

preaching every Sunday, that the only thing the congregation had to do was to decide which language should be preached at nine o'clock and which at 10:30, that I would preach both sermons every Sunday morning.

A member in favor of more English made a motion that my offer be accepted and that the German fathers were to have first choice of which of those two periods of the time they preferred. The motion passed without discussion, and then the Germans asked that they be given the first service at 9:00 a.m. That settled the language question for all time to come. But it placed a heavy burden on me. I had done the same thing in my two former congregations, and the Lord gave me the strength to carry that extra burden for fifteen years longer.

The question about divine services was settled, but the after effects were felt for a long time to come. In the very first service an old grandfather said under his breath, as he was leaving church and saw the younger members of the congregation waiting to enter the church for their English service, "Da stehen die Jaenkies mit den Deutschen Koepfen." Translated, "There stand the Yankies with their German heads." Because of the two services every Sunday, to be sure that the English folks would not be forced to stand in the cold too long, I shortened my sermons by about five minutes to give the first congregation time to leave and the second congregation time to enter the church. The same man thereupon complained in German, "Da kriecht man nicht mal nehr den Ass warm." Translated, "Now we are not in church long enough to get one's behind warm." But the services were both well attended.

The language question brought about another problem. The confirmation of the children. The first class was confirmed in German, because they had been under German instruction for practically one and a half years. However, in the second year of my stay, there were two families which insisted that their children be instructed and confirmed in the German language, thinking that others in the congregation would follow their lead. But the result was that all the class except two were confirmed in the English service, and only two boys in the German service. After that happening, they were always and all confirmed in the English language.

For about ten years both services were attended about on an equal basis. However, from then on the German attendance slackened and by the time I was there fourteen years, it had become

so negligible that in the January meeting of 1948 I asked to be relieved of the double burden. I was told by that same member who had visited me on the Sunday of my installation that I had volunteered to preach in the German and English languages on the first January meeting and in all fairness I should keep it up as long as I had any Germans attending the service. He and his wife attended regularly.

The German attendance by then had dwindled to from eighteen to twenty-five each Sunday. When the April meeting came around, I went before the congregation again with my request that they relieve me of preaching German every Sunday. The old people by that time had died away and the younger element could all understand the English as well as the German. I told them that I had voluntarily taken on that extra burden because at that time it was necessary that I do so, but that the time had come when it was no longer needed. Also, I told them that the congregation had an ordinance in its By-laws stating that the pastor need not preach on any Sunday in which there were less than twenty-five people in the service. And that in the German Services at the time, we had usually an attendance below that figure.

When after much discussion, no motion was made, I told the congregation that I had voluntarily preached German and English to them for fourteen and a half years, and that from now on I would preach and conduct a German service but six times a year, on the regular German Communion Sunday, and if they wanted to have me preach German to them every Sunday that they would have to raise my salary accordingly. This decided the issue. My offer of six German services was accepted and from that time on we had just one service each Sunday until August of that year, when I left Hanover for LaGrange, Texas.

Another after effect of the double header service was this, that my parishoners demanded a German and an English funeral sermon at each burial. This I refused to do. I told them that there was not time enough for me to prepare myself for two sermons, and that therefore I would preach the first service in the language which they preferred and that if a second sermon had to be preached, they could ask a neighboring pastor to preach it. And this became the accepted procedure from that time forth.

St. John's Congregation at Alta had two schools at the time of my arrival there. The main school was directly across the highway from the church building. The branch school, usually taught by an undergraduate of one of our two preacher seminaries, was four

miles to the southeast of Hanover. At the time I was installed at Hanover, the main school was being taught by Mr. Jacob Schmidt, and his daughter Paula Schmidt. The branch school was being taught by student Julius Koch of Concordia Seminary in St. Louis, Missouri. Mr. Schmidt and his daughter Paula continued teaching the main school also through the school year of 1934-1935. Candidate Kurt Horn of Concordia Seminary, Springfield, Illinois, had been engaged as teacher of the branch school.

It was in the April meeting of 1935 that Teacher Schmidt announced to the congregation that he would resign as their teacher on July 1st of the year, and that the congregation would have to call a teacher to take his place. We begged him to continue at least for a year longer, but he refused to heed the congregation's plea. Since the branch school at the time was becoming more or less unnecessary, because everyone owned an automobile and could easily bring their children to the main school, I proposed in the April meeting that the congregation close its branch school and enlarge its main school and call two teachers to teach that school. And since Candidate Kurt Horn was so able a teacher, I proposed to the congregation that it call him as the second teacher and assistant to the pastor on a permanent basis.

The congregation had already called a teacher candidate from the Seward, Nebraska's College, by name of Arnold Ludwig, to be the principal of the main school. My suggestion was accepted by the congregation. The school was moved across the farm to market road to stand in line with the church building to the east, on a tract of land which the congregation purchased from Mr. Albert Fett. The old school was also rebuilt and enlarged by about 20 feet and a full basement containing an assembly hall, kitchen and confirmation classroom were also provided.

In June of the same year, I began a preaching mission in the town of Alta to take spiritual care of a number of poor people, who had formerly belonged to the Hanover congregation and were now day laborers in Alta. These poor people could not afford to own a car and therefore had no way to attend services in Hanover, eight miles away, and also they had no school to teach their children the Word of God. The Mission was begun in a Danisch Lutheran Church which I rented from the nearly extinct congregation. The Danish people had services only once a month by a pastor who served them from Newell, Iowa.

I conducted Saturday school with twelve children and preached there Sunday nights until the first Sunday of September,

when Pastor Kurt Horn, who had accepted my congregation's call, as Assistant Pastor and Teacher of the four lower grades of our school, had been installed.

Beginning with the second Sunday of September, 1935, we conducted Sunday morning services every Sunday, changing off when he preached at Hanover, I preached at Alta, and when I preached in Hanover, he preached in Alta. After only a few months of such services, the congregation in Alta began to grow and grow, until in five years time it became self-supporting and called a pastor of its own.

The first resident pastor of this new congregation was Candidate of Theology, Mr. Elwood Tolch. He did fine work at Alta. The congregation now has its own \$65,000.00 church and is in flourishing condition.

When I first began that preaching station, the pastor of St. John's Lutheran Church in Storm Lake protested. He said that he had canvassed that field several years before and had found it over-churched. And it is true that the town of Alta, numbering a population of only some thirteen hundred people at that time, already had five organized congregations, namely, the Swedish Augustana Congregation, the Danish Lutheran Church, the Scandinavian Congregation, the Methodist and the Presbyterian Churches. But the Danish and the Scandinavian Congregations were small and weak. These churches did not only serve the town of Alta, but the densely populated rural area as well.

I was certain that my own St. John's congregation would some day spread out over territory adjacent to Alta, and that many of them would join the Alta Missouri Lutheran Church. My estimation proved correct, for today many of my former members in Hanover are members of St. Paul's congregation and also many of the Hanover young people are now members of that congregation. The Hanover congregation still has as many, if not more, members today than it had at my time.

The closing of the branch school also proved a good move. Our St. John's school flourished under the able tutelage of teacher, Mr. Ludwig and Pastor Horn. Both were unmarried when we called them, and both married shortly afterward. To provide a home for Pastor Horn, the congregation at a later date rented the Henry Kolpin home, which was just across the highway from Teacher Schmidt's

residence. The school became accredited under Teacher Ludwig and Pastor Horn. By this I mean that the graduates from St. John's school were accepted by the Alta High School without examinations for fitness. And our high school children acquitted themselves very highly in that school. Most of them were and are to this day honor students in the Alta High School.

At the time when we came to Hanover, only two of the congregation's children attended the Alta High School. One, a Charles Zwemke daughter, the other a daughter of August Dreyer. I immediately sent my daughter Ruth to the Alta High School, and in the second year I took Ruth and Lloyd to high school every morning and brought them home in the evening, and at about this time Louis Husemann and Widow Lichtenberg also sent their sons to the Alta High School. The School Board in Alta asked me to also bring the Dreyer daughter along. These extra passengers made it necessary for me to increase my mileage by eight miles a day, but I collected \$10.00 a month for hauling these extra pupils.

Later on, two more Husemann children were added without adding more mileage, and in that way I earned enough by hauling these other children of the congregation to pay for gas and oil. But the wear and tear on my car remained my own expense. I actually wore out my Buick hauling these children to high school, and I was called a fool by many of my own members for doing so, but I have no regrets. That high school education has profited my children very much. Later on even those that called me a fool for hauling my children to high school realized their mistake and today all of the members send their children to high school.

After I had worn out my Buick in hauling children to high school, the Alta Consolidated High School included Maple Valley Township in their consolidation and sent school buses to pick up the children in our territory. And this example was followed by St. John's congregation. After much wrangling, the congregation also bought a bus and first Teacher Reins and later on Teacher Kamprath hauled the congregation's children to and from school. But they found this chore too nerve wrecking and so the congregation hired a young man out of the congregation to haul the school bus. When I left Hanover, they were paying the bus driver \$90.00 a month for the work. Now the congregation owns two school buses and pays two drivers, and also has three teachers teaching the congregation's school, which since my leaving has been rebuilt and enlarged for a second time.

After serving St. John's congregation for five years in the capacity of Assistant Pastor and School Teacher, Pastor Kurt Horn

was called away to Terril, Iowa. Later he accepted a call to Estherville, where he died of cancer some years later. Teacher Ludwig taught on in Hanover for several years after Pastor Horn had left Hanover. But he contracted tuberculosis and for that reason resigned in the middle 1940's.

His successor as principal of St. John's School was Teacher Reins, who had been the teacher of the lower grades of St. John's school after Pastor Horn's departure. As second teacher, we called teacher Kamprath of Williamsburg, Iowa. He was a fine teacher and a very good organist, but he and teacher Reins did not get along. He stayed but one year and then accepted a call to Yorktown, Iowa, where he taught very successfully for a number of years, when he retired.

Before Teacher Reins had been called, Miss Lydia Lutz, daughter of one of our India Missionaries, taught school together with Mr. Ludwig for about five years. She too was a very good teacher. So was Mr. Reins, but he was not a desirable character otherwise. He believed in feathering his own nest and as Teacher Schlichting had done in Yorktown, so he in Hanover, sided with and used to his advantage the pastor's enemies in the congregation. It was mostly on his account that I, after nearly fifteen years of hard work in Hanover, accepted a call into the Texas District. But of that more in another chapter.

At the time we came to Hanover, there was still strict segregation of the sexes practiced in the church service. The women sat at the right of the center aisle as one entered the church. Men and boys sat on the left. This separation was also practiced at the Lord's Table. The men went first, and only after these had all been served did the women dare to come forward. But this custom did not prevail for long after we had arrived.

Shortly after we had been preaching in both languages, a young man came to me and asked if it were wrong for him to sit with his young wife in church and help her with their young children. I told him it is not only not wrong but it is the natural thing for you to do. Within a short time, all the people who came to the English service sat together in family groups. And at the first celebration of the Lord's Supper in the English language, these family groups also came to the Lord's Table together.

This fact, however, caused an uproar among the German worshippers. A solemn protest was made against that practice in

the April meeting of 1934. I challenged the protestant to show from the Bible that it was wrong to do this. Since this proof was lacking, the matter was dropped.

At the same meeting, I was asked who had authorized me to appoint ushers to usher out the communicants from pew to pew, for the English elder had asked me if I had any objections for him to appoint such ushers. I told him that I was glad he had brought up the matter because there was a disorderly converging from all parts of the church, which resulted in a crowded bottleneck in front of the altar, which made it almost impossible for the weak and old members to get to and from the Lord's Table. A long and loud argument developed on the right of appointing ushers without having a resolution for so doing by the voters of the congregation.

One man said: "Vierzig Jahre lang war die alte Weise gut, und nun auf einmal ist sie nicht mehr gut genug." In English, "For forty years the old way was good enough, but now all at once it will no longer do!" Another member asked me point blank: "What is wrong with the old way of going to the Lord's table?" I said to him, "I will demonstrate this to you by an example of farm life. You as a farmer know what happens when you get ready to slop your hogs. As soon as you take the slop bucket off the hook and hit the edge of the slop barrel with it, the hogs in your feedlot or pasture come running full speed from all directions and crowd to the slop troughs, pushing aside all the smaller and weaker ones until they have had their fill. That precisely has been the way you people have been hurrying and crowding to the Lord's Altar to take Holy Communion. The weak and old folks had to stand aside and wait for you younger and stronger ones to be served first. That was disorderly and the Lord wants all things to be done in good order."

My answer settled the argument, but the person who had asked what was wrong about the old way of approaching the Lord's Table quit church for a period of three months and meanwhile demanded an apology from me, which he never got. The final result of this "usher debate" was that the German elder also appointed ushers for the German Communion Sundays, and some of the loudest objectionists against family groups sitting together in church from that time forth sat together with their own wives, and came to the Lord's Table together.

Up to the time of our arrival, the congregation in its by-laws forbade, at the instigation of its former pastor, the organization of Ladies Aid and Walther League Societies. The former pastor's argument had been that Ladies Aid Societies were usually gossip

societies, and that Walther League Societies were spreaders of youthful delinquencies. It was but a month or so after my first annual meeting with the congregation that a delegation of the congregation's women waited on me and asked if I had any objections against them organizing a Ladies Aid Society. I told them that I had no objections, and then they told me about the resolutions of the congregation.

I brought the matter to the attention of the members in the next voters' meeting, and although one member asked in objection to removing the restricting resolution: "haven't our women enough to do at home any more, that they want to waste a half day a month in idle gossip," the resolution forbidding the establishment of a Ladies Aid was removed by a large majority vote of the congregation. The "objectionist's" wife, however, never joined the society although she often was a visitor at the monthly meetings. Permission to organize a Walther League was granted also, but at a much later date and then only after much argumentation.

During my years at Hanover, the second World War broke out. It was on a Thursday afternoon in December when, after I had opened the Ladies Aid Meeting of the month with a short devotional service, I had returned to the parsonage that the news of the bombing of our United States Fleet by the Japanese Air Force in Pearl Harbor came in over the radio, which I had turned on. My first reaction to President Roosevelt's announcement was one of horror and fear.

Albert, our second born son, was in Pearl Harbor at the time, as Metalsmith First Class, on one of the navy's repair ships. What had happened to him?, I wondered. Immediately after I had received the news, I returned to the Ladies Aid Meeting and announced what I had heard. There was much excitement among the mothers in that meeting. They knew then that we were now at war and they feared for their sons' lives. For they knew that a long and terrible war was ahead for America, in which many of their sons too would be involved before too long.

It was on Saturday afternoon after the bombing at Pearl Harbor that we received a cable from Hawaii consisting of one word: "SAFE," signed by Albert. And from Lloyd, who had just gone to work at the Mission Manufacturing Company in Houston, Texas, we received a wire telling us that he had re-enlisted in the U. S. Navy. (He had just completed a "hitch" in the naval service on August the 21st of that year, which was his twenty-first birthday). He asked us to ship his navy clothes to him immediately. Lorenz, our oldest son, had been at work for the Mission Manufacturing Company several years at that

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time. He too sought to enlist in the navy but was rejected because of a heart murmur.

Yes, those were exciting days for our family. Helen and Gertrude were gone from home and married--Helen to Dr. Joseph Simons in Chicago, and Gertrude to Mr. John Gaiser in Kansas City. Eunice, too, was gone from home. She was staying with Helen and her husband in Chicago, there finishing her last two years of high school. Ruth was working for Montgomery Ward and Company's store in Storm Lake. Robert and Edward were in high school in Alta. Indeed, our family had grown up and was flying the coop.

Robert, as soon as he graduated from high school, and he was not even quite seventeen years of age at graduation time, was aching to join the navy also. In the meantime, he had with a classmate hitchhiked to Houston and there had found a job with a Federal Surveying Outfit, which was building military roads along the Gulf Coast. In November of 1942, we received word from my mother that dad died on November 6, 1942. We buried him and before we left for home, we signed papers for Robert, granting our parental permission for him to join the U. S. Navy before he was eighteen years of age.

He enlisted under his brother Lloyd, who had been made recruiting officer in Houston after his enlistment, on Thanksgiving Day of 1942. Because of his work under the Federal Surveying Commission in Houston, Robert was granted advanced rating and sent to San Diego, California, as a full fledged "Gob." He advanced in rank quickly and before Easter of the next year, he was already at Norman, Oklahoma as Ordinance Man, 3rd Class. He was offered the position of Machine Gunnery Instructor with his base at Norman, but he declined that offer in order to get into the active service. He was sent to Jacksonville, Florida, and there he trained as a Machine Gunner in torpedo planes until on July 21, 1943, when he lost his life in a crash of his plane into the Atlantic Ocean, twelve miles off the coast near Pontevedra, Florida.

His death occurred just three days before he was to have his first furlough after which he was to leave for Overseas. We had asked the congregation for our vacation to coincide with his furlough and were already at our cabin on Spirit Lake, Iowa, when at about eleven o'clock on July 21, we received the first dispatch advising us that Robert's plane, in which he was a tail gunner, had crashed into the Ocean on a skip bombing mission at seven ten on that morning. We received two more messages after that telling us that no trace of

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him and his gunner mate had been found, and that he was presumed dead.

We were shocked and we spent the saddest vacation of all our years there at Spirit Lake. Helen and her family, except her husband, were there also. So also was the Reverend Fr. Kruetz family. We did not cut short our vacation as we felt that Robert would not have us do that, but we remained at our cabin in Spirit Lake, Iowa for the full two weeks we had planned to be there.

Although we did not enjoy ourselves (who could have done so under the circumstances), we were at least able to suffer the first and worst hours of grief without disturbance, by-callers and visitors. We found comfort and assurance in the promises of a faithful Heavenly Father, and in the Words of our Saviour Jesus Christ, who at Lazarus' death told Martha and Mary of Bethany: "I am the Resurrection and the Life: He that believeth in Me, though he were dead, yet shall he live. And he that liveth and believeth in me shall never die."

At the end of two weeks, we returned to Alta and made arrangements for a Memorial Service for our son Robert John. This Memorial Service was conducted on the second Sunday of August, 1943. Our Circuit Visitor, the Reverend W. H. Jurgens, at that time Pastor of St. Johns Congregation near Paulina, Iowa, preached the Memorial Sermon. St. Johns Congregation of Alta had donated a two grave plot in its church cemetery to mother and me, where his remains could be buried, should they ever be found, and on this cemetery lot the American Legion Post of Alta, Iowa conducted the Naval Ceremony, designated for Memorial Services, for such servicemen who are lost at sea, at the conclusion of which they placed an appropriate marker and presented mother with a large American Service Flag, which the Legion had used in its Memorial Service. All of our children except Albert, who was in active service in the Pacific Area of World War II, were present for that service. Pastor Jurgens preached on the text found in Deuteronomy 33:26-27.

A period of more than six months have elapsed since I wrote the above chapter on the first death in our immediate family. For some reason, I did not feel up to continuing my family history. However, I have also never felt right about leaving a job to which I had set my hands unfinished. And since I am ripe for the harvest myself and feel that my end is not far off, I am now again, in November of 1960, at work in my effort to complete this manuscript.

And now I must chronicle another sad occurrence in our family. It concerns daughter Ruth. She had on a visit to Texas in

1939 at her insistant request, been given permission by mother and me to remain in Houston and there to go to work for a schoolmate of mine, Mr. John Frank, owner and operator of his so-called "Million Parts Shop," located on Harrisburg Boulevard in Houston. She there worked in an office of the shop under the supervision of an older, experienced woman, who was secretary and business manager of the shop. This woman was a member of the Roman Catholic Faith. I know this from a letter received from Ruth in which she asked me to give her some proof passage which she could use in refuting the Roman Doctrine of Purgatory. I was proud of Ruth then, for I believed that she was successfully contending for her faith.

Later on, Ruth worked for Montgomery Ward and Company in Houston for a time and then she returned home to work for Montgomery Ward and Company, which had just opened a branch store in Storm Lake, Iowa. While working there she dated with a young man of Storm Lake, who also was a member of the Roman Catholic Church. She brought the young man with her one day to visit in our home. I spake to her about not marrying a Roman Catholic on the very next morning as I took her back to Storm Lake to work. She gave me her promise that she would not think of marrying him as long as he clung to the Catholic Faith. Ruth had always been a favorite daughter of mine, and so I took her at her word.

You can imagine mother's and my horror when one Sunday we called on Pastor Kreutz's home to be told by him that our daughter Ruth was taking Roman Catholic Religious Instructions from one of the Jesuit Missionary Priests, which from time to time visited Storm Lake to conduct classes there for Roman Catholic Converts. Ruth, for some reason unknown to me, had not come home for that particular Sunday. Therefore, when we got home, I immediately sat down and wrote her a letter in which I told her what had been reported to us and asked her if the report were true. We received a short and incoherent report from her in which she told us that she was leaving Storm Lake and that it would be useless for us to seek her. That was that. And she made good her report.

Ruth disappeared from Storm Lake and we had no inkling where she could be until some months later when mother and I, together with Pastor Kreuz, attended a seminar of Lutheran pastors at Omaha, Nebraska, at the time we went for our dinner in a nearby hotel. We ran into Ruth and her boyfriend on the sidewalk which passed the hotel. Mother and I insisted that she give us an opportunity to speak to her. Reluctantly she did this and we talked for about an hour. However, though tears flowed on both sides, she refused to admit that she had

done wrong (in fact she has not admitted this to this day). When I reminded her of what she had promised me when I warned her against getting entangled with a Roman Catholic sweetheart, she quoted a Bible passage which says, "We should obey God rather than men," in defense of her action. When at last we sorrowfully were convinced that she was willfully disobeying us, we parted from her.

Again she disappeared and for some time we did not know where she was until at last we received a letter from her from a point somewhere in Kentucky, telling us that she had been re-baptized and confirmed in the Roman Catholic faith. With a desperately sorrowful heart, I thereupon went before my congregation and reported to them what they already knew, and asked the congregation to deal with our wayward daughter. My congregation delegated the secretary of my congregation to correspond with our daughter, endeavoring to show her the error of her way. But his efforts too were in vain.

At last, believing it futile to deal with our daughter any further, the congregation resolved to strike her name from the communion list of the Lutheran Church, as one who had by her willful and unrepentant breaking of her Confirmation Pledge, ex-communicated herself from the Lutheran Church. This resolution of the congregation was forwarded to her by the congregation's secretary, Mr. Arnold Ludwig. No reply to it was ever received from her.

As an aftermath of her action, I, as the Visitor of the Storm Lake Circuit, to which I had been elected by the Convention of the Iowa West District of the Lutheran Church - Missouri Synod, addressed a Round Robin Letter to every congregation of the Circuit, offering my regret and apology for the offense given to them by a member of my family, enclosing with it the action my congregation had taken in the matter by a resolution. At the next convention of the District, I resigned as Visitor of the Storm Lake Circuit.

Daughter Ruth later married Mr. Edward Kacmarynski without our consent and blessing. She never asked for it, and we would not have given it had she asked for it. Some of our friends tried to comfort and assure us that with her background and upbringing, she surely would some day see her wrong doing and repent of it. However, to this hour, Ruth has not fulfilled their prediction. Our family has become reconciled to her and we have forgiven her. But her greatest sin is against God the Father, her Creator, against God the Son, our Lord Jesus Christ and his Gospel, and against the Holy Ghost, her Divine teacher whose teaching that we are saved by "God's Grace Alone, for Christ's Sake Alone, and through Faith Alone," she has

rejected by embracing the Roman Catholic Error of Salvation by one's own merit. That sin is to this day separating her from God and her salvation. Our prayer has been and still is that she may confess her apostasy to God, if not to us, and that she be saved by God's boundless grace and mercy in the end.

After this happened in my own family, I felt that my work in Hanover was finished and I did what I had never done before. I wrote to the President of the Texas District of the Lutheran Church at Waco, Texas and asked him to place me on the calling list of his District. However, he sent me a discouraging reply, telling me that the vacant congregations in Texas would hardly call a man who was sixty years or even older. But at the time, when I was almost old enough to retire, I received a call from Trinity Lutheran Church of near LaGrange, Texas.

This call arrived in May of 1948. It offered me a reduction in salary of \$55.00 a month. However, I decided to take the cut, rather than to become an unwanted man in St. John's of Hanover. And so I, in the July meeting of my congregation at Alta, told my congregation that I had accepted a call to Texas and that I would preach my last sermon to them on the last Sunday of July. This I also did.

However, before I report on our life in my last congregation, I will add a list of some of the names of the families that belonged to my congregation at Hanover. There were the Bredehoefts, Bumanns, Cotongs, Dreiers, Fahrs, Fetts, Friedrichs, Getzmeirs, Glienkes, Griemes, Grienkes, Hankels, Hermans, Holtzs, Hoffmeiers, Husemanns, Hustedts, Kampraths, Kolpins, Koths, Lichtenbergs, Lietzs, Lillies, Menkes, Mohns, Nielsens, Ottos, Plogs, Prescotts, Radkes, Resons, Reinses, Schaefers, Schmidts, Schuelkes, Specketers, Steeves, Vasts, Vosses, Weilands, Winterhoffs, Wredes, and Ziemkes.

In the year 1948 this congregation raised a home budget of \$26,167.01. The contributions for Mission and Charity came to \$5,742.69.

On the Sunday evening on which I preached my Farewell Sermon, the congregation gave us a farewell party at which the congregation together with the Walther League and Ladies Aid Societies presented us with a purse of cash exceeding \$600.00. On the next morning, Mr. and Mrs. Froehlich, an Interstate Trucker from LaGrange, Texas, who had arrived on the last Saturday of July, loaded up our household goods with the help of some of our members, and after they had left for Texas, a short time before noon, we finished cleaning up the parsonage and burning the refuse. Then we went to

our daughter and son-in-law, Ed Kachmarynski and family, where we stayed until on the next morning early when we too left for our new destination at LaGrange, Texas.

XIV

OUR YEARS AT LA GRANGE, TEXAS

It was an extraordinary hot and dry July weekend when we, on a Thursday afternoon, drove into LaGrange, Texas on the Highway from the north. We arrived at the parsonage of Pastor Traugott of Zion Lutheran Congregation at about 4:30 in the afternoon. The thermometer stood at 110 degrees. Mr. Froehlich with our household goods arrived in town some hours later.

On the next day Pastor Traugott took us out to our new parsonage. It was a very old and delapidated building, but freshly papered and very clean. Mr. Froehlich was already at hand with his truckload of household goods. The mercury was climbing higher and higher and reached 112 degrees of Fahrenheit some time in the afternoon; for mother and I, the temperature was oppressive. The heat seemed to sear our facial skin. We could hardly breathe, and the water which we drank seemed to pass right out again through the pores of our skin without doing us any good, except to slack our thirst for a half hour or so when we were forced to drink again.

The Texans who unloaded our household goods did not seem to mind the heat at all. They placed the furniture where we wanted it, connected the electric range, left us with a lot of prepared food and refreshments and returned to their own homes.

However, as hot as the day had been, so refreshingly cool was the night which followed that hot Friday of unloading our household goods. A southeast wind blew up and passed right through our bedrooms, and before morning arrived we had to grab for more cover.

Pastor Traugott had invited us to his home for the following Sunday morning. We worshipped together with his family in Zion Lutheran Church, located on a high hill north of the LaGrange Town Site. We were surprised to see a number of our friends and relatives from Houston, Texas in church with us. Our sons Lorenz and Floyd and their families, brother Carl and his family, Johnny Frank and

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his wife, my second cousin, and an old schoolmate of mine were present also.

They all attended my Installation which took place in Trinity Lutheran Church three miles to the northwest of LaGrange, on that same afternoon. The church was filled to the overflowing. Pastor Traugott preached the installation sermon and performed the rites. The congregation served a fine lunch with the usual over-abundance of fine foods and presented us with a grocery shower and with some hens for our chicken yard and roost.

Although in the country, we had electric lights and power to furnish our home with fresh water by an electrically driven pressure pump. We also had a bathroom and a hot water heater, electrically heated. And for the winter, which was yet far off, there was an underground tank of butane gas for gas heaters, which we had to buy and install before winter came. For in Iowa, we had heated our homes with hard coal which was an unknown and unneeded substance in Texas.

We soon felt at home with the plain and unassuming folks in our new congregation. They were a very sociable, friendly and hospitable farm population. Every birthday in the entire congregation was formally celebrated. Every member of the congregation, if not personally invited, was nevertheless welcome to these birthday parties.

We had not been used to such doings in our other congregations, and it was quite an innovation for us and when the birthdays fell on a Saturday, they were a nuisance and most vexatious for me, for the reason that these parties always lasted until midnight and no one was supposed to leave until the midnight lunch had been served. After all, we were aged people and I had to preach on Sunday morning and conduct Sunday School. For this reason, I craved for peace and quietness and a good night's rest on Saturday evening and night. But like it or not, the pastor was supposed to be at every birthday party, whether the birthday fell on Saturday or some other day of the week.

The time was usually spent in visiting and skatt playing. LaGrange was the center of the Texas skatt players. Regular skatt tournaments were held in the community every year. It is a game which I never learned to understand or play. Some of my church members were so addicted to the playing of this card game that they would forget to eat and to go to bed until the game was over.

At these birthday parties, liquid refreshments were also served--beer for the men, and pop for the women and children. Not

only some women, but even pre-school age children preferred beer to pop. On one occasion I heard a five year old boy say to his mother, who had given him a bottle of pop, "I don't want this slop. I want my beer!" However, though beer was served freely on all these occasions, I must say that I never saw anyone who was tipsy or drunk. Some of the men could hold quite a load and all were very careful not to offend anyone by becoming drunk. The beer diet, no doubt, was the reason why we had a large number of very corpulent men and women in this congregation, as well as much laughter and good-natured joshing.

The young folks of the congregation all belonged to the Walther League Society. They met twice a month for Bible study and entertainment. The entertainment usually took the form of volleyball playing. However, in the fall and winter months, the League members would also devote much time and talent to prepare for and give a so-called "play." To these dramas or comedys, not only the congregation but the entire community was invited and welcomed. At these performances, a lunch was also served free to all comers. Sometimes these performances were so meritorious that the performing group was asked to perform in neighboring congregations.

The services in this congregation were unusually well attended. Also my new congregation, though most of them were poor renters, were very open hearted and open handed in the support of our churches, missions and charities. In fact, my people led the entire Tri-County Circuit in per capita contributions.

Due to increasing age and accompanying weakness and ailments, among which hard of hearing and fading eyesight were the chief, I saw myself compelled to resign after having served this friendly congregation not quite four years. I preached my farewell sermon on the first Sunday in May of the year 1952. On that afternoon the congregation gave us a farewell party, at which I was presented with a seventeen jeweled Elgin watch by the congregation and by a liberal purse by our Walther League and Ladies Aid Societies. The watch was engraved with these words: "In Remembrance of Trinity."

I was now 68 years of age and my better half was 67. We had purchased my parents' old home in Houston, Texas some years before. My mother was still living and had reserved one room in the home for as long as she was to live. However, she lived with us but one year when she and brother Fred went to California for a visit, from which she never returned alive.

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She died on July 20th of the following year and sister Gertrude Ballard brought her body back to Houston for burial in Rest Have Cemetery, where her remains were entered besides the remains of my father. Some day we hope to be buried there also, in the Fred and Caroline Bahr Family Lot.

My brother Lorenz, who was killed in the Texas City Ship Explosion at the Monsanto Chemical Company Wharf, where he was a warehouse superintendent, is buried there also, besides my father, Fred Bahr. My parents' cemetery lot in Resthaven Cemetery on Federal Route 75, just north of Green's Bayou, north of Houston, Texas, is in Block 4, Lot 88. Mother and my grave spaces, assured to us by a quit-claim deed signed by the other Fred and Caroline Fahr heirs, are spaces one and two.

The same Mr. Froehlich of LaGrange, who had in his five ton truck hauled our household goods from Hanover, Iowa to LaGrange, Texas, was engaged to haul them now to Houston, Texas where they were unloaded and placed in the home of my parents which, as stated before, I had purchased from my mother Caroline Bahr some years before. This home is located in the Houston Heights addition, on the south side of 16th Street, bearing the number 242 West Sixteenth Street.

Before telling of our years in retirement spent in Houston, however, I want to say a little more about Trinity Congregation where I spent my last years in the Gospel ministry. Among the family names in that congregation were the Ahlschlaegers, Behrenses, Boenings, Bohots, Buchhorns, Buntess, Dierses, Hatfields, Dohartys, Hattermans, Harbers, Hobratchks, Huelsebushes, Hanishes, Hoefers, Koepkes, Lampes, Moerbes, McClanahans, Morisses, Niemeyers, Osthooffs, Oeltjens, Oeltjendiers, Rieheses, Schielacks, Schneiders, Schellbergs, Schnells, Tietjens, Wiemkens, Zochs, and Zuhns.

A Mr. Walter Oeltjen was president of the congregation, and also County Attorney, elected and re-elected again and again, to serve Fayette County, Texas. A Mr. George Osthoff, son of Pastor Osthoff, formerly pastor of the Lincoln, Texas Lutheran Church, was president of the Citizens State Bank in LaGrange. A Mr. Henry Huelsebusch was treasurer of Trinity Hill Lutheran Church, who paid me my salary of \$165.00 per month punctually every month.

The report for the year 1951 showed that this small but willing congregation had raised a total of \$3,172.71 for running expenses and had paid out a total of \$2,983.91, leaving a balance in

the treasury on January 1, 1952, of \$188.80. In the same year this congregation had raised for Missions and Charity a total of \$3,506.20. This was indeed setting a good example to the other congregations of Fayette, Lee and Bastrop Counties.

I announced to the congregation in the January meeting of 1952 that I would retire on the first Sunday of May, 1952. Immediately the congregation, under the leadership of the Circuit Visitor, began to send out calls for another pastor. Also, they passed a resolution to sell their old parsonage and build a new one for their next pastor. This resolution was also carried out. The old parsonage was sold to a member of the congregation who moved it away and in its place a modern six room home was built, into which some months later after my resignation the new pastor, a Pastor Schmidt from the Kansas District, moved in as my successor.

XV

OUR YEARS IN RETIREMENT

After moving to Houston, we joined Immanuel Lutheran Congregation at 15th and Courtland, to which the Reverend Elmo Miertschin is the pastor. This is the same congregation in which my parents held membership before their death. Pastor Miertschin buried both my father and my mother. Their tombstones give the following dates: BAHR, FRED W., Born May 16, 1858, Died November 6, 1942; CAROLINE, Born October 10, 1864, Died July 20, 1953.

After we moved into our retirement home, we spent a lot of time and money on renovation and improvement of the place. The old garage was torn down and a new one, a double garage 20' x 20' with a concrete slab floor and a storage attic, was erected in its place. The material alone cost me over \$800.00. The building was erected by my son Lorenz and his son Donald Bahr. They did this without pay, for which I am eternally grateful to them.

Besides this garage, we replaced the old fence on the west and south sides of our lot. The house was repainted by my son Edward and myself. The paint was paid for by our son Edward. The sewage and waste-pipe for kitchen sink and washroom was replaced by a plumber at the cost to me of \$165.00. We had the kitchen

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remodeled and a new sink and work tables put in, more than a year before we moved into the home. Son Lorenz also did this work.

Our son Edward, who had been a hardware salesman in Illinois for a number of years, resigned his job and came to Texas and moved in with us at our request. He had quite a time finding a new job as salesman. While he was waiting, he painted the house which was in need of it badly. I helped him with it, painting on the ground as far up as I could reach on the walls.

For about six months, Edward worked at the Mission Manufacturing Company as an apprentice mechanic. When he had served his apprenticeship, he resigned from that work because he did not like it. There was another long period of looking for a new job as salesman. During that waiting period he put a sliding door into the east wall of the kitchen to give access to the utility room.

At last he was offered a salesmanship with the Norcross Company, which firm manufactured all sorts of greeting cards. He was given a poor territory in northwest Texas. Later on he was given a better territory in southwest Texas. But when this territory was taken from him and he was to transfer into Southern Illinois for his territory, he quit after having served the Norcross Company for nearly two years.

After a few weeks of waiting, he again found a salesmanship position with the Star Expansion, Incorporated, which manufactured and distributed stone and concrete drilling tools, and expansion bolts and other building necessities for stone and concrete construction work. He was given the southwest Texas territory, working out of Houston. After about a year's work, his territory was changed to extreme east Texas and southern Louisiana. When the Presidential Election was held in 1960, the business recession which accompanied it terminated his job at the end of January, 1961. He is now employed in the Sun Tex Glass Tinting Company of Houston, Texas, which is a new concern, as Assistant Sales Manager. Since his employment, which began on March 7, 1961, he has been working almost day and night for six days a week.

He has traveled for the concern to Fort Wayne, Indiana; Chicago, Illinois; Dallas, Texas; San Francisco, California; Atlanta, Georgia; Philadelphia, Pennsylvania; and Chicago again, since he took this new job. We hope that soon his working conditions will change for the better. At the time of this writing, May 15, 1961, his hours are from 7:30 a.m. to midnight. We have to get up at

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six o'clock in the morning to get him his breakfast, and that is the only time we get to see him, except on Sunday and sometimes he has to work even then for a half day or so.

Before he took this job, he spent his free time on Saturdays to renovate our utility room. He put in a second floor on top of the old one. For the utility room originally had been an open back porch with a sloping floor. This porch had then been enclosed, but the floor had been left as it was.

When we purchased our first automatic washer, this floor proved unsatisfactory. Edward changed this by laying a second floor level with that of the kitchen. Last April he surprised us with a present of two Friedrich air conditioners. That was in April, 1960. One of these air conditioners he had placed in our dining room, the other in our back bedroom. To make these air conditioners more effective, he bought bags and slabs of rock-wool and insulated the entire attic of our home. Also, he installed, free of cost to us, a new washbowl and stool in our bathroom. He bought and installed two large mirrors, one for our bathroom and the other for the front bedroom.

Mother and I feel as though we are his family, when in fact he is our son. He is constantly worried and busy about our well being. He has paid half on the second automatic washer in our utility room, after the first one became troublesome.

When I broke my ankle on a fishing trip in March of 1959, he paid not only my ambulance service but also \$75.00 on our hospital bill. He, together with the other children of ours, has established a medical fund in the Reagan State Bank of nearly \$1,000.00. Also, he has established a hospitalization insurance policy for mother and me to take care of our eventual needs. May God bless him and all of our children which have joined him in making secure our remaining years in this vale of tears.

While we lived in retirement at Houston, Texas, our children arranged a get together party for mother and me on the occasion of our 48th wedding anniversary. They were all present, together with our grandchildren for the occasion, except Eunice, her husband and her children. They did not wait to celebrate our Golden Wedding Anniversary, because they felt that they would not be able then to get away from home as readily. Our 48th anniversary fell on Saturday, July 7, 1956. Edward rented reservations for them all at the Western Skeys Motel at 7809 Katy Road. We had our celebration dinner at a

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restaurant on Airline Drive, just north of the farmers market. Pastor Elmo Mirtschin mentioned our anniversary in his sermon, for Edward had arranged that also. It was indeed all a pleasant surprise to us, this celebration. Albert was just home on a furlough from the U. S. Naval Station in Newfoundland.

It was two years later when Albert was discharged from the Navy at Charleston, South Carolina. He came home foot-loose, undecided where he would set up his home, after his twenty-sixth year hitch in the U. S. Navy. He and Venna stayed with us in Houston for about a month, when Albert decided to go to California on a visit and perhaps locate there.

It was in July of 1958, just ten days after our Fiftieth Wedding Anniversary that Albert, Venna, mother and I left Houston for Hobbs, New Mexico, where Lloyd and his family had located their new home after his transfer by the Mission Manufacturing Company from Houston to New Mexico, where he was to be Mission's representative in the oil fields of that state. Albert and Venna had prevailed on mother and me to accompany them to California, and to visit while there with my sister Gertrude and her husband, Mr. Douglas Ballard.

We arrived at Hobbs after a long, long day's drive of about 600 miles in Albert's new Dodge Station Wagon, at about 11:00 p.m. We stayed overnight with Lloyd and his family and at about ten on the next morning, we left for Carl's Bad, New Mexico, to go through the renowned cavern there. Lloyd paid for that jaunt. In the afternoon, after we had taken the trip through the cave, we said farewell to Lloyd and family and continued on our way to California.

We went north at first from Carl's Bad until we hit a Federal Highway for Albuquerque, New Mexico. It was a hot ride to that town on the Rio Grande River. In Albuquerque we looked up and visited for a half hour or so with an acquaintance of Venna's. After this visit was concluded, we continued west from that town to Gallup, a city near the Arizona border in New Mexico, where we turned north on Federal Highway 666 to Cortez, a small town in the extreme southwest corner of the State of Colorado.

Early in the morning, we left Cortez on a northwesterly direction on Federal Highway 160 through Moab, Utah. Along the way we ran into Federal High 50. We followed this highway until we reached the town of Ely in the state of Nevada, where we spent Saturday night.

On the next day we drove along Highway 50 through the old mining town of Austin, Nevada, where we stopped for oil and gas and while we were there, we had our first experience with a so-called Dust Devil, a dust laden hot whirlwind, which came up through a canyon of the town and could not find its way out, but zigzagged its way through town and came back again to the same filling station, with dust and papers flying and whirling in all directions.

We left Austin for Carson City, where we spent Sunday night. On the next day we drove along Highway 50, along the east shore of Lake Tahoe to Placerville, California, where we turned south on California State Highway 49, through Sutter's Creek, Jackson, San Andreas, to Valley Springs, sister Gertrude's post office, and then east to Lake Stockton, where she and her husband were the caretakers for the City of Stockton. We arrived at her home sometime in the afternoon. Of our stay there I shall speak in the next paragraph.

It seems to me that I lost a day on this trip to California. For we arrived at sister Gertrude's home not on Monday, but if my memory serves me, on Tuesday afternoon. My son Albert and his wife Venna can straighten out this muddle. It seems to me that we spent not one but two nights on our trip through New Mexico. But, somehow, I cannot straighten this matter out in my mind. However, the routing is correct.

It was a trip I shall not forget. Hot and dusty, to be true, through the glistening white alkali flats. In one place in Utah, we saw a rocky natural bridge in the distance. In another place, a mountain of schist arose a thousand feet high with sheer sides straight up and down, forested with dark green trees, in a level and flat desert. Some subterranean force must have pushed it out of the arid plane, when the world was young.

At still another point, we drove along an elevated river of lava, which had flowed out of a crevice in the world's floor and which hardened in its flow in the cooling atmosphere with its undulations of the flow, showing clearly much like that of an undulating flow of water in a rushing torrent. Wierd, but beautiful nevertheless, all these sights which we beheld as Albert's station wagon sped along the highway, pulling his speed boat on its trailer behind the car.

When we left Carson City after our night's stay there, Al took us to Virginia City where we ate our breakfast in one of that place's gambling halls. The place was full of antique furnishings, immense bars for serving liquor to its clientele, large and gaudily

framed mirrors, and below them the rows and rows of oddly shaped bottles of every description, displaying the liquers that could be had, as in olden days, so even now, for Nevada is one wide open state where almost everything is legal.

While we were eating, the jukeboxes furnished old time music, and in the adjoining room the multitudinous slot machines almost kept time with the music. Al gave mother a dime and told her to drop it in the slot of the "iron bandit," and pull the lever. When she did, she hit the jackpot and received a whole handful of dimes in return. Yes, they know how to rig these machines to catch the gullible sucker. Mother wisely kept her winnings; she never did have an itching finger and never did believe in taking unnecessary risks.

Another strange thing that we noticed in Nevada was the hard and shining supply of silver dollars available. If you had to change a twenty dollar bill, you'd be sure to get all the change back in hard cash. No doubt so that the owner, getting tired of the heavy weight pulling down his pockets, might seek relief by spending some of his silver in the state.

XVI

OUR STAY WITH SISTER GERTRUDE

We spent about three months with my sister Gertrude at her home on Lake Stockton. Her husband, Douglas Ballard, was the official caretaker of the huge dam on the lake, which at the time was the property of the City of Stockton in California. Our brother-in-law had a sinecure of a job. It consisted in this, that every morning, shortly after eight o'clock, he had to read the water guage at the dam and report the stage of the water level behind the dam to the proper authority in Stockton by telephone. Outside of this, he had little more to do than now and then to police the city owned woods and hills along the lake, to make sure that the picnickers and fishermen did not leave too much junk and paper lying along the lake shore.

He received, besides wages, also a free home and free utilities, except drinking water. This he had to haul up from a private spring at the foot of the dam, in two ten gallon milk cans, in a city furnished pickup truck. And, oh! How he hemmed and hawed about and fumed every time that these cans had yielded their last cupful

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of drinking and cooking water. An automatic ramm, the next thing to perpetual motion, pumped the bathing and irrigating water from the foot of the dam to a storage tank, high up on the hill beyond the home. This gave the necessary pressure in the return pipes to the kitchen and bathroom--to fill the bathtub, flush the commode, and furnish the sink with the necessary hot and cold water, to wash the family wash and the dishes.

After we left for Houston, the City of Stockton, through its engineers, accommodated our brother-in-law even more by installing a gadget in his home which automatically indicated the level of the water in the lake at all hours of the day, saving him the quarter of a mile walk to the dam in order to read the guage.

I do not know how much the City of Stocktom paid him in wages, but we feel that every dollar that he received above the use of the home and of the free utilities was just so much political pork-barreling. In addition to these unearned dollars, he now also receives a City Pension besides his social security from the National Government.

The United States Government has now taken over the City of Stockton dam and is building one which, when finished, will be more than a hundred feet higher than the old dam was. Also, it will take in a much larger territory and the water level will be covering all the present lake shore and a multitude of hills and valleys, which heretofore were magnificent scenery. It is difficult to say at this time what the cost of that new structure will be to the taxpayers. However, the cost will be enormous.

Uncle Douglas, after his resignation as caretaker, last September moved into his own home at first, which was about three quarters of a mile east of Valley Springs on the Lake Road. This home had been rented for years to one family, who according to Uncle Doug's own words, had kept the home in a better condition than he himself would have done. Knowing Uncle Doug's aversion to manual labor, this statement of his was no understatement of facts.

All the years that the home had been rented out had brought an additional income of fifty dollars a month to Uncle Doug, of course. When he resigned and moved into his own home, this income was naturally cut off. No doubt it was for this reason, that Uncle Doug and Aunt Gertrude did not live in their own home for more than a few months when they bought a mobile home, a removable one-room utility affair, in which they are now roving nomads, living in the many scenic parks of California.

Our son Albert and his wife Venna stayed at Uncle Doug's home for about a month while we were visiting there. He put his motor boat into the lake during this time. We explored the lake in that boat from north to south and fished in many choice locations, catching mostly bluegills and bluecats. On one such fishing trip, our Son Albert hitched on the City of Stockton's rowboat behind his fast running motor boat. He told me to get into the row boat and said he would drop me off at a good place to fish. At first, when he started his motor, the rowboat followed his boat all right. However, when he had reached the open water of the lake, where it was from forty to sixty feet deep, he opened up his motor and we reached the speed of about forty miles an hour, when for some unknown reason the rowboat began to careen, first one way and then another, finally traveling not on its bottom but on its sides, threatening to capsize.

Seeing the danger of having the boat capsize on top of me, I finally yelled at Albert to decrease his speed. However, because of the noise the engine was making, he did not hear my terror stricken voice at all, nor did he or Venna look back at my plight, and so I decided to take an involuntary bath before the boat would turn turtle and perhaps knock me out.

I did not have to jump out of the boat. I just let go my hand hold when the boat had reached the point of turning up-side-down, and into the drink I went, the oars of the boat followed me and under I went in about forty feet of water, my straw hat marking the place where I had gone down. When I came up out of the water (for I could swim as well as a frog), I found one oar on one side of me which I grabbed, and my straw hat on the other side, which I clutched also. I saw that in the meantime the boat had righted itself and at about the same time I saw Venna looking back. Seeing the boat empty, she yelled at Albert.

He immediately cut his power and began to turn his boat in a wide circle to get back to me, and when at last they did get the boat close to me, Venna, whose face had been horrified up to then, began to scream and her fright turned into shrieks of laughter, seeing me float in the water like a fish line cork, only the top of my bald head and my dark glasses showing above the water.

I grabbed the gunwale of Albert's boat and began pulling myself up, Venna helping me as best as she could, with the tears streaming out of her eyes. After we had picked up the oars and my straw hat, I returned to the rowboat, which we had drawn alongside and in a more leisurely way we proceeded to the fishing site where I