

more than I did. We could have built a half million dollar church during the good times, but we were too tight-fisted and so we had to build it in the depression years, when we had to really sacrifice to make it possible."

History is repeating itself today. Our Lutheran Church today is laboring under a deficit of more than two million dollars while its members are enjoying a prosperity as has never been known in the country before, inviting the Lord's chastizing hand by hampering and hindering the Lord's work. Must we have another depression open our eyes to our selfishness and ingratitude?

In Yorktown I made my first acquaintance with the Walther League in our Church. I had Church Youth Organizations in some of my congregations before. But these were individual societies, not affiliated with other congregations. We usually met about twice a month for Bible study and Christian fellowship.

The International Walther League was a new experience for me, and I must say a regrettable one. I had, as a Lutheran youth and later on as a student of theology, been taught to frown on all forms of dancing. I taught against this form of exciting sinful lust which is latent in all human beings. I preached against the evil of the dance. I warned my young people against it at every opportunity, only to have my Walther League, without my knowledge, advertise and hold a dance in the Yorktown City Hall. To this dance the Walther League Societies of two neighboring Lutheran Churches had also been invited, not only privately by means of a letter to each society, but also publicly in the County papers.

I missed seeing that advertisement and consequently did not know until the County paper of that week was published. I read it just before I was to conduct a meeting of my Walther League Society. When I had read the account of that successful dance, I discarded my essay which I had intended to read to the League that night, and I opened my Bible and the Synodical Catechism, and prepared myself as best I could in the short time left me, to give my young people a Bible lesson so plain and straight from the shoulder, as I was in the heat of the moment, able to give them.

I had a full house that night, for the entire affair had been planned and carried out to bait me and to see if I would have the courage to censure them for it. When I had finished my say that evening, I told the League that I was through with the society for good, unless they would acknowledge their wrong doing and apologize

for it that very evening. Also I demanded that the minutes of that meeting including the apology be sent also to the neighboring societies, accompanied by a plea of the society to forgive it the offense which the society had given them by holding that dance and for inviting them to join them in it.

After I had given my ultimatum, everything in the meeting hall was as quiet as though there were not a soul present. At last the president of the society spoke up and said that at the Walther League Convention in June of that year, they had learned that other Walther League Societies were holding so-called "supervised dances," and that he could not see why then I objected to them doing the same thing. I told them that I was responsible only for what my young people were doing, and that I had no control over what others were doing. Also I told them that my objections against dancing were not based on what others were doing but only on what the Word of God had to say about sinful lust.

I said, "You and I pray God, 'Lead us not into temptation,' and how can I hope to have that prayer granted when I and you willfully place ourselves and others into the way of temptation." But no admission of guilt was forthcoming, much less an apology.

I therefore picked up my hat and books and told the League that I would take the matter before the congregation for disposal and that I would not again attend a League meeting, unless I received an apology before the coming Sunday. Having said that, I walked out and went home.

I sat in my study until after eleven o'clock and then took off my shoes to go to bed, when a knock sounded at the front door. When I opened it, there stood a delegation of two Leagues which asked me to return to the meeting which had carried on under the leadership of my faithful teacher, Mr. Helmuth Stahllecker. I assured the committee that I would be there within a few minutes.

When at last I had re-entered the school where the meeting was being held, I was informed by Mr. Stahllecker that the society had unanimously passed resolutions, first to apologize for having given the dance; secondly, for having given offense to the societies of Immanuel and St. John's Leagues in our sister congregations; and thirdly, to mail a copy of these resolutions to each of the other societies which had been invited to the dance. I thanked the members of the League for their decision and praised them for the Christian courage which they thereby had exhibited. Then I closed the meeting

with a short prayer and the "Aaronic Blessing," and went home again.

My fellow pastors in the other congregations were grateful for the action which we had taken, since it spared them the need of denouncing publicly the doings of my Walther League. However, though this action stopped public dancing in my congregation for a while, it recurred several years later, only in a different manner, because many of the parents had willfully condemned my first attempt to keep my young people on the "straight and narrow way." The father of the president of the League especially was peeved at my success in getting an apology out of the society, and he had told his four boys then attending the League, "The next time you boys stand up for your rights."

The next time came all right, but several years later. We did not have both a senior and a junior society. Both met together. I noticed several years later that some of the society members were always in a hurry to get the meetings over with. Also, on several occasions I noticed that the lights in the school were still on at as late an hour as 2 o'clock of the next morning.

I put on my clothes and went to investigate, thinking that the last ones to leave for home had perhaps forgotten to pull the switch and put out the lights. However, when I opened the door of the school, I found that most of the Junior Walther League members were still there, most of them sleeping in their seats. Naturally I asked them, "How come?" They told me that their older brothers and sisters had gone on to Clarinda after the meeting was over and that they were going to pick them up on the way home.

At first it did not dawn on me that my young people were stepping out on me. However, I did not approve of the way the seniors were treating the juniors. So I spake to the mothers in the next Ladies Aid meeting. I asked them point blank, "Have you ever inquired of your children why it is that they come home so late on Walther League night?" Some of the mothers, to shield their sons and daughters, replied, "O, no doubt they sit and visit with each other for an hour or two after the meeting is over."

I told them then what I had found at two o'clock in the morning on one occasion, and that since then I had watched the lights in school after meetings were over and found that they were on still into the wee hours of the morning after. Some of the mothers were alarmed then, but most of them just shrugged their shoulders.

The next step that happened was this, that some of the seniors no longer attended the bi-monthly meetings but just dumped their younger brothers and sisters off at the school and drove away to Clarinda before the meeting got under way. Again I made it a point to report this matter to the members of the Ladies Aid. This time I noticed animosity in the faces of some of the mothers and none replied to my warnings. I then warned the parents what might result if their young people thus tried to get around Bible Class instruction and Christian fellowship.

It was after I had made this second warning that the town Marshall came to me and complained about some of my young people who were disturbing the peace of Yorktown by their boisterous noise making way late at night after the Walther League meetings. This time I took the matter up with the elders of the congregation. They promised their cooperation. They said that several of our church members who lived in Yorktown had also complained to them about the rowdy action of some of our Walther Leaguers.

They drove around and around in town, with their car mufflers wide open, yelling and shouting to one another. In the meantime, Pastor Vogel told me that he had been hearing complaints about a young member of my, and another young member of Pastor Mueller's congregation, who were holding public dances and drinking parties at a tavern some four or five miles to the southwest of Clarinda. Pastor Vogel also informed me that many of my young people were attending these dances. He did not know at the time that some of his own young people were also involved. Neither did I know it at the time.

However, I told my elders what Pastor Vogel had told me and they, together with some elders of Pastor Vogel's congregation, thereupon paid a visit to that tavern which was in charge of a young former member of my congregation, who was now a member of another Missouri Lutheran congregation in Page County. These elders were shocked at what they found going on at that tavern. Not only some young men, but even some of the girls were found drunk at the place, and most of the patrons were Lutheran young men and women from both the city and country congregations.

That was not the worst of the matter. One of my young men, and I must say one out of a very fine family at that, came to me and said, "Pastor, I came to confess that I have paid no heed to your teaching and preaching. And I am being punished for it now." I could hardly believe my ears. I was so shocked, for he said, "I am going to get married on Saturday to a girl whom I do not love."

He had been keeping company with a fine girl in my congregation. He had to marry a girl out of another congregation, whose pastor had advised him to go to me and make a confession to me of what he had done.

"O," said he, "how I wish now that I had heeded your earnest warning but I have come to my senses too late. I have disgraced my own parents and my church, and the Walther League Society. I want to tell the society that I have confessed all this to you, and also I want you to warn the members again, for I am not the only one who is guilty."

And he told the truth, when he said that, for there were several other "shotgun marriages" within the three congregations in and around Clarinda. There was another in my own congregation, and in the Clarinda congregation, a young girl out of a fine family had to be forcibly prevented from committing suicide. All this took place in the very last months of my stay in Yorktown. I was glad that I did not have to perform the marriage of the second one of my young men in the congregation.

It was then that the parents in my congregation woke up from sinful complacency and indifference against the dance. What had happened had a salutary influence on most of the Yorktown members. They no longer bore me any hard feelings for having been so vigorous in my campaign against the modern dance and its damming consequences.

I know this from the fact that when St. Paul's of Yorktown celebrated its 60th Anniversary, it had me come to them in 1956, not only to preach them one of the Anniversary Sermons, but also to lead them in a sociable get together on the Monday evening after, and the very people who had been my Walther League members while I was pastor in Yorktown insisted on paying, not only train and pullman fare for mother and me, but also they paid me the sum of twenty-five dollars as a gift of appreciation. The very man who had been president of the League when the Yorktown League gave that dance in the town hall had us over for his house guests.

While stationed in Yorktown, one of my families moved to Shenandoah, Iowa, located about 16 miles to the north and west of Yorktown, on what was at that time known as Federal Highway Number 3. It was unpaved at the time, highly graded and dangerous, and sometimes impossible for traveling when it was muddy.

## Bahr Family

Well, the family which moved there, together with another family which had moved to Shenandoah from St. John's congregation in Clarinda, Iowa, asked me whether it would not be a good idea for starting a preaching station in Shenandoah. At first this idea seemed preposterous. There were already two Lutheran congregations in the town which affiliated with other Lutheran Synods, and the Missouri Synod had tried twice before to establish preaching stations in town and these attempts have turned out to be failures. Hence, why try again.

However, I learned that there were a few scattered Lutheran families west of Coin, Iowa to the southeast of Shenandoah, and also a few Lutheran families to the northwest of town, which had formerly attended a Missouri Synod Church at Immogene, Iowa, which had been abandoned later for reasons unknown to me. So at last I felt persuaded to make a third attempt to gain a foothold in Shenandoah, which was a thriving seed-house town.

Not only the Henry Field and Earl May seed-houses were located there, but also several nurseries--one of these Welche's Nursery, if I remember the name correctly. Still more important was the fact that both of the seed-houses had powerful radio stations. In fact, one of these stations, the Henry Field Seed-House Station, KFNF, had asked me to broadcast a religious program of my own arrangement in the German language once a month. They gave us a half hour's use of their station from four to four-thirty on the first Sunday afternoon of each calendar month.

All these things taken together motivated me to look around for a suitable place in which to conduct services every Sunday evening. Such a place was quickly found. St. John's Episcopal Congregation in the 400 block of Church Street was dying out. Only one service was conducted a month in the forenoon. From the Episcopal Bishop in Des Moines, I secured permission to hold services in that church at 412 Church Street every Sunday evening for a rental of \$12.00 monthly. I paid for an ad in the Shenandoah Sentinell out of my own pocket, announcing the first service to be held on the second Sunday in June of 1927. This first service was attended by 12 people, not counting myself and the organist, who was my faithful teacher, Mr. Helmuth Stahlecker.

The attendance increased, but very slowly. I knew what the trouble was. The evening services were not conducive to get people living in the country five and eight miles from town to get ready and drive to town for a church service. Therefore, I brought

the Shenandoah Mission to the attention of the District Convention of the Iowa District, after I had served the congregation for a little over a year. As a result, after much argumentation, the District, instead of calling a Missionary for Shenandoah, voted to place a state wide Missionary there for a time and thus find out what the possibilities were.

The first Missionary arrived in due time and was installed by me. He did excellent work the first year. The attendance grew and grew to such an extent that the congregation decided to call him as their own pastor. For this, the consent of the Iowa District had to be gained. The consent was given at last, and the Missionary was then installed as the Pastor of Trinity Congregation of Shenandoah.

And now the picture, which had been so rosy for a while, began to darken. The pastor expected too much for his little flock. Instead of patiently preaching the Gospel and indoctrinating the members of his flock, he began organizing everything according to the pattern of large city congregations. The congregation was not ripe for such high pressure work. The members were not rich; most of the farmers were renters and the town people were laborers, who worked in the seed house or nurseries, not being highly paid.

Because the pastor became more and more demanding, family after family stayed away from the services. The pastor could not get them to come back, and so finally he received a call to near Milwaukee, Wisconsin, which was his home, and he did not only accept that call but on his way to Wisconsin, he stopped in and had a conference with the President of the Iowa District in which he warned the President not to place another Missionary at Shenandoah because the place was hopeless.

After he left Shenandoah, the congregation asked me to serve them again as best as I could. Within a short time, I had regained most of the people the other man had lost, and the congregation decided to call another Missionary. I was told to ask for a list of suitable names from which the congregation was at a later meeting to choose and call one. Imagine my surprise when I received a letter from the District President, telling me that he had referred my request to the Chairman of the Mission Board.

After a few weeks I received a letter from him, telling me that the Board felt it was inadvisable to call another man to Shenandoah on a permanent basis, and he advised the congregation to call a vicar instead, that is a man who was not yet a graduate,

and to engage him for a term of nine months. The congregation represented this action of the Mission Board and asked me to find a suitable list of candidates. For the Iowa District had in its convention of 1930 accepted Trinity congregation as a member of the District and had promised to subsidize the congregation for half of the Missionary's salary. Neither the President of the District, nor the Mission Board, had the authority to nullify that convention action.

So, we sent a call to a former college mate of mine and graduate of Springfield Concordia Seminary, to take the place of the Missionary, who had gone to Butler, Wisconsin. He accepted the call and he was an experienced man who did wonderful work at Shenandoah for a long time to come. However, when he asked the Iowa District President for admission to the District and to authorize someone to install him as pastor of the Mission Congregation at Shenandoah, Iowa, I found myself in hot water.

The President and the Chairman of the District Mission Board charged me with unauthorized action in the calling of the new man. I replied in a letter of mine that the District had accepted the congregation as a member of the Iowa District, and had subsidized the salary of the Missionary there. As a member congregation of the District, the congregation being vacant, surely had the right to call another man to fill the vacancy, also that I had asked the President for a list of suitable candidates and that he had referred the matter to the Chairman of the Mission Board, and that he too had ignored my request and had asked the congregation to call an undergraduate instead for a term of only nine months, a suggestion which the congregation rejected on the grounds that such an arrangement was not in the best interest of the congregation.

After some argumentation, the President authorized the installation of the new man. As I said before, he did wonderful work during the long period in which he served the congregation. The congregation grew under his ministration.

Soon after his installation, the congregation purchased a private residence at the northeast corner of Church and Summit Streets. This house they remodeled into a chappel, which they used for a number of years for their services. Since that time, under another pastor, this chapel was torn down and an eighty-five thousand dollar church was erected in place of it.

Under the second pastor's administration, the congregation also purchased a parsonage on the southwest corner of Church and



Summit Streets. At this time the congregation is flourishing and self-supporting.

Another instance supporting the saying that "The third time is the charm," for though two previous attempts to found a congregation had failed, the third attempt proved a success, not because it was charmed, but because of God's promise, "My word shall not return unto me void."

What I forgot to state above is the fact that the broadcasting of divine services which I began in 1927 was continued by my successors at Shenandoah. At first, it was in the German language and later on in the English language. Under the second pastor the Sunday morning services from the Lutheran congregation were broadcast over KMA, the Earl May Seed House. And still later, a fifteen minute morning devotion also was sent over the air every morning except on Sunday, over the same station. These broadcasts were highly appreciated by our shut-in fellow Lutherans of Missouri, Kansas, Nebraska, Iowa, the Dakotas, and Minnesota, from the very beginning.

After the Christmas Service Broadcast in 1929, I received 548 letters and cards of gratitude and appreciation. At the same time, these broadcasts were a means of publicity, which advertised the fact that there was a Lutheran Church of the Missouri Synod in Shenandoah which later brought Lutheran business people and their families to locate at Shenandoah, thus adding to the membership of Trinity Congregation.

What pleased me especially was the fact that this young and struggling congregation had raised all the money needed in buying the church property and building the new church out of its own midst, except for a loan of twenty-five thousand dollars which the congregation borrowed from the Appelton Aid Association. That was the extent of the debt of the congregation in the late fall of 1956.

Now let us return to Yorktown. I had worn out my 1924 model of Chevrolet fighting the mud to and from Shenandoah. The Iowa Mission Board had allowed me the sum of one dollar a trip, that is per round trip of thirty miles, for serving Trinity Congregation, all the while in which I took care of it. The Sunday collections were used to pay for the church rental to the Episcopal Bishop in Des Moines, Iowa. Now I needed a new car.

I finally traded mine in at the Rope Motor Company for a 1925 Model Touring Car, which had been owned by one of my Yorktown

members and had been well taken care of. However, by 1929 I needed a better car than even the 1925 Chevrolet. And my opportunity knocked that year, for the Clarinda Herald, a semi-weekly County newspaper, was conducting a subscription campaign in which it was giving away three new autos for the three highest number of subscriptions sold for the Clarinda Herald. I entered the subscription campaign and for about two months, I canvassed Paige County, Iowa. Before I began selling the subscriptions, I had asked my congregation for permission to do so and had received that permission. More than this, my congregation promised me that it would back me up and support my campaign by giving me their individual subscriptions.

The members of St. Paul's kept their promise. They subscribed a hundred per cent. At that time Immanuel Congregation northwest of Clarinda was vacant and I had been called to take over the vacancy. So I asked that congregation also for permission to canvass its members for subscriptions and had been given it. The members of Immanuel also were very generous in taking out subscriptions from me. The weather also helped me out, for it snowed and thawed and rained for several weeks, which kept my competitors from canvassing the country territory. The roads were nearly impassable. Twice I had to get a farmer with his tractor to pull me out of ruts so deep that my axels drug on the ground.

After I had sold a one year's subscription to everyone that would subscribe, I bought all my subscribers a three year's subscription which was at that time reduced a third of the regular subscription price, out of my own money. I spent about three hundred dollars of my own money in order to buy my customers that bonus subscription. They paid for one year's subscription and I paid for an additional two years' subscription. To put it another way: they paid for a one year's subscription and received a three year's subscription instead.

The three year subscriptions provided me with twenty-five hundred points, while a one year subscription counted only five hundred points. Also, the early sales during the first three weeks of the contest were worth five times as many points as the sales in the last weeks of the contest. When at last the contest had closed, I was more than five million votes ahead of my nearest competitor. A lady school-mam and a town preacher's wife in Clarinda were runnerups. They received a Ford and a Chevrolet, and I won the 1929 Model Buick.

It was a beautiful car and a good one too. I drove that Buick for five years before expensive repairs were necessary. Our

first family trip out of the state in that new car was to Chicago for the 1929 Synodical Convention, which was held in June of that year in Concordia Teachers College in River Forest, a suburb of Chicago.

I was a little afraid of driving the twelve miles from cousin Traugott Wunderlich's home to the college for the ten days of the convention. And so it came about that the present President of the Lutheran Church - Missouri Synod, Dr. John Behnlen, who with his family was also staying at Traugott's home, acted as chauffeur for all the guests and delegates that were housed in my cousin's home.

Let me say in passing that Dr. Behnken was also a former schoolmate of mine at Trinity Lutheran School in the Klein Community. At that time his widowed mother was our nearest neighbor in the country. The Theiss Gulley was the boundary line between his mother's acreage and my father's farm. On that acreage which the Behnkens owned at that time, the first Oil Well of that part of the country was brought in. However, I am digressing.

I had borrowed the money with which I bought the extra subscriptions for my subscribers in the contest from the teacher of Immanuel Lutheran School. Soon after, in the same year, he received a call to a Lutheran School in Arlington Heights, Illinois. So I had to repay that three hundred dollar loan sooner than I had figured on. I finally scrapped up enough money to repay it. It was a good thing, too, for the late fall of 1929 triggered the great depression of the 1930's. What a boon that Buick was to us during that depression. I hauled my neighbors in southwest Iowa to conferences and conventions regularly at a fee of one cent a mile, which one brother thought too high, although I picked them up at their front door and delivered them there on the way home every time, at a disadvantage to me.

The last statement above reminds me of one laughable incident which took place on one such conference trip. The conference had been at Casey, Iowa. Pastor Vogel was a little late in getting away from his former congregation members, after the conference closed. On the way home we were caught in a sudden thunderstorm. As a result, the roads were very muddy and slippery. Some miles east of Bedford, Iowa, about thirty miles from Clarinda, my Buick suddenly left the rut on the highway and slid into the road side ditch. No one was hurt and the car was not damaged, but we could not possibly get out of that ditch. We had to have a wrecker from Bedford to elevate and pull us out.

All this did not bother Pastor Frenzel of Shenandoah, Pastor William Mueller of Immanuel, and myself very much. But Pastor Theo Vogel of Clarinda had a wedding scheduled for eight o'clock that evening. It was about five when the car went into the ditch. Pastor Vogel immediately became alarmed and he started walking through the mud towards Bedford about ten miles to the west. Within a few minutes a car came along from the east and stopped. It was impossible for it to pull us out, but the driver promised to dispatch a wrecker from Bedford to pull us out. As he passed Pastor Vogel, he stopped and picked him up and took him along into town.

Pastor Vogel intended to catch the Burlington train at Bedford for Clarinda. He hurried to the railroad station in Bedford and as he came to the depot, he saw a train ready to pull out and thinking that it was the train headed for Clarinda, he quickly boarded it and thought that he was fixed o.k. However, when the conductor of that train came to collect his ticket, Pastor Vogel explained to him that he had not had time to purchase a ticket, but that he was prepared to pay the conductor the cash fare to Clarinda.

It was then that Pastor Vogel was told that the train was not going to Clarinda but to St. Joseph, Missouri. By that time the train was already at Bethany, Missouri where Pastor Vogel got off and in some round about way got headed back toward Clarinda again.

We others in the stalled car, of course, knew nothing of all this until some days later. The wrecker came in due time and pulled us out, and we headed west for Clarinda and arrived there at about seven thirty. Imagine our surprise when Mrs. Vogel told us that her husband had not come home on the train.

The wedding guests were already assembling at the church and there was no pastor and no one knew what had happened. The wedding party had stayed at church and instead of at 8 o'clock the wedding took place at 9:30 that evening, when at last Pastor Vogel managed to get into town. We others had a good laugh at his expense, but we did not dare laugh before him. Had he stayed with the stalled Buick, he would have been home in time for the wedding and all that for a cent a mile, instead of all the expense he had in getting there in the round about and hard way.

On another trip, we had also picked up Pastor Jaebker and while we were driving north, I suddenly smelled cloth burning. I stopped the Buick and asked the smokers whether they were perhaps

on fire. Pastor Mueller and Pastor Jaebker, who by the way had confirmed me in Trinity Lutheran at Klein, Texas, the only two smokers in the car at the time, said that they were all right. However, a few minutes and a few miles farther along, Pastor Jaebker suddenly jumped up as far as the top of the Buick allowed him to do so and cried, "Stop! for I am on fire." Yes, and he was on fire! The pocket of his jacket was on fire and in the seat cover of the back seat, a round hole was glimmering around the edges. His cigar had shed its ash into his pocket and after that had burned through, the seat caught and it was the cotton padding of the seat which also was burning that had caused me to smell cloth burning. Well, we stopped long enough to get the fire out, and then we went on to our conference.

I mentioned before that my two oldest sons had quit college at Concordia, Missouri. I used them to help me chop fire wood for the winter. Mr. Henry Mueller owned a lot of pasture land along the Tarkio River which at Yorktown was nothing more than a creek. In that bottom land Box Elder Trees had grown up to such an extent that the grass was suffering from want of sunlight. He had told me that I could cut all the trees in the creek bottom down for fire wood, and the two boys and I did just that, and so when the time came for us to move to Alta, we had enough firewood racked up to fill a five-ton truck with its cattle rack to the very top.

Albert found employment later with Mr. George Witthoeft. He also worked for Mr. Henry Behrhorst, and for a time also for a neighbor of George Witthoeft, whose name I have forgotten. He was treated wonderfully at the first and last of these three places, but I don't think that he will ever forget his months of labor for Henry Behrhorst. He earned every cent he got there, and there was very little spare time for him there from the time he left the bed in the morning and hit it again in the evening.

Lorenz worked for a while at a shoe store in Clarinda, during the Christmas rush. Later on we took him to Waterloo, Iowa, where through Pastor Semmann he found employment in a water well tool manufacturing company. He worked there for about a year, when the two largest banks of Waterloo went bankrupt. When this happened, the Well Tool Company ceased production because all its funds were tied up in the banks which had failed. Lorenz came home again and he worked for a while in the Swift and Company Country Plant in Clarinda. That job did not last long. After this he worked for a while together with Paul Mueller, son of Pastor William Mueller, who had opened up a cream station. But he too had to close for a lack

## Bahr Family

of business. It was about at this time that Albert joined the U. S. Navy. It was about the middle of April when he left for Des Moines to enlist.

We all went to the "Y" east of Clarinda, where at that time U. S. Highway Number 73 and Highway Number 3 intersected. Albert insisted on hitchhiking to Des Moines, and he got there after a long and feet sore journey. The Navy accepted him and he served for some twenty-five years. The year of his enlistment was 1933 and he served until some time in June of 1958.

What I forgot to tell is that he finished his high school training at the Clarinda High School. Gertrude and Helen had their first two years of high school in Yorktown, where they had a junior high school under the supervision of a Principal Beyers. He was a very efficient teacher. The last two years the two girls attended in Clarinda. They all graduated from that school with high honors. Gertrude won a scholarship which entitled her for a year's free attendance at Chilicothe Business College at Chilicothe, Missouri. Helen, who had set her mind on becoming a registered nurse, we entered at the Lutheran Memorial Hospital in Chicago. We paid a visit at the time to our former teacher, Mr. Helmuth Stahllecker, who was at the time living in Humboldt Park which was near the Lutheran Hospital.

On the way from Chicago, we left off Gertrude at Chilicothe and we were fortunate enough to get her a free boarding place with the President of the college. She was to earn her board and room by doing housework for him and his family. Some time later, for reasons which I have now forgotten, she boarded with the family of a hatchery owner whose name I also cannot recall at this moment. After she finished her secretarial training at Chilicothe, she found employment at Kansas City, Missouri. She worked there until she became married to Mr. John Gaiser. Of this I will have more to say in another paragraph.

It was on the trip home from Chilicothe, Missouri, after we had left off Gertrude, that we ran into a thunderstorm so severe about ten miles south of Marysville, Missouri, that we could not get home that day. It had rained between seven and eight inches, and all the creeks and rivers were overflowing in that hilly country. We had to turn back to Marysville after we came to the first flooded stream to the northwest. There we stayed overnight in a private home which kept tourists, for at that time motels were unknown, and tourist camps were few indeed.

We had to pay seven dollars for the night's accommodations. For some reason two of these dollars were refunded by mail about a week later. What caused the genial host to return the two dollars I do not know, but perhaps he and his kind wife had read between the lines that we were indeed very poor and needy folks.

It was noon on the next day before any of the roads north were open for travel. When at last we did leave Marysville, we took the strip pavement to Bedford, Iowa instead of the U. S. Highway Number 73 for Clarinda. For the bridges on that highway were still under flood water. We finally made it home, but we had to make some sixty instead of thirty miles to get there. By strip highway spoken of above, I mean a highway which had one lane paved and the other graveled. Those roads were all right for as long as the paved strip was on your side of the road. Everybody used the paved strip, but if the strip was not on your side of the road, you had to leave it every time you met another vehicle.

When we left Helen for her nurse training at Lutheran Memorial in Chicago, the agreement had been that we had to buy her uniforms and pay for her books the first year of training. In the second year, she was to get her uniforms from the hospital and we were only to supply her with pin money and her books. But the depression voided all such agreements. We had to purchase her uniforms in the second year as well as in the first.

In the third year she was to get pin money and uniforms, but she got neither one. When she was home for her vacation in the summer, between her second and the last year, she needed new uniforms and the fare back to Chicago. Mr. Wellhausen, treasurer of the congregation, had faithfully promised me enough money for both at the end of June when he paid teacher Schlichting all the money in the congregation's treasury, so that he could go on his vacation, and gave me nothing, although a hundred dollars of it should have been mine.

When the first of September of 1933 came around, I asked him for the money he had promised me, and he smilingly replied that there was no money in the treasury. It was my suspicion, and I told him so in my front yard that he had made no effort at all to collect it. He started to make all kinds of excuses for the people, and I finally lost my calmness and told him that he had cheated me out of a hundred dollars in cash in June, which had been coming to me, and had given it to the teacher who did not have to accept his salary in kind as I had to do, but was always paid in cash.

My neighbor across the street, who was a professional trucker by name of Yearous, overheard the argument. He was a member of the Methodist Church in Yorktown. After my congregational treasurer had left, he came across the street and asked me how much I needed. I told him that I had to have some twenty-five dollars for Helen's fare to Chicago and for the most necessary clothes. He insisted that I take fifty. This I repaid to him when about two months later, when my shoats were fat enough, I sold them on the St. Joseph Market at \$1.90 a hundred weight. He was indeed a friend in need to us. He has gone to his eternal reward long ago. I will never forget his kindness.

When at last Helen had completed her course at Lutheran Memorial Hospital, she was offered \$25.00 a month for doing nursing work for the hospital, including her room and board. She refused that offer and rightly so, and found employment at Cook County Hospital at a hundred dollars a month.

I lost all my respect for the Lutheran Hospital in Chicago, and if I had to send another daughter to a hospital for nurse training, it would be not to a Lutheran Hospital for that hospital was Lutheran in name only. Although a solemn promise had been given me that my daughter could attend church every Sunday, the hours were arranged in such a way that they had to leave church as often as they attended, long before the services were due to be closed. As a consequence, Helen was bared from the Communion Services in the church she attended, which certainly was neither Lutheran nor Christian.

And now, for some more pleasant experiences that we made in Yorktown during our almost nine year stay at that place. When the boys quit college, they spent much of their time in the fall and winter months in trapping. They caught Musk Rats by the scores, the pelts of which brought from one to two dollars and a half each. They were also very successful in the trapping of skunks and civet cats. The parsonage sometimes smelled more like a hide dealers store than a parsonage. They also caught quite a number of mink, but most of them were cotton mink which did not bring top prices. However, on one occasion, Lorenz did bring home a large prime mink, whose pelt brought him thirty-five dollars. Their seasons take usually netted them between fifty and seventy-five dollars each.

After I had won the Buick in the newspaper contest, I sold my 1925 Chevrolet to Albert. Here is what happened during the very first winter after I had won it. His car always stood outside, just south of the parsonage under some soft maple trees. My Buick, in



the meantime, stood in the hollow tile garage a little farther south. One morning when I wanted to use my Buick (the thermometer stood at 20 below zero), the starter just gave a hum, very like that of the hum one hears in a bumble bee's underground hive, when it has been disturbed. The engine would not turn over. When I came back into the house and told them that the Buick would not start, Albert said, "I'll start my Chevie and pull you." I laughed at him and said, "If my Buick will not start, when it has stood in the garage all night, why do you think that your car will start after it has stood outside in all this storm." But he went out and pulled on the starting crank just three times, and off went the engine. He pulled my car out of the garage and after we got it on the road in front of the parsonage, he hooked his Chevie to the front axel of the Buick with a tow chain and pulled me all over Yorktown, but my Buick would not start. We had to put her back into the garage and wait until the weather warmed up again.

While speaking of the garage, another remembrance came to my mind. I had been gone from home one day and upon returning home I noticed that the back of the garage wall had bellied out. I examined the wall which was built of glazed tile, and found that all the seams had turned loose from the concrete binder in between the tile. I mentioned the fact to my family at the supper table and I was told that both doors of the garage had stood open and that a violent storm had blown up from the east and had pushed the back wall out.

I wondered a lot about that wind and found out just during the past Christmas that the ill wind was in fact the Buick, driven by Lloyd, before he had a driver's license. Albert had given him permission to drive and coming up the hill from the south, Albert told him to give it the gas so it would not stall, and Lloyd did just that. So, when he came to our driveway, the car had too much speed when he turned into our driveway, with the result that the brakes did not act quite quickly enough. The Buick almost went through the garage before it came to a dead stop. The wind was manufactured in the minds of my sons to hide their guilt and to save them from a tongue lashing or perhaps even from a worse lashing than that of the tongue.

One year while we were yet in Yorktown, I rented the Drace pasture for my cow. It was about a five acre pasture. I plowed up about two acres of that and planted it to garden truck. Among this I had also planted some watermelons. They set on very heavily, but most of them remained under size because of a drought that had hit southwestern Iowa.

When at last these melons ripened, we had far more than we could use. So Lloyd and Robert hauled them to the band stand in the center of Yorktown and sold them to the people that came into town to trade on Saturday afternoon and evenings. They made quite a killing for as long as they lasted, because melons were scarce in that drought year. They sold them from a nickle to twenty-five cents, depending on size.

We had all the cabbage, onions, tomatoes and sweet corn that we could eat and can from that truck patch, besides fodder and some soya bean hay for the cow. I had sowed the soya beans in between the sweet corn rows at the time I layed it by. Shortly after we had a downpour of rain and the soya beans grew luxuriously after that, even after the drought set in.

Here are some of the names of the people in Yorktown. There were the Husemanns, Withoefts, Herzbergs, Ropes, Sumps, Sieferings, Warnekes, Windhorsts, Harmses, Nothwehrs, Muellers, Millers, Wellhausens, Behrhorsts, Goeckers, Bauers, Meyers, Clayboeckers, Copelands, Eichhorsts, Bilers, and Kettlers, besides others whose names I am unable to recall at the present.

My youngest brother Lorenz from Houston, Texas, on a visit to our home, fell in love with the only daughter of the Will Herzberg family and married her. They had three children, namely Vernon, who is now pastor of a Lutheran congregation in Waco, Texas; Delores, and Howard. Uncle Lorenz was killed later in the terrible explosion at Texas City, shortly after World War II. Details of his death will follow in some later paragraph.

We finally left Yorktown on Thanksgiving Day in 1933. A Mr. Betke and Ted Yearous in their five ton trucks moved our household goods, firewood, cow and chickens to Alta, or rather to Hanover, eight miles to the south and west of Alta. The trucks left around eleven o'clock. Our family followed in the Buick shortly after dinner. As we left we stopped in to visit Mr. Herman Eichhorst, who was very sick at the time, and told him goodbye. He told me that he had regretted it very much that he could not have been present in the Sunday service before when I preached my farewell sermon. He had heard my farewell sermon in Pleasant Grove, Missouri, some fifteen years before. He died that same day, before we reached Hanover. Mrs. Eichhorst made a long distance call to Alta and asked me to have the funeral, but that was impossible for me under the circumstances. Pastor Frenzel of Shenandoah had been called

by the Yorktown congregation to be the interim pastor. I told her to call on him for the service, which she did.

### XIII

#### OUR YEARS AT HANOVER, IOWA

It was just getting dark when at last we drove in front of the Hanover Church. Mr. Betke's truck was already unloading our furniture at the parsonage. Mr. Yearous had blown out a tire on the way about ten miles north of Atlantic. That delayed him for several hours. He did not arrive until nearly ten o'clock.

Our family was divided up among three families that Thanksgiving night. Mother, I, and the smaller children stayed at the home of Teacher Schmidt. Mr. Yearous and some other children stayed with Mr. and Mrs. Louis Plog. Lloyd stayed with Mr. William Specketer and family, and he was a pet of Mr. Specketer from that time on.

We arranged our furniture the very next day, and slept together in our own home on Friday night. But we were lost, for we had no electricity in Hanover when we first came there, nor did we have any until four years later when at last the R. E. A. came to us. And even then, we had to fight to get it. For the Farmers Telephone Line out of Galva, which was then operating with a one-wire ground circuit and un-insulated wire, refused consent for the R. E. A. to erect its power lines along the opposite side of the county roads. I met with the Telephone Board and so did officers of my congregation, but the Telephone people refused to yield.

I left that meeting and told the Company that they should take their telephone out of parsonage, or else I would take it down myself. And so for a whole year, the telephone company and I were at loggerheads with one another. My members, who wanted to be in telephone connections with their pastor, also remonstrated with the telephone company. In the meantime, the R. E. A. found a way around the dilemma by stringing their lines through the middle of the sections instead of along the farm roads. They were gladly given permission by the farmers to erect their poles and wires through their fields and pastures.

After a few years, the Bell Telephone Company entered the Hanover Territory with its metallic circuit and the Farmer's Cooperative Telephone Company, to save itself from bankruptcy, had to rebuild its entire line, also into an insulated and metallic circuit, which also improved its service immensely.

My installation at Hanover had been set for the afternoon of the first Sunday in Advent, which was also the first Sunday of December. For a time, it looked as though I would not be installed that Sunday. The Pastor who was to install me was the former pastor of the congregation, and he was at odds with the majority of the congregation. He had been pastor of the congregation for forty-four years. He had ruled the congregation with an iron hand. He had been a "German Language Preacher" all his life, and in the last quarterly meeting on the first Sunday of October of that fall, the request had been made by a bare majority of the voters that more English preaching be given them.

At the time, the congregation had preaching in the English language just once a month, and the sermon was preached not by the pastor but by an undergraduate from one of our two seminaries, who was otherwise engaged in teaching the branch school of the congregation, which was located some four miles to the southeast of the Hanover Church. The regular pastor fought that request and tried to bluff the congregation by telling the members if the voters insisted on more English preaching, and of teaching Religion in the English language, that then he would have to offer his resignation.

The pastor's challenge, or bluff, did not work. For the younger element in the congregation had long ago longed for a different pastor. So one of the members, immediately after the pastor had entered his protest, made a motion that the congregation accept the pastor's offer of resignation. This motion was immediately seconded, and when the chairman called the motion, it passed by a bare majority.

In a huff, the pastor closed the meeting and a few weeks later, had his furniture moved to a fine residence in Sioux City, Iowa. He kept on preaching at Hanover, however, and conducting meetings for the purpose of calling a successor to him. He always proposed such candidates to the congregation who were his friends and of whom he knew, that they would not accept the call of the congregation. It seems to have been a plan to discourage the congregation in their attempt to get a new pastor and to have them call him back.

But if this was his scheme, as many of the members said, that it was, it also did not work. After having called unsuccessfully for a number of times, when he proposed another picked candidate list, some one in the congregation suggested my name. I was preaching regularly over the Henry Field Seed House Station at the time, in the German language of course, but the congregation had a number of former members in my congregation at Yorktown. Their relatives often had visited in Yorktown and had learned there that I had, by preaching double-header sermons, given them what they wanted.

So, it is my conviction that these younger members of St. John in Alta got their heads together and decided to place my name on the candidate list. This persuaded many of the people who wanted only German preaching to cast their vote for me. They had heard my German preaching over the radio and imagined that I was a German minded man, even as they were. And so it came about that I received a large majority of votes in that meeting.

The call was then made unanimously and I was glad to accept, although I did not know what had gone on behind the lines in Hanover. I did, however, soon find out. For hardly had we eaten our noon-day lunch on that Sunday when a family of the congregation came to see me. As we were sitting in the study of the parsonage, the member said that he had come over to see me about a matter that had been brought up in the last quarterly meeting, and which would have to be corrected in the January meeting. When I asked him what that matter was, he said that by a bare majority the congregation had passed the resolution that henceforth the teacher, Mr. Jacob Schmidt, had to teach the Catechism and the Bible History in the English language, and that this could not be because it would disrupt family worship, that hereafter the children would receive their religious training in the English language, and that for this reason the children would no longer be able to pray with their parents in the home.

He was so insistent in his request that I do something about this change in school, that I was ten minutes late in arriving at church for the installation. I made that man no promises, since I had only his statement on the matter. He even told me that the proper time for me to protest was when the minutes of the October meeting were being read.

I could understand the member's concern, although I did not agree with him. He had a houseful of young school-age children

and he was afraid that they would soon rather speak in English than in German. And how right he was in his fears, for one of his sons is now a Spanish-English pastor on the Ilse of Pines of Cuba; and another son of his is married to an American woman, who cannot speak a word of German and can understand very little if any of it.

But his visit in my home on the very Sunday on which I was to be installed acquainted me with the fact that one of my future troubles in Hanover would be the pestivirous language question. I was not wrong in my conclusion. It popped up in the January meeting and almost disrupted the congregation into two hostile camps, but I had now been forwarned of what was to come and I was ready for it when the hour came.

My installation sermon was preached by my visitor, the Reverend O. H. A. Hoemann of Battle Creek, Iowa. Pastor Wehking had arrived just minutes before the service was to start. I could see that he was all worked up and I was certainly glad that he did not preach the installation sermon. He installed me and vanished after the service. He had antagonized a number of his best members because he had not announced his farewell sermon but preached it on a Sunday when only a few of his members were present. It must have been a humdinger. Someone told me that he closed his sermon with these words in German: "Bleibt bei der Sprache, in welcher Ihr Eure Religion gelernt habt, und lasst das Methodistische Wesen hier nicht aufkommen, Amen." Translated, he said, "Continue in the language in which you have learned your religion, and do not let the Methodist ways take over here. Amen."

Winter set in shortly after I arrived, and the winters in Hanover were the coldest which I have experienced anywhere. In the winter of 1936-1937, the thermometer fell to the low of 36 degrees below zero on one night and stayed below zero for thirteen days in a row. For seven weeks in that winter we had no school and no church services.

The Buena Vista County snow plows opened our roads to Alta about once a week and we had to hurry to town for our purchases immediately after it came through, and we could not dwaddle around in town but had to hurry right back home before the roads would drift shut again. There was a drift just a quarter of a mile east of the Hanover Store, which by actual measurement turned out to be nineteen feet high. The snow came in the middle of January and stayed on the ground until the middle of March, when a thaw set in

which flooded all the sloughs and creeks, but since the ground was frozen from three to four feet deep, not any of that badly needed moisture entered the bone dry soil. As a consequence, we had a drought in 1937, the like of which had not been seen in that part of Iowa by anyone.

I was lucky in that we had laid in a large supply of coal for that winter in the summer before. Many people ran out of coal and had to cut down shade trees in their back yards to supply themselves with fuel. In many homes the water pipes froze and the people had to melt snow for their household needs of water. We had no need in that winter to freeze ice cream in a freezer. We just mixed the ingredients together and then set the mixture into our kitchen pantry. In a few hours, after occasionally stirring the mixture, we had the finest ice cream.

We had a quarter of beef that year from one of our members and it kept frozen as hard as a bone until we had eaten all of it. Just to the west of the teacherage there was a mountain of snow drifted across the road so high that it acted as a starting point for our children to coast on their sleds for more than a quarter of a mile.

The church was built on a large hill. It was just a frame church, but thirty-six by ninety feet, with a spire of a hundred feet. I just loved that church, for everything was just as it should be. It had a large sanctuary, a beautiful altar and pulpit, and two bells. The finest sounding bells, second only to the bell at Brussels, Illinois. The bells in both places had been imported from Europe and had been cast out of real bell metal. On a quiet day those bells could be heard for as much as three miles. Also, the church was equipped with a genuine pipe organ and the congregation was a real singing congregation. The church attendance was as good as I have had anywhere, but as I stated before, the congregation almost destroyed itself over the language question.

A great many of the people in the congregation had come directly from the Province of Hanover in Germany, and though they had learned to speak, and most of them also to write, in the English language, they never spake anything but Low German in their homes. There the services in church and the instruction given their children in St. John's Christian Day School had been in German altogether, until the time of the first World War.

The Civil Defense had insisted that English teaching and preaching also be conducted. And from that time forth, the congregation

had one English sermon a month. It had continued in this manner unto the time I was called. At that time the congregation had asked for at least two services in the English language each month, but the old fathers in the congregation were in the majority and had outvoted the second and third generation. The margin was very narrow.

I had been called to preach just once each Sunday, and provisions had been made that I preach English just once in the month. But when the January meeting of the congregation came along, the English element was better prepared than they had been in the October meeting. They were all present at that meeting for one thing. Also they had recruited a number of new members to strengthen their faction.

The day of the meeting was a bitter cold and stormy day. Some of the old grandfathers, not dreaming that the language question would be brought up again, had preferred that day to stay home behind their warm hard coal heaters. The meeting, as usual, was begun with a devotional service. After this was finished, the chairman called the assembly to order and the minutes of all previous meetings since October were read. As soon as the chairman of the meeting asked for a vote to approve these minutes, the member who had paid me a visit on my installation Sunday asked for the floor and declared that he had an objection to the minutes of the October meeting.

When the chairman asked him to state his objection, he attacked the resolution asking their teacher henceforth to teach the Catechism and Bible History in the English language. He made a long-winded speech in which he stated what he had told me before, namely, that as a result of that ruling by the congregation his children and others would no longer be able to pray with the family at home in their family worship. He stated also that in the course of time, their children would no longer be able to follow and understand the German service, necessitating two trips to church for every family, etc. The result was an uproar in the meeting.

The chairman, though he personally favored more English preaching, did not have the courage to call his protest out of order, for fear of antagonizing a number of his fast friends. Finally, I had to ask for the floor in order to make peace. I told the chairman that the protest was out of order, because the purpose of approving the minutes was not to reopen any questions which the congregation by its resolution had answered and settled, but that the approval of the minutes was only for the purpose of determining whether the minutes were a correct transcript of the resolutions which the



congregation had passed. Also, the member who wanted the October resolution rescinded would later on have the opportunity to ask the congregation to reconsider that resolution to which he objected. This interjection of mine cooled the hot heads for the time being.

In the meantime, the congregation transacted its usual business and everything went smoothly until it came to the election of officers. In the election of an elder, whose term had expired and he had been a staunch defender of the German language, a new man was proposed as a candidate for that office who was outspoken in his opinion that there should be more English preaching. When the ballots had been gathered and counted, the German element was dumbfounded because he was elected over the former incumbent by a few votes. The same thing happened when it came to the election of a new trustee. He also was in favor of more English preaching. The other officers were minor in importance and they were all re-elected.

And now came the time to reconsider the motion of the October meeting concerning the teaching of religion in the English language, to which the above mentioned member had objected at the time of the reading of the minutes. That resolution was denounced and discussed at length by both sides. However, when it came to a vote, it carried again but only with a bare majority.

At this point, the members who desired more English preaching offered a resolution in which they asked the congregation to have English preaching at least twice each month. This resolution also was denounced and discussed until nearly sundown and when at last the vote was taken, it was lost by just one vote. That almost tore the congregation into two parts. The English faction declared, unless they were given more English preaching, they would sever their connection with the congregation and join another Lutheran congregation which had more English preaching, or else open up another congregation in which they would have English preaching every Sunday. When the discussion had reached this point, I asked for the floor and in the course of my talk I justified the English party in demanding more English preaching. I told the German faction that if they would drive the other members out of their organization, that I could see no other future for them except annually decreasing membership and at last suicide for the congregation.

Then I told both factions that there was a solution possible for each of their factions to have what it desired. The Germans could have German every Sunday, and that the others could have English