people in attendance. The arrangements were made with their district

²⁶E. H. Droutz as quoted by F. Wambsganss, op. cit., p. 18.

²⁷F. Wambsganss as quoted by W. F. Beck, op. cit., p. 176.

superintendents, and Leesville again became a station served by the Methodists. The Lutheran group was forced to leave, but they took with them 75% of the congregation, and started services in the school building.

Early in April of 1946, the Leesville Lutheran members resolved to build a church. The Trailer Mission came at the opportune time that this fact could be proclaimed each night from the tent. Meanwhile, the Methodist group had become extinct again, and had practically lost its identity in the community. Seven meetings had a total attendance of 1,400.²⁸

The second stop of the Trailer Mission expedition in 1946 was Sparksville, a mission station of about 300 population. Our church had an established mission there, with a Sunday school of 91 enrollment, and a communicant membership of 12. The Sunday attendance was an average of 32. The Trailer Mission attracted quite a few prospects in this area. The bus system was used extensively in connection with Sparksville, which accounted for the very good attendances each night (1,345 in seven meetings.) There were definitely 20 souls in Sparksville that were contacted through the Trailer Mission; because they were almost persuaded, it was felt that a week of evangelistic services shortly after the Trailer Mission would settle the matter in their minds as to their soul's security in church membership. Four weeks after the Trailer Mission left Sparksville, the evangelistic services were scheduled, in which the

²⁸O. Horstmann, "Sparksville and Other Missions," Trailer Mission Reports, 1946, p. 17.

cardinal doctrines of the church were treated.²⁹

Another place visited in 1946 was Needmore. Needmore proved valuable in Trailer Mission experience as a warning to trailer missionaries. They were to check up ahead of time as to the possibility of conflicting with another revival already scheduled to appear at the same time as theirs. In the case of Needmore, it was the Baptist church that was holding the revival. Certain individuals of that town interpreted the Lutherans' being there as a direct thrust against the Baptists. Of course, this was not the case even though we got credit for it. Another result of this incident was poor attendance. This made a poor impression on the unchurched because they felt the lack of drawing power which would indicate some lack in our church or doctrines. Thirdly, this had a poor reaction upon the Trailer Mission personnel, which up to that time was having an overflow crowd each night. But now an empty tent caused them to become quite depressed. Four meetings were held here with an attendance of 350 and a total collection of \$6.40.³⁰

Fort Ritner had trailer missions for the second season. The missionaries felt that it proved one of the most fruitful Trailer Mission sessions that they had. They made 25 very good mission contacts which later showed up for thesevangelistic services held at Sparksville, only 3 or 4 miles away. Prior to the Fort Ritner stand, the missionaries had heard of a proposed revival on the part of the Nazarene church there, and so they (the Lutherans) pushed their date up three

²⁹Ibid., p. 18.

³⁰Ibid., p. 19.

weeks to accommodate the Nazarenes. In the meantime, the Brother of the Nazarene church got out a petition requesting that the Lutheran trailer unit not be permitted to enter Fort Ritner. Only a few biased Nazarenes signed it. Then the enthusiastic brother went to the trustee of the township and asked him to forbid us to use the school lot. This request was not granted. The result of all this effort on the part of the Nazarene only caused a blaze of curiosity and a flame of enthusiasm which filled our tent each night. It also decided in the minds of six people definitely to become Lutherans and not Nazarenes. The six meetings here had a total attendance of 1,315.³¹

Reports such as these can be told for many more pages. If our experience in hill country missions had taught us anything, it was this: That the Lutheran church could gain a foothold in areas that were predominantly unchurched, or which had been abandoned; or where the work was done haphazardly by other churches, and where we had no Lutheran nuclei. Here missions could be projected and satisfactorily developed into congregations, provided that God gave us men trained and versed in the specialized technique of hill country missions. "Your old men shall dream dreams, your young men shall see visions." (Joel 2:28).

The Eastern District

During the summer of 1946, the Mission Board of the Eastern District tried out the Trailer Mission. The Rev. L. Leonard was engaged to do the preaching and Pastor Wilbur Lottes of St. Luke's near Buffalo was engaged to serve as song leader.

³¹Ibid., p. 20.

They first went to Perry, New York, where they had a very small mission congregation of about a dozen communicants. Attendance for five meetings here was 395. From here they went to Gowanda where there was a small mission congregation. Attendances here were 631 for six evenings. Then they went to Angola where we had a small self-supporting congregation. The total attendance for the 21 evenings of the Trailer Mission in New York was 2,330 and the total collection was \$1,001.17. Statistically speaking, the Trailer Mission was a success. Following are several reports submitted by the pastors who served the parishes where the Trailer Mission was located:

At Maryvale, one of the most prominent members of this mission station was not in favor of having the Trailer in the beginning. However, after we had been there one night he changed his mind completely. Not only did he attend all of our meetings, but he had a special hitch attached to his Chrysler so that he could move our trailer from place to place each Saturday. He is now sold on the Trailer Mission. We believe that our congregation is now more mission-minded and more mission-conscious than ever before.³²

Before the trailer came to Gowanda most of our people were adverse to it. Our organist refused to play for it. However, when the week was over our people had a complete change of mind. They were wholeheartedly for the Trailer Mission. Some of our people even followed it to the next town after it had left Gowanda. All told, the Mission accomplished much good in Gowanda. It gave us new connections. It helped to settle some of the internal difficulties within our own congregation, and it gave the local pastor a tremendous boost when he felt that he needed it most. It restored his faith in the future of his own mission.³³

The reception of the Trailer into our part of the country had a very definite effect on the people. They were at first puzzled at the thought of connecting Open Air Preaching under a tent with so-called dignified Lutheran church, but after a few nights of your preaching these thoughts were driven from their minds.

³²L. Leonard, "The Eastern District," Trailer Mission Report, 1946, p. 34.

³³Ibid., p. 35.

The whole consensus of opinion from the village officials was that more of this type of preaching was needed in all small communities. They accepted your work and wished that you could have remained longer. Directly from your efforts and the contacts made at the Trailer, we have three families who are willing to take adult instruction in the fall and will send their children to our Sunday school. One of these families was going to the show and were parked in the alley by the Trailer when your sermon attracted them and they stayed and listened. I think that we would have had many more families for the church if you could have stayed longer. But we are very thankful to God that you were here at all and that He did not fail in His promise that His Word would not return unto Him void. I must also mention the fact of the stimulus to my own congregation in the matter of personal missionary work. While you were here and up until the present time they have been filled with the enthusiasm of making their own lives into personal missionaries for the Lord.³⁴

Many people who otherwise would never come into contact with this Gospel were reached through the Trailer Mission. This method brought the Gospel of Jesus Christ and Him crucified to men from both sides of the track.

The Northwest District

The Board sent a trailer, tent, and equipment to the Northwest part of our country in 1945. Accompanying the Trailer were the Rev. W. J. Janssen, and student M. Wolfram. They opened their campaign at Sunny-side, Washington, where they had good attendances. After leaving the Yakim convention, they went to Prose where attendance was also encouraging. From here they headed for Tonasket, Washington. It was a very long road. Their little Chevrolet had a hard time dragging its trailer behind it (weight of 3,200 pounds). It huffed and puffed and many times refused to go any farther. They were forced to stop several

³⁴Ibid., p. 36.

times until their car cooled off. At Tonasket the tent stood opposite a tavern. When the missionaries sang and preached, the men in the tavern would come out and stand on the sidewalk, listening attentively. People came from Havillah, twenty miles distant, to take part in the meetings. The church in Havillah was so interested that it gave the Trailer Mission a large sum of money to help carry on. One man paid the whole cost of advertising. Another repaired the car free of charge, at quite an expense to himself. Some of the other places visited were: Oroville, Grand Coulee, Golderdale, Washougal, Longview, and Beaverston. In Grand Coulee it was so windy and dusty that the picture on the screen was almost completely obscured by the dust.

Much credit is due the pastors, their wives, and the members of our various churches in the localities where the men worked for the success of the Trailer Mission in this District. Nearly 4,000 people heard the message; hundreds of calls were made; more than 35,000 pieces of literature were distributed. At least two new preaching stations were established as a result of the work. Already enough requests have come in to occupy the Trailer Mission at least eight weeks for the summer of 1946 (the next summer).³⁵ God be praised for everything!

Southern Illinois District

The question on the minds of good many Lutherans of Southern Illinois was: "Would it be worthwhile to hold tent meetings in this

³⁵W. Janssen, "Riding the Circuit," The Lutheran Witness, LXIV (October 9, 1945), 4.

District?" While every Christian knew that Gospel preaching is always worthwhile, some doubted the advisability of using this comparatively new method here. Under the leadership of Pastor E. H. Fleer and the able assistance of Pastors Roy Moeller and G. K. Schmidt, the Trailer Mission opened at Fairfield on June 1, 1946. They started in this small city which had no Lutheran church. By the end of the summer, church services were being held here, a Sunday school with an enrollment of fifty had been organized, and a missionary had been called to give full time to the new field.³⁶

After five days, the Trailer Mission unit moved to Royalton. In this village we already had a mission station. Here a record attendance of 160 people was reached. Du Quoin is the city to which Pastor Fleer next took his traveling evangelists. Here the attendance varied between 50 and 120. An already organized congregation received a spiritual shot-in-the-arm, and some new prospects were found.

At Jerseyville the tent services met with the least amount of success as far as numbers in attendance was concerned. And yet here twelve Lutheran families had been located through the efforts of the Trailer Mission.

Next came Berea Negro Mission at Alton. Here again capacity crowds found their way to the Gospel tent. So many prospects for membership were found that a chapel in this city was imperative.

Three days of Trailer Mission services at Livingston proved a

³⁶M. J. Schliebe, "Trailer Missions in Southern Illinois," The Lutheran Witness, LXV (September 10, 1946), 308.

real help to that thriving mission station.³⁷

This new method had been tried. All doubts had been removed as to the practical value of Trailer Missions. It was no longer a trial in Southern Illinois, but it was a proven means of spreading the Gospel. Our Lord had commanded us to "go and preach the Gospel." This is the standard and goal of our church, to spread the pure Word. Certainly we want our church to grow in numbers, but our primary purpose should be to reach as many people as possible with the truths of Scripture. Trailer Mission offered us this opportunity. There is no question that the messages that were brought in Word, picture, and song have made impressions on the hearts of many that no power on earth can erase.

³⁷Ibid., p. 309.

District	Number of Weeks Operation	Number of Towns Visited	Number of Services In each District	Total Attendance for District	Average Attendance per Service	Total Collections	Average Collection per Service	Stations Started	Stations Advertised	Good Prospects for New Missions	Number Present Prospects for New Missions
Iowa West	7	7	43	2521	59	231.60	5.30	2		1	4
Southeastern	9	5	54	5663	105	450.00	8.33	2	1	1	1
Western	5	3	27	1365	51	156.50	5.75	1	2		
Central	7½	9	50	9693	194	714.17	14.28	2	5	1	1
Atlantic	9	9	44	2286	52	50.38				2	7
Eastern	4	4	21	2330	111	1001.17	47.67		4		
Central Illinois	3	3	18	963	54	115.00	6.00			2	1
Southern Illinois	5½	6	29	2576	92	295.29	11.35	1	3	1	1
TOTALS	50	46	286	27,397	96	3014.11	10.54	8	15	8	15

Statistical Report for 1946

CHAPTER VI

DEMONSTRATION SERVICES AND CONFERENCES

The enthusiasm and zeal of the workers is very evident in the reports. It was even contagious for the visiting clergy. Members of our congregations also became enthusiastic, and many of them offered their services. Others rendered excellent aid to the trailer missionary. At the 27th Annual District Walther League Convention of Southern Illinois, (August, 1946), the leaguers assumed responsibility to provide the District Mission Board with full trailer mission equipment. The young people had set \$5,000.00 as the minimum amount to be received for this project. These Southern Illinois Leaguers grasped this opportunity to help bring the Gospel to many unchurched in the area after hearing the report of the successful tour recently completed by trailer missionaries of the District under the leadership of the Rev. E. H. Fleer of Cahokia.¹

On May 25, 1947, the trailer unit, completely equipped for mission work, was dedicated at Millstadt, Illinois. The unit included a station wagon, large tent, 120 folding chairs, a portable organ, altar, public address system, recordings of chimes, hymns, and Scripture verses, a motion picture projector and films.²

Different groups became genuinely interested in the Trailer Chapel

¹"Trailer Mission Equipment Bought by Leaguers," St. Louis Lutheran, II (September 22, 1946), 1.

²"Leaguers Dedicate Mission Equipment," St. Louis Lutheran, II, (June 1, 1947), 1.

as a missionary project. At the third biennial Convention of the Southern Illinois District Lutheran Women's Missionary League held at Chester, Illinois, the women voted \$500.00 for relief and \$400.00 per season for District Trailer Missions.³

The demonstration of Trailer Mission preaching was finding a place on the programs of many conventions. At the Saginaw Convention (June 21 to 29, 1944), a trailer equipped with motion pictures and slide charts, was demonstrated by Pastor A. W. Maack. The Emergency Planning Council was instructed to purchase more trailers as a result of this demonstration.⁴

Then in Ft. Wayne, Indiana, at the Centennial Epiphany Conference held on January 7 and 8, 1947, a practical demonstration of the Trailer Mission was given by Pastor A. W. Maack, B. F. Schumacher, and F. Wambganss.⁵

Probably the most interesting and remembered demonstration was the one in St. Louis at the Trailer Missionary Conference. Twenty-one trailer missionaries from seven synodical districts met at Concordia Publishing House, St. Louis, May 8 and 9, 1946, for the first conference of its kind in the Missouri Synod. The Rev. A. W. Maack was in charge of discussion. "What to do with the 'amen' and 'hallelujah'

³"Southern Illinois Women's League Adopts New Missionary Project," St. Louis Lutheran, II (October 6, 1946), 1.

⁴"Missionary Means," Digest of the Saginaw Convention, (October, 1944), p. 20.

⁵"Agenda of Conference," Bringing You the Centennial Epiphany Conference, (January, 1947), p. 9.

shouter;" "What to do with the lady who insists on 'testifying';"
 "What about the sectarian quartet which offers its services?" "What
 about the visiting lay preacher whom 'the Lord has given a message'?"--
 these were some of the problems of the tent preacher which were dis-
 cussed.

The highlight of the conference, according to H. W. Gockel, was a tent service on the Seminary campus. The actual Gospel tent was put up on the tent grounds. The pastors were given lessons in erecting the large tent, driving stakes, tying knots, wiring for lights and public address systems, showing pictures, arranging lecterns, portable organ, chairs, etc. Pastor B. Schumacher ("Brother Ben" to his hill country parishioners in Southern Indiana) and Pastor A. W. Maack conducted a typical service, using charts to illustrate the sermon. The twenty-one pastors joined in singing "Praise Him! Praise Him!," "Jesus, Our Blessed Redeemer," and "All Things to All Men." The Rev. Paul Kiehl gave a graphic demonstration of the use of visual aids in Trailer Mission preaching. Pastor Maack closed the conference by saying: "No church is in a better position to do effective Trailer Mission work than ours. We have the message, the trained clergy, excellent equipment, and have developed superior techniques."⁶

⁶H. W. Gockel, "Trailer Missionaries Hold First Conference," The Lutheran Witness, LXV (June 4, 1946), 197.

CHAPTER VII

CONCLUSION

Analysis

The success of the Trailer Mission work is evident from the reports. There were really no failures. A spiritual boost, publicity, and a further analysis of the field was given to existing mission stations. A rather complete analysis was made of a number of communities in which the Lutheran church was not represented. A shot-in-the-arm was given to already established self-supporting congregations. Mission stations were started, and a number of areas showed from the Trailer Mission that they were ripe for the harvest. One of the really important results of the Trailer Mission work was the preaching of Christ's message of salvation to people who previously had not had the opportunity to hear it. The Trailer Mission had the advantage of reaching people who otherwise would not have been reached. This type of mission appealed to many who were not attracted to the churches.

In the Southern Illinois District alone, new congregations were started in Mt. Carmel, McLeansboro, and Carmi. This was the story with many of the other districts also.¹

What is even more important as to the success of the Trailer Mission, at least in the eyes of many, was the fact that there is every reason to believe that Lutheran members who attended were stirred and

¹G. W. Boecker, "Personal Letter to Roy Maack," (October 29, 1960).

challenged, thereby having their mission-consciousness deepened. Thus the lasting benefits of the Trailer Mission in the hearts of Lutherans cannot be measured. An example of this was when Circuit B in Queens, New York, in 1947 decided to embark on the "Each One--Reach One" campaign of the Lutheran Church--Missouri Synod. They sponsored as their first project a Trailer Preaching Mission. The Trailer Chapel, operated by the Atlantic District came to Queens during the month of June and located at three different sites in three consecutive weeks. This gave a tremendous mission perspective to the ten existing congregations in Circuit B.²

Following are the comments of the pastors who preached at these tent services: A. F. Steinke, Islip, New York: "It seems that a number of pastors might be well-trained to do evangelistic preaching more frequently."

B. von Schenk, Our Savior, Bronx, New York City: "I note that some people like to come out for this kind of a service who will not go to a regular church."

Edward P. Merkel, Trinity, Locust Manor, New York, while attending one of the services, met a "gospel preacher" of the Brethren. The latter said: "I do street preaching regularly, and I send my converts only to soundly fundamentalist churches. If I ever come into your neighborhood, I shall certainly direct the people to your church."³

²"Trailer Mission," The Lutheran Witness (Atlantic District Edition), LXVI (June 17, 1947), 1.

³"Trailer Mission," The Lutheran Witness (Atlantic District Edition), LXVI (July 29, 1947), 1.

P. G. Breur, Grace, Jamaica, New York, said: "The mission was a success. We have had only the most favorable and pleasing reports. All of us are anticipating the return of the Trailer Chapel to Queens next year."⁴

Almost weekly during the interim of Lutheran tent services, testimony had been heard showing that misconceptions have been cleared away and better relations affected with people. For example, the consistent and repeated claim identifying our Church either directly with Catholicism or "just like it" had been swept away. Not unusual is the statement made by a man of another denomination after a week of Lutheran tent services: "I have always been prejudiced against the Lutheran church. Other workers at the factory told me not to attend; they are just like the Catholics. I know different now. You preach the Bible."⁵

It was the unique message of Lutheranism that changed many of these misconceptions. It was, however, the means of our Lutheran tent services which made it humanly possible to reach these people. Instances such as the following illustrate the blessings of this unit. In one town in the District a wife told the pastor: "My husband will never join the Church." Through District tent services he came to a knowledge of his Savior, and has now been instructed, baptized and received into communicant membership with our Church, together with his wife. He is now a zealous worker for his Savior and his Church."⁶

⁴Ibid., p. 2.

⁵E. W. Boecker, "Facing the Great Task through Lutheran Tent Services," Southern Illinois Walther League Bulletin, VI (September, 1946), 1.

⁶Ibid., p. 2.

On another occasion a young man responded by saying: "I never cared much for church before; since tent services came to town, I can't seem to stay away."⁷

Thousands of tracts were scattered throughout the District as part of the unit's program. The Lord used such a tract in one location to bring a teenage girl to services, and eventually also to Christ. She found the tract dirty and crumpled, lying on the street. After reading it, she identified it with Lutheran tent services. There were even times during the course of Trailer Missions conducted by the Atlantic District in New England that the tent missions served as agents for distributing Bibles and Testaments to the people living in the area.

One interesting aspect of the Trailer Mission in New England during the Second World War was that a number of congregations of other denominations asked, after hearing the tent missionaries, if Lutheran clergymen would serve their parishes.⁸

One real advantage of the work carried on by the Trailer Mission was the fact that it "cracked the ice" for the Missouri Synod in states where it was not well represented.⁹

The missionaries, by going into a town, would set up their tent, speak over the public address system, circularize the town, and become, almost immediately well known.

Without exaggeration it may be said that the mobile mission has

⁷Ibid., p. 2.

⁸H. Kern, "Personal Letter to Roy Maack," (October 21, 1960).

⁹H. Kern, "Personal Letter to Roy Maack," (February 11, 1960).

brought Christ not only to many ears and eyes, but to many hearts which would have remained untouched were it not for the effort put into this method of approach. Thus the seed of God's Word was sown in spiritual soil. That some of this seed--perhaps more than some would have faith to believe--will bring forth fruits is certain.

Future

Since 1950, when the Atlantic District sold its trailer, and since 1955, when the Southern Illinois District sold its trailer, this type of mission work in the Lutheran Church--Missouri Synod has been discontinued.

During the war years and for several years after, the work, as carried on by Synod, was under the direction of the Emergency Planning Council of Synod--except where districts owned their own units, as in the case of Southern Illinois and Atlantic. After this, it was placed under the Home Mission Board of Missouri Synod. "Since the work was placed under the Home Mission Board, it did not receive the attention it should have. One of the main reasons, no doubt, is the fact that there is such a shortage of manpower."¹⁰

This was the situation all over according to the letters which district missionaries wrote to A. W. Maack, who had been Synod's contact man through all the years of Trailer Missions.

Perhaps the reasoning of the Southern Illinois District for discontinuing Trailer Missions sums up the attitude of all the districts

¹⁰A. Maack, "Personal Letter to Herbert Kern," (February 22, 1950).

concerned. They discontinued because: 1) their Mission Board encountered great difficulty getting the right talents at the right time for the work; 2) the novelty was wearing off; 3) not many lasting effects remained after the departure of the mission, unless a full time man was placed into that field right away. The Mission Board did not have the men and the means to do this.¹¹

During the Second World War, many pastors were demanded from each denomination. The Trailer Mission had served well in areas where there was a shortage of pastors, but now that many were coming out of the service and filling the vacancies, the demand for the Trailer Mission had dwindled.¹²

Also one of the stated purposes of the Trailer Mission was to find the Lutherans who had moved during the mass migration of the Second World War. Many of these had been found, and were now being served. People after that war were not moving quite so often and suddenly, and local parishes and mission boards were more able to keep up with them. Now the need of the Trailer Mission was not so great.

It is my conviction that the Trailer Mission had served a useful purpose in mission work throughout the years and that it paved the way for the great "Preaching--Teaching--Reaching" missions which have been conducted throughout our Synod in the past number of years. Already on October 20, 1949, when Pastor Kern made his report to the Mission Board of the Atlantic District, encouraging them to discontinue Trailer

¹¹P. F. Harre, "Personal Letter to Roy Maack," (November 3, 1960).

¹²H. Kern, "Report to Atlantic District Mission Board," (October 20, 1949).

Missions, he encouraged that lay people should be trained to make calls, and that much could be accomplished in this way.¹³

It seemed that evangelism, like advertising, had to be done on a large scale. It wasn't enough to have a Trailer Mission set up along side an existing church or in a vacant lot in some town where the Lutheran church was not represented. It seemed to be more effective to have a number of churches participating in a larger program. Each church would participate simultaneously with the others, having lay people make the myriad of calls on prospects. More people become involved, which contributes to the success of evangelistic work.

And so the PTR was born. It was perhaps not a direct result of the Trailer Mission, but it certainly used many of the techniques of Trailer Missions--the informal services every night, giving out of tracts, having a guest missionary, using the same publicity media. Some of the PTR speakers are even preaching with charts to illustrate their sermons.

Trailer Missions served a needed and useful purpose in its time. It was an instrument in bringing many to the Word of God. No doubt it would still be effective in parts of America today. It is the belief of the writer of this paper that the Rev. Alvin Maack, and the Rev. William Duerr, pioneers of Trailer Missions in the Lutheran Church, and all the others mentioned in this paper and any other who worked with Trailer Missions deserve a tribute in this concluding paragraph of this thesis. God bless their humble efforts.

¹³Ibid., p. 2.

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