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Mildred Tengbom

Newly Revised, with an Afterword by Charles Lindquist

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The Spirit^{of} God was Moving

The World Mission
Prayer League:
Its Beginnings

Mildred Tengbom

Newly Revised, with an Afterword by Charles Lindquist

World Mission Prayer League
Minneapolis, Minnesota

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Foreword

“Write the vision” (Habakkuk 2:2, NRSV).

The prophet Habakkuk received a vision, many long years ago. He was told to write it down – plainly, “in big block letters,” so that “it can be read on the run” (MSG). He was to write it in hope, as an encouragement for all the generations to come. The Spirit of God was on the move. And he was about to do something special.

Another sort of prophet received another sort of vision, nearly a century ago. It was a missionary vision – a clear, broad vision for the evangelization of the world. He, too, was instructed to write the vision down – point by point, in clear and simple language, as a guide and encouragement for generations to come. The Spirit of God was on the move. And, once again, he was about to do something special.

You have that vision in your hands.

This was a vision given to a fellow named Ernest Weinhardt in 1929, in a little town called Mboula, in what is today Cameroon. It has found its way in the many years since to a little Bible school in Minneapolis, a little village in the mountains of Bolivia, the faraway steppes of Mongolia, the towering Himalayas of Nepal, and thousands of points in between. It has birthed as well a committed community of like-minded friends, who have prayed and dared the vision into a living reality. It is this “birthing,” this daring, that is described in the following pages.

The story will be told by one of its “midwives,” you might say – an insider who was gripped by the vision as a young woman and committed her life to see it become reality. Her name was Millie. This is the story of hundreds and thousands of young men and women like her – committed to their Lord, surrendered to his Cause, and ready to give their lives for the sake of his mission in the world.

Now at home with the Lord, Mildred Hasselquist Tengbom (1921-2016) was one of our true pioneers. Millie's own life echoes the themes presented in this book.

Born to believing parents in 1921, Millie described a deep personal encounter with the Lord Jesus Christ on July 23, 1936. She was a girl of 15. A few years later, on April 9, 1939, she committed herself to the Lord and his Cause for missionary service.

"A real period of 'Processing' began for me," she wrote a few years later. "I began to realize that one can have a lot of light on missions without there being real life. So I asked God for a real heart vision of the world; and as I waited upon him alone, he began to give it...."

You will sense Millie's "real heart vision" in these pages. Her own vision led her into solidarity with Weinhardt's vision, and the organization that was emerging around it. She applied for service within our fellowship on September 12, 1941, and soon was off to the Nepal border – what was then considered one of the most challenging and least reached mission fields on the planet.

From the very beginning, Millie was an excellent storyteller. Her correspondence from those early years in Asia is a delight to read, even today. And she wrote more than letters. Millie authored 27 books throughout her life, and published hundreds of articles.

The Spirit of God Was Moving (Millie's 19th published volume) recounts the story of our organization from its earliest formative years until about 1945, and the appointment of Paul J. Lindell as our General Director. It is told from the perspective of one who has lived the story from the inside. The book was first published in 1985.

This is a "revised" version of the 1985 text. Yet I have edited Millie's original text only lightly, adding mainly a few dates and personal names. (I like knowing, for example, that "Rev. G.W. Busse" was actually a Gustav. And that "Mrs. George N. Anderson" had a name of her own. Her name was Annette.) I have added as well an occasional historical detail that seemed to

complete the context for Millie's wonderful narrative. If you find dates or details here and there that seem to be in error, you may safely attribute those bits to me.

I have not otherwise made any wholesale changes to Millie's original. In one section, where Millie is plainly talking about her personal experience, it seemed natural to cast a few paragraphs into the first person though her original text employed (somewhat inconsistently) a third person perspective. The book's basic structure, chapter headings and flow, however, remain Millie's own.

I have also added an Afterword that will summarize, very briefly, a few events that have occurred among us in the last half-century, to bring the reader up-to-date, more or less. The emphasis of this volume, however, is on our roots and early years.

Millie's text contained no footnotes, and I have not added them: if you like footnotes, you won't find any here. I hope that you will not be disappointed. The volume is not, exactly, a rigorous historiography. It is more like a personal memoir.

Millie, as I have said, was an excellent storyteller. It is my intention that readers hear her own voice in these pages more than my own. I trust that her inimitable style and cheerful personality will shine through. Perhaps you have had the opportunity to know Millie personally, as I have. I hope that you will recognize dear Millie in these pages.

A special word of thanks is due to Kelly Kinnunen, who has added a few relevant pictures, and laid things out in a pleasing sort of way. Thanks as well to Deb Ringblom for her encouragement and editorial help.

The God of Habakkuk (and Ernest Weinhardt!) continues to give vision to his people, as it turns out. May he use the vision described in these pages for the furtherance of his mission among all peoples of the world.

Pr. Charles Lindquist

Director Emeritus
Minneapolis, 2018



Ernest Weinhardt



Weinhardt (*right*) with his small wooden table in Mboula (*circa 1929*)

The Vision

“Tonight a vision came into my mind. I will write it here just as I was prompted to write it when I saw the vision....” (October 17, 1929).

In the western Sudan of Africa, in what is today Cameroon, slightly built, brown-haired, blue-eyed Ernest Weinhardt sat at his rough wooden table recording in his slanted handwriting the conviction from God that had gripped his soul.

Outside a brilliant moon sharply outlined the trees: a thick-trunked baobab tree, its sprawling root-like branches naked of leaves; the flowering acacias; the feathery jacarandas; and the thorn trees, their tiny-leaved branches arching in the shape of a huge umbrella. A gentle, cool breeze drifted through the window. Darkness had brought welcome relief after the heat of the day. A short while earlier the muezzin’s call to prayer had echoed out from the minaret of a local mosque. But this night Ernest Weinhardt was oblivious to it all. He reached over to pull his kerosene lamp a little closer. Head bent over his journal, he wrote what burned within him:

And the Lord answered me: “Write the vision; make it plain upon tablets, so that he may run who reads it. For still the vision awaits its time; it hastens to the end – it will not lie. If it seems slow, wait for it; it will surely come, it will not delay.”

What is the vision?

- 1. That God will take out of the Lutheran church a large number of men and women as missionaries to bring his gospel to the great unoccupied areas of the world;*
- 2. That these be taken out directly by him, independently of and without the intervention of ecclesiastical organizations;*
- 3. That these be provided for materially directly by his intervention, in answer to prayer and according to his promises;*

4. *That these be received directly in answer to prayer and in numbers corresponding to the need of the field or fields from time to time;*
5. *That these missionaries occupy, as far as pleasing in the sight of God, the yet unreached territories in the hearts of three continents: Africa, Asia and South America;*
6. *That these missionaries be preeminently men and women of the Cross, of the Spirit, of the Word and of prayer; having no desire other than to live, labor, suffer and die, if need be, for their Savior Jesus Christ;*
7. *That these men and women occupy these territories with the primary purpose of praying for the outpouring of his Holy Spirit upon their peoples unto the conviction of sin and conversion;*
8. *That this work be looked upon as a definite task to be completed within a definite period of time;*
9. *That this work take on such a spirit and proportion to eventually involve all the Lutheran churches in America;*
10. *That this be a mighty factor in uniting the believers of the various synods of the Lutheran church in one heart, mind and spirit around the God who has so manifestly worked on our behalf; ...that these things be a source of quickening and blessing to other churches in the homeland as well;*
11. *That these things be a mighty testimony to God as the true, living and almighty God, and to the One who hears and answers the prayers of humble believers when offered in Jesus' name and for Jesus' sake; that these things be to the great glory of his name in the church and to Christ Jesus to all generations for ever and ever;*
12. *That he accomplish the substance of these things according to his purpose, wisdom and will directly by the might of his own hand, exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power at work within us, in Jesus' name and for Jesus' sake.*

On the next page Weinhardt sketched a crude map of the world and indicated the heart of Africa, Asia and South America. Below the map he wrote, “Can God do these things? Yes. Can he provide and send out needed missionaries – one thousand, two thousand? Yes. Can he supply the means? Yes.”

The vision Ernest Weinhardt recorded that day was not one that had come to him suddenly. For a number of years he had cherished in his heart a deep longing that every person on the globe be given an opportunity to learn about Jesus Christ and come to know him. Over and over he had declared to his friends, “We must have it as our aim to bring the gospel to the very last individual. Wherever there are people who have not heard the gospel, to them we must go, no matter how few in number they may be.”

This conviction grew until it sent him to Paris to study French in preparation for going to Africa under the Sudan Mission, a recently formed Lutheran mission society. But even as he prepared to go to Africa, his thoughts and prayers embraced the entire world.

The commission to preach the gospel to the whole world seemed so overwhelmingly great that Weinhardt could envision it being accomplished only by a large number of workers sharing the task together. Weinhardt felt that there were many who would be willing to go if the opportunity were given to them. He commented:

There are many young men and women in the homeland who feel there is no need or room for them on the mission field, or rather, that societies will not and cannot accept and use them. They therefore immediately dismiss the idea of becoming a foreign missionary. An appeal for a definite number of young people – that is, an appeal to God – would give them to know that there is a definite need and that there is room for them.

Many also think that to be a foreign missionary one has to be a super-individual. This should be clarified. A good training is highly desirable, but it should be explained that there is also a need for those who are not so highly trained, but who are wholly given to God and to the salvation of souls.

The recruitment of a large number of missionaries would call for extraordinary faith to believe that God would supply for their going and service. Prayer would be the preeminent method employed to accomplish these goals.

The resistance to their message also would be impressive, he knew, for the Enemy does not easily relinquish ground. To break down the resistance, Weinhardt saw the necessity for men and women to be filled with the Holy Spirit so that as they taught, lived and worked, revival could break out.

Weinhardt knew that hardship, trial and testing were inevitable; therefore those who volunteered to go needed to be prepared to suffer. And they should go aiming to quickly train, inspire and assist national believers to reach their own people.

Mission organization and investment at home, Weinhardt believed, should be minimal. Energy and resources should be plowed into developing churches around the world. Weinhardt envisioned a light structure capable of embracing all the synods of the Lutheran church, without institutional fusion within any one of them. He pictured a structure committed as well to freedom for those involved, to follow what they discerned to be God's individual calling for them.

All of these thoughts had been churning around in Weinhardt's mind and heart for years before that night in the little town of Mboula, in what is today Cameroon, when he committed his vision to paper, in twelve orderly paragraphs.

The vision that he described was not totally new, it is true. For many decades, Christians from different backgrounds and

denominations, all over the world, had conceived similar visions and sought to put them into practice. But the vision that came to Ernest Weinhardt had clearly in view the church of his own confession, the Lutheran church. God was winning the world to himself. He aimed to use Lutherans in the effort.

Gladly Weinhardt embraced the call.



Lars Olsen Skrefsrud



Lars Olsen Skrefsrud (*second row left*) with Børresen (*standing*) and colleagues in Santalistan

The Roots of the Vision

To better understand what the Holy Spirit was bringing to birth in the heart and mind of Ernest Weinhardt, we need to step back in time and take a look at the emergence of other movements through the years. Many had come to birth and grown within the framework of the Lutheran church during the decades preceding Weinhardt's day.

Down through the centuries, where new life has broken out from time to time, it has often occasioned new forms of organizational expression. Some denominations have had difficulty knowing how to respond to these new expressions, and consequently splinter groups have sometimes been formed. The Lutheran church has been characterized by an unusual spirit of elasticity, tolerance and acceptance in allowing new forms of expression to remain within its various bodies and structures. While being critical sometimes of old forms and organization, Lutherans caught up in new movements of reform are characteristically loyal to their church bodies in most cases and desire to remain within them. We see this dynamic at work in the European and Scandinavian mother countries of Lutheranism.

In Germany the name that stands out above all others when we think of post-Reformation renewal is that of Philipp Jakob Spener (1635-1705). In 1675 he published his famous *Pia Desideria* – what might be translated “*Pious Desires*.” In this short volume Spener protested the low moral standards, name-calling and arguing he observed within the church, and the cold, intellectual orthodoxy that characterized so much of state-church religion. The people of Germany read Spener's dissertation and nodded their heads in agreement. His message swept the country. It found a particular home at the University of Halle.

Twelve years later, a gifted young German professor at Halle, August Hermann Francke (1663-1727), picked up the publication and found himself one in heart and thought with Spener. Francke

himself had experienced personal renewal a bit earlier while he was at Leipzig, where he had been called to teach Hebrew. It had happened for Francke one day as he sat struggling to understand and translate John 20:31 correctly: “But these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing you may have life in his name.” The verse so puzzled him that he called in his friends to discuss it with him. In the course of the discussion Francke’s intellectual faith was touched with the flame of the Holy Spirit. A fire of love and devotion for Christ began to burn within his heart. So brightly did it burn that Francke exploded into a dynamo of faith and action that erupted in dozens of different projects. Back again at Halle, Francke founded in quick succession an elementary school for poverty-stricken children, a special Latin school for gifted poor students, a hospital, a pharmacy, an orphanage, a bookstore, a laundry, a printing press and vocational trade schools. Homes for wayward girls, prostitutes and beggars offered shelter to those cast aside by the rest of society. A free boarding school for university students and a museum of natural science touched the lives of the intellectuals.

Francke’s vision embraced all strata of society. Neither was his vision limited to his own country and people. In 1705 two students from Halle, Bartholomäus Ziegenbalg (1682-1719) and Heinrich Plütschau (1676-1747), felt God calling them to go to India. Francke encouraged them to follow their calling. Another young student a few years later, Heinrich Melchior Mühlberg (1711- 1787), believed that God was calling him to the wilderness of North America. He found encouragement and good support at the University of Halle. Mühlberg is considered the father of Lutheranism in North America. But “his staunch Lutheranism was tinged with pietism,” according to Roy F. Martens, writing in the *Lutheran Cyclopedia*. It was Lutheranism warmed by the revival fires of Halle.

Concern for those without knowledge of Christ in other lands continued to grow among those in the renewal movement. Volunteers presented themselves, ready to go with the gospel.

To train the volunteers a missionary seminary, known as *Missionsakademie*, was opened in Hamburg. To send out the young volunteers, an amazing number of missionary sending and supporting agencies – each a movement in itself – burst into being and began to function.

In 1834 five missionaries went to the Orange Free State in South Africa under the Berlin Missionary Society. In 1836 the Leipzig Mission sent missionaries to India. In 1837 the Gossner Missionary Society sent missionary volunteers to Australia, and to India a few years later. The Neuendettelsau Missionary Society was conceived in 1841 to supply missionaries and means to plant the Lutheran church in North America; later they enlarged their work to include New Guinea and Brazil. In quick succession followed the Bethel Mission, the Hermannsburg Missionary Society, the Hildesheim Missionary Society for Blind Girls in Hong Kong, the Jerusalem Union, the Schleswig-Holstein Missionary Society, the Syrian Orphanage and the Lutheran Free Churches' Mission, among others. These were semi-independent movements within the Lutheran church. That is, they were not part of the regular church bodies nor controlled by them. At the same time these non-ecclesiastical organizations were recognized by the regular churches as authentic expressions of the Christian faith within the Lutheran church.

In addition to the mission organizations already mentioned, renewed Christians founded and supported other missionary organizations – some within the Lutheran tradition, some interdenominational. Thus, in Germany, new life birthed in revival sparked new means for expression and outreach.

In Norway a layman named Hans Nielsen Hauge (1771-1824) cut the furrow that broke the sod for a new movement of spiritual life, especially among the laity. Hauge had read and been influenced by Martin Luther, Johann Arndt, Heinrich Mueller and Erik Pontoppidan. On April 5, 1796, he experienced a call from God to “arouse his sleeping fellow countrymen.” To fulfill this calling Hauge took to the road to carry out itinerant

gospel preaching. Being of a practical mind as well, he also encouraged his peasant friends to stir up the gifts God had given them to establish businesses and start factories. Hauge coupled conversion to God and righteous living with an emphasis on doing one's daily job faithfully as unto God. He frequently underscored these three points in his preaching.

Revival broke out and washed over the country. The resulting hunger for God's Word led to the establishment of Bible schools. The study of God's Word awakened in people a sense of responsibility to preach the good news to all. Missionary societies were created to send out gospel workers, including the Lutheran China Mission, the Norwegian Missionary Society, the Norwegian Lutheran Mission, and the Schreuder Mission, among others. Missionary seminaries were opened for training volunteers.

The Santal Mission – a direct ancestor to our own community – was created during this time of revival. Hauge's warm revival reached eventually into the life of a troubled young man named Lars Olsen Skrefsrud (1840-1910). "My heart was as hard as a stone," Skrefsrud later wrote. Then the gospel got hold of him. The renewed young man felt an immediate calling to mission – "a burning desire to become a missionary... that I, the most unworthy of all, might be permitted to declare to the heathen what I had experienced in my own heart – his boundless compassion." The result was the creation of the Santal Mission in 1867, with its special burden for the Santal people of the Indian subcontinent.

Stories like these were typical of the period. Gospel renewal in hearts at home reached out into the world. We may note that the missionary training seminaries and various sending agencies were again semi-independent movements – not sponsored or controlled by the Lutheran church of Norway. Even so, the church recognized their presence and in many cases even encouraged the active and generous support of these organizations.

As a result of the new life that swept through the country, lay preaching became so acceptable that even today there are

more lay preachers in Norway than ordained clergy in charge of congregations.

In Sweden God used another lay preacher – and prolific writer – to bring renewal to the church, Carl Olof Rosenius (1816-1868). Once again, as we see continually, new life sought new organizational expression. Out of the renewal grew the *Evangeliska Fosterlands-stiftelsen* (the Evangelical National Missionary Society), the Mission Society of Bible True Friends, the Swedish Israel Mission, the Jerusalem Society, the Swedish Mission in China and Japan, the Swedish Mongol and Japan Mission, the Women's Missionary Workers, and still others. The *Evangeliska Fosterlands-stiftelsen* employed lay preachers for work in Sweden as well as overseas, and also founded and maintained several middle and junior high schools. Again, all of these mission-sending agencies functioned as movements, serving alongside the state church of Sweden.

In Denmark a young pastor in a country parish, Jacob Peter Mynster (1775-1854), in 1803 suddenly realized that living belief in God is inseparable from faith in Christ. As he confessed, "I thus now had a real, historical Christ, and nothing can be compared to the rapture, the interior jubilation, with which I began to say to myself: 'I have a God and a Savior.'"

From his country parish, Mynster went to Copenhagen, where he exerted a strong influence on the educated classes. Søren Kierkegaard was his confirmation student. Nicolai Grundtvig also emerged from a home that had been touched by the spirit of renewal.

As was true in the other countries, so too in Denmark: new life gave rise to missionary activity. The Danish Missionary Society was formed and began to send missionaries abroad. The Santal Mission of Norway opened an office in Denmark, in support of Skrefsrud's Danish colleague, Hans Peter Børresen (1825-1901). As elsewhere, these societies functioned as semi-autonomous Lutheran movements.

In Finland, as a new life movement quickened and refreshed the church, primary emphasis was placed on evangelistic and educational work and on the extensive publication and distribution of Finnish Christian literature. But in Finland, too, new life at home found its way into the world. The *Suomen Luterilainen Evankeliumiyhdistys* (Lutheran Evangelical Association of Finland) was an example, sending out ambassadors of Christ to Japan. Once again we note that this association was not controlled by the state church, but operated as a movement.

Even the Lutheran church in Holland was touched by renewal, and as early as 1743 a group of Dutch lay persons began work in the town of New Amsterdam in Guyana. A strong, vigorous church flourishes there even today.

In a day when interest in missions in many areas seems to be only a smoldering, flickering ember, we do well to ask, “What were the emphases of the new life movements of the 17th and 18th centuries in the Lutheran churches that produced such widespread and vigorous missionary responses?”

According to some scholars, the leaders and followers of the new life movements:

1. *Considered the state churches bogged down in institutionalism, dogmatism and polemics;*
2. *Called for reform;*
3. *Emphasized personal conversion and rebirth;*
4. *Stressed holy living;*
5. *Underscored the importance of the individual;*
6. *Preferred a simple liturgy;*
7. *Emphasized the priesthood of all believers, holding that all Christians could preach, witness, pray and engage in work to which they believed God had called them;*

8. *Considered the church to be the community of born-again believers and felt more unity with those who made this confession than with members of their own denominations who did not; and,*
9. *Emphasized the concept of “changing the world by changing people.”*

In addition, scholars point out that the movements:

1. *Emphasized the unity that exists between all Christians (thus preparing the way for ecumenism);*
2. *Frequently sang gospel songs;*
3. *Emphasized personal revivalistic preaching and Bible study;*
4. *Encouraged an appreciation for the biographies of born-again people;*
5. *Cherished the ideal that the minister or pastor should be a model for the people; and,*
6. *Included in their church life “love feasts,” that is, testimony and small group meetings.*

Some scholars have suggested that the movements were weak in producing authoritative voices on doctrine. Also, some of the leaders and followers have appeared to be quite indifferent to the created world, leading them to regard the physical body, work, recreation, nature, political and economic life as purely secular and unrelated to one's spiritual life.

Widely varying reactions greeted the renewal movements as they swept from country to country. Perhaps most significant of all is that the Lutheran church, though often perplexed as to how to cope with all these new movements, whose followers sometimes gave the impression of a “holier-than-thou” attitude, still did not ostracize these new groups. The Lutheran tradition, for the most part, allowed the new groups to retain the name “Lutheran” and to function within and alongside established congregational life.

Yet some in the church bodies resented the emphases of the renewal groups and did all they could to thwart and frustrate their efforts. In Germany and German-speaking Switzerland, as well as in Scandinavia, 43 anti-renewal or anti-pietism laws were passed between 1678 and 1734. In theological circles bitter arguments ensued, with sometimes vehement controversies over specific issues. In Norway an earlier effort to forbid lay preaching was resurrected, and ten times Hans Nielsen Hauge was arrested and imprisoned – once for several months.

Others did not actively oppose the renewal groups, but sat back and adopted a wait-and-see attitude. Still others ignored them, never acknowledging their existence and never referring to them. Some ridiculed them, joking among themselves about the “holier-than-thou pietists” who talked only about “pie in the sky, by and by,” and who seemed likely to become, they thought, slaves to legalism. Yet some welcomed them with cheers and open arms, took them in and were themselves warmed and renewed.

How did those in the new life movements react when rejected?

A few reacted defensively and in anger wrote scorching, hellfire, condemnatory, judgmental letters to those who were criticizing them.

Some tried to listen objectively and weigh the criticism being leveled against them.

A few became so convinced that the regular church bodies were dead that they left their church home and sought fellowship elsewhere. The leaders of the movements, however, pleaded against this. Even Hans Nielsen Hauge, after years of being arrested, imprisoned and misunderstood – which left him a broken man – still pleaded with the people to be true to the national church.

A few shrank back and adopted again a more traditional religious life and themselves became critics of the movements that once had brought them so much joy. Or they became rationalists, like Johann Christian Edelmann (1698-1767), who abandoned

his roots in the revival and declared that John 1:1 should be translated, “In the beginning was reason.”

Some were so in love with their newly found Lord and so caught up with him that they were oblivious to criticism. Or, if they heard occasional remarks, they were so convinced that they were in touch with truth and reality that opposition did not bother them a bit. As Spener himself confessed:

*The pietists of our day
Are Christians given wholly
To kindness, love and truth; and they
Are striving to be holy.
I will confess that I embrace
Their doctrine of salvation
Without restraint or any trace
Of shame and hesitation.*

So, renewal and new life produced fresh movements within the church, along with opposition, resistance and tension.

When the extensive Lutheran emigration to the United States began, it carried within it these same dynamic relationships. The living movements themselves were embodied mainly in the lay people who came, especially in those who came from Scandinavia. The tension or resistance, in many instances, was brought over by the clergy sent to care for the young Lutheran church in North America – in particular, clergy from Germany.

But in North America, too, new life broke out irrepressibly. Danish and Norwegian immigrants, who knew the Santal Mission in their homelands, established a United States branch in 1891 in Minneapolis, Minnesota. This was the American Board of the Santal Mission that would become a formal part of the World Mission Prayer League in 1972. The American Board sent its first missionaries in 1904 – decades before Weinhardt’s vision – to join their Scandinavian colleagues already at work in Santalistan.

The Lutheran Orient Mission, likewise a movement, sent volunteers to work among the Kurdish people in the northern areas of Iran and Iraq. The Sudan Mission, the Lutheran society under which Ernest Weinhardt first served, sent missionaries to Africa in 1923. The Bethphage Mission, a movement to care for the mentally and physically challenged and disabled – whom the rest of society had cast aside – was founded in 1913 in Axtell, Nebraska.

The Evangelical Lutheran Good Samaritan Society, another such organization, which today owns and operates more than 200 facilities for the elderly in 26 states, was born a few years later. In 1922 August Hoeger, an American Lutheran Church pastor in Arthur, North Dakota, related in a short article for a church paper the story of Chris, a boy in Upham, North Dakota, who was stricken with polio and needed money for treatment.

“How many would be willing to give two cents to help Chris?” Pastor Hoeger asked.

The response was so overwhelming that after Chris’ expenses had been totally paid, \$2,000 was left over. That sum, in 1922, was considerable indeed. Upon the advice and counsel of fellow clergy, Pastor Hoeger used it to rent a six-room house to care for the developmentally challenged. Soon he had to rent a second house. When an old man hobbled in on a cane, pretending he was disabled so he could find a home, Pastor Hoeger began to think about all the homeless, unloved and uncared-for elderly people. Out of this concern grew the Good Samaritan Homes.

Today the Evangelical Lutheran Good Samaritan Society cares for the elderly through its nursing homes, homes for the aged, housekeeping apartments and multi-care communities. In addition, they have homes providing specialized services for mentally challenged adults, as well as centers for troubled youth. Annual revenues exceed \$1,000,000,000.

In the 1920s and continuing into the 1930s, the church – especially in the Midwest – stirred as it was quickened with new life. The Holy

Spirit seemed to be working overtime. People became convicted of sin as they listened to the Word of God and saw themselves as guilty and lost without Christ. Confession and repentance became opportunities to trust in the gospel, ushering in the assurance of being forgiven by God and the discovery of inner peace.

As had been true in the Lutheran homelands, these movements were sometimes given to excesses, a tendency to set up rules and regulations, and sometimes critical and judgmental attitudes. But when true to its gospel foundations, this new life reached out in love to others. It also sought new avenues of practical expression – what became new movements of service and mission.

In Minneapolis, a plucky young woman named Annette Elmquist carried a vision for the establishment of a Bible school where Lutheran young people could be prepared for a life of faith and service. Scores of young people felt the need for such a ministry. They envisioned “a great Recruiting Station for foreign missionaries and inner mission workers, a mighty Power House of prayer... a source of new life and inspiration for the home congregations.” Annette joined four Augustana Synod pastors already at prayer for just such a school — George N. Anderson, Samuel M. Miller, Roy F. Thelander, and Claus A. Wendell. She was soon to join one of the pastors permanently as Mrs. George Anderson.

This powerful, shared vision became a reality in the Lutheran Bible Institute of Minneapolis, which held its first classes on September 17, 1919. The Bible Institute prospered, moving into a spacious new property on Portland Avenue in 1929. Annette herself, after further preparation, taught some of the classes. It was there, as we shall see, that Clarence O. Granlund would soon teach a course on the progress of world missions – which would in turn become fertile ground for sharing Weinhardt’s vision.

In 1933 the Lutheran Colportage Service, under the leadership of Hannah N. Chalmers, began to print gospel tracts, offering them to those who would distribute them far and wide.

A number of Lutheran pastors from different synods felt strongly compelled to evangelize and to train others to evangelize. The Lutheran Evangelistic Movement was born of this concern, after many meetings and much prayer. Included among the early leaders of this movement were Pastors Evald J. Conrad, Leonard C. Masted, Hagbard “H.O.” Egertson, Joseph L. Stump, Arthur “A.W.” Knock, Enoch L. Scotvold, Gustav “G.W.” Busse, John O. Gisselquist, Jens M. Halvorson – as well as our own John Carlsen and Paul Lindell.

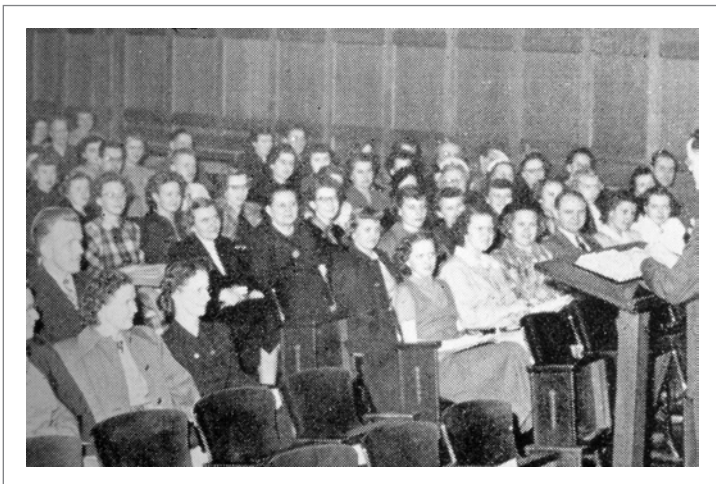
Dr. Carl Knutson Solberg, who attended the first Lutheran Evangelistic Movement conference in 1936, gave this favorable report in the *Lutheran Herald*:

Synodical lines were forgotten. One all-absorbing objective was uppermost: How can we best develop, encourage and practice a scriptural evangelism in its various aspects, so as to awaken and strengthen the spiritual life in our Lutheran church? Loyalty and cooperation with synod and local congregations were stressed. Separatistic tendencies away from church or agitations in opposition to the church were warned against.

So then, the call that was coming in 1929 to Ernest Weinhardt – to reach out to nations and peoples in three continents with the good news of God’s love through Jesus Christ – was a call that had been coming to men and women in the Lutheran church for many, many decades. If fulfilling this call meant the creation of new channels through which to go and work, this too was not new to Lutheranism. And evidence that the Holy Spirit was indeed calling for an enlarged vision and a new venture of faith became increasingly clear in the months and years that followed. For God was speaking not only to Ernest Weinhardt but to many, and the vision and the calling were shared. What remained now was for the many who cherished this same vision to find each other, come together, unite in their calling – and discover how God would have them proceed.



Clarence Granlund at LBI lectern



LBI classroom (circa 1939)

The Vision Shared

For three years as he worked in the Sudan, Ernest Weinhardt carried in his heart the vision he felt God had given him. Then, in 1932, ill health sent him back to the United States.

That same year Pastor Clarence O. Granlund – a gentle, sometimes fiery, slender man with a thin face, a broad and high forehead and a Roman nose – began to teach a course in mission survey at the Lutheran Bible Institute in Minneapolis. But the course was not a dusty textbook course. Pastor Granlund's heart ached for all who did not know the Jesus he loved. His eyes were constantly sweeping the far horizons. Distant lands and strange peoples came to life in Pastor Granlund's classroom, and they were seen as lost without knowledge and acceptance of the Savior.

Seated in that classroom was an older student, a comparatively short and squarely built Norwegian immigrant: John Carlsen. His full, round face, which quickly broke into smiles and often erupted in hearty laughter, grew more and more sober as he passed day after day of facing the needs of people without knowledge of Jesus Christ. Impulsive, visionary, demonstrative and sometimes stubborn and difficult to work with, John Carlsen was at the Bible school not as a matter of personal preference. He had come only because he felt this was where God wanted him. In Norway he had enjoyed teaming up with his brother in the fishing industry. But when an economic depression hit, their business failed. John left Norway and came to Milwaukee seeking work. His first job was at Allis Chalmers. His second was in a photographer's studio, retouching portraits.

All the while, however, God was dealing with John. His mother told him how she had given him to the Lord for his service. John resented his mother's transaction. What right did she have, he questioned, to turn his life over to God? So he put his fingers in his ears and refused to listen to God.

Then one day, while working on the portraits, he stared at the retouched ones with dismay. What had happened? With great care he set to work on the next set of photographs. Once again he was disappointed with the result – he had simply lost his touch. He tried and tried, but the results no longer satisfied either himself or his employer. Still he resisted God.

He sharpened his carpentry skills and hired himself out as a builder. Quickly he was involved in two accidents. When the second one seriously injured him, he felt that, if he wanted to stay alive, he had better listen to the living God. So it was that he packed up his family, left Milwaukee and came to the Bible Institute to study the Bible while he waited on God for further direction.

In the meantime, Ernest Weinhardt, who because of continued frail health could not return to Africa, had accepted a call to serve the Silver Creek-Big Lake Parish near Monticello, Minnesota.

Another pastor – the hearty, outgoing, warm and loving Evald J. Conrad of Trinity Lutheran Church of Minnehaha Falls in Minneapolis – had come to know both Weinhardt and Carlsen separately. Conrad became convinced that these two should meet, and so he brought them together.

And so it was that Carlsen and Weinhardt met: Weinhardt, the quiet, gentle, scholarly, thoughtful, sensitive (perhaps overly sensitive sometimes) and refined one, with his prime concern for the spiritual welfare of people; and Carlsen, the unpolished gem whose wide interests and big heart often carried him in a dozen different directions at once, and who not only thought of people's eternal future but was interested as well in making life comfortable for them while they were on earth. The common interest that united these two men, so different from each other, was their concern for the peoples of South America – a concern that dated to Granlund's course in mission survey offered some while before.

"Brother Weinhardt," John said excitedly, "I believe that God has brought us together. You must visit us in Minneapolis. My wife

and I have opened our apartment and some who are concerned are coming to pray. There are Adolph Andreasen, Margaret Christensen and Stanley Olson among others.”

“Coming to pray.” From the very earliest days, here was the practical emphasis and guiding principle for the mission that was soon to emerge. As Weinhardt himself would declare in an early issue of the mission’s *Bulletin*:

Prayer is our working method. Prayer takes our eyes off circumstances, off appearances and focuses them fully upon the Lord of the harvest. He alone has the answers. He alone has the resources. Is there need for laborers? We pray. Do we have need for money, for government permits, for transportation, for equipment, for anything? We pray. We know no other way to meet the situation.

The number of those who came to pray grew and eventually crowded out the little Carlsen apartment. The group moved to the campus of the Lutheran Bible Institute, then to Calvary Lutheran Church (Augustana Synod), and later to Central Lutheran (Evangelical Lutheran Church). One verse above all challenged them: “The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few; pray therefore the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into his harvest” (Luke 10:2).

They prayed. They encouraged others to pray. They printed prayer commitment cards which they encouraged people to sign, thus drawing them together in a common praying fellowship. The more they prayed, the more the fire burned in their bones. It was like the experience of the Prophet Jeremiah for them. Jeremiah had uttered, “If I say, ‘I will not mention him, or speak any more in his name,’ there is in my heart as it were a burning fire shut up in my bones, and I am weary with holding it in, and I cannot” (Jeremiah 20:9).

So too it was for Weinhardt and Carlsen. The burden of their hearts cried out for expression. All the next summer they

traveled, visiting one congregation after another, 150 in all. To keep their praying friends informed they began to publish a *Bulletin* and attached a name to their growing fellowship. They called themselves the South American Mission Prayer League.

Two members of the fellowship, Myrtle Nordin and Marie Thompson, felt strongly that God was calling them not only to pray, but also to go. When the young Prayer League felt unable to send them directly, saying that they were only a “prayer league” and not a sending agency, the intrepid women struck out on their own. Calling themselves the Colombia Evangelical Mission of South America, they sailed for Colombia in 1936. The next year four more missionaries joined them.

In the meantime Carlsen, upon graduating from the Bible Institute, combined an evangelistic and missionary emphasis as he continued to travel and speak in churches. But the conviction that he should go to South America was growing on him steadily.

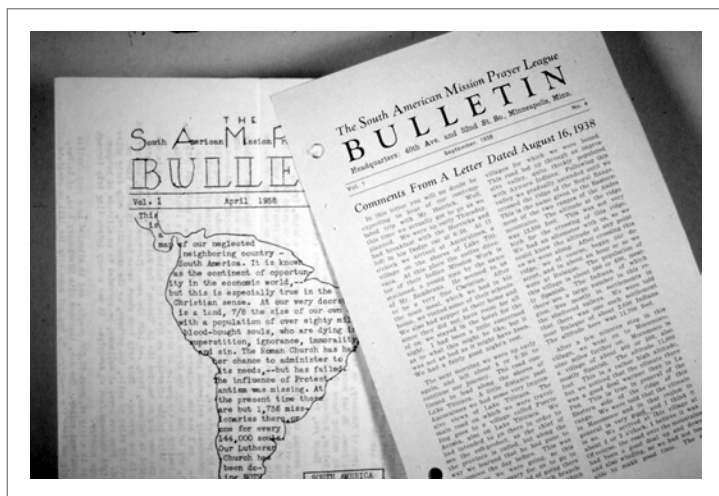
Weinhardt was sensing the same call for himself. In December 1936, Weinhardt recorded this in his journal: “I received a deep settled conviction that God was calling me and leading me to South America, and that that land would therefore be my next field of labor. This conviction was given me while I was calling upon God in prayer.... One thing, among others, that has caused me to rejoice is that this is in line with the vision received while in the Sudan.”

“How shall we go?” the two men asked each other, when they came together.

“I have already approached the board of my church, the Evangelical Lutheran Church,” Carlsen said, “but they do not feel ready at this time to begin work in South America.”

“And I,” said Weinhardt, “have approached the Sudan Mission, but they believe they should limit their efforts to Africa.”

And so the two men did the only thing they knew to do when they were perplexed about the next step. They got down on their knees and prayed.



South American Mission Prayer League bulletins (1938)



Ernest, Hildegard and Betty Weinhardt (*left*) with colleagues in Bolivia

The Vision Begins to Take Shape

On the evening of May 25, 1937, two dozen people pulled open the big, wooden doors of the Lutheran Bible Institute, climbed the steps to the foyer and went quietly into the chapel. John Carlsen and Ernest Weinhardt had approached their praying colleagues and asked if they would send them to South America. The friends were cautious about their reply.

“But we can at least get organized a bit more,” they said, and that night they elected a board. Pastor Evald J. Conrad was to be president; John Carlsen, field secretary; Gerhardt Ostrem, vice-president; Stanley R. Olson, secretary; and Adelaide Bergesen, treasurer. Pastor Halvar “H.G.” Randolph, Adolph Andreasen, Ernest Weinhardt and John Carlsen were appointed as an advisory committee.

Weinhardt went home from the meeting and wrote in his journal: “The South American Mission Prayer League has organized a little more definitely.”

Two months later, on August 6, 1937, Weinhardt and Carlsen drove out to the Bible Institute’s summer camp at Lake Independence to meet with Randolph, Conrad and Andreasen. They poured out the longings of their hearts, and then all the men prayed. They arose from their knees convinced that God was indeed calling Weinhardt and Carlsen to go to South America.

Later, back in Minneapolis, the men went to see Pastor Granlund in his office at Calvary Lutheran Church.

“We’ll have to organize and define principles as we grow,” they decided. “For now we’ll form a home committee to carry on the affairs.”

Andreasen, Conrad, Granlund and Olson were chosen to serve as the committee. The office would be at Trinity Lutheran Church of Minnehaha Falls, where the church secretary, Dora Mainquist,

would care for the correspondence. Olson was to edit the *Bulletin*, which would provide information to the larger circle of friends. Thus the framework was set up, making it possible for Weinhardt and Carlsen to depart for South America. The praying fellowship was about to become a sending fellowship.

On the night of December 5, 1937, snow crunched under foot and a crisp winter wind whipped rosy color into the cheeks of worshippers who, bundled in warm winter clothing, hurried into the “Little Homelike Church” – Trinity Lutheran Church of Minnehaha Falls, in Minneapolis. Weinhardt and Carlsen made their way forward to kneel at the altar rail as their wives, Hildegard and Constance, watched from the front pew. A picture of Christ in Gethsemane hung above the altar, as if to preside over the gathering. Pastors Conrad and Granlund met the two men at the rail, laid hands upon them and commissioned them to go as ambassadors and servants of the living God to South America. Samuel Miller, dean of the Lutheran Bible Institute, then committed the men in prayer to God and to the Word of his grace. Hildegard and Constance bowed their heads as well, blinked hard and joined in fervent prayer.

Eight days later, on December 13, Weinhardt kissed his wife goodbye and headed for the West Coast. Carlsen followed on December 30 and met Weinhardt in Shelby, Montana. From there the men proceeded together to Seattle, Washington, and then down the West Coast to California – uncertain still where their calling to South America would take them, specifically. In San Francisco they decided to visit the consulates of Peru and Bolivia.

“Come to my country,” the Bolivian consul pleaded. “My people live in poverty, illness and superstition. You can do much to help them.”

On Friday, February 18, 1938, at 11:15 a.m., Carlsen and Weinhardt, carrying their suitcases, climbed the gangplank of the S.S. Margaret Johnson and then descended to their third-class quarters. When they returned to the ship’s deck, they looked down to see, standing on the dock, Mr. and Mrs. Martin Lien of Pasadena, Mr. and Mrs. Peterson

of Valier, Montana, and Miss Agnes Johansen of Los Angeles. Joyfully they invited these friends to come on board, where they visited with them until 2:30 p.m. Then the “All visitors off!” call sounded, and the friends had to leave.

“Goodbye, goodbye!” waved the five friends from the pier below, smiles and tears all mixed up on their faces. “God go with you and before you to open doors.”

“Goodbye, goodbye!” called the two men, thinking also of their wives and children, whom they were leaving behind.

The ship’s whistle sounded. The pilot boat alongside the ship gently nudged it away from the pier and steered it out into the open sea.

“Goodbye, goodbye,” the men called again from the deck. Fine rain drizzled down and a brisk wind sprang up, causing them to hurry inside.

Weinhardt entered in his journal, “I have become satisfied that God had indicated that he would now have me plan definitely on leaving for South America....” And then, in his typical manner when trying to ascertain or verify what he felt to be God’s leading, he wrote:

Factors leading me to this conviction:

1. *A closed door (to Africa);*
2. *An open door (to South America);*
3. *The Word of God: Luke 4:42-43, Isaiah 26:7-15, Revelation 3:7-13;*
4. *The testimony of the Spirit, inward peace resulting therefrom;*
5. *Letter containing gift of \$7 for missionary work in South America received just in time.*

In Panama Carlsen and Weinhardt changed ships. On Thursday, March 10, their second ship brought them to Mollendo, the port town of Arequipa in southern Peru, where they decided

to disembark. They went ashore by launch and passed through customs. Eleven days later they boarded a train for La Paz, Bolivia.

The little cogwheel train puffed and chugged as it began its ascent into the Andes. On the straight-backed hard seats, Weinhardt and Carlsen sat upright, shaking and jerking from side to side as the train jolted along. From time to time they would grab their seats and hang on, as the cogs would slip, causing the little train to shoot backwards. Dirt and soot sifted in.

As they continued to climb, the two men saw groups of Aymara men and women. Some of them huddled under brightly-colored, handwoven shawls. Some of the men wore tweed coats and trousers, laboriously patched, one repair upon another. The largest patch the men saw was a huge square of gunnysack burlap that covered almost the entire back of a jacket. The wide, homespun woolen skirts of the women were almost threadbare, some worn through to the lining. The women, for the most part, were barefoot; their feet were chapped and scabby. The men shuffled along in sandals made of old rubber tires.

When the train stopped at stations, vendors came running up, offering hot spicy soup, hard rolls, coffee and bananas.

As the sun sank out of sight, the wind whipped and howled through the cracks in their coach. Carlsen and Weinhardt pulled their coats tighter about them. An attendant brought them blankets and hard round pillows, but they slept little. As their train reached altitudes of 14,000 feet and above, they sat up, gasping for air and claspng their chests and stomachs which were knotted in pain.

The next day both men stared with amazement as they caught sight of huge Lake Titicaca, lying at an altitude of 12,500 feet. At Puno, a small city at the northern end of the lake, the little train ground to a stop. The two men gathered up their baggage. Puffing and panting in the thin air, they walked to the steamboat that would carry them to another train, waiting at the southern end of the lake. Carlsen wrote:

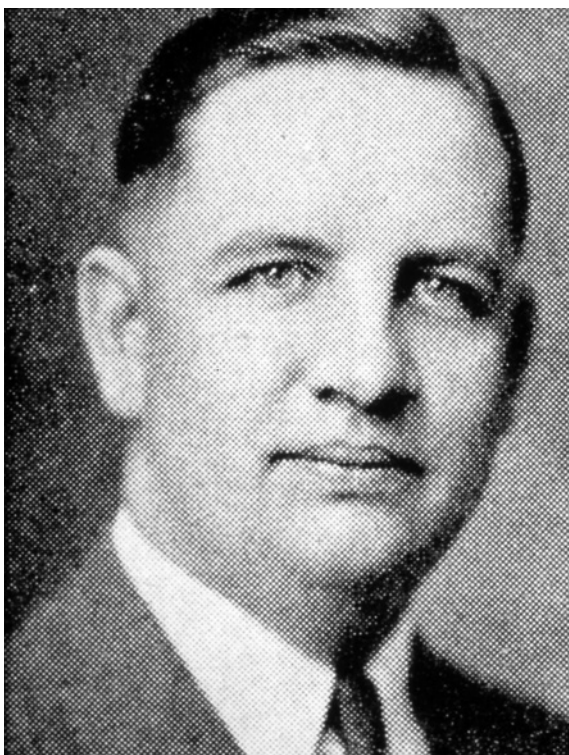
The trip across Lake Titicaca was very interesting. Thousands of Indians live in small villages scattered here and there around this beautiful and 100-mile-long lake. There are only two mission stations along the shore of this great lake, outside of the work of the Adventists. Why haven't we Lutherans reached this tremendous field with thousands of souls...?

As the second train chugged on and on, Carlsen and Weinhardt fought nausea and longed for their journey to be over. And then, suddenly, they found themselves on the rim of a vast, deep hollow. Looking down they saw the city of La Paz, the gem of the Andes, sprawled out below.

Because La Paz dates back to 1548, a feeling of keen excitement came over the two men as their train wound its way down into the city. The train chugged alongside narrow, cobblestone streets, past adobe buildings, past patios, courtyards and buildings with balconies and red-tiled roofs, until at last it puffed to a stop at the depot. There a Mr. Irle of the American Clinic – a mission project of the Methodist Episcopal Church – met them and invited them to stay at the clinic while they were in La Paz. The men accepted gratefully.

The ride to the American Clinic took them down the main boulevard with its streetcars and old office buildings. Many of the buildings, the newcomers noted, were grouped around squares that were bright and attractive with trees and flowers and winding paths.

As they rode along, the two travelers in their hearts gave thanks to God. He had brought them this far. Surely he would lead them now to the place where they should begin work. They little guessed how time-consuming their search would be and how multitudinous and vexing would be their testings. Just as well. Life is handled best in little chunks, in daily portions. And for this the men were ready.



Evald Conrad



Trinity Lutheran Church of Minnehaha Falls

Setting Their Sights to Plow a Straight Line

Back in the United States, the members of the home committee were meeting to define the principles of the new mission. Carefully and prayerfully they considered the spirit and values Weinhardt had outlined in his vision in the Sudan. Finally, in the February 1938 issue of the *Bulletin*, they printed the guidelines that would direct the course of the mission:

The home committee, consisting originally of members selected by the charter missionaries, and reinforced from time to time from among members of the Prayer League as the Lord may direct, shall meet as occasion may require to perform the following duties according to principles of the mission resting on the Word of God herein declared:

1. *To personally pray for the work and workers (Colossians 4:2-4) and for more laborers in the harvest (Luke 10:2) and also to encourage fellow members of the Prayer League to unite in prayer groups wherever possible (Matthew 18:19-20);*
2. *To present the cause, as doors are opened, in connection with evangelistic efforts (Acts 1:8) and by printing and distributing literature;*
3. *To receive, care for and distribute funds of the mission on the basis of Philippians 4:4-7 and 19, Romans 13:8 and 1 Corinthians 9:13-14, with full understanding that the mission shall not solicit any funds;*
4. *To interview missionary candidates who may apply to the mission, and to accept such as are considered truly called and qualified on the basis of the following tests:*
 - *Definite confession of personal faith in Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior and doctrinal acceptance of and adherence to the teaching of the Word of God as declared in the Evangelical Lutheran unaltered*

confessional writings – see 2 Timothy 1:13-2:2, 1 Timothy 6:3-5 and 2 Timothy 3:14-17;

- *Implicit faith and trust in God to provide all our needs according to Philippians 4:4-6 and 19; Matthew 6:33; Mark 11:22-24; Psalm 37:3-5 and 2 Corinthians 9:8-9;*
 - *Full agreement that distribution of funds received by the mission shall be made on the basis of actual need (1 Corinthians 9:13-14) and proportionately as the funds allow, fully recognizing that the mission, in obedience to Romans 13:8, will not borrow funds and thus cannot guarantee any set income;*
5. *To arrange proper services to be held in consecrating of new missionaries according to Acts 13:1-4 and that they go forth as sent by the body of believers under the direction of the Holy Spirit;*
 6. *To assist outgoing missionaries in proceeding to the field and to provide them with necessary credentials;*
 7. *To assist missionaries home on furlough to be used of God in the homeland as he opens the way.*

“As the need arises, we shall have to be even more specific in defining the principles and practices of the mission,” the home committee agreed, “but for now, what we have stated should be sufficient as general guidelines.” And they sent a copy of what they had drafted to La Paz for Carlsen and Weinhardt to consider.



The first church in Mocomoco



Villagers and friends in Mocomoco

In Search of a Harvest Field

In La Paz the weeks sped by. Weinhardt and Carlsen consulted with missionary and national leaders about possible locations for the new work. The two made trips to outlying places. They studied and prayed. And as is often the case until one becomes acclimated to a new locale, they spent some time being sick. The week following Easter, both men came down with hepatitis. Carlsen made an extremely slow recovery. Not until July were they well enough to make their first exploratory trip northeast to Lake Titicaca, a region that had been suggested to them.

By the end of July, the men knew the time had come to make a decision. Word had reached them that two new workers, Pearl Englund, a teacher, and Emma Isaacson, a nurse, would be sent out shortly. The women could live in La Paz at first, where they would study Spanish and be introduced to the work. But the mission would need a place of its own to work.

“I believe the region lying to the north and east of Lake Titicaca is the place where we should settle,” Weinhardt said to Carlsen.

“All the doors are open, aren’t they?” Carlsen asked. “For five years we and others have prayed that God would guide us by opening and shutting doors. If we were on the wrong track, God would be shutting doors instead of opening them, wouldn’t he?”

Weinhardt held up his hand now, and touching his fingers one by one he began to enumerate the reasons why he felt God was positively leading them.

“First, there was our Bolivian friend, Dr. José Guzmán Baldivieso, who visited us in Minneapolis. Remember how he urged us to come to Bolivia? How he declared the native populations were in a state of awakening and how the gospel should be preached to them while they were receptive?”

He held up his second finger. “Then, the Bolivian consul in San Francisco repeated the plea.”

The third finger went up. “The Christian workers and missionaries in La Paz received us warmly and offered whatever help they could.”

The fourth finger was raised. “They also said they knew of no larger or needier field yet unoccupied in Bolivia.”

The fifth finger was released. “In spite of the poverty, sickness and spiritual darkness – as we have thought of this area, we have experienced God’s peace in our hearts, his assurance that he was indeed leading us.”

“Maybe,” said Carlsen, “the next thing we should do is approach the sub-prefect and see if he will give us permission to begin work there. Mr. Herrick said he would take us whenever we wanted to go.”

Mr. John Herrick, the Canadian Baptist Church director working among the Aymara people, suggested that they first make the trip to Mocomoco to see the provincial sub-prefect. At 6:50 in the morning on Thursday, August 11, Carlsen and Weinhardt climbed into Mr. Herrick’s Dodge and the three men set off. They bumped their way along on a dirt road across the Altiplano until they arrived at Ancoraimas. There they spent the remainder of the day and night with Mr. and Mrs. Clato Zambrana, the Bolivian director of the Aymara work of the Methodist mission in that area. At 8:30 the next morning they set off for Mocomoco.

They passed through a large and impressive valley, rather heavily populated with Aymara farms and settlements, crossed the *Cordillera Real* shortly after midday and paused at 13,500 feet to gasp for oxygen. They welcomed the descent to Italaque at 11,700 feet, and found it to be a village of about 600 people, mostly Spanish speakers. They rested briefly and then descended further into the valley. The road twisted and meandered its way down. In places the curves were so abrupt that they had to back up and go forward several times in order to negotiate the turn.

“A car like our Dodge handles it quite nicely,” Mr. Herrick said. “The bigger trucks have a tougher time. It’s a bit hair-raising riding the local trucks.” He laughed shortly. “Most of the trucks don’t have side mirrors – they hardly fit around some of these bends. A little boy jumps out to guide their backing up around the corners, and puts wooden blocks behind the tires so the vehicle won’t fall off the edge.”

On and on they twisted their way down. Then, suddenly coming around a bend, they saw the little village of Mocomoco clinging to the mountainside. Entering the village, they rattled over the narrow cobblestone road that snaked its way like the letter “S” through the town. Pigs oinked and waddled out of the way, pushing and jostling each other. Chickens cackled and flapped and flew. Cattle and children stood stolidly, staring. They drove past two-story adobe houses with thatched roofs that crowded out to the dirt road. At the end of the village the road came to an abrupt end. Herrick turned the car around and retraced their route.

Herrick had rolled down the window on his side. Weinhardt sat with his hand cupped over his nostrils. Carlsen noticed and chuckled. “Pretty pungent, isn’t it?” he asked.

In front of the plaza they stopped. A Catholic church overlooked and dominated the square. Trees grouped together in the center. Small administrative buildings and shops encircled the plaza.

Mr. Herrick checked the odometer. “One hundred thirty-eight miles,” he announced.

Weinhardt had been tallying some figures. “And eight hours actual driving time,” he said. The men stepped out and beat their clothing and stamped, trying to shake off some of the dust.

“What would you guess the population to be?” Carlsen asked Herrick.

Herrick’s eyebrows went up. “Four, five hundred maybe.”

Townpeople crowded around and directed the three men to the sub-prefect, who welcomed them warmly.

“Sit down, sit down,” he invited. He gave the men ample time to explain why they had come.

The sub-prefect nodded as they spoke. A prominent businessman of the village appeared and sat listening intently to the conversation. In the end the sub-prefect arose, extended his hand and assured the men that he would be glad indeed to have them come – and that his government would do all it could to give them the protection they needed.

Then the businessman spoke up. “I have a building I would like to give you for a school,” he said eagerly. “It will be good for our children to be able to learn.”

“There are many living on farms outside this little village who need help, too,” the sub-prefect said. “Come with me, and I will show you.”

And he led the men through the village to a point where they could look down over terraced fields dropping down in ordered layers to the river far below. His arm swept out as though to encompass the hills encircling them.

“People, people,” he said, “all over these mountains. Over 60,000 Aymara, we estimate, and 6,000 Spanish-speaking people. Pinched by our cold climate and ill-fed, they can only eke out a living. They are hard-working and pretty simple folk. Often gripped by primitive fears, often ill. Given to drinking. If you have it in your heart to do anything, anything at all, we welcome you. With all our hearts.”

In the meantime another man had walked up and joined the group. The sub-prefect greeted him and then introduced him to the men as the area’s representative to the National Congress in La Paz. The sub-prefect explained to the congressman why the men had come. He, too, nodded his head in agreement and welcomed the men.

“Spend the night with us,” the sub-prefect invited, and the men gladly accepted.

In his journal that night, Weinhardt noted, “We were much impressed with the welcome we have received in this village and with the open door placed before us.” And on his return to La Paz, he added:

In general, we felt that God had opened up the door for this journey. We felt that God had been with us, and we were very deeply impressed with what we had seen. We cannot but be much inclined to believe that God has shown us the field where he would have us take up work. We feel that we can only praise and thank God for this journey.



Making do with little...



Sharing a festive meal with friends

Thistles and Thorns

Encouraged as they were by the assurance that God was leading them, Weinhardt and Carlsen were severely tested as well. Before departing on their trip to Mocomoco, John Carlsen received a letter from his wife stating that she had been forced to borrow money in order to provide for the family. Letters from Hildegard Weinhardt, received earlier, indicated that she too barely had enough to meet the most basic needs in the Weinhardt home.

Weinhardt himself was in agony. “I believe I can truthfully say that the present is the most difficult and impossible situation in which I have ever been,” he wrote in his journal. Not only were their wives in need, but Weinhardt and Carlsen’s bill for board and room was due to be paid – and the men had only 10 cents between them.

“What shall we do in this situation?” Weinhardt noted in his journal, and then proceeded to enumerate the steps they could take. The course he outlined might apply for all who find themselves in tight, testing situations. Here was the strategy:

1. *Thank God for this situation and praise him; this only affords God a greater opportunity to manifest his goodness and glory, and thus to glorify his name;*
2. *Dig our feet down, as it were, and stand, not to look to the right nor the left, nor backward, but only upward and forward;*
3. *Set ourselves, give ourselves over to wait;*
4. *Wait upon God and for God; wait upon him in his Word, in earnest prayer, in praise and fasting;*
5. *Believe in God, trust in him; trust in him for deliverance.*

And then for his own encouragement, Weinhardt wrote that one should remember:

1. *God's deliverance of Peter from prison;*
2. *God's deliverance of Paul and Silas from prison;*
3. *God's deliverance of Israel at the Red Sea; and,*
4. *God's leading of Israel through the Jordan.*

He also reassured himself by recalling special promises from God's Word: "Call upon me in the day of trouble; I shall deliver you, and you shall glorify me" (Psalm 50:15). "Thus says the Lord who made the earth, the Lord who formed it to establish it – the Lord is his name: Call to me and I will answer you, and will tell you great and hidden things which you have not known" (Jeremiah 33:2-3). "Those who trust in the Lord are like Mount Zion, which cannot be moved, but abides forever" (Psalm 125:1).

A few days later he made another entry:

"Thou dost keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on thee" (Isaiah 26:3). During the night God was pleased to bless my heart through this word. When we have committed all our matters to God in prayer, then all such matters become God's affair, God's problem, and we have no more any right to look at those things. Our calling is then to look only to God, to keep our minds stayed on him. The things we have committed to God are his problems, and he will take care of them. In this way we enter into complete rest from all our cares, burdens and work. The least care or burden is too much for me. But God can easily carry them all. I cannot do the work, but God can and will.

It was at this time, with so many needs unmet, that the two men set off with Mr. Herrick to visit the sub-prefect in Mocomoco. Their business, they had decided, must be to carry on with the job God had given them to do, believing that God would supply the needs of their families as well as their own personal needs.

But when they returned to La Paz, their need still stared them in the face. In his journal Weinhardt made note:

Yesterday and today God has been pleased to bless me much through the 22nd Psalm. In this psalm we find 1) a great trial, 2) a great faith, and 3) a great victory. When, as we read in this psalm, God has "heard" (verse 24) and answered, then the working out of the answer to our prayer on earth is indeed a small matter with him.

The next day an airmail letter from the home committee arrived. With trembling hands, Weinhardt ripped open the letter to find two checks of \$25 each. Gratefully the men thanked God. The letter informed them that monies also had been forwarded to their families.

Jubilantly the men set off the next morning to pay their overdue board and room bill of \$30. To their astonishment, their landlady handed them a bill for \$60, twice the amount that had been agreed upon. She had told them earlier that she would have to increase the amount, but they were not expecting it to be a 100% increase. What to do? The men went home and prayed. After prayer, they decided to go to their landlady to see if she could consent to compromise. The landlady agreed to accept \$50. Once again the men went home and prayed, and after prayer brought to their landlady the entire \$50 they had received the day before. Once again they were down to 10 cents.

Then greater financial needs than ever confronted them. Now that they had settled on a definite area where they would begin work, the men agreed that Weinhardt should stay on and continue language study, while Carlsen would return to the United States. There he would continue conference work and seek to build up support at the base. But money would be needed for his return trip. So the men prayed again. In his journal Weinhardt recorded:

We should live on the ground of the impossible. If we do not, we do not live on the ground of Scripture. What do we have in Scripture but a record of the impossible? If we live in the Scriptures, therefore, we will live in the atmosphere of the impossible, on the ground of the impossible. We will,

as it were, see impossible things taking place all about us continually. The fact that these incidents are separated by hundreds of years does not matter. It will be to us as if they were happening before our eyes. If we abide, then, in his Word, and his Word in us, then it will not be hard to trust in God for the impossible. And it is a question if we really have faith, if we cannot trust in God for the impossible.

And again he recorded:

As mentioned, in the Scriptures we see impossible things happening continually. Moses crossing the Red Sea... Joshua crossing the Jordan... The walls of Jericho falling... Lazarus being raised from the dead... The prison gates swinging open at night and Peter marching out... In the Spirit there is no such thing as past and future. There is only the continual present. Therefore, when we abide in the Spirit, all these events become present to us. When we are in the Spirit, we are in the eternal, in eternity. And in eternity there is only the great "now."

Faith in God never reckons with the question of possibility. That is something that does not enter into the picture at all. Faith looks only at God. With him all things are possible.

Faith is largely a matter of position. If we abide in the Spirit and in the Word, then it will be natural to believe.

Other entries told of severe temptations to doubt, which Weinhardt was passing through at this time. But he adds:

"Be not dismayed, for I am your God" (Isaiah 41:10). God is of such a nature that he cannot forget his own. God cannot be indifferent to the needs of his own. The God who came to us when we were yet dead in trespasses and sins and who said, "Live," and who caused us to live and to become his children – will he now forsake us? No! Surely he will not do that!

A few days later he records other struggles:

I have been inclined to think and feel, perhaps quite unconsciously, that God is conditioned upon or limited by the free will of man in his answering our prayers. I have thought perhaps he is limited by the free will of those individuals whom he may be pleased to use to supply this need. But is this really so? No! He does not condition his prayer promises in this way. He does not say, "If the free will of men will allow me to, I will answer your prayers." God is completely independent of the free will of man. His will is absolute and sovereign. This being so, then when he wills to have a certain need supplied at such and such a time and in such and such a place, then he will have that need supplied at that time and place. In view of this, God's child, trusting in him for the supply of all need, is not dependent upon circumstances or the will of others, but upon God only.

However, there may be cases when God will need time to answer prayer. For this reason it may be necessary for God's child to wait.

Whenever God is pleased to withhold material blessings, it is only that he might give greater and deeper spiritual blessings.

At 9:30 on a Thursday morning, three weeks after the men had paid the board bill that left them with a balance of 10 cents, there was a rap on their door. A Mrs. Bell of the American Institute stood outside.

"Dr. Beck received a cable this morning," she said. "He asked me to bring it over to you."

With mixed feelings, Carlsen and Weinhardt read: "Please advise as to safety and whereabouts of missionaries Weinhardt and Carlsen. No word received four weeks. Would appreciate return word. SAMPL."

Money was included with the cable for a ten-word reply. The men drafted the reply and sent it off before noon. In his diary Weinhardt entered: "We have not had money for postage. Of course it has been very hard not to write to our wives during this time."

Back in the United States Dora Mainquist, the mission's secretary and treasurer, had been on vacation. The volunteer who had taken over her work noted that when it was time to send out the bimonthly remittance to the two missionaries, there was only two dollars to send. It hardly seemed worthwhile to send two dollars, she reasoned, and decided to hold it over until the end of the month. Had she sent it, they would have had postage to write home.

As it was, the remittance the substitute secretary sent at the end of the month arrived the day after the cable, enabling the men to meet their obligations. "Thanks and praise be to him!" Weinhardt wrote in his diary.

But he also added, "Having received victory from God in one trial by faith is no assurance that our faith has been fully established, perfected, and that therefore we will no longer be in need of trials to exercise our faith." And, indeed, more testing followed. On another occasion they were reduced to 64 cents before a check came.

During these weeks of severe testing, one special instance of God revealing his loving care for them occurred. Through the months they had been eating mostly Bolivian food. Eating habits are not easily changed, and they found themselves longing for something from home. One Sunday afternoon, as Carlsen left the house to go on a walk, he jokingly said to Weinhardt, "I'll bring back some apple pie and doughnuts, and we'll have coffee when I return."

As he walked down the street, he heard a voice call, "Mr. Carlsen!" He looked up. There in the window above him stood the wife of the American consul.

"Come in, Mr. Carlsen," she invited. "How would you like a piece of apple pie?"

When she brought it to him, Carlsen hesitated for a moment and then asked, “Would you mind if I took it home and shared it with my friend?”

“Why, no, no!” she assured him. “But I have more. Let me get you another piece.” She hustled off to her kitchen. When she came back, in addition to the pie, she was carrying a bulging paper bag. “Here are some doughnuts you might enjoy as well,” she said.

Carlsen hurried home, clutching his treasure. “Ernie!” he called out before he had the door pushed open. “Ernie, put on the coffee! Here are the doughnuts and the apple pie the Lord provided!”

By the end of that year, 1938, receipts at home totaled \$2,204.48, or an average of almost \$184 per month. “I am convinced,” Pastor Granlund wrote to the men, “that we should share our needs more freely with all of our praying colleagues.”

The mission was feeling its way along with regard to financial policy. One reason the men had felt so constrained not to solicit funds in any way or even to state their needs openly was because they did not want to be criticized for diverting money from the regular channels of the synods. If they made their needs known to God alone through prayer, surely others could not accuse them of this.

Beyond this, the policy of looking to God for the supply of their needs would mean that budgets would not come to determine or limit the expansion of their work. Development of a new field, initiation of a project or the opening of a new work would be dependent directly upon God, the faith of those proposing to do the work and their willingness to step out in obedience.

Carlsen and Weinhardt’s response to the financial testings they faced during these early days was critical. If they had not “hung on” and persisted in believing that God would see them through, the future of the mission could have been jeopardized.

As it was, they emerged from each testing stronger than before, unshaken in their resolve that the mission should continue looking to God alone for his supply, and that growth and expansion need not be determined by a budget. The Lord's worker was to seek God's guidance as to what work to do – and then trust God to provide whatever was needed to accomplish it.

Things were beginning to take shape for the new mission. An area of work had been found. New workers would soon be on their way. The financial principles under which the mission would operate had been tested and found to be workable. Now it was time to direct attention to strengthening the base in the United States.

In the United States the Holy Spirit had been working as well, preparing to bring into the Prayer League a group of young people with a somewhat different background than that of Carlsen and Weinhardt. Two of the young men were sons of an Augustana Synod missionary couple in China, and it is to this family that we next direct our attention.



Jonathan and Paul Lindell

The Hand of the Lord

It was the summer of 1929. Pastor John Lindell had joined his wife Selma, and three sons, Paul, 14, Jonathan, 12, and David, 5, at the hill station of Kikunshan where the boys were attending the American School. Two days' trip away by railroad, down on the plains where the Augustana Synod missionaries carried on their work, unrest brooded. Time and again armies marched through the area and fighting broke out. The men, who with their families were on vacation in the mountains, assessed the situation.

"We'll have to return alone and leave our families here," they concluded.

"But we can go," the single women said.

And so it was decided that the men and single women only would return to their stations of work.

As the time to leave drew closer, Pastor Lindell became very quiet and pensive. Finally, he went to his wife, took both her hands in his, and looking deeply into her eyes, said, "Selma, I have something I must tell you, something painful." His eyes, intense in seriousness, searched her pleasant round face.

"Selma, the Lord has told me I will not return once I go back to work."

Her face flinched. John Lindell went on quickly. "You must not despair, but carry on. For the Lord has also revealed to me that all three of our sons, Paul, Jonathan and David, will have missionary careers. And the conviction has come to me that God will call Paul to a special position of leadership. When that comes to pass, Selma, I want you to stand by his side and offer him all the loving, loyal support you can. Promise?"

Through tears that were blurring her husband's dear face, Selma silently nodded.

Pastor Lindell left.

That winter fighting broke out in the area where he was working. Wounded soldiers flooded the mission hospital at Loyang. Missionary doctor Carl Peter Friberg appealed to his colleagues to come and help him.

When Pastor Lindell arrived at the hospital he found wounded and sick soldiers lying on the floors of the hospital and out on the yards around. Most ominous of all was the report that typhus was raging through the area. Within days the dreaded disease had prostrated Dr. Friberg, Pastor Lindell and one other missionary. Word was sent immediately to the wives. When Selma Lindell opened her letter, she began to weep quietly.

“This is what John told me about,” she thought, and indeed it was. Within days he and Dr. Friberg were dead.

At the same time the matron of the American School for missionaries’ children became so ill she had to leave.

“Will you take her place?” the school authorities asked Selma Lindell, and within days she and her three boys had moved into the complex of the boarding school.

During the Christmas vacation of 1932, a mighty working of conviction of sin swept through the school, an outworking of the Shantung Revival then sweeping through the region. It touched the heart of the oldest Lindell boy, Paul. He sought out Pastor Palmer Anderson, the principal. Together they talked and prayed, and as a result Paul emerged into a conscious and intimate knowledge of Jesus Christ as his personal God and Savior. This experience, which was for him foundational and life-changing, was to stand him in good stead for the difficult times that lay ahead.

That fall Paul left to enroll as a student at Gustavus Adolphus College in St. Peter, Minnesota. Adjustment did not come easily. In later years Paul told of sleeping in the cornfields on the edge of St. Peter the first nights after his arrival. He shrank from

mingling with classmates whose American ways and philosophy differed so radically from his own. He felt lost and alone. He was afraid to talk lest he say the wrong thing, afraid even to speak on the telephone. Weekends would find him taking a bus to Minneapolis where he would rent a cheap hotel room and sit and try to think and pray his way through. But although Paul was finding the first months a time of painful adjustment, few of his classmates realized it. They demonstrated their affection and admiration for him by electing him freshman class president, and rushed him into a fraternity as well.

During his junior year his younger brother Jonathan, joined him. For his senior year Paul moved to Minneapolis and transferred to the University of Minnesota, and Jonathan accompanied him. Pastor Evald J. Conrad and his wife Eleanora opened their home to the two boys.

On the walls of their upstairs room in the Conrad home, the two brothers tacked maps of all the countries of the world and posters with mission slogans. Their little room also overflowed with friends who stopped in. Animated and sometimes even heated discussions went on far into the night. Eleo Conrad, busily occupied with caring for their own little children, found time to feed the Lindell boys also. She cheerfully allowed them to run in and out of her house, welcomed all their friends and frequently joined them in lively conversation. Always she encouraged and supported them and rejoiced in their youthful, vigorous dedication. Quickened herself to a deeper love for her Lord, she found herself crawling out of bed at an early hour each morning to have a quiet time alone with God before the hubbub of the day began to erupt. Paul and Jonathan's mother also, both at this time and through the continuing years, stood by her boys with encouragement and support.

Impressed by his perceptive intellect and reasoning, some of the university faculty strongly urged Paul to do graduate work in philosophy, and offered an opportunity to continue his studies. But Paul's sights were set on the mission field.

In the fall of 1937, Paul began his theological studies at Augsburg Seminary in Minneapolis, while Jonathan enrolled at Augsburg College. The following year Paul arranged to transfer to Augustana Lutheran Seminary in Rock Island, Illinois.

Before leaving for Rock Island in the fall of 1938, Paul heard the British missionary Norman Grubb while on tour in America, preaching the missionary challenge. Grubb was the general director of the Worldwide Evangelization Crusade, founded by C.T. Studd, his famous father-in-law.

“When I went I did not look for anything special,” Paul wrote later, “and to many who were present, there was not anything unusual. But to me it turned out to be the hand of the Lord reaching into my life and directing it into what has since become my life’s work.”

Grubb spoke of the necessity of seeking and understanding God’s will for one’s life. He also told a little about the mission society he represented, and how mission societies may operate on the simple basis of faith.

A few days later as Paul was on his way to Rock Island, many thoughts tumbled around in his mind. Was he planning to return to China, he asked himself, merely because that was home for him, or was he certain of God’s leading him there? Suddenly he wasn’t sure.

Both he and his brother Jonathan had spoken in many churches since their return from China. They had noted with growing interest the numbers of young people wanting to go overseas. But how were they to go? The synodical mission boards felt they had already all the missionaries that their budgets and their structures could support. How then, Paul wondered, could we hope to reach the millions yet untouched by the gospel? Mission societies such as Norman Grubb described were not new to Paul. He had grown up alongside the China Inland Mission, after all, and was familiar with the example of Hudson Taylor, that faith mission pioneer. Was there room in the Lutheran church for a similar experiment

in faith and missionary obedience – a society in which expansion would be limited only by the vision and faith of its volunteers? As Paul approached Rock Island and faced his second year in seminary, he prayed that God would guide him.

A turning point came at the end of his second year. Students were to spend their third year of preparation working in a parish in an internship program. Then they would return to the seminary for their fourth and final year. Paul was considering two possible courses of action. The one would be conventional: complete seminary, be ordained and return immediately to China as a missionary. The other would be highly unconventional. He began to picture the creation of a society like the China Inland Mission or the Worldwide Evangelization Crusade, yet within the Lutheran church. New areas could be occupied. New workers could be mobilized. More lay people could become directly involved as well. But if this were to become a reality, Paul reasoned, and if he were to become a part of it, would it not be better for him to remain unordained and retain the status of a layperson? What would his mother say about this? And the pastor father of his sweetheart from childhood, Margaret Sovik? And the traditional mission board which had cared for their family so well all through the years?

All these questions swirled in Paul's mind as he struggled to understand God's will for his life. He went to the dean of the seminary and unburdened his heart. The dean suggested he pray. So Paul took his Bible and a copy of Oswald Chambers' book, *My Utmost for His Highest*, and shut himself in a small room on the top floor of the dormitory. In his own words Paul describes what took place:

For two days and nights it was a fight, a fight to the finish. I saw that I had to die, die to my ambitions, my fond hopes, my reputation, the kind opinions of my friends, my closest human ties, my possessions, my cherished traditions, my own willfulness. But it was a losing fight from the start. At

last a simple line from Oswald Chambers brought the final word: "If you debate for a second when God has spoken, it is all up. Never begin to say, 'Well, I wonder if he did speak?' Be reckless immediately, fling it all out on him. You do not know when his voice will come, but whenever the realization of God comes in the faintest way imaginable, recklessly abandon. It is only by abandon that you will recognize him. You will only realize his voice more clearly by recklessness."

I plunged, abandoned all to him and took the path which he had indicated. In place of bondage and dissatisfaction, I have found liberty and deepest rest. In losing my life I found it again, now greatly enriched with "unutterable and exalted joy."

Two convictions came to Paul as the outcome of those decisive days: he was assured God was calling him to work in and with a mission society, and he felt he should not seek ordination but instead identify himself with the laity.

That summer Paul served a church in a small town in Nebraska. In that rural setting he found both time and quietness to consider his decision. When the fall of 1939 came, Paul returned to Minneapolis, where his vision was further encouraged by Pastor Clarence Granlund of Calvary Lutheran Church in Minneapolis. Pastor Granlund was sympathetic and understanding and, of course, himself a strong supporter of missions. Because of Granlund's close association with the South American Mission Prayer League, Paul was introduced to this new mission. Throughout the following year, various mission speakers visited and spoke at Calvary, and this widened Paul's outlook even more.

Perhaps most significant of all, Paul found more and more peer-age friends who also had been captured by Christ's call to discipleship, who had caught a vision of a world in need of the message of Christ and who were puzzled as to how the job could best be done.

As these young friends talked and prayed together, they found themselves torn in two directions. Six of the group were sons of Lutheran missionaries and felt deep loyalty to their traditional church body. At the same time, their youthful vision saw the needs, not only of the fields their church already occupied, but of the entire world. Because they took Christ's command seriously, they felt more effort needed to be put forth to send out many more missionaries to enter unevangelized areas. The needs of West China and Central Asia, in particular, gripped their hearts.

Could not new areas be entered, they asked each other, if volunteers were willing to trust God to meet their needs and willing to live simply on a minimum income? In fact, would not living more closely to the level of national communities in itself commend the gospel to them?

"To the pit with the idea we have to live like others in rich houses and possess many goods in order to win them!" Jonathan exploded one day as he paced back and forth. Little bright patches of red burned in his cheeks. "Have we ever tried to win them by being poor? Jesus did. And it worked too. We must give up our home comforts and give the money to God's work. Sacrifice for Jesus' sake. We must live it. All our goods will slip out of our hands someday anyway. Why not let them count for Jesus now, whom we claim to love with all our hearts?"

So it was that six like-minded friends conceived a plan. They would offer themselves to the church, to enter new areas as "extra-budgetary missionaries." They promised to assume responsibility for their own financial support in dependence upon God, not budgets. All they asked of their church body was that it commission them to go, assist them in procuring the needed papers, allow them to be self-governing overseas, transmit to them whatever funds came in designated for them, include their names in the synodical prayer calendar and inform the churches of this plan and the existence of extra-budgetary missionaries. Jonathan desired to be sent to the borders of Nepal, Paul to the borders of Tibet and the other four to West China. The young men then brought their plan,

which they called “Unsalaries or Extra-Budgetary Missionaries for Pioneer Work,” to the Board of Foreign Missions of the Augustana Lutheran Synod in July of 1940.

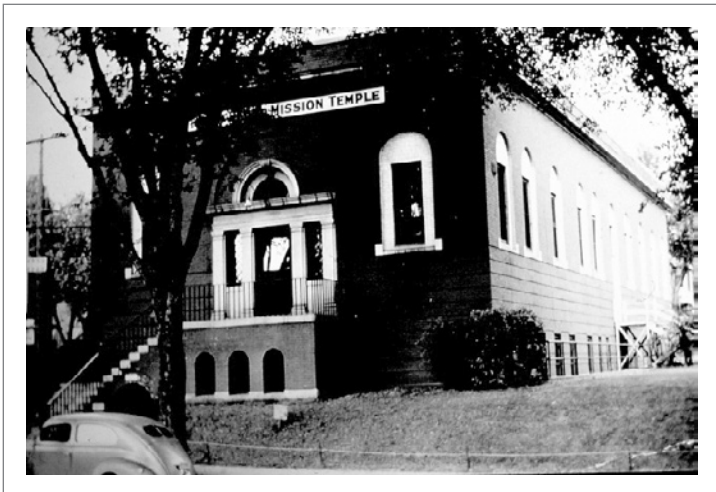
The board members received the young men kindly and for two days sat with them discussing the plan. In the end, unable to come to a united decision, the board referred the matter to a committee for further study. When the committee finally brought their report, they recommended that the six young men complete seminary training, be ordained, go to the work already established in Honan Province and hope that opportunity would present itself for them to move to West China sometime later.

Of the six young men, David Vikner and Anders Hanson followed the advice of the committee and went to China. When China closed to missionary work, Anders Hanson moved to Hong Kong and continued his missionary work there. David Vikner had a varied and illustrious missionary career, culminating in the position of executive director of the Division for World Mission and Ecumenism of the Lutheran Church in America. Bertil Friberg went as a missionary doctor to Tanganyika, East Africa, and served there for several years until the poor health of his wife brought the family back to the United States. Kenneth Edwins accepted a pastorate in the United States.

But Paul and Jonathan Lindell could not abandon their vision for Central Asia – and for a new “extra-budgetary” missionary movement within the Lutheran church. If their dream was of God, surely a way could still be found, they reassured each other. And together they prayed for that way.



The first Weinhardt Christmas in Mocomoco (1939)



The first Prayer House in Minneapolis (1940)

Brought Together and Torn Asunder

Meanwhile a number of events had taken place in the South American Mission Prayer League, both in the United States and in Bolivia.

John Carlsen had left Bolivia on October 28, 1938, shortly after Emma Isaacson and Pearl Englund arrived.

Ailing health and strength had dropped Ernest Weinhardt's weight to 132 pounds, and when the flu attacked him he went to the Seventh Day Adventist Hospital at Chulumani, at an altitude of 6,000 feet. After 17 days the doctor advised him to relocate for a while to sea level. Weinhardt found reasonable rental quarters in the Chilean city of Antofagasta and stayed there to study Spanish. Correspondence passed back and forth between Carlsen and Weinhardt during these months as further principles for the mission were clarified and defined.

In November of 1939, Lillian Bangs, Ingeborg Pederson and Lester Carlsen arrived in Bolivia and went to La Paz for language study and orientation.

The new year ushered in additional testing for the little mission group.

Pearl Englund became ill with chronic appendicitis.

Financial need again confronted Weinhardt. Once he waited three weeks for money to pay for his board and room. When the check finally came he discovered that the delay had been caused by insufficient postage, causing the letter to go by surface instead of airmail.

Another time when he did not have enough money to buy lunch, a man walked in off the street and asked to buy some Bibles and New Testaments. With that money Weinhardt was able to buy food.

During his months in Chile, Weinhardt was prompted to pray that six additional workers be sent out. On June 15, 1939, when his wife Hildegard, daughter Betty, and Mable Lund arrived in La Paz, he saw his prayer beginning to be answered. "I am deeply thankful and happy that Hildegard and Betty are here now and that we are reunited," Weinhardt wrote to his friends in the United States.

Weinhardt had rented a house in Mocomoco for \$2.50 a month and it was to this adobe home he now brought his little family. Mable Lund and Ruth Sundberg described their own introduction to the residence:

The day we arrived in Mocomoco we came to a wooden door in the wall. We pushed it open and walked up some steps that led to a patio. To the left we noticed a stone seat with a balcony above it. Next to it a door led to a room about 20 feet long and 15 feet wide, which served as combination kitchen, dining room and living room. The walls were mud. The floor was made of wooden crates that had been knocked apart and laid on the ground. Through the windows on the one side of the large room we peered out and saw a ravine drop immediately below us, while beyond it rose a mountain range. To our right lay the bedroom. We ducked inside and pulled our sweaters tighter around us. It was shivering cold and clammy damp. The furniture the Weinhardts had purchased in La Paz was simple: a wood-burning iron stove, metal cots, a wooden table and chairs, a wicker settee and two chairs.

From these humble surroundings, Hildegard Weinhardt, daughter of a Minnesota senator, wrote to her family, "We are very happy here and would want to be no other place."

Ernest Weinhardt felt the same way. Still he could not forget the sweep of his original vision. On Christmas Day of that year, 1939, Weinhardt wrote in his journal: "God will open the way for the gospel to be brought to the heart of Africa, the heart of

Asia, to the heart of this land and to any islands of the sea yet unreached, and to any peoples that are yet without the gospel. He will open the way for the gospel to Tibet, to Afghanistan and to the other lands so long closed.”

Weinhardt recognized that his human limitations would obviously allow him to occupy only one place on the globe. He was humble enough to let that place be a simple South American adobe house in a small village high in the Andes. But in spite of these physical restrictions, nothing could stop him from continuing to long and pray for the whole world. Indeed, by 1940, the South American Mission Prayer League had expanded the horizon of its name. From then on, it was known as the World Mission Prayer League.

The ground was now prepared for two parallel groups to be brought together – so diverse in some respects, yet one in vision and purpose – Weinhardt, Carlsen and the World Mission Prayer League, and Paul and Jonathan Lindell with their young friends.

In July of 1940, the Lindell brothers applied to the World Mission Prayer League to be sent to the borders of Tibet and Nepal. Their applications were accepted. Then an unexpected development intervened.

For some time John Carlsen had been advocating the establishment of a headquarters for the mission. He referred to it as the “Prayer House,” a place where candidates would be trained in prayer and community, in evangelism and in trusting God for their daily needs.

In March of 1940, a group called the Christian Radio Mission offered Carlsen the use of a vacant building, a former telephone building, for this very purpose. A woman named Corky Rye, who had become secretary-treasurer for the World Mission Prayer League, moved into the building with her husband, expecting John Carlsen to join them and assume responsibility for the training program.

But Carlsen questioned that his gifts lay in that area. He knew from experience that God blessed his evangelistic efforts. Should he not confine his efforts to evangelism? Besides, he already had preaching commitments that would carry him around the country for most of the remainder of the year. So the home committee turned to Paul Lindell. Would he be willing to assume responsibility for this project – for one year, anyway, before going overseas?

Paul went immediately to Margaret Sovik, his fiancée – daughter of Pastor Edward and Anna Sovik, who had served as missionaries in China under the Evangelical Lutheran Church. What would Margaret think? Paul learned that she was willing. Pastor Granlund, however, advised that Paul and Margaret should marry before undertaking an assignment together at the Prayer House. So at a Saturday evening service at Calvary Lutheran Church, Paul and Margaret were wed. That very night they moved into the two-story, red-brick building on 2601 Second Avenue South in Minneapolis.

The building called for renovations in order to provide adequate bedrooms. Lumber from an old house that was being torn down was procured free for the hauling away and four bedrooms were built on the lower level. Four unheated rooms in the upper story, reached only by an outside stairway, were also used as sleeping areas, even in the winter. The downstairs level included as well a simple meeting room with half-windows and heating pipes running across the ceiling, a combination living room/dining room, a small kitchen and two bathrooms.

Paul understood the aim of the Prayer House to be three-fold: 1) to stir up missionary interest in the churches; 2) to acquaint the church bodies with the vision and the program of the mission; and 3) to prepare new recruits for this new type of missionary endeavor.

To carry out the first objective, teams visited churches where they were invited. Through song, testimonies and talks, they shared the heart-concern that had taken precedence in their lives above all other concerns: to obey their Lord's command to preach the gospel to every creature.

In addition, every Saturday evening the community at the Prayer House offered an open house get-together, with a buffet supper served, followed by a two-hour informal meeting. Enthusiastic and joyful singing, testimonies and a stirring talk, usually by Paul Lindell, characterized these meetings. As the months passed, more and more people came, crowding out the home's little chapel.

The mission *Bulletin* was going out to 2,000 who had pledged to pray that God would send laborers into the harvest fields. At the headquarters the secretary-treasurer recorded gifts to the mission and transmitted them to Bolivia. Business correspondence was handled. Candidates going overseas were assisted in securing passports, visas, medical clearance, and so on.

Paul Lindell used several methods to prepare recruits for the new style of life they would be adopting.

To emphasize the aspect of fellowship, management of the home was on a community basis. Household chores were shared. Money and resources were also shared. "All I have is yours," became one of the guiding principles. "If you have a need and I have the means to meet that need, I am free to give and you to receive."

Every morning at nine the family came together. Problems and victories, joys and sorrows, all were shared. Abundant time was given to discussion. The Bible was turned to for light on the subjects being considered. Discussion easily flowed into times of prayer. "Bear one another's burdens" became a daily working principle.

Paul frequently led the group in Bible study. The group read devotional literature together as well, and discussed its significance for their lives. This was a favorite pastime whenever a team traveled to a church for a meeting. No sooner was the car on the highway than Paul's book came out. If he was not driving, he would read aloud, expound, question and explain. If he drove, he handed the book to someone else to read.

Among the books that the group studied together were Roland Allen's *Missionary Methods: St. Paul's or Ours* and *The Spontaneous Expansion of the Church*, C.F.W. Walther's *Law and Gospel*, Luther's *Table Talk*, William Law's *A Serious Call to a Devout and Holy Life*, Norman Grubb's *Touching the Invisible* and others. Additional books were assigned to some of the candidates on an independent study basis.

I myself moved into the home both to do bookkeeping for the mission and also as a candidate for the Nepal border, and I can recall some of the books Paul assigned me to read. Included on my list, in addition to the ones we studied together, were Joseph Stump's *The Christian Faith*, R.C. Trench's *Notes on the Parables of our Lord*, half-a-dozen books by Andrew Murray, another half-dozen by F.B. Meyer, all of Oswald Chambers, Robert Hall Glover's classic *The Progress of World-Wide Missions*, the biographies of Hudson Taylor, William Carey, Adoniram Judson, George Müller, C.T. Studd, William Borden, Mary Slessor, and many others. Books by Mildred Cable, Francesca French and Amy Carmichael also went on the list, along with Carl Olof Rosenius, Ole Hallesby and Sverre Norberg. Bishop J.C. Ryle was introduced to me, along with Alexander Whyte and John Baillie.

The story of Sister Eva of Friedenshort enthralled me. John Fox's *Book of Martyrs* overwhelmed me. I wrestled with Søren Kierkegaard, and shook my head in dismay that my sluggish mind could not grasp much of Jakob Böhme, whose writings seemed to me imaginative but obscure. Madame Jeanne-Marie Guyon wasn't much better, but I was impressed by her willingness to suffer for her faith.

Paul was a master storyteller and simple fare at mealtime became a gourmet feast as Paul held the group spellbound with stories of outstanding men and women of God.

Praise was given a predominant place in the life of the home. The family committed dozens of hymns and gospel songs to memory so it could break out in song at any time.

Youthful, zealous and visionary, the Prayer House community was also sometimes critical of the life and work of the synods. It wondered if the synods took seriously the command of our Lord to preach the gospel to every person. It asked whether thousands of dollars invested in elaborate churches and related buildings, used only once or twice a week, could be justified. It wondered how right it was to have churches competing with each other, and evangelistic efforts via radio, preaching and the printed word duplicated over and over, while millions in the world had never heard the message of God's love even once. It was appalled at the many thousands of dollars Christians spent on entertainment, pleasure and pets while millions languished in poverty, ignorance and illness around the world. It frowned as it saw more and more place being given to entertainment, even in the program of the Christian church.

In connection with overseas work, the group took the mission boards and older mission societies to task for building walled-in, secluded missionary compounds where missionaries, after working hours (credit was given them for being hard workers and sincere), would relax comfortably, enjoying a standard of living many, many times higher than that of those they served. It questioned introducing Western customs, dress, hymns, liturgy and organizational setups. It asked if it was wise for mission organizations to establish costly institutions which the national church would never be able to support. It wondered if the role of the missionary should not be that of enabler and catalyst rather than leader and boss.

In regard to the Christian life, the Prayer House family deplored long faces and declared that Christians should learn to give thanks in all things. They protested that God did not mean for Christians to remain subject to sin, but made power available to enable them to conquer sin. This latter emphasis was sometimes misinterpreted as if the group believed in sinless perfection – which was not the case. They did believe, however, in Christian growth and in personal sanctification. In regard to prayer, they

believed that they should spend more time giving thanks for God's present and anticipated provision, than in begging and asking God for things.

They were eloquent in rhetoric, lofty in ideals and fervently believed what they said. But they were also untried in the actual practice of many of the areas of which they spoke.

Perhaps it was the strong conviction with which the Prayer House people spoke and the deep joy they found in turning themselves over to God that was contagious to others. Their message captivated a group of students from Augsburg College, the college of the Lutheran Free Church. The students began to meet frequently and called themselves, The King's Crusaders. One memorable night of commitment the young people in that group considered whether they would give themselves unreservedly to God and seek to follow his leading into whatever work he called them. The question was also raised as to how many felt led to make their connection with the Prayer House group a life commitment. A young Raymond S. Rosales, who later became associate director of the World Mission Prayer League, was along that night and remembered it:

We faced the matter as carefully as possible. We prayed as we talked that God would give us light. Then came the moment of decision. Quietly and deliberately we arose in the meeting, one and another, and openly committed ourselves to the light from God. I can recall that I was the second to stand, and I said something like this: "I hereby commit myself to a life of full-time missionary service." Then I sat down. Of one thing I was sure, and it has remained so to this day: God called me to missionary service and led me to apply to the World Mission Prayer League.

"The Missionary's Call," a poem written a century earlier, applied to the young people gathered that night:

*The vows of God are on me, and I may not stay
To play with shadows, or pluck earthly flowers,
Till I my work have done, and rendered up account.*

With the Prayer House group being vocal in their protest of traditional ways of doing Christian work and with a growing number steadily being attracted to their meetings, perhaps it was inevitable that opposition should set in. Some began to attach labels to the Prayer House community. “Victory enthusiasts” was one of them.

The editor of *The Lutheran Messenger*, the official paper of the Lutheran Free Church, linked Paul Lindell and the group at the Prayer House with the Worldwide Evangelization Crusade, founded by C.T. Studd. It was true that several leaders of that society – Norman Grubb, Alfred Ruscoe and the Rev. Edwin Gillman, among others – had influenced many of them profoundly through their lives and teaching, but the group wanted to remain within the Lutheran church. The church editor warned against the dangers associated with “the surrendered life,” “the victorious life,” “living by faith” and “guidance.” In the hands of immature and intensely zealous Christians, the church editor wrote, the results could include “narrow dogmatism,” “hypercriticism,” “proselytizing” – even “parasitism.” He went on to criticize the group at the Prayer House of communal living, declaring it to be an unnatural situation and one apt to produce unnecessary tensions.

Alarmed by this violent reaction from one of the synods and probably fearing that the leadership of the mission was slipping from his hands, John Carlsen, in the fall of 1941, persuaded the World Mission Prayer League’s home committee to dissociate themselves from the group at the Prayer House. Then placing the affairs of the mission in the hands of the home committee, and more particularly, Pastor Clarence Granlund, Carlsen once again left for Bolivia.

Some of the members of the home committee were troubled by this turn of events. They saw the value of the Prayer House training program and recognized Paul Lindell’s leadership qualities. So they asked Paul if they could continue to send World Mission Prayer League candidates to him for their training,

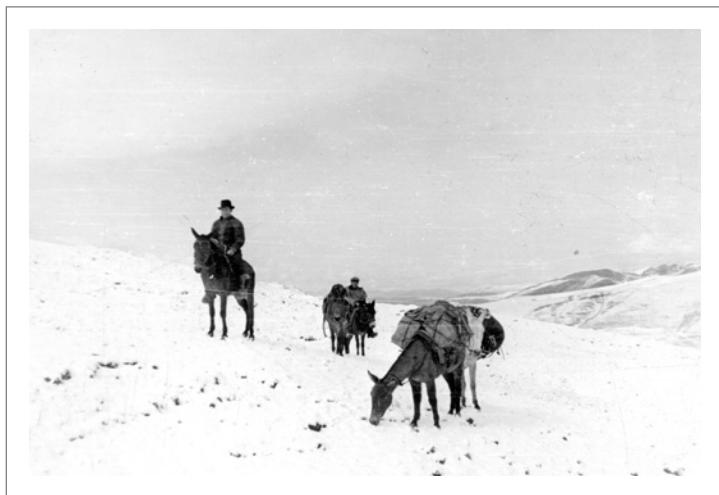
though the two organizations were to dissociate. Paul agreed. They also urged Paul to carry on with his vision, and they began to pray for the time when the two groups would again be united.

The split, unfortunately, threw the Prayer House group into more unfavorable light than ever. Bitter, venomous letters were sent to Paul from many quarters. One of the last things Paul did in 1974, when he knew the cancer which had invaded his body soon would not let him rise from his bed again, was to take this file of letters to the paper shredding machine and cut them to bits.

“The past is past,” he said that day. I want to leave no record of anything that would mar the names of men whose names are honorable. We all err – I perhaps most of all. But God forgives, and so do his children.”

So we have no record of how widespread, how bitter, how justified or unjustified the opposition was. Those of us who witnessed it saw how very hard it was on Paul. He interpreted the action as a vote of no confidence. We saw him, more than ever, struggling to be certain he was walking in obedience to God. At the same time he fought, sometimes unsuccessfully, to be sure, to keep his own attitude right.

Within the space of months, two groups which shared a common aim had been brought together and then torn apart. Would healing come? Would the two groups be brought back together again? No one was sure, though many prayed for it.



Weinhardt and Lester Carlsen en route to Chuma



A cold evening on the road to Chuma (*circa 1941*)

Dark Days

The years 1941-46 were transitional years both for the Prayer House group and the World Mission Prayer League.

Jonathan Lindell, who had gone to India under the World Mission Prayer League, asked that he be transferred to the Prayer House fellowship, which in 1942 took the name Lutheran World Crusade. With this transfer, the Lutheran World Crusade suddenly became a sending group.

The World Mission Prayer League's work also expanded during this time. In 1940 Mable Lund and Emma Isaacson opened a station at Villa Perez, in Bolivia's highlands. Emily Lindahl had joined the group. Weinhardt was often ill, and Betty fell from a ladder and broke her right arm.

In 1941, down with a cold and bronchitis, Weinhardt wrote:

*God of Silas, God of Paul,
God of the falling prison wall;
I cannot doubt, but only sing;
Let his praises ever ring.*

Emma Isaacson and Emily Lindahl, on their way to Villa Perez, ran into a violent rainstorm. Emily fell from her mule but was not hurt.

In July Hildegard Weinhardt submitted to surgery for appendicitis. Hospital and doctor bills caused a financial crisis, but when the Weinhardts had only \$3 left in their pockets a check for \$348 arrived.

Weinhardt suffered from a nosebleed that began at 11 a.m. one morning when he was uptown. Nothing the doctor did could stop it. Finally at 3 a.m. the following morning it stopped. Bennert and Lenore Solberg arrived in La Paz. Ingeborg Pederson, stationed at Chuma, became critically ill with what was thought to be heart trouble. On muleback Weinhardt rushed to her aid

and anointed her, praying for healing. The next day she arose, dressed and joined the group for breakfast. A dozen pages in Weinhardt's journal are devoted to this testing. Full recovery, however, did not come until Inky was able to make the strenuous trip to La Paz. The doctor there discovered her problem to be pleurisy. The pressure of the fluid building up in her lungs was causing her heart to misbehave. But in this new experience, when the little group, to begin with, was isolated from human medical help, they learned to turn to God in prayer and faith for physical healing also.

"Dark days, dark times, times of trouble are times in which we are led to see the glory of God, if we believe," Weinhardt declared in his journal. "Trouble plus believing leads to the seeing of the glory of God."

At that time Weinhardt also recorded:

A little after midnight I was awakened and again felt the need of calling upon God as before. I said to God that it seemed as though he had been utterly indifferent to our prayers, that his ear had been utterly deaf to us. But then he came and answered mightily through his Word – "For awhile he refused." Through this word God at once explained everything and completely relieved my burden. It was not as though he said "No" to us. "It is not that I have not heard you, nor that I will not hear you. It is just that I have been pleased not to answer for awhile. In due time I will indeed hear you and answer. Only continue to look to me and to call upon me." I knew that it was God who had spoken. My burden was completely lifted. My heart was filled with peace and joy.

Once again Weinhardt wrote out of the anguish of those days:

"But thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ." We may fail God at times and fail to go in the way in which he would have us go, but he nevertheless turns everything into triumph. When we fail to

go in the way in which he would have us go, he immediately brings into operation a law of compensation. If we go in the way in which he would have us go, he will bless us and work out certain things. If we fail to go in this way he will work out blessings then also, and I am inclined to believe even deeper blessings, though we will suffer more. It will be a case of learning obedience by the things which we suffer.

The arrival of John Carlsen and his family, together with Sylvia Berge and Florence Dickson, cheered and encouraged Weinhardt though he was troubled by news of the split that had developed between the World Mission Prayer League and the Prayer House group.

The following year, 1942, ushered in even more traumatic testings for the Weinhardts. Mrs. Weinhardt gave birth to a beautiful 4 lb. 15 oz. baby girl, Hilary Faith, on February 16. About a month later, on March 18, the baby suddenly died.

“This has been a very hard blow to us,” Weinhardt wrote. “She had been getting along very well, so this was entirely unexpected. It has been very difficult to understand, but we can accept this as of him and therefore believe it will be for the best.”

*Though famine sore oppress the land,
Sorrow and suff'ring too,
The faithful ones will surely find,
His promise still is true!
So now I calmly rest in him,
Rejoicing day by day,
Regarding not the things I see,
I trust in him alway!*

Three weeks later, on April 8, the Weinhardts left La Paz for leave in the homeland.



Paul J. Lindell

Fallen Logs in the Road

Back in the United States, Ernest Weinhardt assumed the position of home director of the World Mission Prayer League. Troubled over the division between the World Mission Prayer League and the Lutheran World Crusade, Weinhardt met repeatedly with Paul Lindell and Pastor Clarence Granlund. Pastor Granlund had assumed considerable responsibility for the World Mission Prayer League since the rupture with the Prayer House.

Two fallen logs seemed to prevent the groups from coming together. For one thing, the relationship between Carlsen and Lindell had been broken as a result of Paul Lindell's ejection from the Prayer League. The other obstacle, at the time, seemed even more formidable.

Paul Lindell believed strongly that the government of the organization should lie with those who were involved in the work fulltime, taking some of his inspiration from the principles described by Hudson Taylor and C.T. Studd. In outlining principles and practices for the Lutheran World Crusade, Paul maintained:

The Home Front shall be self-governing.

The Home Front shall be directed under God by a full-time worker who shall be elected by, and may be replaced at any regular meeting of the Crusade staff by, the fully-accepted workers under his leadership. But because of the important relationship of the Home Front director with every Foreign Front of the Crusade, his appointment to leadership shall be made only with the full consent of each of the Foreign Front directors.

The Home Front director, if it is thought advisable, may be assisted by an executive committee of staff workers appointed by himself, with the consent of the staff workers.

In commenting on this proposed form of government, Lindell said:

It may be felt by some that the form of government for the Crusade is incomplete and has the unfortunate weakness of not taking into consideration the large numbers of supporters and intercessors who have a deep interest in the work of the Crusade. They might feel more confidence in the Crusade if they could find expression through some form of representation in the Crusade, such as an advisory committee or board drawn from among them, through which they could have a hand in determining the policies and practices of the Crusade. Any other arrangement would be unsatisfactory.

1. *From the worker's standpoint: The Crusade believes that God guides those whom he commissions and that those to whom God has given a life and death commission in the Crusade are responsible to receive and obey the guidance of the Holy Spirit for the work of the Crusade. The Crusade also believes that only those should be fully responsible for making decisions in matters relative to the work of the Crusade who are in a position to pay the price of sacrifice, faith, patience and even reproach which is involved in the decisions which they make. Men of God who are committed to certain branches of the Lord's work for which they are fully responsible to obtain guidance and in which they are paying the price of obedience are obviously not in a position to share in the consequences of decisions which they might make in other branches of the Lord's work. Therefore the Crusade believes that the workers themselves should hold the final responsibility for making and carrying out decisions relative to Crusade affairs.*
2. *From the standpoint of a governing board: It would be unfair of the Crusade to expect a board of men who have other commissions and commitments to take the responsibility for directing the policies and practices of the Crusade, because they would naturally be reluctant*

to make decisions relative to advance which would involve the workers in sacrifice and risk in which they could not similarly share. On the other hand, when full-time workers in the Crusade are responsible for making their own decisions and for paying the price involved, then these decisions can be made more easily, because they are asking others to do only that which they themselves take the lead in doing.

Carlsen, who once had shared Lindell's views, declared now: "God has led me very definitely to see that he can use mature Christian leaders as advisors, even of a faith mission, even though they are not necessarily living and laboring according to our principles."

Granlund took the same position as Carlsen, for although in the main he felt happy about the principles and practices proposed by Lindell, he expressed that "your Principles and Practices... fail to recognize the church as the body of Christ, which in the present World Mission Prayer League setup is represented in the group of Prayer League members."

Paul Lindell argued, in turn, that recognition of the body of Christ was made by provision of an advisory board. He insisted, however, that the board be advisory only and not have administrative authority.

Perhaps there was a third difference that made it difficult for the two groups to fuse into one. The original vision of the World Mission Prayer League had been almost entirely positive, comprised of three emphases: 1) to supplement the present missionary work of the synods; 2) to enter unoccupied fields; and 3) to provide opportunities for missionary service for a broad range of candidates, including those who were skilled in practical matters but who had not pursued an advanced academic education.

On the other hand, Paul and his group, in reality, had a twofold vision. They cherished, on the one hand, the same overall goal as

the World Mission Prayer League in regard to reaching out with the gospel. Jonathan Lindell had emphasized over and over:

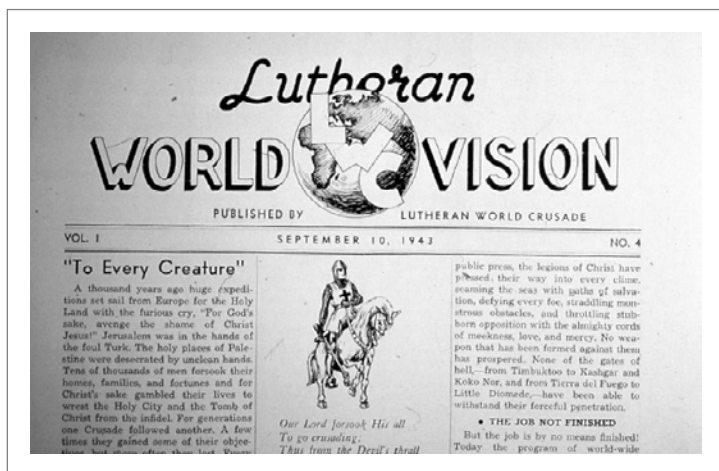
We must live in a world. We must pray and believe for a world. We must act and work with God for a world. We must accomplish the evangelization of a world. We are not just responsible for ourselves, to get ourselves fed and saved and cared for. We need to relate all of our lives to a world – a hungry world, a sick world, a lost world. This must not be just theory to us either, but life!

But as had been characteristic of new life movements in previous decades in Europe and Scandinavia, Paul Lindell and his group also spoke a prophetic message and called for change. They were, in short, “crusaders.” They desired reform in the emphases of the synods so that Christ would be acknowledged as Lord as well as Savior. They sought change in the attitude of the church towards Christ’s last command, so that missions would become something more than a secondary concern and take its rightful place as the predominant goal towards which all church life and activity is aimed. They protested the paternalistic attitude of missionaries towards those of other lands. They wanted the role of the missionary changed from overseer and lord, to servant and brother. They called for a life of voluntary sacrifice and poverty in order that the job might get done, whatever the cost. They wanted dying to self and living for others emphasized, rather than the preservation of individual rights. They stressed that Christ forgives sin, and gives power to overcome sin as well.

Most of the World Mission Prayer League people did not share this sense of calling to protest and seek change. Indeed, many shrank from it. This difference gave rise to attitudes between the two groups which made it difficult for them to come together. The youthful Lutheran World Crusade, perhaps unconsciously, thought the World Mission Prayer League somewhat lacking in their message and vision. They asked if they were fearful of people, saying it appeared they tended to curry the favor of the synods and the leaders of the church. On the other hand,

the World Mission Prayer League viewed the Lutheran World Crusade as proud, too outspoken, lacking in respect for the leaders of the church, unappreciative of all that the church had done, and immature in their proposals regarding the practical implementation of Christ's teachings in real life. So this tension existed between the two groups. And by conceding administrative authority to a board or council, Paul feared that the prophetic message might be lost.

So, unable to come to any agreement, in 1942 the two groups continued to operate as separate entities. Yet eventually there would be compromise – and healing.



Lutheran World Crusade bulletin (1943)



Nepal border team (circa 1954)

A Surge Forward

The following year, in June of 1943, the Lutheran World Crusade filed for incorporation and drew up a governing document entitled “*Principles & Practice*.” When a gracious and spacious home came up for sale, near the Lake of the Isles, in Minneapolis, the Crusaders made an offer of \$12,000 – a ridiculously low sum for such a home even then. To their joy and amazement the offer was accepted. With sixteen bedrooms, a spacious living room and dining room, a library, a solarium with a white marble floor and a large well-equipped kitchen, in addition to a vacant and unfinished third floor, the house proved to be a generous provision indeed.

As the group moved into their new home, 50 Crusaders, as they called themselves now, from Washington, California, Texas and the Midwestern states, gathered for a week of conference. They gave thanks to God when their treasurer reported that over \$10,000 had been received that year. This sum did not include gifts that individuals had received for personal needs or monies used to operate the home. For the next few years, the incomes of the Lutheran World Crusade and the World Mission Prayer League were almost identical.

The mission movements in Europe had not only started work in other countries, but also launched service projects in their sending countries. So, too, the Lutheran World Crusade considered how they could reach those in the United States. They wanted to challenge and inspire Christians to make Christ the Lord of their lives and to seriously commit themselves to fulfilling his great commission. They decided to reach out in three ways.

First, additional mission homes would be opened. These homes would be centers where missionaries coming and going could stay, where meetings could be held and where those interested in relating to Christ’s commission could come for counsel, encouragement and help.

Then bookstores would be launched, providing additional centers of activity. Christian books would be made available for people to buy and read. And those operating the centers would have opportunity to demonstrate what it meant to live lives committed wholeheartedly to God. They would seek to stir people up to give themselves to God, to seek his will for their lives, and to enlarge their vision to include the whole world.

The third way of reaching out was to offer the services of young volunteers to congregations that were needing help. These young volunteers would serve as parish workers, youth workers, pastors' assistants and office workers. Wherever they served, they would try to make their missionary message known.

Verne and Bernice Lavik opened a mission home in Seattle. Virginia Antonsen and I occupied rented quarters in Los Angeles, until my father's serious illness called me back to Minnesota. Harvey and Hazel Carlson took my place.

Bookstores were opened by Iona Peterson and Hazel and Ruth Hauge, in Viroqua and La Crosse, Wisconsin, respectively. Fran Swenson and I felt God's calling to open a store in Racine, Wisconsin. The story of that store is typical of the spirit of the young Crusaders, and portrays how we experienced God's abundant provision day-by-day and in many ways.

One of our team described the store's beginning:

Only God knows where the vision for a bookstore in Racine was first born. From various ones we have gleaned bits of information that lead us to believe God spoke about it to several hearts. Neighboring our store on one side is a little embroidery shop owned and operated by a dear Danish Lutheran lady who tells us, from a heart filled with joy, of the many years she has prayed for such a store. At times it seemed as if God was speaking to her to go ahead with it, but always it seemed more than she could handle with her other work, so she continued to wait and pray.

About a block and a half away live Mr. and Mrs. Oscar Johnson, two other Lutherans whose lives are given to God that they might count towards getting the gospel to every creature. In their hearts, too, the vision for a store burned, and it was to their home that two Crusaders, Mildred Hasselquist and Bernice Hansen, came last summer. There the vision caught fire.

Millie shared the vision in greater detail with the fellowship back in Minneapolis. All the facts of the situation were discussed. Hazel Hauge, director of the bookstore movement, recalled that Racine had been suggested to her when she first began her work. Millie pointed out that with 27 Lutheran churches in the city, the prospects should be good.

The months slipped by. The vision did not dim, but burned brighter. At last convinced that it was within the will of God, we set out to accomplish what we had seen in vision.

Hazel Hauge, Fran Swenson and I drove to Racine in February of 1944. We scouted around in the downtown section first. One evening, as we were walking in the west Racine area, we began to feel drawn to that section of town as a possible location. Sandwiched between Gethsemane Lutheran Church and its parsonage and the embroidery shop of the Danish lady who had been praying for a bookstore, was an empty grocery store.

The story continues:

When we got inside it was big, much bigger than we had thought, and very dirty. Rather than redecorating, the landlord offered us two months free rent.

As we stood in the store that first afternoon our vision began to grow. We saw partitions rise up out of the floor, paint and wallpaper appear on the walls, and display cases arrange themselves around the room. In the back half of the store, living quarters, compact and cozy, and a storeroom came to life. In reality there was nothing that afternoon but

a room 50 feet by 17 feet, a ceiling, four walls, a floor and dirt – but there was plenty of all that. That and God. What more did we need? We signed a contract to rent the place.

And then we set to work. We soaped the windows. We each bought a pair of overalls. Fran had a knack for carpentry. Hazel and Millie had ideas and loved adventure. Even at that we sometimes wondered if we would succeed as we thought of building things that were far beyond our knowledge or experience. However, we soon found, as we took the plunge, that God began to stir to add visible substance to our faith.

The president of a lumber company, who was a Christian, granted us priority for the lumber we needed. (It was during the war years and lumber was difficult to get.) He also gave several hours of a busy day looking over our homely penciled “blueprints,” and offered valuable suggestions. Through another Christian businessman we were able to get all our paint and wallpaper wholesale. Over \$100 had been given to us, designated for opening the store, and most of these gifts had come from totally unexpected sources.

A Christian contractor became intensely interested in our project and offered his help in setting up the partitions and building shelves and cases. He brought over his tools and power saw, leaving them for us to use. And then one day he showed up with his whole crew of men, and for two days they worked. Bookshelves leaped into place and boards rose right off the floor and became display cases in no time at all. The men donated all their work.

A Christian painter heard of us and offered to help during his free mornings. Painting the ceiling was a shaky proposition. We had to stand on a wavy plank six feet off the floor with nothing to hang on to. “Good preparation for climbing the Himalayas,” Millie said cheerfully as she climbed the stepladder that first morning.

Oscar Johnson was a floor sander and he sanded and refinished all the floors. His dear wife became “mom” to us. She opened the Johnson home and took all three of us in, caring for our every need.

The contractor, his round face beaming with joy, knocked on the door one day and toted in lovely new light fixtures. He brought along an electrician to install them and also to put in as many wall plugs as we needed.

With all this expert help we received an education in carpentry and were given skilled advice and direction in remodeling.

Even while we were still building, our sales mounted to almost \$50. People came into the store, climbed over lumber and told us what they wanted. We found the right box, opened it and produced the desired goods.

The finished store was just another proof of the faithfulness of God, eager always to work on behalf of those who believe him and step out on his promises. We think that the happiest person on earth is a young Christian ablaze with the fire of a new faith, even if there are 50 theorists around to cool his ardor. Isn't it better to crash through trying to believe too much (is that really possible?) than not to try at all? Doesn't God prefer a too-exuberant faith to a pale orthodoxy which mouths all the truths and doesn't really believe any of them?

When the store was finished, its pale yellow walls with the attractive blue wallpapered back wall invited customers to come in. A sign over a map in the little office through the archway told everybody that there were 800,000,000 persons around the world who had never heard the good news about Jesus Christ. Other plaques and banners proclaimed that “God’s commands are his enablings” and “If Jesus Christ means anything at all to me, he can mean just as much to any person anywhere, and every person everywhere should be given the chance to know him.”

In the little office and also in the main display room were chairs where people could sit and browse through books, pick up missionary magazines or talk with the team. Living quarters in back provided a cheerful home. Secondhand pieces of furniture needed only a little paint and some yards of colorful material to transform them. As we worked on the store we tried to make it as lovely and harmonious and attractive as possible. We remembered the little verse:

*If Jesus built a ship,
She would travel trim.
If Jesus roofed a barn,
No leaks would be left by him.
If Jesus planted a garden,
He would make it like Paradise;
If Jesus did my day's work,
It would delight his Father's eyes.*

All three bookstores were eventually turned over to private ownership, and continued in ministry for many years.

In addition to the mission homes and bookstores, a number of volunteers fanned out to help congregations that were receptive to their ministry.

The principles of discipleship which were held up as guidelines for the Crusaders were, briefly stated:

- 1. Remember, a disciple of Christ is possessed of an absolute devotion to Jesus Christ;*
- 2. Such a relationship to Christ means that while thankfully recognizing the visible channels, still the disciple looks to Christ alone as the only sure source for the supply of whatever is needed to fulfill his calling and ministry;*
- 3. Added to his deep personal devotion to Christ, the disciple possesses an affectionate loyalty to the other members of the community and to the whole body of Christ;*

4. *An underlying principle of life and fruitfulness in the Spirit is the way of the Cross, captured so well in Amy Carmichael's poem:*

Hast Thou No Scar?

Hast thou no scar?

No hidden scar on foot, or side, or hand?

I hear thee sung as mighty in the land,

I hear them hail thy bright ascendant star,

Hast thou no scar?

Hast thou no wound?

Yet, I was wounded by the archers, spent.

Leaned me against the tree to die, and rent

By ravening beasts that compassed me, I swooned:

Hast thou no wound?

No wound? No scar?

Yet as the Master shall the servant be,

And pierced are the feet that follow Me;

But thine are whole. Can he have followed far

Who has no wound nor scar?

5. *Finally, the disciple sees himself to be a part of the church of Christ; he sees Christ giving numerous gifts and graces by the Holy Spirit to members of the body for work and fruit in his mission in the world.*

June of 1943 saw the beginning of the publication of an attractive four-page paper which was later expanded to eight pages. The magazine bore the name, *Lutheran World Vision*. The July issue announced that Rev. M.H. and Verna Sand, with three children, and Virginia Antonsen would be leaving for Colombia, South America.

Of special interest to us at this time is the March 1944 issue which carried a letter from a Nepali young man, Theodore Manaen, who later served as associate director of the World

Mission Prayer League at its headquarters in Minneapolis. In this letter Theodore writes in part:

My dear mother taught me to walk in the way of the Lord. She instilled in me a deep love for the Lord. Then in my early teens the Lord took my mother to heaven and relieved her of all her earthly trouble. The Lord saw that I needed someone to help me in my spiritual walk, someone to take the place of my mother. The Lord gave me Jonathan [Lindell] who is now my dear elder brother. We pray, sing and walk together. We have forgotten our cultural and nationality differences and are now two brothers in the beauty of the Lord Jesus.

Theodore asked for prayer that he might understand what God had for him to do.

In 1944 Adeline Tennis left for Colombia, South America. Ray Rosales, who had hoped to get to South America, had been inducted into the army. After a number of months in the service Ray wrote:

With the vision given, the Lord set out to perform another necessity. He set before me the valley. I started down that lonesome road when I was inducted into the service, and I have been treading it since. This is the valley in which I am being shaped into the vision.

My walk so far has been rather wobbly. I cannot say that I have ridden through as more than conqueror. I have been perplexed with impatience. I have been caught with resentments and jealousies. My faith has almost quit. I have not always been in a position to catch the Lord's whispers. It has been a battle. I marvel at God's patience and tenderness towards me. I'm so slow to learn and grow!

In 1944 the mission home in Los Angeles was closed, and Harvey and Hazel Carlson moved back to Minneapolis to assist with the work there.

The year 1945, marking the end of World War II, saw Frank Wilcox and Ruth Hauge leave for India, their ultimate destination the North-West Frontier Province to work with the people on the border of Afghanistan. Evelyn Hallquist, Jonathan Lindell's fiancée, and I left for the Nepal border in northern India.

Candidates were volunteering. Finances were good. Doors were opening. The future was as filled with promise as the desert newly-lain with irrigation pipes and sprinklers.



Paul Lindell is installed as Director (1945)

Reconciliation

When the reunion between the World Mission Prayer League and the Lutheran World Crusade finally came in 1945, the transition was a quiet one.

Up until 1945 the World Mission Prayer League had been loosely organized. With the Evangelical Lutheran Church interested in the prospect of adopting the Bolivia work as its own, the future of the Prayer League itself hung in limbo. But when the synod turned instead to Colombia, the need for legally incorporating the World Mission Prayer League became clear. A formal organizational meeting of supporters took place on May 20 and 21, 1945. They elected a council of twelve members to manage and direct the affairs of the mission. Pastor Weinhardt and Dr. John Gronli, professor of missions at the Lutheran Bible Institute, had drawn up a constitution which they presented for consideration. On July 7, 1945, the World Mission Prayer League was formally incorporated.

John Carlsen was in Bolivia. Pastor Granlund had accepted a call to Bridgeport, Connecticut. Pastor Weinhardt was serving a church in Fridley, Minnesota. Consequently much of the responsibility for guiding the affairs of the World Mission Prayer League fell on Pastor Evald Conrad, of Trinity Lutheran Church of Minnehaha Falls. Pastor Conrad was also a member of the advisory board of the Lutheran World Crusade.

Long talks ensued between Paul Lindell and Evald Conrad. They thanked God for all the two groups cherished in common. They discussed differences. They prayed for wisdom. Finally they decided they could incorporate some features of each group in a possible merger.

Members of the League would be those who signed a card indicating they were praying definitely, frequently and unitedly for

the fulfillment of Christ's commission. To qualify as a member one also had to be a member of a Lutheran congregation.

The fellowship would meet annually and elect a governing council, its size to be determined from time to time according to need. The council was to meet quarterly. Its duties were clearly defined.

A directorate would oversee the work more closely and be made up of the executive staff and at least five council members, two of whom would be the chairman and treasurer. The responsibilities of the directorate were also defined.

Conrad and Lindell discussed the proposal with Weinhardt. He rejoiced. They sent a letter to Carlsen. He sent an affirming reply as well.

The first clue that changes were imminent came in the July/August 1945 issue of *Lutheran World Vision*. That issue announced that the bookstores of the Lutheran World Crusade would be turned over to the Lutheran Evangelistic Movement. The Lutheran Evangelistic Movement concerned itself with work in the United States, so it seemed appropriate that this group should assume responsibility for the bookstore ministry.

The September issue of the magazine announced, in referring to the transfer of the bookstores, that "other changes too will be made in due course."

Those changes happened on October 22, 1945, when the two groups finally united. Paul Lindell, on behalf of the Lutheran World Crusade, wrote:

Since last June we have had much fellowship and discussion with the World Mission Prayer League concerning a possible consolidation of our work with theirs. We found that we were of one mind and heart in missionary vision and objective, in general working principles, in doctrine and spiritual emphasis and in fellowship of spirit. There were many indications that the Lord was leading and wherever

the matter of a possible union of the two missions was talked of among our friends it was received with joy and thanksgiving. We have treasured greatly this widespread witness of the Holy Spirit among many friends and we have taken such steps as would most quickly and satisfactorily effect our complete union. The corporation of the Lutheran World Crusade will be dissolved, and all properties and personnel will be merged with the present organization of the WMPL. The Lutheran World Vision will now function as the regular monthly publication of the WMPL.

Evald Conrad commented:

October 22 will stand out as one of the great days in the history of our mission – a day of rejoicing, an unforgettable day.... Only the Holy Spirit can effect a true union. Men may try by arguments, organizational setup and united meetings to combine and unite, but no true union ever follows. Only the Holy Spirit can so unite hearts that there is a true oneness of purpose, vision, program and fellowship.

Thus forty missionaries and home personnel joined hands, along with fifteen applicants. The mission, at last, was ready to move ahead in a united effort.



Ernest, Hildegard and Betty Weinhardt in Minneapolis (*circa 1945*)

Stretching the Wings

At the age of 49, even though he was not feeling well, Ernest Weinhardt wanted to go back to Bolivia. Frail health had frustrated him since his days in the Sudan. Again and again in his journal he had commented on the struggle he had to accept a weak body that could not respond to all his heart wanted to do:

I was deeply tried in my heart and spirit about it over a period of many years. I was greatly perplexed.... Finally I became more and more reconciled to this state of weakness, and began to say more and more in my heart, "Lord, thy will be done. I do not understand why you are pleased to have me so weak, but thy will be done!" Then... I began even to understand something of the reason why perhaps God is pleased to have us so weak at times. And that reason is this: God sees it needful and good for us to know and understand something, not only of the power and glory of God, but also something of the utter weakness, helplessness and nothingness of ourselves. For us to see and understand this latter truth is just as important and necessary as to see and understand the former. These are the two centers around which our Christian life and experience must revolve, namely, God and ourselves. We must know both.

Weinhardt must have known how serious his condition was, for in his journal he even recorded his struggle in being assured God would provide for his funeral costs and care for his family after he was gone.

He sought healing. He mentions in his journal confessing his sins to his wife and then being anointed and prayed for. He sought to draw on God's strength moment by moment and thought he was being quickened and renewed, but then the weakness attacked him more severely than ever and left him trembling. Deterioration in his journal handwriting is clearly evident. He wrote:

I have found myself as of late anxious and troubled about many things. For example, there are many things which I have wanted to do, but I have found that time and strength have not permitted. This has troubled me. Then there are many people that I have wanted to see, and I have felt that I should see them, but time and strength have not permitted this either. This also has troubled me. But this morning, as I gave myself to seek him, it seemed that he wanted to speak to me, and by his grace I let him speak. This is what he said, "Martha, Martha, you are anxious and troubled about many things; one thing is needful. Mary has chosen the good portion, which shall not be taken away from her." These words fitted my case exactly. The Lord had spoken. There was no doubt about it. And good was his word. My burden was immediately lifted. Anxiety and a troubled heart about all these things were gone. Now the Lord did not say that those other things are bad. No, they may be good, very good. But we can't do everything, and one thing is needful. His word then for us is that we should give our special attention to this one thing. And insofar as there is time for these other things, and as he leads, well and good. Things which we do not have time for, which strength will not permit us to do, which he does not lead us to do, we can be content to leave such things undone.... He will bless us mightily and we will be strong.... I praise and thank God for this blessing. He has lifted this burden. He has given me rest.

In spite of his increasing weakness, Weinhardt could not abandon his dream to return to Bolivia. He resigned from his church in Fridley and began to make preparations to return to the field.

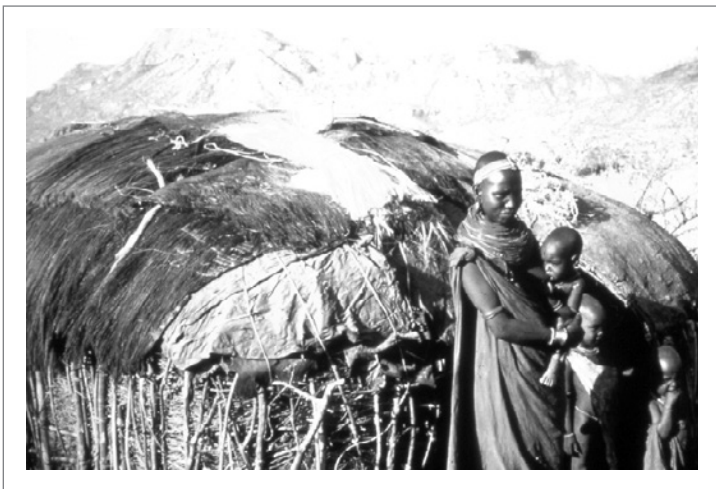
"I think I can understand a bit more why God has permitted me to be weak these years," he recorded in his diary.

1) To bring me to the point of helplessness in my life, to the point where I must look to him...; 2) that I might sympathize with others who similarly suffer; 3) that I might look more to the world beyond where there is no weakness, no suffering, no disappointment.

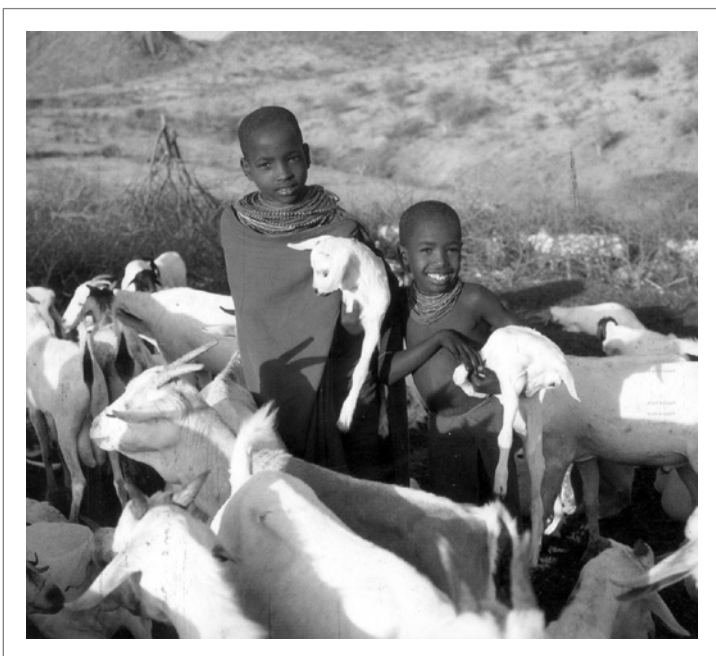
On Monday, September 2, he made this entry: "Passage to La Paz, Bolivia, by air was confirmed today. According to the schedule we are due to leave Minneapolis September 30, 6:50 p.m., and will arrive in La Paz October 4, 11:35 a.m." His handwriting is sprawled across the page, so different from the precise, small characters in the earlier entries of his journal. "The Lord has strengthened and comforted me much from his Word," he adds, followed by, "and this I have needed." It is his final entry. On September 8, 1946, in Fridley, Minnesota, Ernest Weinhardt was released from his weak body and called to higher service.

*Why should we start, and fear to die?
What timorous worms we mortals are!
Death is the gate of endless joy,
And yet we dread to enter there.
Oh, if my Lord would come and meet,
My soul should stretch her wings in haste,
Fly fearless through death's iron gate,
Nor feel the terrors as she passed.
Jesus can make a dying bed
Feel soft as downy pillows are,
While on his breast I lean my head,
And breathe my life out sweetly there.*

— Isaac Watts



A manyatta in Samburuland



Young shepherds at work

The Three Continents Entered

“What is the vision?”

“That these missionaries occupy, as far as pleasing in the sight of God, the yet unreached territories in the hearts of three continents: Africa, Asia and South America.”

Thus Ernest Weinhardt had written in his journal on October 17, 1929.

Unquestionably Weinhardt did not expect his vision to be fulfilled through one new mission alone. Rather he had seen the place of mission movements in general in his denomination, American Lutheranism. This understanding was confirmed in 1937, the year that he became involved with the South American Mission Prayer League:

As the year progressed, I was led to have a wider prayer interest. I was led to pray, not only for the Sudan Mission, but also for the South American Mission Prayer League, for the Colombia Evangelical Lutheran Mission of South America, the Lutheran Orient Mission and the mission in Alaska of which Dr. Carl Sodergren is the director. These are all Lutheran independent faith missions. I was led to have an interest in all independent Lutheran missions, rather than in just one of them, and when this change had taken place in my prayer life, then I felt led to ask God that he would send out nine Spirit-filled workers this year, not only in connection with the Sudan Mission, but in connection with any and all of these missions.

Weinhardt envisioned that mission movements would significantly supplement the efforts of the Lutheran synodical mission boards, and of other Christian churches, in the work of world evangelization.

As it developed, the fellowship of which Weinhardt was a part, the World Mission Prayer League, has indeed extended its work

to the three continents Weinhardt envisioned – Africa, Asia and South America. This too has been the Spirit’s doing.

Having already related the entrance into Asia and South America, there remains the story of the entrance into the third continent of Weinhardt’s vision – Africa. This was accomplished when Rev. William Jacobson, his wife DeLois and their family went to Nairobi, Kenya, in 1968.

Rev. Jacobson had previously served in neighboring Tanzania under the Board of World Missions of the Lutheran Church in America, so he was familiar with the East African situation. He went to Kenya originally to help with the work of the Emmaus Bible Correspondence School in Nairobi, a nondenominational evangelical institution that seeks to complement and assist the existing missions and churches through its program of Bible correspondence work, radio broadcasts, film showings, and seminars in schools and with youth groups. At the time Pastor Jacobson joined the work, about 2,000 correspondence courses were being mailed out each month to students in Kenya, Tanzania and Uganda. About 54% of the students were completing the courses.

“Hitherto the Lord has helped us” (1 Samuel 7:12) was the Bible verse that was ringing in Pastor Jacobson’s ears as he walked down the steps of the airplane that had brought him and his family to Nairobi on that memorable July first. As they entered the lounge of the Africa Inland Mission guest house where they were planning to stay for a while, the same words, emblazoned on one of the overhead ceiling beams, greeted them. And that night as the various missionaries staying in the guest house gathered for devotions, the portion from *Daily Light* began with those same words: “Hitherto the Lord has helped us.” Even as the Lord had led and blessed in the past, so he continued to lead and would continue to bless the Jacobsons in their new mission call.

And the blessing spread farther than the Jacobson family. Here was yet another step toward the fulfillment of Ernest Weinhardt’s

remarkable vision. The Lord was working his blessing through the World Mission Prayer League, allowing the extension of its work to a third continent.

Because the task of evangelizing the world is bigger today than it has ever been before, we look forward with anticipation and faith for God's Spirit to continue to move, thrusting out many more laborers into the harvest field. The World Mission Prayer League is but one small part of the effort. Yet each part has a role to play. We pray that God will find us faithful in carrying out the specific responsibility he has entrusted to us.

Afterword

The image with which Millie concludes her narrative stands as a fitting milepost at the conclusion of an era.

“Hitherto the Lord has helped us” (1 Samuel 7:12).

Here is an image that inspired our earliest pioneers. Lars and Anna Skrefsrud themselves, as you may know, inscribed this verse on the cornerstone of “Ebenezer Station” in Benagaria, in 1867 – the first home of the Santal Mission.

Here is an image that encouraged later pioneers as well. Bill and DeLois Jacobson, as you have now learned, put this verse before them as they entered “the third continent” foreseen in Weinhardt’s sweeping vision.

Here is an image that has encouraged us all along the way, in fact – from Benagaria to Bangladesh, and Minneapolis to Mongolia.

“Hitherto the Lord has helped us!”

By the Lord’s gracious help, tens of thousands have heard the Good News of Jesus or seen it lived out in acts of love and service. Churches have been planted. Leaders have been trained. Bodies have been healed and communities built. And many thousands have come to living faith in the Savior of the world.

By the Lord’s help, we have grown in numbers. Thousands upon thousands of friends have come to share our vision through the years. They have prayed millions upon millions of prayers for the work of the gospel around the world. They have given millions of dollars to support the effort. Sometimes they have offered themselves in service, too: many, many hundreds have volunteered through the years, since Millie’s day. They don’t get rich. They may face danger. I am continually amazed at their intrepid obedience.

By the Lord's good help, our outreach projects and ministry partnerships have grown widely as well. Our earliest involvements in South America, Asia, and Africa now include partnerships and new involvements in many far-flung corners of the world. Some of these involvements were only for a season: Colombia (1943), Brazil (1953), American Samoa (1976), Hong Kong (1977), Romania (1993), Tanzania (2008), Uganda (2014), South Africa (2015) and South Sudan (2009), among others – as well as outreach among international populations in the United States (1991, 1996) and Canada (2007). Other involvements are only recently getting under way: I think of emerging partnerships in the Democratic Republic of Congo (2015), in particular. Still other involvements have been long-term, persisting from our early years until today.

At this writing, we are something like 120 missionaries at work in 21 countries around the world. We are more than 6000 praying members. We are partners and colleagues with scores of national churches and international agencies, at work together in a wide and wonderful variety of Kingdom service.

“Can God do these things?” Ernest Weinhardt queried long ago.

“Yes” (p.17).

This is an image that propels us into the future as well. The Lord has helped us “hitherto”: *the Spirit of God was moving!* And he *continues* to move among us. He calls us, again and again, into new adventures of obedience. He deepens our faith. He challenges, encourages and forgives us – and provides for us day-by-day. He has shown himself utterly trustworthy. We may trust him for our future, too.

Let me conclude with an expert opinion from one hundred years ago – from the early years of the last century, leading up to Weinhardt's vision. I will footnote the opinion in case you want to track it down. It comes from a fellow named Robert Speer.

Robert Speer was a genuine missionary statesman. He stood just at the juncture of things: one century giving way to another; one era of missionary enterprise making way for another; older things giving way to newer things. Historians described the nineteenth century as “the great century of missionary expansion.” And so it was. Robert Speer, however, stood at the beginning of a new century of missionary expansion. He had new histories to write.

Speer was among the architects of one of the most significant meetings in the history of church and mission, since the days of Pentecost itself. In 1910, in Edinburgh, representatives from around the world gathered to assess the progress of the missionary enterprise until then, and to project what remained to be done in the century ahead.

You may have heard of the call “to evangelize the world in our generation”; it was first voiced in Edinburgh. You may have come to appreciate the modern ecumenical movement; you are perhaps an heir of the movement, as I am myself. It had its roots in Edinburgh. Later international congresses in Berlin, Lausanne, Manila, Cape Town, Tokyo, etc., trace their impetus and inspiration to Edinburgh. Edinburgh was the original.

Edinburgh was not perfectly successful, however. It was not sufficiently representative of the world church, for one thing. It was not adequately inclusive of denominational, regional, educational, economic and gender variabilities. The “worldwide” congress, as it turns out, was not uniformly supported across the entire Christian world. Some felt deep misgiving about the effort. Some felt clearly threatened by such a gathering: it seemed, somehow, presumptuous and disrespectful. What was not to like about “the great century,” after all? What could be better than “great”?

As the gathering’s architects met to plan and prepare for the event, in a memorable meeting in Philadelphia in 1908, Speer addressed these misgivings head on.

“It is no enmity to our past to believe that it did not exhaust

God,” Speer insisted. “I do not see any disloyalty to the past in believing that God means the future to be better than it.”

Then he went on:

Unless the past has made ready for a better future, the past was a bad past. Only those things are good that make ready for better things to come after them, and those men [and women] are disloyal to the past, not who believe that it made preparation for greater things, but who believe that all great things are in a golden age gone by. The worst disloyalty to the past is to mistake it for the future. Very great and glorious that past has been, but that past will have failed to teach its lesson to us, that past will have failed to fulfill its mission in the will of God if it binds men forever in the chains of its institutional forms, unless it has made them ready for larger and completer things and led them on to such a unity as Christ himself, we must believe, longed for while he was here and waits for now where he is gone.[†]

“Hitherto the Lord has helped us!”

Today, once again, we stand at the juncture of things: a wonderful old story, narrated here by one of its early participants – ready to make way for something new. Older things give way again to newer things. There are new histories to write, in this new century.

You have in your hands the “hitherto” – the many, many evidences of God’s gracious help among us, through the years. It is something like a “prequel” to this new century of missionary adventuring.

But the “sequel” remains to be written. Just here, once again at the juncture of things, let us remember the counsel of Robert Speer. It is no enmity to the past to expect great things of its sequel – better things, even, than appeared in the original. More daring things.

[†] *Report of the First Meeting of the Federal Council – Philadelphia, 1908, Elias B. Sanford, ed., (New York: Revell Press, 1909, p.363)*

Greater and more creative advance. More strategic engagement and more effective service. Its protagonists will no longer be Weinhardts and Skrefsruds, I think. It may not include so very many Lindells.

The sequel will be written by people like you.

Charles Lindquist

Minneapolis, Advent 2018

The vision was not unique, but it was spontaneous. Go with the gospel to the hearts of three continents: Asia, Africa and South America. Seek out the unreached. Enlist men and women out of existing Lutheran churches to do it. Look for the unmistakable call of God on a person's life and proceed without budget or even the promise of continuing support. It was a reckless approach by a group of unusually dedicated and confident people. More than 1,000 missionaries in over 20 countries over the last 80 years have followed the vision. It continues today with the praying support of some 6,000 Prayer League members in the US and Canada.

Mildred Hasselquist Tengbom (1921-2016) served as a missionary of the World Mission Prayer League on the border of Nepal from 1945-53. In 1956 she and her husband Luverne (1919-2018) were commissioned by the Augustana Lutheran Church to go to Tanzania, where they continued in service until 1968. From 1968-85 the Tengboms made their home in Anaheim, where Luverne served as academic dean of the California Lutheran Bible School. In June of 1985 they accepted a commission from the Lutheran Church in America to teach in Singapore. The Tengboms retired to Southern California in 1991.

Millie authored 27 books and hundreds of articles published in over 50 religious and secular periodicals. She was at work on a 28th title at the time of her death in 2016.



WORLD
MISSION
PRAYER
LEAGUE

TOGETHER IN CHRIST, PRAYER & GLOBAL MISSION