



1944 - 1995

A HISTORY OF THE WORLD MISSION PRAYER LEAGUE IN CANADA 1944-1981 *by Daryl Olson*  
DEVELOPMENTS IN WORLD MISSION PRAYER LEAGUE/CANADA 1981-1995 *by Arnold Hagen*

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*by Daryl Olson*

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*1981-1995*

*by Arnold Hagen*

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# *The History of the World Mission Prayer League in Canada 1944 -- 1981*

by Daryl Olson  
March 27th, 1982

## *Perspectives on WMPLC*

The World Mission Prayer League falls into a long tradition of free missionary movements within Lutheranism. Free missionary movements have been a part of Lutheranism ever since the first Lutheran free movement; the Pietistic Danish-Halle mission began in 1705.<sup>1</sup> The World Mission Prayer League, like its traditional predecessors, was raised up by God to meet a special need at a particular time. It is also a part of the larger family of Lutheran free movements which continue to exist today in various forms. In Canada, such institutions and activities as Canadian Lutheran Bible Institute, Lutheran Bible School of British Columbia and the Lutheran Evangelistic movement belong to this family of free movements. Perhaps these movements are best described as modern expressions of historic Lutheran Pietism.<sup>2</sup> It is in this tradition and family that the World Mission Prayer League of Canada belongs.

This mission society was first organized in Minneapolis, Minnesota, on May 25, 1937, as the South American Mission Prayer League.<sup>3</sup> The USA organization traces its roots back to two separate visions which eventually came together. On October 17, 1929, Pastor Ernest Weinhardt, an Augustana pastor, serving as a missionary in Africa under the Old Sudan Mission, recorded in

his diary the vision that he had for a Lutheran mission society.<sup>4</sup> Then in the fall of 1932 a number of students of the Lutheran Bible Institute in Minneapolis were moved to pray for South America through a mission survey course taught by Pastor C.O. Granlund. One student, John Carlson, a Norwegian immigrant, recently converted, was particularly challenged by the class and he with his wife invited others to a prayer meeting in their apartment. Pastor Ernest Weinhardt was one of those present. This group grew so that they met not only in homes but also in churches and at the Bible School. They also published and distributed prayer cards, visited congregations and produced a publication called the Bulletin. One of the results was that in 1936, two women raised their own support and went as missionaries to Columbia, South America. The

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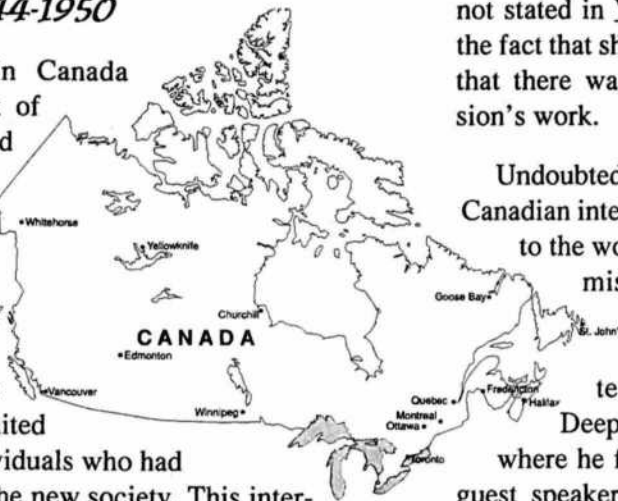
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following year, both Weinhardt and Carlson sensed a call to the mission field in South America. They both approached the Sudan Mission but were turned down. Carlson then approached the ELC mission but was again turned down because neither of these boards were then prepared to move into South America.<sup>5</sup> Weinhardt and Carlson then approached the South American Mission Prayer League and proposed that it

send them.<sup>6</sup> The prayer group agreed and this resulted in the organization of the mission society on May 25, 1937. In late 1939, two brothers, Paul and Jonathan Lindell, made application for mission service in Central Asia. It was at this time that the present name World Mission Prayer League (hereafter WMPL) was adopted. However, the legal incorporation of WMPL in the USA did not take place until 1945.<sup>7</sup>

### *How WMPL Came to Canada. 1944-1950*

Interest in Canada for the work of WMPL started very early after its organization as a mission society in 1937. This interest was probably limited to a few individuals who had heard about the new society. This interest is evident in that Adeline Tennis, a Canadian, went as a missionary to Columbia in 1944 under WMPL.<sup>8</sup> The March 1947 edition of World Vision [the first magazine of WMPL, see page 7 for more information] indicates that Miss Tennis and three other missionaries went to Columbia "to study the Spanish language at the excellent school in Medellin and also to investigate the possibilities for opening a new work in some needy place either in Columbia or in one of the other republics."<sup>9</sup> Adeline Tennis left WMPL in 1947 in order to sponsor and conduct a private



Christian school in Medellin.<sup>10</sup> Her three years with WMPL gave her the distinction of being the first WMPL missionary from Canada. There is no doubt that her involvement stimulated interest among many people in Canada.

The second Canadian foreign missionary to go out under WMPL was Bernice Hanson of Frontier, Saskatchewan. She left for Bolivia on September 5, 1947.<sup>11</sup> After some language training she was put in charge of a bookstore in La Paz.<sup>12</sup> How she became interested in WMPL is not stated in World Vision magazine, but again the fact that she went through WMPL is evidence that there was interest in Canada for the mission's work.

Undoubtedly, the greatest reason for growing Canadian interest in the work of WMPL was due to the work of Paul Lindell and a number of missionary teams that traveled in Canada in the late nineteen forties.

In July, 1947, G.O. Evenson attended a Lutheran Evangelistic Deeper Life Conference in Minneapolis where he first heard Paul Lindell, one of the guest speakers for the week.<sup>13</sup> Pastor Evenson was so impressed that he invited Paul Lindell to speak at the Saskatchewan Lutheran Bible Institute (now the Lutheran Collegiate Bible Institute) at Outlook, Saskatchewan, in February of the following year.<sup>14</sup> Paul Lindell made a deep impression upon Howie Olson, one of the students at SLBI at that time. Arnold Hagen, a recent graduate of SLBI, first had his interest whetted after hearing about this consecration week through Howie Olson.<sup>15</sup> Both Howie Olson and Arnold Hagen later became instrumental in the incorporation and establishment of WMPL/Canada.

Paul Lindell also spent time in Alberta in 1950. The April 1950 edition of World Vision magazine stated the following:

Our General Director, Paul Lindell, spent the greater part of February in Alberta, Canada. Through Rev. Albert M. Vinge, Dean of the Canadian Lutheran Bible Institute at Camrose he received an invitation to come there as one of the two speakers during what is known as Fellowship week, in which churches of the surrounding area participate. Following this he was speaker during Foreign Missions Emphasis Week at the Institute, giving daily chapel talks, conducting one period a day on the topic "The Continents Call" and holding open forums on foreign missions. Evening messages were given in Camrose Lutheran Church (Messiah Lutheran) and missionary films shown. There was an especially warm response throughout and there seems to be no question that CLBI is a center of real spiritual life. From Camrose, Mr. Lindell went to Calgary where he spent a week giving missionary messages in an Augustana Church, (First Lutheran) Rev. L. C. Tengbom, pastor.<sup>16</sup>

Both these preaching missions were very influential in Canada and this illustrates the charisma of Paul Lindell. Perhaps more than any other individual, he was responsible for awakening and stimulating Canadian interest in the work of WMPL.<sup>17</sup>

Missionary teams sent out from Minneapolis and Seattle were responsible for awakening interest within Canada. On September, 25, 1948 a missionary team made up of Laura Kessel, Margaret Hatteberg and Mr. and Mrs. Alvin Berg, traveled through North Dakota into Canada, then across northern Minnesota back to Minneapolis. Their meetings usually "consisted of an opening

hymn, a missionary message, testimonies by members of the team, a showing of slides from Bolivia and the Nepal Border and closing remarks."<sup>18</sup> On the west coast, Ruth Hauge, Esther Johnson and Verne Lavik traveled as a missionary team in the Pacific Northwest from October 3 until December 12, 1948. They went north into British Columbia and as far south as Salem, Oregon.

The year 1950 was significant in the promotion and outreach of WMPL/Canada. Not only had Paul Lindell spent a rigorous month promoting missions in Canada, but also in that year a missionary team was sent on a Canadian tour. Also in that year two mission representatives and a treasurer were appointed in Canada. It would seem that due to this increase in promotion and outreach in Canada during 1950, there came to be a heightened awareness of WMPL and its work.

Reverend G.O. Evenson of Outlook, Saskatchewan, and Reverend Sterling Johnson of Ryley, Alberta, were the two mission representatives appointed in Canada. They arranged the itinerary for the missionary team which toured in Canada that spring. An article in the July 1950 issue of World Vision clarified the purpose and responsibilities of these mission representatives. The following excerpts express the main thrust of the article.

. . . it is one of the problems of mission organizations to find a suitable and effective way to link more closely together into a working fellowship those who go afar and the friends who share in the work at home.

In the case of our mission a strong emphasis upon getting people out into the field has overshadowed the equally important

need for enlisting and mobilizing the enthusiasm and interest of those at home who have followed the vision. . .

Six months ago the Home Council decided to initiate a plan to appoint Mission Representatives for two full year terms in all parts of this country and Canada. This will give to many friends more official position in the work of the mission and will encourage them to represent and promote freely as they wish the vision and work of the World Mission Prayer League in their respective areas. Theirs will be a free will ministry to the Lord's cause without compensation by the Mission.

Our Mission Representatives will represent WMPL in their areas, will encourage interest in the Mission by speaking on its behalf and will give help to new recruits and prospective missionaries.<sup>19</sup>

This article concluded by listing twenty-three Mission Representatives, among them the two Canadian Mission Representatives.

On May 14, 1950, a missionary team made up of Verne Lavik, Norton McCaughan, Inga Kjos and Ruby Severtson began their Canadian tour in Saskatchewan.<sup>20</sup> The team toured for two months visiting congregations in Alberta and Saskatchewan. They were warmly received in the congregations they visited<sup>21</sup> and much interest in WMPL must have been whetted.

The effect this team had in the congregations it visited cannot really be measured except by the support and number of missionaries that came from Canada in later years.

Obviously the work of WMPL was taking solid root in Canada. After Paul Lindell's preaching mission in February of 1950 and the tour of the missionary team in the same year,

about \$1500 from Canadians was given to the work of WMPL. Since WMPL was uncertain how to handle these funds, they asked Richard Pedersen of Camrose to take care of them temporarily. This he agreed to do and he opened an account at a local bank on behalf of WMPL. Some Canadian friends of WMPL then suggested that Mr. Pedersen be appointed as deputy treasurer for WMPL and that gifts for the Mission, from donors in Canada, be sent to him. On April 10, 1950, the Mission Council in Minneapolis appointed Mr. Pedersen for this duty.<sup>22</sup> Before this time, individuals sent their financial gifts directly to Minneapolis.

Perhaps two other people who deserve mention for promoting WMPL/Canada during 1950 are Inga Kjos and Pastor Laverne Tengbom. Miss Inga Kjos, a WMPL candidate, taught at

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CLBI during the spring term of 1950.<sup>23</sup> Pastor Tengbom of First Lutheran in Calgary was an American pastor of the Augustana Synod and as a friend of WMPL was influential in promoting WMPL/Canada.<sup>24</sup> No doubt many more people could be mentioned if more information was available.

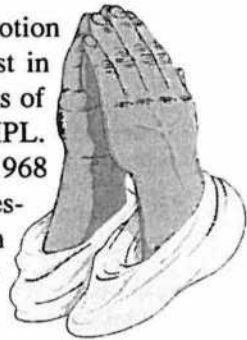
In order for WMPL to take hold in Canada, the Canadian churches must have sensed a need for such a movement. The writer would like to suggest a number of reasons which perhaps explain the expansion of WMPL into Canadian Lutheranism. First of all, those who supported



WMPL were usually of Scandinavian descent and predominantly from a pietistic background. Norway and Sweden in particular had been profoundly influenced by pietism. A practical result of pietism in Norway was the development of a number of activities related to and yet independent of control by the state church: folk high schools, Bible schools, seminaries, foreign mission societies, evangelistic associations and publishing firms.<sup>25</sup> Therefore, as a result of their background Scandinavian Lutherans readily accepted an independent mission society such as WMPL. Secondly, none of the Canadian Lutheran churches were autonomous at this time. Canadian Lutheran missionaries served under American Lutheran Foreign mission boards. Often when these missionaries came home on furlough, they would do most of their deputation work in the USA rather than in Canada. As late as 1964, some Lutheran congregations in Canada had never seen a Lutheran foreign missionary. WMPL missionaries were welcomed with open arms in Canadian churches.<sup>26</sup> A third attraction about WMPL is its policy of encouraging missionaries to correspond with those supporting them back home. Another attraction is the way which WMPL handles its funds; all gifts go directly to the place of designation. Fifthly, WMPL was attractive because as its handbook states, "it made available a way by which qualified lay members, as well as pastors and professionally trained persons, could go into other lands in missionary work and do so regardless of budgetary limitations."<sup>27</sup> All the above reasons suggest that WMPL met a need and received a ready response in Canadian Lutheranism.

## *WMPLC Becomes Established In Canada. 1951 - 1968*

During the forties the promotion of WMPL had sparked interest in Canada. The 1950's were years of increased activity for WMPL. During the years 1951 to 1968 WMPL became even more established within Canadian Lutheranism and moved towards Canadianization.



A substantial number of missionaries went out during the period from 1951 to 1968. Miss Bernice Hanson, previously mentioned, continued to serve under WMPL in Bolivia until 1956.<sup>28</sup> Mr. Hermon Simrose was the first Canadian man to volunteer for missionary service overseas with WMPL. On the afternoon of May 23, 1954, at Bethany Lutheran Church (ELC) near Darmondy, Saskatchewan he was commissioned for missionary work in India along the Nepal border. On June 8, he arrived in Calcutta, India.<sup>29</sup> The first Canadian married couple to be sent overseas for mission service under WMPL were Mr. & Mrs. Luther Erickson. They were commissioned for missionary service in India in Emmanuel Lutheran Church (Augustana Synod) in Czar, Alberta.<sup>30</sup> They arrived in Darjeeling, India, on March 14, 1958,<sup>31</sup> and served in India for two terms.<sup>32</sup>

The life of a missionary is not as adventurous as many people would like to think for often the missionary's life is filled with difficulties, sorrows and even tragedies. Reverend Roy Hafso

and his wife, the next Canadian missionaries to go out under WMPL, experienced tragedy upon their arrival in Pakistan. While they were unpacking, their third daughter, Tavia, got into a bottle of anti-malaria tablets and swallowed so many that she died within an hour.<sup>33</sup> This was a tragic moment in the history of WMPL. The Hafsos had gone to Pakistan in March of 1959 and they returned in November of the same year.<sup>34</sup> However, in spite of this tragic accident, WMPL continued to grow and Canadian missionaries continued to go overseas.

During the period from 1960 to 1968, thirteen Canadians were involved in full time service for WMPL either as missionaries or home staff. The following list gives the names of these missionaries, their place of work and the period of time which they served under WMPL.<sup>35</sup>

NAME	PLACE OF SERVICE	YEARS
(Leaves of Absence and Furloughs not shown)		
Mr. Herman Simrose		1954 - 1960
	India	
	Nepal	1961 - 1973
Mr. & Mrs. Luther Erickson		1958 - 1968
	India	
Miss Bernice Hanson		1959 - 1961
	Home Staff	
Mr. & Mrs. Carl Zimmerman		1961 - 1966
	India	
Miss Ramona Vaxvick		1962 - 1963
	Ecuador	
Mr. Karl Washeim		1963 - 1968
	Bolivia	
Mr. Nels Loberg		1964 - 1981
	Bolivia	
Dr. & Mrs. Bill Dahl		1964 -
	Pakistan	
Mr. Arnold Schmidt		1966 - 1977
	Pakistan	
Miss Nancy Kay		1966 - 1967
	Home Staff	

Interest in missions and in WMPL in particular continued to be stimulated by special services, missionary team tours, missionary teachers at CLBI in Camrose, mission representatives and by the official publication of WMPL World Vision Magazine. The interest of Canadian Lutherans resulted not only in missionaries being sent overseas, but also in financial and prayer support for the work.

However, during the fifties and sixties the promotion of WMPL/Canada was continued and carried out to a large extent by Americans. There are only a few activities in Canada that indicate that the Mission was becoming Canadianized.

During the fifties Verne Lavik, Northwest Regional Director in the USA, conducted a large number of special services in Western Canada. In March 1954, he was in Canada,<sup>36</sup> in 1958<sup>37</sup> and in 1959<sup>38</sup> he was in a number of churches in Alberta and Saskatchewan and in February 1960,<sup>39</sup> he held services in all three western provinces. Paul Lindell, the General Director of WMPL, continued his visits to Canada in order to promote missions. He visited First Lutheran in Calgary in the early fifties,<sup>40</sup> Vancouver in 1958<sup>41</sup> and Central Lutheran in Moose Jaw in April of 1960.<sup>42</sup> In 1951 two WMPL mission conferences were conducted in Canada, one at Goshen Lutheran, Matsqui, BC, and the other at First Lutheran in Vancouver, BC.<sup>43</sup> Some of the WMPL missionaries who came to Canada during the fifties to promote missions were Jonathan Lindell,<sup>44</sup> Rev. John Johnson, Rev. and Mrs. Roy Hagen,<sup>45</sup> Lillian Bangs,<sup>46</sup> and Mildred Hasselquist.<sup>47</sup> These last two missionaries both taught at CLBI in Camrose. Mildred Hasselquist taught a missionary course during the early



fifties and it was partially through her influence that Herman Simrose and Mr. and Mrs. Luther Eriksson<sup>48</sup> went to the mission field since they were students at CLBI during the early fifties. Lillian Bangs taught for one term during the winter quarter of 1961.<sup>49</sup>

Sterling Johnson of Ryley, and later of Camrose, continued to be a Mission Representative in Canada until April of 1952.<sup>50</sup> Rev. G.O. Evenson also continued in the capacity of Mission Repre-

The interest of Canadian Lutherans resulted not only in missionaries being sent overseas but also in financial and prayer support for the work.

sentative until November 1954.<sup>51</sup> During the period from 1954 to 1960, there were no official Mission Representatives in Canada and it appears that their number dwindled in the USA. Early in 1960 an attempt was made to revitalize the Mission Representative program. The April 1960 issue of Lutheran World Vision stated:

Representatives and contact personnel function as agents for the Mission. They assist in the arranging of deputation work in the area, encourage subscriptions to the Lutheran World Vision, speak in behalf of the Mission in local churches and encourage recruits in their area for the program of world missions.<sup>52</sup>

In February 1960, Allen Severson was listed as Mission Representative for the Vancouver

area<sup>53</sup> and in May of the same year H. R. Hemmingson was listed as representative in Calgary.<sup>54</sup> How influential these Mission Representatives were is difficult to determine but they were important, not only because they were Canadian Lutherans who were interested in the work of WMPL but also because they desired to promote WMPL among their fellow Canadian Lutherans.

The official publication of WMPL, World Vision magazine must also be seen as a contributing factor towards heightened awareness of WMPL/Canada. This excellent little monthly periodical always contained articles by missionaries and up-to-date news about the mission fields, thus maintaining contact between supporters and missionaries. When in the late fifties the organization World Vision came into being, the name of the magazine was changed to Lutheran World Vision<sup>55</sup> to avoid confusion. A few years later the name was changed to Fellow Workers since there still was confusion. Fellow Workers is still the magazine's present name, and it and a prayer letter are still the primary means of up-to-date information concerning the work of WMPL.

It is the area of finances that the Mission first became most Canadianized. In 1951, Richard Pedersen, Camrose, Alberta, was appointed as Canadian treasurer.<sup>56</sup>

Early in 1962, C.R. Mickelson of Hagen, Saskatchewan, on behalf of an interested group at Saron Lutheran set up a bank account in Birch Hills in order to support scholarship funds for the Bible schools in Bolivia and India. The group also decided to adopt the name the Saron Branch of WMPL.<sup>57</sup> The establishment of such a branch indicated a desire on the part of this group for a

Canadian mission organization underlining that there was a need for a Canadian branch of WMPL.

The slow but steady growth of donations to WMPL from Canada also indicates a growth in

Year	Total Donations & Revenue
1951	\$1,500.00 (approx.)
1952 — 1962	figures not available
1963	\$7,601.00
1964	\$10,973.00
1965	\$11,303.00
1966	\$12,696.00
1967	\$13,616.00
1968	\$9,159.00
1969	\$11,231.00

interest in the work of WMPL. The following list of financial contributions perhaps best indicates this growth in interest.<sup>58</sup>

Richard Pedersen served as Canadian treasurer throughout the years. Perhaps it is this giving of money, and of themselves in

service and prayer that really indicates that WMPL was dear to the hearts of many Lutherans in Canada.

### *The Incorporation of WMPL/Canada*

In about 1966 a new problem confronted supporters of WMPL/Canada. The Canadian government established the policy that gifts given to organizations outside of Canada would not be allowable for tax deduction.<sup>59</sup> This meant that WMPL would have to establish a Canadian base if Canadian donors to WMPL were to be

eligible for deductions on their income tax. It was primarily for this reason that WMPL was incorporated in Canada.

Rev. Howie Olson was the leader in spearheading the meetings and work involved in getting WMPL incorporated in Canada. As previously mentioned, Howie Olson had become interested in the work of missions, and WMPL in particular, back in 1948 when Paul Lindell spoke at SLBI Consecration Week in Outlook.<sup>60</sup> In the late sixties Pastor Howie Olson had had Paul Lindell in for several missionary conferences at Calvary Lutheran Church in Edmonton.<sup>61</sup> Following one of these conferences on July 3, 1968, a small group of interested friends gathered together at CLBI, Camrose, to meet with Paul Lindell.<sup>62</sup> The purpose of this meeting was to discuss the ways to proceed in forming a separate corporation of WMPL/Canada. Two procedures were agreed upon. First, a meeting should be called of all interested people and secondly at this meeting a council should be authorized to proceed with the incorporation.<sup>63</sup>

Notice of this next meeting was sent to all WMPL members in Canada and an invitation was extended as widely as possible for all to come who were interested in organizing WMPL/Canada. On December 6, 1968, an all day missionary conference was combined with this important meeting at Calvary Lutheran in Edmonton. The conference took place in the morning and afternoon with informal presentations of WMPL being given by missionaries Luther Eriksson, Dr. W. Dahl and Carl Zimmerman. Forty people were present for the evening business session. They were received as charter members and as such were given the privilege to vote. Because of the absence of Paul Lindell,

Verne Lavik chaired the meeting and Carl Zimmerman acted as secretary. At this meeting two important steps were taken, first five people were elected to the Mission Council, namely Mr. Richard Pedersen, Pastor A.B.H. Hagen, Pastor H. O. Olson, Mr. Kris Ervick, and Mr. G. Loken. Pastor H. O. Olson was elected chairman. The members of the Council were to act as incorporating trustees of the WMPL/Canada. A motion was passed that authorized the Council to go ahead and take steps to organize the WMPL/Canada and to make ready the lines the World Mission Prayer League should follow in Canada.<sup>64</sup>

The first meeting of the Canada Council of WMPL was held on February 27, 1969, at Calvary Lutheran, Edmonton, with Paul Lindell the General Director also present. Paul Lindell presented a proposed agenda for the meeting. At this meeting many major decisions were made. It was agreed that Pastor A.B.H. Hagen would be vice-chairman, G. Loken secretary and Richard Pedersen treasurer. A motion was made to adopt the same constitution as the WMPL in the USA, making only such changes as will fit it to the requirements of the Societies Act in Alberta and to its special function as WMPL/Canada. Pastor Howie Olson was appointed to consult an attorney concerning the changes needed in the constitution and to submit this constitution with an application for the incorporation to the Registrar of the Department of Provincial Secretary in Edmonton. Four other motions were passed during this meeting, the first dealt with the relation of WMPL/Canada to WMPL/USA. A motion was passed that the chairman of the board sent to Minneapolis for WMPL/USA Council meetings and for their annual meeting. The next two mo-

tions dealt with setting up a WMPL office in Canada. The first motion called for an office to be set up, as outlined by Paul Lindell, and that a volunteer secretary should be utilized. The sec-

In order for WMPL/Canada to become incorporated there were some real sacrifices of time and money on the part of a number of people.

ond motion moved that Calvary Lutheran Church be asked for office space, and use of the church address for mail. The last motion suggested that the need for a Canadian director of WMPL be made known with a request for prayer that God would call and give to out Canadian WMPL a man to serve as Canadian Director.<sup>65</sup>

The result of these motions was that Paul Lindell approached Calvary Lutheran Church council about office space in the church. The Council agreed to let WMPL/Canada work out of Calvary Lutheran.<sup>66</sup> Miss Viola Lae consented to serving as volunteer Recording Secretary in her off hours. Pastor H. O. Olson secured the services of Mr. C. Saxton, a local barrister and member of Mount Zion Lutheran Church in Edmonton.<sup>67</sup>

One further meeting was necessary to prepare the incorporation documents. This meeting took place at Calvary Lutheran in Edmonton on June 21, 1969.<sup>68</sup> Many corrections and changes were made which aided in the drafting of the final accepted copy of incorporation. On November 25, 1969,<sup>69</sup> WMPL/Canada was registered as a society in the province of Alberta. Following

this, application was made to the Federal Government for Federal tax exemption, for the Mission and for the authority to issue receipts. This was received by April 15, 1970.

In order for WMPL/Canada to become incorporated there were some real sacrifices of time and money on the part of a number of people. Pastor Howie Olson and his wife spent much time and energy in pursuing the incorporation and establishment of WMPL/Canada. Pastor Olson was chairman for the first six years and its Regional director for the next four years even though he was also traveling evangelist and Director for the Lutheran Evangelistic Movement in Canada.<sup>70</sup> At the end of 1977, he resigned as regional director of WMPL because the work was too demanding.<sup>71</sup> Perhaps what is most significant is that Pastor Olson served WMPL totally on a freewill basis without receiving an allowance.

Another person significant for her free volunteer work on behalf of WMPL Canada is Viola Lae. She served as volunteer financial secretary

### **The Mission's statement of faith asserts very strongly that it is a Lutheran mission**

on a part time basis from 1969 to 1978.<sup>72</sup> One of the most faithful supporters on WMPL/Canada has been Richard Pedersen of Camrose. He served as deputy treasurer of WMPL from 1950 to 1969 and since as treasurer of the Canadian Council. Such a record of service is truly remarkable. Other names which deserve mention for their sacrifice and faithful service are Pastor

A.B.H. Hagen, Dr. G. Loken, Kristen Ervick and Luther and Berit Eriksson. No Doubt there are many more persons who have given of their time and effort to make WMPL a significant mission society within Canadian Lutheranism.

The WMPL operates under a different philosophy than the synodical mission boards of Lutheran Churches in North America. Perhaps the philosophy can best be expressed by a few excerpts from the Mission Handbook.

The method for obtaining funds or goods and equipment for the temporal needs of the Mission and its workers is primarily prayer to God and trust in Him to provide.<sup>73</sup>

No direct solicitation of funds is made, either to individuals or to churches and church groups. One reason for this practice is that the Mission does not desire to divert support which otherwise would go to the regular work of the church bodies.<sup>74</sup>

...many years ago Hudson Taylor of the China Inland Mission expressed an attitude of faith which fits well the position of the Mission when he wrote, 'God's man, in God's place, doing God's work, in God's way will never lack God's supply.'<sup>75</sup>

The Mission's statement of faith asserts very strongly that it is a Lutheran mission and if any worker no longer wishes to be identified with this position, they must resign from the mission. Ever since its founding, WMPL insists that its mission effort is a complement and supplement to the regular missionary work of the Lutheran Synods and that an independent Mission society, it has no intention to compete or to divert men or means from the Lutheran Synodical programs.<sup>76</sup> Today its work in various countries of the world show that it has usually gone to areas where the Lutheran Synods are not doing any mission work



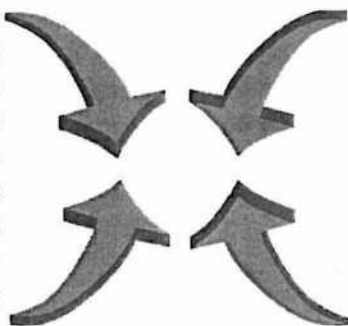
but in areas where there were synodical missionaries, WMPL has cooperated with them

### *Significant Developments Since Incorporation*

On May 1, 1972, the American board of the Santal Mission merged with the World Mission Prayer League.<sup>77</sup> As a result of this merger WMPL became involved in many projects in India and Bangladesh. WMPL also accepted Santal missionaries Harold and Dorothy Engen and Naomi Torkelson in India and John and Lois Otteson and Art and Kathy Bliese in Bangladesh as WMPL workers. Harold and Dorothy Engen were the two Canadians in this group of missionaries. The Engens through an arrangement worked out between WMPL Canada and Division of World Missions (DWM) ELCC, were issued a call by DWM and accepted it on April, 1977. This did not change their assignment in India.<sup>78</sup>

Perhaps the next most significant development in the history of WMPL was that it together with a number of other independent movements formed a fellowship called the Affiliation of Lutheran Movements (hereafter referred by the acronym ALMS) on February 7-8, 1974 at Seattle Lutheran Bible Institute.<sup>79</sup> The constituting members of this fellowship were The Fellowship of Lutheran Bible Institutes namely: the Canadian Lutheran Bible Institute, Camrose, Alberta

(CLBI), the California Lutheran Bible Institute, Los Angeles (CLBS), the Seattle Lutheran Bible Institute (SLBI), the Lutheran Evangelistic Movement (LEM), Lutheran Youth Alive Inc., Los Angeles (LYA), , Lutheran Youth Encounter Inc., Minneapolis (LYE), and World Mission Prayer League of Minneapolis and Camrose, Alberta.<sup>80</sup> The purpose of ALMS is to strengthen each other's ministries and to engage in tasks in which the movements desire to work together. The focus and concern of ALMS is the spiritual life and mission of the congregation, and therefore the members pledge themselves through membership and service to the life of the local congregation. Their heartfelt concern is for the spiritual renewal and for the constant revival within the Lutheran Church and to this end they give themselves as expendable agents.<sup>81</sup> Since their formation as a fellowship, ALMS sponsored a theological conference in 1980 in Minneapolis with such speakers as Dr. Trygve Skarsten of Trinity Lutheran Seminary, Columbus, Ohio, Dr. Ralph Winter, founder of the US Center for World Missions, Pasadena, California, Dr. Olaf Hanson of Luther Seminary, St. Paul, Dr. Charles Mueller a former district president of Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod and Dr. Herbert Chilstrom of the Lutheran Church in America. The addresses given at this conference were published in a compendium entitled Movements in the Church.<sup>82</sup> To new members have also joined ALMS since it was constituted. They are the Latin American Lutheran Mission and Good News for Israel.<sup>83</sup> Perhaps the significance of such a fellowship is that it indicates a desire for encouraging and strengthening one another but also a desire to raise a united conservative evangelical voice in the Lutheran Church. WMPL of Canada and the USA support such



cooperation and through the years have sought to work for renewal and mission vision within the Lutheran Church.

It was also in 1974 that WMPL of Canada had its need for a regional director fulfilled in the person of Reverend Howie Olson. He served as part-time regional director from 1974 to 1977. He resigned in 1977 due to his heavy work load.<sup>84</sup> Up until 1978 both Pastor Olson and Viola Lae had served the Mission on a part-time volunteer basis. On September 1, 1978, WMPL of Canada had its first full-time home staff in the persons of Luther and Berit Eriksson.<sup>85</sup> Luther's position was Deputation Secretary and Berit's was Financial Secre-

tary. In May of 1978, a mission home and office was purchased in Camrose by WMPL.<sup>86</sup> This house presently serves the needs of a home for the Eriksson's and also in the Canadian office of WMPL/Canada.

Since its incorporation, WMPL/Canada has not only experienced these new developments but it has also grown in a number of ways. A significant number of people have sensed a call to the work of world missions and have applied for service under WMPL in recent years.<sup>87</sup>

In the area of finances, WMPL/Canada has also experienced much growth in the last decade.<sup>88</sup> The following chart indicates this growth.<sup>89</sup>

The decreases usually are due to the fact that fewer missionaries are overseas and fewer are being supported. The money does follow the workers which is a basic tenet of WMPL policy.

Name	Home	Place of Service	Years (Furloughs & leaves of absence omitted)
David Wold	Edmonton, AB	Pakistan	1974-1976
Miss Sherryl Jorgenson (now Olson, wife of writer)	Ponoka, AB	Pakistan	1974-1977
Mrs. Lil Lewis	Edmonton, AB	Nepal	1976-
Mr. Jake Schaffhouser	Ft. St. John, BC	Zaire	1976-1981
Miss Una Vogel	Leduc, AB	Ecuador	1976-1980
Fritz & Kathy Geiser	Ft. St. John, BC	Ecuador	1977-1981
Rev. & Mrs. Gene Mau	Hagen, SK	Pakistan	1978-1980
Miss Karen Eriksson	Camrose, AB	Mexico	1979-1980 (Oct. - April)
Mrs. Josie Pillman	Lloydminster, AB	Ecuador	1980
Mr. & Mrs. Clayton Mellsen	Ohaton, AB	Pakistan	In preparation 1982

Year ending	Total Donations and Revenue:
1970	\$16,189
1971	\$14,107
1972	\$19,769
1973	\$32,951
1974	\$38,190
1975	\$58,008
1976	\$61,011
1977	\$65,981
1978	\$94,893
1979	\$103,866
1980	\$93,388
1981	\$84,488



Things have not all been easy for the work of WMPL/Canada. There have been a number of sorrows and tragedies in the WMPL family. On March 1, 1974, Paul Lindell<sup>90</sup> the General Director for WMPL for thirty some years and a key person in the development of WMPL/Canada, passed away. His successor, Reverend Leonard Patzold the next General Director passed away suddenly after a very short term as General Director from 1974 to the fall of 1975. On May 21, 1977, a tragedy occurred when Bud and Auli Schmidt were instantly killed in a car accident at Medicine Hat, Alberta.<sup>91</sup> Bud and Auli were home on furlough from Pakistan with their three children. Friends of WMPL were reminded that God's ways are not always our ways. On March 18, 1979, another Canadian WMPL leader passed away. Friends were again saddened at the sudden passing of Pastor Howie Olson, the man who had been a pioneer leader in incorporating WMPL/Canada.<sup>92</sup> Yet in spite of these losses of personnel and leaders in this past decade, the work of WMPL continues to go forward in Canada. God has indeed blessed this organization's work.

### *The Future for WMPL/ Canada*

What does the future hold for WMPL/Canada? This question is difficult to answer. Usually free movements in North American Lutheranism have not become large or influential.<sup>93</sup> Often what has happened has been that the free movements have been absorbed by one or the other of the Lutheran Synods, but then new movements have always arisen

to take their place. Free movements in Canadian Lutheranism have sometimes been criticized as not being Lutheran, divisive and competitive. However, such criticisms are shortsighted. The Lutheran Council in the USA suggests in a recent study that "the free movements have challenged the institutional churches... (and led) in their multi-formity from institutional rigidity."<sup>94</sup> It would seem that God has used many structures within Lutheranism. Often free movements have been pioneers in leading the church into new areas of mission. Within Canadian Lutheranism today, WMPL/Canada has challenged the various synods to broaden their mission vision, it has kept the spirit of foreign missions alive in many congregations and it beckons the churches not to abandon the task of cross-cultural frontier missions as some have done in recent years, but rather to search out the mission field where the Christian gospel is not yet proclaimed. The task facing the church is still a great task and synodical mission boards and free movements such as WMPL/Canada need to encourage and stimulate one another and pro-

voke one another to good works in order that the Gospel be preached to all nations.



## *EndNotes*

- <sup>1</sup> Ray S. Rosalles (Editor). Movements in the Church Trygve R. Skarsten, "Free Movements in American Lutheranism" Published by Affiliation of Lutheran Movements, 1980 p. 14.
- <sup>2</sup> George O. Evenson, Adventuring for Christ: The Story of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada (Calgary: Foothills Lutheran Press, 1974) pp. 17-18.
- <sup>3</sup> Raymond S. Rosales, "Forty Years Ago" Fellow Workers, May 1977, p. 6.
- <sup>4</sup> Rosales, 1977 p. 4.
- <sup>5</sup> Rosales, 1977 p. 5.
- <sup>6</sup> Rosales, 1977 p. 6.
- <sup>7</sup> Rosales, 1977 p. 7.
- <sup>8</sup> To God Be the Glory! An unofficial Booklet listing all of the WMPL Missionaries from 1937-1977, published May 23, 1977 on the occasion of WMPL's fortieth anniversary
- <sup>9</sup> World Vision, March 1947, p. 14
- <sup>10</sup> World Vision, March 1947, p. 14
- <sup>11</sup> World Vision, November 1947, p. 14.
- <sup>12</sup> World Vision, July 1949, p. 4.
- <sup>13</sup> Dr. G.O. Evenson, interviewed by writer at Canadian Lutheran Bible Institute, Camrose, AB, February 18, 1982.
- <sup>14</sup> Evenson - interview, also World Vision March 1948, back cover.
- <sup>15</sup> Pastor A.B.H. Hagen, interviewed by writer at Canadian Lutheran Bible Institute, Camrose, AB, February 18, 1982. Interview recorded on cassette which is in possession of writer.
- <sup>16</sup> World Vision, April 1950, p. 15.
- <sup>17</sup> Evenson - interview.
- <sup>18</sup> World Vision, January 1949, p. 14.
- <sup>19</sup> World Vision, July 1950, p. 9.
- <sup>20</sup> World Vision, May 1950, p. 15.
- <sup>21</sup> World Vision, August 1950, p. 12.
- <sup>22</sup> Paul J. Lindell, "WMPL in Canada" Fellow Workers, April 1969, p. 2. Also Richard Pederson interviewed by writer at his home in Camrose, AB, February 19, 1982. Also World Vision, June 1950, p. 11.
- <sup>23</sup> World Vision, April 1950, p. 15.
- <sup>24</sup> Luther & Berit Eriksson interviewed by writer in WMPL home in Camrose, Alta., Feb. 19, 1982.
- <sup>25</sup> George O. Evenson, "Norwegian Roots of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Canada (ELCC)" The Shepherd, Vol. 57, No. 3, March 1981, p. 6.
- <sup>26</sup> Eriksson interview.
- <sup>27</sup> Handbook of the World Mission Prayer League, adopted by the Home Council/USA on Nov. 1, 1976, pp. 2-3.
- <sup>28</sup> World Vision, July 1956. P. 14. Also, To God Be The Glory, a booklet listing all the WMPL missionaries from 1937-1977 published May 23, 1977, on the occasion of WMPL's fortieth anniversary, p.3.
- <sup>29</sup> World Vision, June 1954, p. 21.

- <sup>30</sup> World Vision, January 1958, p. 14.
- <sup>31</sup> World Vision, April 1958, p. 14.
- <sup>32</sup> Arnold Hagen, "Increase in Canada," Fellow Workers, Oct. 1978, p.11.
- <sup>33</sup> World Vision, June 1959, p. 14.
- <sup>34</sup> World Vision, Sept. 1959, p. 14. Also, To God Be The Glory, p. 3.
- <sup>35</sup> To God Be The Glory, pp. 2-5, 7-9.
- <sup>36</sup> World Vision, April 1954, p. 15.
- <sup>37</sup> World Vision, Aug. 1958, p. 14.
- <sup>38</sup> World Vision, April 1959, p. 3.
- <sup>39</sup> Lutheran World Vision, March 1960, p. 6.
- <sup>40</sup> Eriksson, interview.
- <sup>41</sup> Hagen, interview.
- <sup>42</sup> Lutheran World Vision, March 1960, p. 6.
- <sup>43</sup> World Vision, Sept. 1951, p. 7.
- <sup>44</sup> World Vision, Dec. 1955, p. 22.
- <sup>45</sup> World Vision, Jan. 1958, p. 14. Also, July 1957, p. 15.
- <sup>46</sup> Lutheran World Vision, Dec. 1960, p. 14.
- <sup>47</sup> World Vision, Aug. 1954, p. 9.
- <sup>48</sup> Eriksson, interview.
- <sup>49</sup> Lutheran World Vision, Dec. 1960, p. 14.
- <sup>50</sup> World Vision, April 1952, back cover.
- <sup>51</sup> World Vision, Nov. 1954, back cover.
- <sup>52</sup> Lutheran World Vision, April 1960, p.15.
- <sup>53</sup> Lutheran World Vision, Feb. 1960, p. 15.
- <sup>54</sup> Lutheran World Vision, May 1960, p. 15.
- <sup>55</sup> Lutheran World Vision, Feb. 1960, front cover.
- <sup>56</sup> World Vision, July 1951, p. 14.
- <sup>57</sup> Lutheran World Vision, May 1962, p. 14.
- <sup>58</sup> WMPL minutes of Canada Council in Edmonton. Meeting of June 21, 1969. Also, Dr. G. Loken, personal correspondence in possession of writer.
- <sup>59</sup> Paul J. Lindell, "WMPL in Canada," Fellow Workers, April 1969, p. 2.
- <sup>60</sup> Referred to earlier on page.
- <sup>61</sup> Hagen, interview.
- <sup>62</sup> Pastor Howie Olson, Report given in 1970. Part of material given to writer by Dr. G. Loken.
- <sup>63</sup> Olson Report
- <sup>64</sup> WMPL Minutes of Organization meeting at Edmonton, Dec. 6, 1968
- <sup>65</sup> WMPL Minutes of the first Canada Council meeting at Edmonton, February 27, 1969.
- <sup>66</sup> Olson Report.
- <sup>67</sup> Olson Report.
- <sup>68</sup> WMPL Minutes of the Canada Council at Edmonton, June 21, 1969.
- <sup>69</sup> Certificate for registration as a society sent to Department of Provincial Secretary, Edmonton, AB "Registered" Nov. 25, 1969. (photo copied)
- <sup>70</sup> Arnold Hagen, "Vessel for Noble Use," Fellow Workers, May 1979, p. 14.

- <sup>71</sup> Hagen, "Vessel for Noble use," 1979 also Interview.
- <sup>72</sup> To God Be the Glory, May 23, 1977.
- <sup>73</sup> Handbook of the World Mission Prayer League, adopted Nov. 1, 1976, p.13.
- <sup>74</sup> Handbook of the World Mission Prayer League, pp. 13-14.
- <sup>75</sup> Handbook of the World Mission Prayer League, pp. 13-14
- <sup>76</sup> Handbook of the World Mission Prayer League, p. 3.
- <sup>77</sup> Alvin C. Berg, What God Has Done: A Global Report," Fellow Workers, May 1977, p. 16. Also "Mission Family of WMPL," Fellow Workers, Nov. 1974, p. 16.
- <sup>78</sup> Fellow Workers, April 1977, p. 4.
- <sup>79</sup> Hagen, Interview.
- <sup>80</sup> Affiliation of Lutheran Movements, A Brochure received by Pastor A.B.H. Hagen by writer.
- <sup>81</sup> Affiliation of Lutheran Movements.
- <sup>82</sup> Rosales, 1980. pp. 2-3.
- <sup>83</sup> Affiliation of Lutheran Movements.
- <sup>84</sup> Hagen, May 1979 pp. 3, 14.
- <sup>85</sup> Arnold Hagen, "Increase in Canada," Fellow Workers, Oct. 1978, p. 11.
- <sup>86</sup> Hagen, interview. Also Eriksson, interview.
- <sup>87</sup> To God Be the Glory, updated by Berit Eriksson.
- <sup>88</sup> Dr. G. Loken personal correspondence.
- <sup>89</sup> WMPL, Annual Report 1981, p. 7.
- <sup>90</sup> Fellow Workers, March 1974, p. 9.
- <sup>91</sup> Pastor Howie Olson, "Delivered from the Dust," Fellow Workers, August 1977, p. 3.
- <sup>92</sup> Hagen, May 1979, p. 3.
- <sup>93</sup> Rosales, p. 30.
- <sup>94</sup> Institute for Ecumenical Research Strasbourg, Evangelical, 'Liberation and Charismatic Movements: Their Problem and Significance with Ecclesiological and Ecumenical Frameworks', New York: Lutheran Council in the USA 1978, p. 19, cited by Movements in the Church, p. 30

# DEVELOPMENTS IN WORLD MISSION PRAYER LEAGUE/CANADA 1981-95

by Arnold Hagen  
January 1996

*"My days are swifter than a weaver's shuttle",* is the confession of Job of Old Testament times.<sup>1</sup> This statement is true of individual lives and of organizations and movements of the church. It is also applicable to World Mission Prayer League in Canada.

Daryl Olson has written the history of WMPL/Canada as a treatise for his studies at Lutheran Seminary in Saskatoon, which is dated March 27, 1982. It gives the early beginnings of this movement within Lutheranism, and its ministry since its incorporation in Canada in 1969 and up until the beginning of the 1980s. Since that time there is considerable development that has taken place; like a weaver's shuttle moving back and forth there have been and will continue to be developments taking place that are important to record and preserve in WMPL/Canada's history.

At a council meeting of WMPL/Canada on March 17, 1995, Arnold Hagen was requested to write an update of the history. As one who has had an association with the movement over many years, and as a full participant in its ministry since its incorporation in 1969, I deem it a privilege to write a history of the work

over a fifteen year period, 1981-1995. In some instances the period involved will be longer, in order to complete statistics quoted by Daryl Olson that conclude with the year 1981.<sup>2</sup>

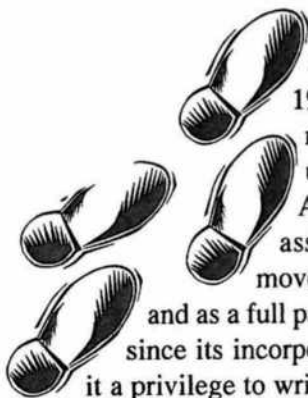
## *Developments in the Home Base in Camrose*

### *A. Facilities*

The first office was in Calvary Lutheran Church, Edmonton, which the congregation graciously provided. This was a convenient location, as the first president, Howie Olson was its pastor. Viola Lae the first financial secretary, who served as a volunteer was also in Edmonton. This facilitated a convenient and close working relationship between these executive persons.

In the course of a few years, consideration was given by the council for a more permanent home base. The decision was made in 1975 to establish the home base in Camrose.<sup>3</sup> This was the time when the first president Howie Olson vacated this office to become the Regional Director of WMPL/Canada. Arnold Hagen who succeeded him as the new president, was president of the CLBI and had his office there, so Camrose was a convenient location.

It was soon recognized that there was need of full time staff to expedite the work, and to relieve Viola Lae of her position as financial secretary.



This recognition resulted in the purchase of a house at 5408-49 Avenue that was to become the WMPL/Can Home as of July 1, 1978. It was purchased at a price of \$50,000 from Mary Erickson, of which amount a loan of \$37,000 was secured from WMPL/USA, at a low interest rate of 5%. To make this a home for the incoming new staff, Luther and Berit Eriksson, as well as providing additional bedrooms for use of WMPL, there were renovations done in the basement.

This home provided excellent and adequate facilities for a number of years in the work. When however Rev. Rob Lewis was called as the new executive director, who along with his family were to take up residence in January 1996, the council again with much prayer made the decision to purchase a house that would serve as their home. This house, at 5716-39 Avenue was purchased for \$96,600.<sup>4</sup> This was made possible, not by a loan this time, but by a very generous grant from WMPL/USA in the amount of \$67,300.

WMPL/Canada now has two houses that serve as its home base: the first as offices and as the residence for the financial secretary, with extra bedrooms for guests; the second as the home for the executive director and his family.

The establishment of Camrose as its home base has been advantageous for another reason. The council meetings and the annual meetings are held in the Canadian LBI which is only two blocks away from the first mission home.



### *B. Home Staff*

The first full time fellow workers called to the home staff were Rev. Luther Eriksson and his wife Berit, who along with their four children moved into the mission home in 1977. A news release regarding their appointment is as follows:

#### *WORLD MISSION PRAYER LEAGUE TO ESTABLISH A CANADIAN OFFICE*

Camrose, Alberta, April 3 -- The World Mission Prayer League/Canada has decided to establish an office with a full-time Promotional Secretary and Office Secretary. Rev. and Mrs. Luther G. Eriksson of the Western Canada Synod of the LCA have been accepted for these positions. The new office will be located in Camrose, Alberta. The Canada Council of the World Mission Prayer League made these decisions at its March meeting in Camrose.<sup>5</sup>

Luther and Berit Eriksson had both mission and pastoral experience and were well qualified for these positions. They had been WMPL missionaries 1958-67, in the parish ministry 1970-78. Luther resigned in 1982 due to illness and passed away in 1986. After his death, Berit's position was changed to Administrative Secretary, which was more in accord with her work.

While part time help in the office and the home were of good assistance to Berit, it was recognized that full time assistance would be the better way. In 1986, Nels and Marion Loberg were appointed as Promotional Secretary and Home Hostess, in which positions they served until 1988 when they again went back to the field



as missionaries. Their extensive mission experience in Bolivia for many years was an asset in their ministries in the home and office. Once again as previous to their positions in the office, part time help was provided for Berit until the appointment of a financial secretary.

Florence Olson was appointed as the Financial Secretary, and began her work in September 1990. She was well acquainted with the ministry of WMPL, being the mother of missionary Arlin Olson. Berit and she were the two home office staff personnel until early 1993, when Berit became ill, was diagnosed with cancer and passed away on July 22. Florence who was serving as the financial secretary, now found that her portfolio was expanded to other areas. Part time office assistance was provided from time to time to assist her.

In the mean time the council was actively at work, praying, and alerting the constituency about the need of an executive secretary in replacement of Berit, and seeking to find the Lord's person for the position. While working on this matter, the council felt it imperative that additional assistance be given to Florence. At a meeting of the Council on Nov. 27, 1993, a resolution was passed that Arnold Hagen be asked to be the Executive Secretary on an interim basis. While he recognized that a president of a board that deals with policy matters ought not to be involved in administrative matters, yet because of the urgency of the situation, and hopefully the brevity of the position, he accepted this voluntary assignment on a part-time basis. Unexpectedly, this position continued until the end of 1995.

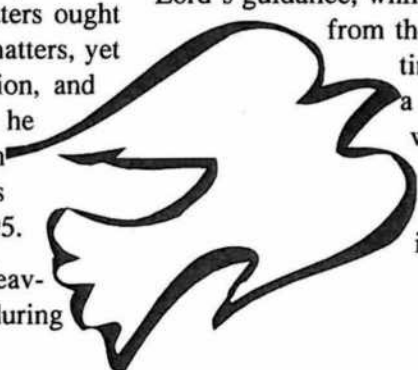
There were two unsuccessful endeavors to secure an executive director during

the interim period. Neil Mittelstaedt, along with his wife Carol had been commissioned as missionaries to Pakistan with WMPL in January 1991. Their visas were denied and they were uncertain as to what the future held, even though he was a graduate of Concordia Seminary in St. Catharines, ON. The council interviewed him at a meeting August 20, 1993. The green light seemed on, and the council unanimously called him to be the executive director.<sup>6</sup> However it was not to be; the call was declined, as Neil chose to remain in the parish ministry instead.

Much heart searching followed along with prayer for the Lord's guidance. But more was to come as another call was declined.

Charles Jackson, a former CLBI student and recent seminary graduate, was called. The Bishops of the ELCIC decided that if he should accept the position, it would need to be as a layman as they would not authorize his ordination on a call to WMPL. Only a call to a parish would qualify him for ordination. Not unexpectedly at this juncture, he declined the call and accepted a pastoral position.

The council was reminded by these declinations even though they believed they were Spirit-guided in these choices, that God's ways are not our ways. Once again they prayerfully sought the Lord's guidance, while entertaining the question from the past: "Why Lord?" This time, after much discussion, a decision was reached on whom to call; this call received a positive response from the one who received it.



Reverend Rob Lewis of Lisbon, Illinois, was called. It is interesting to note that twice previously in 1985 and 1993, he had been approached about the possibility of his interest in the position of executive secretary of WMPL/Canada. It did not seem to him that this was the time to consider such a possibility. This time he promised to give the call prayerful consideration. However, at almost the same time he was informed of a call to become a professor of practical theology at the Seminary and Bible School of the AFLC. This involved considerable struggle, but it resulted in the assurance that the call to WMPL/Canada was the one to accept. What a blessing was experienced at the next council meeting!

Rob Lewis is a Canadian, a graduate of the CLBI in Camrose, the LBI in Seattle, and the AFFLICT Seminary in Minneapolis. His wife is Pat (Patzold), also a graduate of CLBI, and a daughter of Ruby Patzold and the late Leonard Patzold, missionaries to Pakistan (Leonard Patzold was a former director of WMPL/USA.) They have four children, and moved to Camrose the first week of January 1996.

The position that Pastor Lewis will hold is that of Executive Director. The constitution provides for the position of Executive Director, and the council decided this will be the title of Pastor Lewis' position. It is with thanksgiving and anticipation that the council awaits his coming and the launching of an enlarged ministry of WMPL/Canada.

The council has in a general way indicated the functions of the office and has communicated them to Pastor Lewis.

### *C: Expectations for Executive Director*

Although the ministry will be shaped by the gifts of the individual, the following will be involved:

- Provide vision and leadership
- Administration
- Promotion of Prayer Support
- Public Relations
- Relation with members, associates, missionaries, candidates
- Liaison: fields, WMPL/USA, Canadian Lutheran Churches
- Arrange for missionary home assignments.



## *God's Provision for WMPL/Canada*

### *A. Provision of Fellow Workers 1969-95*

In addition to the following list of fellow workers there have been some part-time workers in the WMPL home and office in Camrose who have assisted when there was a shortage of staff.

The number of fellow workers on the field has varied over the years. At present, there are only seven, three couples and one single, serving in Afghanistan, Ecuador and Mexico.

There is a noticeable change in the mission fields in which Canadians have been involved with over the years. There were 8 (couples and singles) in Pakistan, but none now;

Name	Field	Years
Bill and Doris Dahl	Pakistan	1964-83
Dale Engen	Bangladesh	1994 4 months
Karen Eriksson	Mexico	1980 7 months
Luther and Berit Eriksson	India	1958-67
Luther	Camrose office	1978-82
Berit		1978-93
Leanne Golding	Ecuador	1995 1 month
Dan and Leonie Gomez	Mexico	1994-
David Haugen	Pakistan	1986-89
	Afghanistan	1994-
Lil Lewis	Nepal	1976-83
Marion Loberg	Bolivia	1952-65
Nels Loberg	Bolivia	1964-65
Nels and Marion Loberg	Bolivia	1965-80 & 1990-94
	Mexico	1985-86
	Camrose Office	1986-88
Clayton and Brenda Mellsen	Pakistan	1983-94
Jan Njaa	Pakistan	1987 3 months
Arlin and Ruth Olson	Pakistan	1985-89
	Afghanistan	1993-
Florence Olson	Camrose Office	1990-
Terry Pattison	Kenya	1991-94
Paul and Josie Pillman	Ecuador	1982-90
Miriam Renison	Kenya	1994 3 months
Diane Rude	Pakistan	1989-93
Ken and Lynne Slamp	Mexico	1990-92
Helena Tenhunen	Pakistan	1986-90
Mark and Marybelle Thompson	Ecuador	1991-
Ramona Vaxwick	Ecuador	1970 3 months
Charles Zelensky	Pakistan	1988-90
Arnold Hagen	Volunteer Camrose Office	1993-95

two of these are now in Afghanistan, seconded to IAM. Kenya and Bangladesh, have recently had two workers, but none presently. The same is true of Bolivia.

### *B. Provision of Council Members 1969-95*

NAME	YEARS SERVED
H.O. Olson	5 years as Pres.
G. Loken 1969-1985	17 years as Sec.
A. Hagen 1969-1995	27 years, 21 as Pres.
R Pedersen	14 years. Treasurer
Viola Lae	6 years
Olaf Friggstad	3 years
Lydia Foster	3 years
David Wold	9 years
Luther Eriksson	4 years
Berit Eriksson	1 year
Kris Ervick	9 years
J.S. Stolee	6 years
Arnfeld Morck	1 year
Vern Roste	5 years
Leonard Sogge	2 years
Elmer Rawling	3 years
Joyce Bergh	9 years
Vern Raaflaub	6 years
Nels Loberg	3 years
George Evenson	6 years
Carolyn Jacobson	3 years
Clint Adams	3 years
Faith Brace	1 year
Paul Swedberg	3 years
Sally Swedberg	6 years
Garnet Leach	6 years
Ken Jorgenson	6 years
Lil Lewis	3 years
Oscar Lokken	3 years

Lloyd Olson	3 years
Bill Dahl	9 years
Leonie Gomez	6 years
Steinar Haugen	6 years
Bob Randoy	9 years
Laverne Hoveland	6 years
Arnold Kreuger	2 years
David Eriksson	6 years
Una Vogel	3 years
Eleanor Damkar	3 years
Alice Hafso	2 years
Charles Jackson	1 year
Diane MacClellan	1 year

Since its incorporation in 1969 WMPL/Canada has had an elected council comprised of both laity and pastors to guide its ministry. Some have served for many years, and others for fewer. Since 1992, periods of service are limited to three consecutive terms.

### *C. Provision of Finances 1970-95*

The income over the past twenty-five years is encouraging and indicates growth that is far greater than the inflation factor. However, the growth is not steady, and show spurts that are rapid at times. There is not only growth for there are some years when there have been decreases, which seem a bit discouraging on the surface.

There are factors not readily apparent that contribute to this fluctuation of income over the years. There is an occasional comment made in reports dealing with finances, that recessionary times could be a factor in decreases. It seems other factors are more likely involved. One such is the reception of legacies given to WMPL, which give an increase in income. As an exam-

Year	Amount
1970	\$ 16,188
1971	14,016
1972	19,768
1973	32,950
1974	38,189
1975	58,007
1976	61,010
1977	65,980
1978	94,892
1979	103,865
1980	93,387
1981	84,487
1982	98,381
1983	88,671
1984	74,271
1985	82,228
1986	160,733
1987	126,058
1988	135,588
1989	155,040
1990	171,458
1991	170,210
1992	186,364
1993	152,430
1994	149,647
1995	not yet available

ple, a generous estate was received in 1986; other legacies have been a great blessing too, especially in recent years.

Another important factor is the financial policy and faith of WMPL, which affirms that the Lord will provide for the workers that are sent into the field. When there are more workers, the income increases, and when there are fewer, the income decreases. This is reflected in the financial statistics and is a real encouragement.

## *Relationships Formalized and Extended*

### *A. World Mission Prayer League a Sodality, Not a Modality*

There are two basic structures in which the work of world missions has been and continues to be carried on. This is true also in Lutheran world missions. The terms used to describe these two structures are *sodality* and *modality*. A modality is an institutionalized structure. The church is a modality; it is an institution that has

shape and form and is organized with a specific membership to carry on its purpose. A sodality is not institutionalized. It is a fellowship of like-minded people that has a particular mission to fulfill. It is a movement that gathers together rather informally to accomplish a specific purpose that holds them together. A *movement* has been described in this way:

"Spontaneous temporary coalescence of people around a need or an opportunity".<sup>7</sup>

World Mission Prayer League is a sodality, not a modality. It is a movement, not an institution. The Lutheran church and the Lutheran Synods are modalities. Although differently structured they interrelate and need to be co-operative rather than competitive. From its very outset, WMPL has sought to be non-competitive, but co-operative with the world missions' program of the Lutheran Church. It has sought to enter fields where there was no other Lutheran mission work or it was reaching only a segment of the country. What was true in its inception is also the case in its continuing ministry. This is clearly in evidence in the work of WMPL/Canada, and poignantly in the years 1981-95.



### *B. Relationship with Revenue Canada and WMPL/USA*

A sodality like WMPL/Canada needs the approval of government agencies in order to be entitled to issue tax deductible receipts for gifts that enable its ministry. When it was incorporated in 1969, it was given registration to issue these receipts. This privilege also involved responsibilities including the submission of a yearly report and an audited financial statement

to Revenue Canada (formerly Department of National Revenue). In the year 1985, WMPL/Canada received a reply to its submissions, asking for verification that it was living by the stipulations in its registration. Was WMPL/Canada supporting only Canadian missionaries with the gifts it received, or were some of them being diverted to the support of other missionaries than its own? This was difficult to determine because of the close inter-relationship in the work and the two offices of WMPL/Can and WMPL/USA. Counsel was obtained to assist in this complex situation.

President Hagen arranged an interview with Mr. Ron Knechtel, a taxation specialist with the Canadian Council of Christian Charities, who acted on behalf of its member organizations with Revenue Canada. It was learned that WMPL/Canada was only one among many such organizations that was being scrutinized by Revenue Canada at the time. The endeavor was apparently to weed out illegitimate organizations from having registration privileges. This resulted in A MEMORANDUM OF AGREEMENT by WMPL/Canada and WMPL/USA, which was also approved by Revenue Canada.<sup>8</sup>

This Memorandum of Agreement states the nature of WMPL/Canada's ministry and its relationship with WMPL/USA. It also provides for a Joint Overseas Committee, and the provision that in the financial reports of WMPL/USA, reference will be made in the listed income to the amount of contributions from Canada. This has formalized the fine relationship that has existed from the beginning between the ministries and the joint ministry of WMPL/Canada and WMPL/USA.



### *C. Relationship with other Lutheran Churches*

Relationships have been cordial and basically co-operative in the work of missions between WMPL/Canada and the Lutheran Synods. Some concern however was registered by the president of the ELCC with the appointment of Luther and Berit Eriksson in the office in Camrose, that they might be a competition to the world mission program of ELCC. About this time, a request for a display at the ELCC convention was denied. The Western Canada Synod of LCA gave opportunity for convention displays by WMPL/Canada. The ELCIC grants WMPL/Canada the privilege of a display at its biennial conventions and participating in its Global Missions' events. The Lutheran Women's Missionary League of the Lutheran Church Canada has invited a display at its convention in July 1996.

There is an increasing complexity in the operation of organizations over the years, including church and parachurch movements. It is often referred to as "red tape". Legislation enacted by governments, along with expanding needs of workers in the work of world missions have impacted upon the relationship between WMPL/Canada and the Lutheran churches. Medical care, disability, unemployment and retirement planning are needs that involve both the state and the church. WMPL/Canada recognized that rather than seeking to go its own way in these instances, it would be advisable to seek the agencies of the church and its program where practical and available.

When the council decided to seek to enroll Berit Eriksson in the pension plan of the ELCC, it was denied because there was no formal relationship with it to qualify for its participation in

the plan. Previous to this, and until the formation of the New ELCA in 1987, WMPL/Canada missionaries along with WMPL/USA missionaries had been able to participate in the pension plan WMPL had with the church in the USA. After 1987 WMPL/USA arranged a pension plan with Lutheran Brotherhood. WMPL/Canada had to then decide what to do regarding a pension plan for its fellow workers. There were several options:

- Continuing participation with WMPL/USA if possible.
- The pension plan of the Canadian Council of Christian Charities.
- The pension plan of the ELCIC. This would however require an agreement between WMPL/Canada and the ELCIC.

An AGREEMENT OF UNDERSTANDING was developed and approved in 1988 by the ELCIC and its Division of World Missions and WMPL/Canada<sup>9</sup> This agreement acknowledges the WMPL/Canada as an independent mission society. It also states that there is no legal relationship involved that would make either responsible for the actions or liabilities of the other. There is to be ongoing consultation by the respective executive directors, and a sharing of information and reports on the nature of the ministries. WMPL/Canada will have the opportunity for convention displays, and may be given opportunity to present the cause of its ministries, recruit personnel, and obtain financial support according to synod guidelines and upon approval of individual congregations.

Since that time, WMPL/Canada has participated in the pension plan of the ELCIC. In late 1995, word has been received from the ELCIC



Pension Department that continuing participation in the plan is being seriously questioned by the Insurer of the ELCIC plan, so that it may be denied at the end of this year. Thus renegotiating a pension plan once again for its fellow workers seems most likely.

## *Additional Items of Development*

### *A. Mission Conferences.*

Congregations held mission conferences not infrequently in 1981-95. Missionaries at home on furlough and home staff would usually be on the program. Displays were always invited and this was a good exposure for the ministry. In addition, with the close fellowship experienced with other movements as CLBI and LEM, there was participation in their programs as well. WMPL missionaries or staff who were available frequently had a teaching ministry on missions in CLBI classes and LEM Deeper Life programs.

It was deemed important that in addition to these opportunities, WMPL/Canada should have its own mission conferences or camps, similar to those held several times a year in the USA. A retreat for missionaries, staff, and area representatives was held in 1991 at CLBI with an attendance of 42.

Thereafter mission camps were held annually, 1991-95, the first two and the last at Camp Kuriakos, and the second last at CLBI. Members of the staff at these camps were guests from the USA and our own Canadian members and missionaries home on furlough. Another mission camp is planned for August 1996, again at Camp Kuriakos.

### *B. Area Representatives and Prayer Groups*

Prayer has always been a main thrust in the ministry of World Mission Prayer League. The movement is comprised of people who pray and trust the Lord to answer with provisions and people to carry out its mission in the world. However, a more recent development has been the appointment of area representatives to function in designated areas to promote prayer and the ministry. At first they were termed regional representatives, but this was changed to area representatives.

The number of area representatives has varied, depending on who is available to serve.

They are appointed in areas where there are members and friends of World Mission Prayer League enabling a prayer fellowship. Their term of service is 2 years. Contact is maintained with them to assist them in their serving.

### *C. Prayer Focus*

Over the years a newsletter was sent periodically to the membership, informing of the ministry and of the need of prayer for specific people, fields and projects. In 1992 this was changed to *Prayer Focus* with a monthly mailing. It is primarily a prayer list of the fifteen fields in which WMPL is serving, but also gives pertinent information on each. It serves as a prayer agenda for prayer meetings in the home base Camrose, but also for prayer meetings convened by the area representatives.

#### *D. Re-entry Booklet*

An item discussed in council meetings at some length has been how to adequately help missionaries home on furlough, going on a leave of absence or resigning, to adjust to the "foreign" experience of living in Canada. This is especially crucial in regard to children in the family that find re-entry difficult.

A booklet on re-entry, or furlough has been prepared for use in this re-entry and 'debriefing' of returning missionary families that is very helpful.

#### *E. Psychological Testing of Missionary Candidates*

There have been both medical and psychological testing of applicant missionaries for some time in WMPL. Previous to 1984, the medical testing was done in Canada, but the psychological testing was done in the USA, where the American missionaries were tested. This involved considerable travel and expense, so a Canadian Psychologist was found who could do the testing.

Dr. Lloyd Njaa of Saskatoon, formerly a professor at the University of Saskatchewan, recently retired, and a friend of world missions graciously accepted to do this, and without cost except for the materials involved. This has made the testing both convenient and economical.

#### *F. Mail Vote To Elect Council Members.*

For a number of years following incorporation in 1969, the manner of electing members of

the council was by vote at the annual meeting. Some time later in order to enable the entire membership to participate in the voting procedure, a mail vote was held, since this had also become the practice in WMPL/USA. After functioning this way for a few years there was some question raised that this might not be proper in Canada, so it was discontinued for a brief time until assurance was given by government and legal authorities that it was proper. The Lawyer suggested that the Bylaws be amended to state that the election of council members be by mail vote. This was done, and since 1993 the election of council has been by mail.

#### *Facing the Challenge of the Future*

With faith in the promises of God and courage and confidence in the Lord's mission in the world, WMPL/Canada in gratitude for blessings in its past ministry, and anticipating fruitfulness in its future ministry, enthusiastically engages in its God-given task to win people to Jesus Christ. "To God be the glory, great things he has done". We also confidently add, "And great things he will continue to do by the gracious work of his Holy Spirit, and through the ministry of World Mission Prayer League/Canada in the days ahead. Amen!"



## *EndNotes*

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<sup>1</sup> Job 7:6 NIV translation

<sup>2</sup> Page 7, History of WMPL/Canada

<sup>3</sup> President's Report, 03/13/75

<sup>4</sup> Council minutes, Nov.18, 1995

<sup>5</sup> News Release, Raymond Rosales WMPL/Mpls

<sup>6</sup> Council Minutes, August 20, 1993



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