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A History of the Montana Conference of the Evangelical Church

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A HISTORY OF THE MONTANA CONFERENCE
OF THE EVANGELICAL CHURCH

by

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER	PAGE
I. THE INTRODUCTION.....	1
The Problem.....	1
Objectives and Importance of the Study.....	2
Limitations of the Study.....	3
Definition of Terms.....	4
Method of Procedure.....	5
Statement of Organization.....	6
II. THE ORGANIZATION OF CONFERENCE HISTORY.....	9
Early History of Montana.....	11
Origin of the Evangelical Church.....	15
The Beginning of Evangelical Work in Montana.....	21
The Broadview Mission.....	22
The Inverness Mission.....	23
The Plentywood Mission.....	24
The Fallon Mission.....	26
General History of the Montana Conference Prior to Formal History.....	26
The Broadview Mission.....	26
The Inverness Mission.....	31
The Plentywood Mission.....	38
The Fallon Mission.....	43

The Billings Mission.....	45
The Rapelje Mission.....	52
The Ryegate Mission.....	55
The Shawmut Mission (no record).....	56
The Big Timber Mission.....	56
The Reed Point Mission.....	58
The Livingston Mission.....	59
The Columbus Mission.....	62
The Montana Conference Organized, June 23, 1927.....	63
 The 1927 Session.....	 64
The 1928 Session.....	66
Missoula Mission Established.....	69
The 1929 Session.....	70
The 1930 Session.....	71
The 1931 Session.....	72
The 1932 Session.....	73
The 1933 Session.....	74
The 1934 Session.....	76
The 1935 Session.....	77
The 1936 Session.....	79
The 1937 Session.....	80
The 1938 Session.....	81
The 1939 Session.....	82
The 1940 Session.....	84

CHAPTER

PAGE

The 1941 Session.....	84
The 1942 Session.....	85
The 1943 Session.....	85
The 1944 Session.....	87
The 1945 Session.....	90
The 1946 Session.....	92
 III. EVANGELICAL MINISTERS OF THE GOSPEL IN THE STATE OF MONTANA.....	 96
 IV. PLANS FOR MERGER WITH THE UNITED BRETHREN CHURCH IN CHRIST...	152
 Basis of Union.....	154
The 1948 Session.....	159
 V. CONCLUSION.....	165
 BIBLIOGRAPHY.....	171
 APPENDIX A ARTICLES OF INCORPORATION OF THE MONTANA CONFERENCE OF THE EVANGELICAL CHURCH.....	 177
 APPENDIX B QUESTIONNAIRE.....	181
 APPENDIX C MAP OF THE EVANGELICAL WORK IN MONTANA.....	182

CHAPTER I

THE INTRODUCTION

As the population moved westward the church sent missionaries to keep its constituency together. The Evangelical Association Church, through the Dakota conference, tried to keep its people together in the state of Montana. The United Evangelical Church, through the Platte River Conference, tried to keep pace with its people who homesteaded in the Broadview vicinity.

THE PROBLEM

There has been no authorized history written of the work of the Evangelical church in the state of Montana. The work was started in 1908. Many of the men directly connected with the early beginnings have passed on to their eternal rewards. There are few remaining who could help to reconstruct the unrecorded beginnings. These, because of health or geographical location, were unable to actively participate in the conference work. It had become necessary to begin work on such a history immediately if an adequate account of the early years of this mission conference was to be obtained and preserved in written form.

The necessity for such a history was further increased in the light of the merger of the Evangelical Church with the Church of the United Brethren in Christ in 1947. The United Brethren conference had a fairly complete history written by Rev. S. O. Douglas. In order that the historical records of this organization be complete, the Evangelical history had to be collected and compiled.

As early as 1933, a committee was appointed to write this history. Rev. H. S. Tool was appointed as chairman of this committee. Nothing permanent was ever accomplished, although Rev. Tool had his heart set on writing a history of the conference. He would have been qualified in a very excellent way to write such a work, but in 1948, shortly after his third appointment to Reed Point, he was called to his eternal reward and the history remained unwritten. The writer was challenged in many ways by the saintly witness of Rev. H. S. Tool. It was the author's privilege to complete his work for a license to preach under H. S. Tool's fatherly guidance. After Rev. Tool's departure, the writer received his first opportunity to preach and tried in a very limited way to supply the field until conference could locate another man. The intimate connection to this man's life and ambitions for the Evangelical church in Montana made a strong impression on this writer, and he vowed then to in some measure complete Howard Tool's incomplete task. That work is embodied in this thesis.

OBJECTIVES AND IMPORTANCE OF THE STUDY

One of the important reasons for this study was to place on record, in a systematically written form, the history of an organization which has become an important part of the Montana Conference of the Evangelical United Brethren Church.

This thesis was written with several objectives in view. The author desired to complete the historical account of the Evangelicals

so that further work might be done to make a combined history for the present work.

One is constantly aware of the lessons history can teach to the observer. The study of past successes may bring future successes, and a study of the points of weakness in the past may help to offset repetition at a future time. It was the author's purpose to put in written form the record of the Evangelical work in Montana. Materials were gathered from the Montana Conference Official Records, local Church Records, interviews with key individuals, and correspondence with many others. The writer presented the facts as he was able to find them in these sources of material. Where there were conflicting reports, facts were taken from the Official Records and Church Records.

Little is known in the denomination about the early work of the church in Montana. Some materials existing in print are not accurate because there was no standardized history of the work in the state, and records which were used as reference works were at times conflicting.

Provision was also made in this thesis for churches to find a correlated statement concerning the early years of their beginning. Also, material on the men who served as ministers of the church in Montana was gathered and included.

LIMITATIONS OF STUDY

Time has in many instances blurred the facts concerning events which took place in the early period of the history. In some instances conflicting reports were given. In these cases priority was given to the Conference Official Records and Local Church Reports.

Personal testimony was carefully considered and compared before being included, where local records were hazy. The writer recognized that there were some facts that were not completely accurate. Wherever possible the existing established records were used as a guide. The cooperation of those able to supply information was gratifying, especially the men serving in former Evangelical fields.

DEFINITION OF TERMS

In order to give a full understanding of this history, the following terms are defined.

Annual Conference. This has been used to denote a group of organized churches under a single leadership within a given area, oftentimes within state boundaries. The Montana conference was made up with all of the organized churches in the state of Montana included.

Presiding Elder. The ranking officer within the organized conference was the presiding elder. He was superintendent over all of the churches within the conference or district over which he had supervision.

Dakota Conference. This conference was composed of all Evangelical churches in the combined states of North Dakota and South Dakota. These were originally Evangelical Association churches.

Platte River Conference. This was a United Evangelical conference made up of the churches in Nebraska and Iowa. This conference was dissolved in 1922 when the Evangelical Association and the United Evangelical church merged. The major part of the Platte River conference

became part of the Nebraska conference of the Evangelical church.

METHOD OF PROCEDURE

Documentary Sources. Various documentary sources were utilized in the course of this historic investigation. All available conference material was incorporated. A number of Evangelical Messengers were examined for pertinent material directly applicable to this study. Such publications, as well as unpublished sketches and a thesis, were also used.

Interviews. Some persons who were directly connected with the conference were contacted and interviewed. These interviews were written down or tape-recorded and then used with discretion as they lent support to the thesis. In some cases questions were supplied to close associates in Hubbard, Iowa and Billings, Montana. These people personally interviewed individuals whose testimony gave added influence to this work.

Questionnaire. A questionnaire was sent out to gather information about every man that had ever served in the Evangelical church in Montana. These forms were sent to the preachers concerned wherever possible or necessary. In cases where death had taken the minister, the nearest relatives or close friends were consulted. The questionnaire was sent by mail to California, Oregon, Montana, North Dakota, South Dakota, Minnesota, Iowa, Colorado, and Nebraska. The form used in this questionnaire was included in Appendix B.

Letters. Personal correspondence was established and maintained with preachers and laymen alike who would be able to give information pertinent to a study of this nature. This was particularly useful in gaining necessary information concerning conference beginnings.

Published Books. Books containing allusions to the work in Montana were studied. Because there was no historic document existing for the Montana conference, the reports that appear in some published books were found to be inaccurate. (Each congregation, however, has compiled a historic sketch concerning the work on the field.) These records were consulted and copied. From 1927 to the date of the merger of the Evangelical Church with the United Brethren Church, the conference edited and published annually, journals that carried the official recording of conference action. These were collected, read, and used extensively in this thesis.

STATEMENT OF ORGANIZATION

In the first chapter, the reader has been introduced to the study. Chapter two contains the organization of conference history. There is a brief history of the State of Montana that was included to help gain a picture of the circumstances and background that preceeded the founding of the Montana Conference of the Evangelical Church. Brief accounts were also included about the origin of the denomination itself. Special time was given to show the division of this denomination into the two segments that separately started the original organization of local congregations. In chapter two, one will find a brief but complete

historic account of each congregation except Missoula which was started at a later period. In this section, the general history prior to formal organization was also presented. On June 23, 1927, the Montana conference was organized, and extending from this date, highlights of the important events taking place each year are given.

Chapter three deals with the biographical sketches of men who served the Montana conference as ministers of the Gospel. Material was collected and compiled in a presentable form to aid congregations in tracing facts about the men who served them. Poems are inserted in various places throughout the paper. These were written by Rev. H. S. Tool and were inserted under proper topics to add his personal touch to this history.

Plans for the merger of the Evangelical church with the United Brethren church were presented and discussed in chapter four. The basis of union was included, as were the important facts concerning the actual conference preparation for the event. Chapter five concludes the study.

Land of Shining Mountains

Oh land of shining mountains in winter snows agleam,
Of these thy bards are singing; thou art the artist's dream.
The sunlight of the morning is shining in thy face;
Upon thy heights the eagle has found her nesting place.

Oh land of crystal rivers descending to the sea,
The dream of western empire shall be fulfilled in thee.
Thy silver streams shall water the fertile fields of grain.
The storage hills shall haven the riches of the rain.

Oh land of spreading prairies where sheep and cattle roam,
The meadowlark is calling where rancher builds his home.
Thy suns descend in glory above eternal snow
Among thy waving harvests the gentle breezes blow.

Montana, oh Montana, I love thy silver streams.
Montana, oh Montana, thou art the artist's dreams.

H. S. Tool

CHAPTER II

THE ORGANIZATION OF CONFERENCE HISTORY

From 1908 to 1910 in reply to the advertisement of "free land" in the "last best West", settlers by the hundreds entered the state of Montana. Men and women from the Evangelical Church came with them to settle the land. They came from Nebraska, Iowa, the Dakota's and other places. The Church sent missionaries to Montana in an effort to meet the spiritual needs of, as well as maintain its constituency.

The history of the Evangelical Church in Montana cannot be properly understood without some knowledge of the state history. A proper conception of the growth and expansion of the denomination is also needed for background to this study. Because of this, we have included brief summaries on these subjects in this paper. The writer further seeks to discover the early beginnings and systematic missionary advancement of this denomination in the state of Montana.

Montana Hymn

Montana, thine the grandeur of mountain and of plain.
I love thy crystal rivers, thy fields of waving grain.
Thine the azure heavens, the white clouds racing forth;
Thou shalt ride on forever, the queen of all the north.

Montana, thine the riches of forest, mine and field,
Of wealth for all the nation, thy fertile lands shall yield.
Thou art the home of waters racing onward to the sea;
Thou yielddest precious treasure to the sons of industry.

Montana, thine the beauty of sparkling valley stream;
Thou art the poet's lyric, thou art the artist's dream;
Upon thy spreading mountains, the snows eternal shine.
I love thee, fair Montana, for the beauty that is thine.

Montana, thine the empire, thine the years to be,
The heritage of millions, the home of liberty.
Thou broad domain of mountain, of valley and of plain,
In thee shall be our glory, in thee shall be our gain.

Montana, fair Montana, ride on and on and on.
Ride forth into the morning; the night of doubt is gone.
Thine the home of patriot, of noble pioneer;
Ride on, our own Montana; to us thy name most dear.

H. S. Tool

EARLY HISTORY OF MONTANA

In order to give the reader a clearer understanding of the History of the Montana Conference of the Evangelical Church, this condensed history of the state of Montana has been included.

Montana, in size, is the third largest among the States of the Union. The territory was organized in 1864, and was admitted to the Union in 1889. The name, Montana, was given to the territory by James M. Ashley, who sponsored the bill for the territorial organization. It means "mountainous regions".¹

The region east of the continental divide (an imaginary line running through the state from which the water shed goes either east to make the Missouri River or west to form part of the Columbia River) was added to the United States in the Louisiana Purchase from France in 1803. The smaller western region, west of the divide belonged to the Oregon country.

In April of 1805, the Lewis and Clark expedition entered Montana. They traced the Missouri River to the three rivers that make it, and they named these rivers the Jefferson, Madison and Gallatin. On the return trip through Montana Lewis and Clark divided company. Lewis led one division up the Big Blackfoot River, while Clark, with the other division, ascended the Bitter Root and crossed the headwaters of the Missouri. He reached the Yellowstone, which he was first to explore. The parties later met

1. T(homas) J. W(alsh), E(dward) E. B(ennett), "Montana", Encyclopedia Britannica (14th edition; New York 1947), XV, 746.

at the confluence of the Missouri and the Yellowstone. The reports of their expedition stimulated the interest of fur traders along the Missouri. They began to extend their operations into the Montana territory. In 1807 Manuel Lisa built a trading post on the Yellowstone at the mouth of the Big Horn River. This was the first building in Montana. The same year, John Colter, one of Lisa's men, lost the trail and discovered the future Yellowstone Park. After 1807 Lisa's men made annual trips into the Yellowstone region. In the western part of the state, David Thompson of the Northwest Company sent Finan McDonald to build a trading house at Kootenai Falls. This was the first building on the Western Slopes of the State. Thompson built the Salish House, a permanent post at the Clark's Fort River in the following year. For the next half century the fur trade dominated the country. In the eastern section of the Montana territory the American Fur Company monopolized the fur trade.

Iroquois Indians, employed by the fur companies to teach the mountain Indians to hunt for furs, taught them also the Catholic religion. The Salish Indians sent four separate delegations to St. Louis to bring back the "Black Robes", and Father P. J. DeSmet returned with the last of these in 1840. In 1841 he founded St. Mary's Mission in the Bitter Root valley.²

The number of settlers were small during the years of 1850 to 1860. But a real rush of immigration came when gold was discovered on Gold Creek by the Stuart brothers in 1858, and in 1861 and '62 a colony of pioneers settled along this creek to pan for gold.

2. Ibid., p. 749.

Also in 1863 gold was discovered in Alder Gulch, one of the richest placer areas in the world, where Virginia City grew up and soon became the leading town in Montana. In this same year Last Chance Gulch was discovered. This became the future site for the capital city of Helena.

New gold discoveries were constantly made during the next few decades of Montana's history until there were gold camps in hundreds of gulches. "By 1876 gold to the value of \$144,400,000 was produced."³ Not until the early eighties was the copper discovery made at Butte which was to result in its becoming one of the world's largest mining camps. The large influx of miners brought difficulties with the Indians. It had been principally left to the fur traders and the missionaries to keep peace with and among the various tribes, but this was for their own benefit. The relationship between the gold hunters and the Indians had no mutual benefits such as were present between fur traders and Indians.

The Sioux and Cheyennes united in trying to prevent immigrants from passing over the Bozeman trail, and this important short cut to Montana from the Platte had to be closed by the Government. The Sioux were again on the war path in 1876 because the miners had invaded their Black Hills reserve, and that year they annihilated Gen. Custer's five companies of cavalry on the Little Big Horn River. So many of the Indians were killed, however, that their power was broken.⁴

It was along the Bozeman trail that the majority of the churches of the Evangelical Church were located. And the place where Custer

3. Ibid.

4. Ibid.

made his last stand is close to Billings, which was the largest work in the state.

The last disturbance from Indians on the organized scale came in 1877 when Chief Joseph of the Nez Perces refused to stay on the reservation that the government had marked out carefully for each tribe. He led a group of followers in an escape attempt into Canada. After giving desperate battle in the Big Horn country and conducting a masterly retreat over more than one thousand miles, he was surrounded in the Bear Paw Mountains and was forced to surrender to General Miles.

During these years the eastern three fifths of the state was unsettled, and settlement came only when agriculture and livestock came in as an industry and began to expand eastward. The first crops were raised near the mining camps and the produce sold to the camps. "Prices were high and disappointed miners found the production of food a lucrative business."⁵ The first massive cattle drive from Texas to Montana was made in 1869. The first rail shipments of cattle were made from Ogden, Utah where the cattle were trailed from Montana grasslands. After the Indians were put down, the cattle shipments were made from Cheyenne, Wyoming. The Northern Pacific Railway was completed through the state in 1883 and this stimulated the farming industry in general. "The population of Montana in 1870 was 20,595; in 1890 it was 142,924; in 1910, 376,053."⁶ These figures in a measure tell the story of the

5. Ibid.

6. Ibid.

State of Montana in its beginning years. As the Government opened land to homesteaders the influx of population was great. It was during the latter part of this period that the Evangelical Church began its work in Montana.

ORIGIN OF THE EVANGELICAL CHURCH

The Evangelical Association originated in the United States of America. Most of the many religious denominations of America had their origin in Europe or Asia. They are products of the Old World. Jacob Albright, a tile maker, saw the spiritual need of the German immigrant people located in Pennsylvania. He was an exhorter in the Methodist Church but the Methodists could see no future in German language work among the "Pennsylvania Dutch". Albright preached among these people, and God richly blessed his efforts with many conversions. This gave him courage to continue the work. Soon some of his converts were also preaching.

They fearlessly attacked every form of sin, and scathed the dead churches, which wrought great opposition to them and engendered fearful persecutions. In spite of persecutions they continued and led many souls to a real experience of salvation in Christ.⁷

In 1800 Albright organized three "Classes" which is considered the origin of the Evangelical Church. One historian quotes from Bishop S. P. Spreng who had given information on the beginning of the

7. A. H. Utzinger, History of the Minnesota Conference of the Evangelical Association, (Cleveland, The Evangelical Press, 1922), p. 14.

work in one of the services which he had received from "Henry Stetzel, of Pennsylvania, who knew Jacob Albright well."⁸

Jacob Albright, in 1797, called the leaders of his converts together for a conference. They conferred till late in the afternoon, when they grew weary, and were heavily burdened for their work, when they suggested going into prayer. They prayed on and on, as only they could. They wrestled with God like Jacob at the Jabbok; they kept on until midnight, when they could pray no more. They began to praise, to shout, to weep for joy! Their hearts melted together like iron in the furnace. They embraced each other and laughed for joy. In that night the Evangelical Association was born. It was born in an all-night prayer meeting.⁹

The work spread from this prayer meeting in all directions. Men such as John Walter, George Miller, John Dreisbach and others were staunch co-laborers of Albright. John Seybert, who was a tireless and successful missionary, and later a bishop, was perhaps one of the most prominent figures of the early church during the first half century of its existence. "He won thousands of souls for Christ and carried the Gospel courageously to the new settlements of the West."¹⁰ "The principal characteristics of this new church were true repentance, thorough conversions, and holy living."¹¹

8. Ibid.

9. Ibid.

10. Ibid.

11. Ibid.

In 1891 one of the saddest events in the history of the Evangelical denomination took place when the church split into two factions. The Evangelical Association met in Indianapolis and the minority group which later became the United Evangelical Church met and organized in Philadelphia. The majority group was led by Bishops Esher and Bowman. Bishop Rudolph Dubs led the minority group. At the two rival conferences held in two varied places the two denominations organized. After October first, historian Albright states:

The saddest four years in the history of the denomination followed during which many long-standing friendships were severed and new lines of allegiance were formed. In a number of the states, trials were held in the civil courts to determine which group was the Evangelical Association and to whom the property belonged. The courts decided in favor of the majority group. On November 30, 1894, at Naperville, Illinois, the minority group organized itself as The United Evangelical Church. In the Evangelical Association there were now 110,095 members and 982 itinerant ministers, and in the United Evangelical Church there were 61,120 members and 415 itinerant ministers.

Today it is generally agreed that this division in the Evangelical Association should never have occurred. No one can estimate how much greater would have been the influence of the Evangelical Church and how much more effective her work if this rift had not occurred during the period of its most rapid growth and expansion.¹²

The United Brethren Church developed in similar surroundings and conditions at this same time. Philip William Otterbein was their founder. This denomination in 1946 joined with the Evangelicals to form the Evangelical United Brethren Church. This has been inserted

12. Raymond W. Albright, A History of the Evangelical Church (Harrisburg, Evangelical Press, 1945), pp. 328, 329.

to show the parallel advancement of the two denominations as they expanded and developed to spread the cause of Christ.

Surveying the expansion of the Evangelical and United Brethren churches across the continent, marked similarities in the expansion are apparent. With minor diversions north and south from Pennsylvania, the major thrust of both churches followed the flow of migration to Ohio where a slight diffusion is apparent. There the United Brethren moved more aggressively through the central and southern part of the state while Evangelicals showed more strength in the northern part. From Ohio the thrust continued westward through Indiana into Illinois. From Illinois the lines of expansion fan out, running north into Wisconsin, northwest into Minnesota and the Dakotas, west into Iowa and Nebraska, and southwest into Missouri, Kansas and Oklahoma.¹³

This precisely sets forth the movement of the denomination. As people moved to settle the land, open to them by the government, the Church endeavored to supply the people with ministers and care for their spiritual needs and welfare. They sought to conserve their own people.

In the development westward that brought about the Montana Conference, the Minnesota Conference played a supporting roll. From Minnesota pioneer preachers went into the Dakota territory and proclaimed the "unsearchable riches of Christ." These pioneer preachers gave themselves completely to their work. They rode horseback or drove horsedrawn buggies hundreds of miles to contact these groups of settlers and minister to their needs.

The Dakota Conference was the aggressive conference as far as the

13. Paul H. Eller, These Evangelical United Brethren (Dayton, Otterbein Press, 1950), p. 53.

establishment of Missions in Montana is concerned. They entered Montana two years later than the Nebraskans but their work developed more rapidly.

In the Dakota Conference records, reference is made to the Presiding Elder visiting seven Evangelical centers in 1917. C. A. Bremer,

was assigned to Milbank, S. D. as pastor and served that charge until he was elected Presiding Elder in May 1917, and stationed on the Bismarck District. At this time the charges in Billings, Fallon, Great Falls, Loreda, Inverness, Plentywood, and Round Up, Montana were supervised by the Superintendent of the Bismarck District.¹⁴

This is the only known record concerning some of these preaching points.

The call for missionaries came to the church as early as 1902 to the office of Editor S. P. Spreng. John R. Hoy had settled near Plains, Montana, which is now about sixty miles northwest of Missoula, and is located on Alternate Highway 10. He requested that the Evangelical Church dispatch a missionary to his settlement.

John R. Hoy, brother of Rev. Samuel Hoy of the Dakota Conference, settled on a farm near Plains, Montana. He wrote Editor S. P. Spreng of his settlement in the Far West, and invited an Evangelical preacher to come and minister to them.¹⁵

This interesting fact is added to the above quotation, and perhaps explains why the denomination as a body did not take full

14. Personal Correspondence of the author, from C. F. Strutz, Bismarck, North Dakota, January, 1953

15. Eller, op. cit., pp. 80-81.

advantage of the opportunity offered to them.

...at the time the church was so engrossed in the China Mission, and soon thereafter in the Italian Mission, that eleven years were to elapse before the Association gave official attention to Montana.¹⁶

The territory around Plains was never entered by our denomination.

The call for missionaries came also from Broadview territory, where a group of Nebraska Evangelicals desired a minister. S. B. Dillow, Presiding Elder from the Platte River Conference of the United Evangelical Church, surveyed the territory. He realized the need and made plans to organize the mission. According to correspondence with the son of the first missionary, and the nephew of this Presiding Elder, some of these men who came into Montana to homestead were preachers from the Platte River Conference. He pointed out that one land agent boasted that he had "bagged seven Evangelical preachers with one shot".¹⁷ He tells that these men were W. L. Dillow, Professor Leonard, A. I. Ferch and Reverends Thoren and Blakeway. These men arrived before the denomination took up work. In his correspondence S. M. Dillow, stated that most of these men started preaching for other denominations. "Thoren, Ferch, and Blakeway for the Congregationalists; W. L. Dillow preached for the Methodists in Park City, Montana."¹⁸

16. Ibid., p. 81.

17. Personal Correspondence of the author, from S. M. Dillow, Shelton, Nebraska, January, 1953.

18. Ibid.

THE BEGINNING OF THE EVANGELICAL WORK IN MONTANA

Little Western Villages

Little Western Villages,
Weeds along the road,
Sand and gravel in the street,
Sidewalks shimmering in the heat....
Little western cities, you
Haunt me when I'm passing through.

Folks there are who call you dead,
Little western villages.
Still, it seems sometimes that life
Away down east is full of strife.
Sort of like to hear folks talk,
Sauntering like along the walk.

Prairie comes right up to town
Little cities on the plain.
Maybe dried up corn or oats
Or fences where they feed their shoats;
Tumble weeds; and, seems as though
There's nothing left for winds to blow.

Kind of wish sometimes that life
Would take me back to you again.
Years may come and years may go,
Still the prairie winds will blow
And turn the chargers for the nights
When dark clouds hide the prairie lights.

Used to be so different,
Little western villages.
Indians, buffalo used to be,
And then the cattle industry,
Right where you're sleeping on the plain...
Wish I lived right there again.

H. S. Tool
Columbus, Montana

The work in Montana was started almost simultaneously by two separate conferences. In 1908, S. B. Dillow, Presiding Elder of the Platte River Conference, came to visit his brother near Broadview.

The last Sunday before he left he preached in our homestead shack to a few neighbors we had invited in. From then on we met as a Sunday School group on Sunday mornings taking turns of meeting in homes until we established a more permanent place of worship.¹⁹

In the northwest section of the state, two years later, Presiding Elder William Suckow preached in the home of his brother. From this meeting there grew what later became known as the Inverness Mission of the Dakota Conference.

The denomination made its swing westward as the people migrated to the western lands. The Government offered them the opportunity to homestead, and also gave others the chance to buy land at a cheap price. The eastern populace took advantage of this land opportunity and came West.

THE BROADVIEW MISSION

The Broadview Mission was undertaken by the Platte River Conference of the United Evangelical Church which convened at Beaver Crossing, Nebraska, on March 12, 1908. In September of the same year, Rev. W. L. Dillow was appointed as the first missionary to Montana. He was to minister to the loyal group of Evangelicals that had homesteaded around the Broadview territory. Shortly

19. Ibid.

after preaching services were established, Bishop W. F. Heil made an episcopal visit to the field. He announced on December 13, 1908 to the small crowd gathered in the Great Northern Railway Depot, that the General Board of Missions of the United Evangelical Church was ready to take the work in hand, if the people were willing to do their part. The Church Record fills in what transpired.

Shortly after Rev. Dillow's appointment the work was placed under the direction of the Board of Missions and Rev. Dillow was retained as missionary and served four years and six months.²⁰

The first services were held in the pastor's home six miles southeast of the present site of Broadview. Later services were held in a tent in town until it became too cold to carry on in that fashion. Then the little group found a meeting place in the office of the McCall Webster Lumber Company, and from there to the Great Northern Depot. Later they continued their meetings in the home of Miss Mabel Sudduth, until the church was built in the summer of 1909.

THE INVERNESS MISSION

In the spring of 1910 the North Dakota Conference of the Evangelical Association created what is known as the Inverness Mission in the state of Montana.²¹

The work was assigned to an elder of the Dakota Conference, H. A. Ritter, who arrived on the field June 17, 1910, to begin the

20. Official Record, Broadview Congregation, Broadview, Montana, p. 1.

21. Official Record, Rudyard Congregation, Rudyard, Montana, p. 1.

work. "This was the time of the opening of this area for homesteaders."²²

The first service on the mission was held in the home of R. W. Suckow, twenty miles north of Rudyard. Rev. William Suckow, who was then Presiding Elder, conducted the service.²³

Soon after Rev. Ritter's arrival he made the acquaintance of J. P. Kupal and his family. Services were begun and continued in their home until a school house was erected in that vicinity. Rev. Ritter enlarged the work, and launched new missions in the surrounding communities. He had preaching appointments in Rudyard, Hingham, and several others in homes north and south of either Inverness and Rudyard.

THE PLENTYWOOD MISSION

The northern part of Montana had not been opened very long when Mr. Ralph Tammen, a personal friend of Rev. William Suckow, set out to find a new home in the West.

...Mr. Ralph Tammen, a short heavy set man of the German nationality, came west to see what he could find in the way of a future home. He was a very intimate friend of the late Rev. Wm. Suckow. The Suckows had taken land in the Rudyard community and Mr. Tammen was on his way to find some land in that same territory when he learned that it was about all taken, so he stopped off on his way, and drifted into the Plentywood community in the spring of the year 1910. Mr. Tammen was a Christian and felt God calling him to preach, but, as he told the writer only a few years ago, he was

22. Ibid.

23. Ibid.

one of those that tried to run away from God and not preach. However, it was soon found out that he could preach and before he had finished moving to his new home he was called upon to preach a funeral sermon, that of Mrs. Joe MacIntosh. People saw at once that they had another minister in the community.²⁴

There are few records concerning the work carried on in Plentywood. Rev. E. J. Bott summarized the work to 1925 in a prepared paper. He found some information on record in the Plentywood Herald, one of the local papers. He states that

Announcements are found as early as October 4, 1910, telling of the Church Services held in the School House.....This was the school house which stood in the old town site and the first school house in town. Regular services were held every Sunday afternoon at two o'clock. The local Congregational church built in the fall of 1910 and for a time the Rev. Tammen preached there until one day he found himself locked out. He began a German Sunday school upstairs above the building which is now the Westland Oil service station in the Bolster block.²⁵

The historian continued that although the Sunday school was in German, very few of the people in and around Plentywood were German. However, this was the language which Mr. Tammen could most easily speak, so he had most all of them learning German in order that they could follow him.

24. E. J. Bott, An Unpublished History of the Plentywood Field, 1927, p. 1.

25. Ibid.

THE FALLON MISSION

Work was begun by the Evangelical Church in the Fallon area in April of the year 1910. The Fallon Mission had its beginning in the Cabin Creek community seventeen miles southeast of Fallon. The Fred Brost family, formerly from Kulm, North Dakota, arrived in this area in March of 1910. He built a large barn with a large hayloft which served as the first Evangelical Church. Presiding Elder Conrad Oertli stopped in the community and looked up the Brost family and other North Dakotan's. He held a German service on April 28, 1910 in the loft of the Brost barn. Those in attendance beside the Brost family were the Fred Nies family, John Dewald family, Gottfried Ulrich family, and the Schlintz family. During the first three years occasion services were held either in the Brost barn or at neighboring homes. Rev. William Suckow held a number of services in this community in the following year.²⁶

GENERAL HISTORY OF THE MONTANA CONFERENCE PRIOR TO FORMAL ORGANIZATION

THE BROADVIEW MISSION

This mission was organized November 15, 1908 with seventeen charter members: Rev. W. L. Dillow, Georgie, S. Marion, Verna, Tracy, Fred and Francis Dillow, Mabel Sudduth, G. A. Waterman, C. J. Waterman, R. H. Briggs, Ida M. Briggs, F. C. Bauer, A. E. Hahn, W. H. Sudduth, and Elizabeth Sudduth. This group built their first

26. Official Record, Fallon Congregation, Fallon, Montana, p. 1.

church building in Broadview at the cost of seventeen hundred dollars in the summer of 1909. Rev. S. B. Dillow, Presiding Elder from the Platte River Conference, dedicated the new edifice.

Rev. Dillow resigned his missionary position in the spring of 1912, but continued to serve the work until the fall of that same year. He was relieved by C. G. Breves, who was reportedly a fine preacher. During his pastorate an addition was built to the church. Rev. Breves resigned in 1914 and was succeeded by Rev. O. L. Peckenpaugh. He served the years 1914 to 1916. While serving Broadview he supervised the erection of the church parsonage. This building was completed at the cost of twelve hundred dollars. Rev. Peckenpaugh left Broadview and took a homestead in Wyoming. This move left the Broadview congregations without a pastor for several months. J. H. Kohler followed Rev. Peckenpaugh. He came from Cozad, Nebraska and arrived in Broadview April 14, 1916. He had made the long journey from Cozad to Broadview "overland by auto".

Rev. Kohler reported the field to be disorganized.

The work in town was more or less disorganized when we got here. It was just a few months before our coming to the field that an attempt was made on the part of the Congregational church to unite the two churches of Broadview into a community church; through the influence of a few faithful loyal Evangelicals the class was held²⁷ together with the exception of one family.

This congregation went through severe testings in this proposed merger. They had faced these difficulties without a pastor, and

27. Official Record, Broadview Congregation, Broadview, Montana
p. 3.

perhaps only through persistent and faithful prayer to Almighty God, were they able to come through still holding most of their own people.

While we found many discouraging features of the work, if one were inclined to look on the dark side of things, we found a few families such as S. W. Eller, N. A. Eller, W. A. Granzow's, and George Anderson's who were true and faithful to help us push the work,²⁸ which was not only encouraging but helpful.

At the end of the first six months of ministry, Rev. Kohler reported a loss in membership. During the second year of his ministry the congregation was able to hold their own. There were some losses that were hard on the little group. Two of the faithful group were taken by death, namely, S. W. Eller and Mrs. George Anderson. Coupled with this Newton A. Eller moved from the Broadview community to Rapelje. He was class leader and Sunday School Superintendent, and Rev. Kohler made it plain that his position would be hard to fill.

The Influenza Epidemic caused the church to close its doors for seven weeks during the conference year 1918-1919. The dread disease took Andrew Anderson from the church group. At this time the Salem church building was erected seven miles southeast of town. The building was dedicated July 14, 1918 by Bishop W. H. Fouke, assisted by the Presiding Elder, H. A. Tool. This church was built for twenty-six hundred dollars and dedicated debt free.

28. Ibid.

In the midst of all these reverses and misfortunes of those three years, the work gradually grew until we had more than doubled the membership. In the year 1919 the pastor's salary was increased \$155.00. God be praised for His goodness and blessings.²⁹

On May 30, 1918, the Broadview church held a Union Memorial service with Rev. Kohler preaching. At this service a resolution was drawn up which was sent to the local papers, the Secretary of the Federal Council of Churches of Christ in America, and printed in the historic records of the participating churches. This resolution expressed appreciation to Woodrow Wilson, President of the United States, who had declared this day to be one of prayer and fasting. They appreciated his deep concern for the nation as it faced the problem of peace. They pledged to uphold the President and his great cause in prayer to Almighty God.

Rev. Kohler further reported that during their stay on the field the town of Broadview had been actively engaged in providing for improvements. In 1917 the congregation was able to connect the parsonage to a city water system. This saved the pastor's family money and effort, for previously water had been hauled in at "50cts. per barrel". In 1918 the town of Broadview was incorporated, and in 1919 the town council ordered sidewalks to be put in. The church followed the directive of the town council and Rev. Kohler remarked concerning this improvement:

This was a very good move not only for the benefit of the town generally but for the church,

29. Ibid., p. 4.

as before this, a rainy day made it almost impossible to have service on account of the mud.³⁰

A tragedy struck the Broadview congregations when Rev. Kohler, their pastor, was drowned in the Yellowstone River in 1921. The record shows that God had used this man, and had richly blessed his ministry in the Broadview community.

Rev. Kohler was succeeded by F. Mc Pherson Bayles who served the congregation until June of 1926. Rev. Bayles left no records of the work for this period. Rev. E. C. Hicks, his successor, made mention of some improvements during the five years of his ministry.

During the summer of 1925 electric lights were put into the parsonage and during the spring of '26 the roof of the parsonage was raised and four rooms added to the parsonage. The Salem church was painted and varnished inside and generally fixed up.³¹

Rev. F. M. Bayles used to hold service in the school house near our farm on Friday nights. During bad weather he would ride a horse out to our place and many times he and my father would walk to the school house for the service. Once in the early spring they were walking because the creek between our place and the school was running high. The only place they could find to cross was on the barbed-wire fence. Dad being the lighter tried it first and made it fine. But when Rev. Bayles tried to cross it was a different story. He was much too heavy for the wire and he fell into the raging stream. Brother Bayles went through many hardships during his ministry at Broadview. He had several country preaching appointments the farthest of which was about 16-18 miles east of town.³²

30. Ibid.

31. Ibid.

32. Personal Correspondence of the author, from J. D. Lindley, Bozeman, Montana, January, 1953.

THE INVERNESS MISSION NEAR RUDYARD

Rev. H. A. Ritter served the missions in the northwestern part of the state for the first seven years of their existence. His work was begun in June of 1910 in an area which had recently been opened to homesteaders. The Inverness work centered about faithful Evangelicals, but Rev. Ritter, possessed with a missionary spirit, pushed the sphere of influence for the Lord in all directions from this first mission.

Rudyard also offered opportunity for services which were held in homes and above the store until the local school was erected. A community north of Inverness was also opened to us. Several German families who could not speak English well had settled there, so we opened a preaching place there in the German language. This was 12 miles north of Inverness, and there was also an English appointment there. We also had a school house appointment six miles south of Rudyard. The main work at Inverness is 8 miles north of Rudyard. Work was also begun at Hingham that year.³³

Rev. Ritter made the following remarks concerning the year 1911 and its effect on the work.

The year 1911 was a wonderful year in many ways. There was an abundance of rain and everyone was busy improving their homes. Many manifested appreciation of the favorable conditions by regularly attending public worship.³⁴

In 1913, Rev. Ritter learned that a number of Evangelical families were living southwest of Chester. He visited them and

33. Letter of F. E. Wines to H. S. Tool, June 8, 1945, in Rudyard Record.

34. Official Record, Rudyard Congregation, Rudyard, Montana, p. 1.

made arrangements for services. This mission preaching point survived a few years and then was dropped from the appointments.

In 1914 work was begun on the Bethel church building. It was located about eight miles north of Inverness. Rev. Ritter retired from the active ministry and took up farming in this community. He would preach whenever the opportunity presented itself.

Rev. Ritter was succeeded by Rev. H. A. Thiele, who was sent to the mission in May of 1915. He continued in the service of God and the church until 1924. In this period hardships were added and multiplied on the missions and preaching points. Viewing the beginnings of the Inverness mission and the others, one could draw a mild comparison with a beautiful forest of virgin timber, or with an excellent field of wheat. At the conclusion, the forest of virgin timber had been burned over, and the wheat had been hauled out. Where once the land blossomed with dwellings and families abounded, now the land became almost desolate. This period of history records a general exodus from the land.

In 1915 Bethel congregation and friends were in a church building program. The future looked bright for them. During this year a Sunday school was organized and while revival meetings were planned for two separate occasions, the weather conditions made it impossible to hold them. Grace church had a splendid young people's organization. In this church they held a successful evangelistic meeting with good attendance. They had trouble with the roads after the spring thaw came, and this made it impossible to continue them for any length of time. The Salem field, located seven miles south

of Rudyard, was considered to be a very spiritual congregation by Rev. Thiele. With these preaching appointments he also undertook a work called "The Kammerzelt Appointment".

The Kammerzelt appointment was served by Rev. Thiele and there was a fine group of godly people there. Many Ev.'s from Dakota etc. This is about 24-30 miles S. W. of Chester.³⁵

During 1916 the Bethel congregation dedicated a new church building. A successful meeting was held which revived the congregation. Grace church seems to have progressed perhaps more than any of the other fields on the circuit. They had a sufficient number of people attending, asking for preaching services every Sunday. With the numerous preaching points being served by Rev. Thiele, this request posed a real problem for him. He concluded that such a thing, "could not be done".³⁶ A series of evangelistic meetings were held in Grace church during this year with no visible results. The Salem congregation organized a Sunday school and began to consider erecting a church building. The pastor held his own revival meeting, at this point, and it was successful.

In 1917, Bethel church was plagued with the "language question". This is a problem that frequently made its appearance during the World War I period. The popular sentiment scorned the things that were in any way connected with Germany. People even tried to stop the German language from being spoken. The German people living in the United

35. Personal Correspondence of the author, from Mrs. Martha Suckow Packer, Rudyard, Montana, January, 1953.

36. Rudyard Record, op. cit., p. 3.

States wanted to be classified as true Americans. Pastor Thiele discontinued preaching in the German language. The German language was never revived again in this church. Grace church work remained about the same as it had been during the previous year. Hingham was predominantly a German appointment and as in the case of the Bethel congregation, the work was hindered because of the German connection. At the Salem church the building program was postponed. The year 1917 was the first crop failure. There was no record given of any evangelistic meetings being held in any of the preaching points. The Kammerzelt appointment showed no prospects of encouragement for the future.

In 1918, the German element of the Bethel church settled their differences and the appointment was united to work for the glory of God. Again this year the people suffered from the lack of rain. High prices, coupled with the crop failure and a severe influenza epidemic, caused even the strongest of heart to weaken. Because of these setbacks, the people began to leave the community. For many weeks public meetings were banned in the area. Although the people suffered from the economic depression, the "Spirit of Revival" manifested itself in some of the Evangelical churches of this circuit. At Bethel and Grace churches, successful meetings were held. These were held late in the year. At Grace church "Twenty-four professed to cleansing by the blood of Jesus, and I took a number into the church."³⁷ Pastor Thiele considered Hingham to be a hot-bed of fanatical patriotism.

37. Ibid., p. 4.

This factor, with the failure of crops, hindered any progress in the work. In the Salem congregation the economic spirit of unrest began to make itself felt. The Kammerzelt appointment was moved to the home of Henry Eckhardt.

Hardship seemed to strike the little churches again in 1919. For the third straight year, the land lacked in moisture to raise a crop. The denomination, realizing the serious condition existing on this field, sent money and clothes to help them through this emergency. Bethel, Grace, Hingham, and Salem were all hard hit by the poor crops. Pastor Thiele worked hard to keep the field together. The men of the families had to seek work in other parts of the state to get sufficient money to support their families.

The folk at Salem were forced to leave and go where they could make a living. At Bethel the same was true—they went 'back home' or to the lumber camps where both they and their horses found work. And too, too few ever had the means or courage to come back for by this time the big loan companies owned 95% of the land.³⁸

Again, as before, families moved out of the territory, and "building up the work from a numerical standpoint was impossible.....I tried to serve the appointment faithfully."³⁹ One could not help but feel a bit discouraged in a time such as this. In most of the churches there was a decrease in attendance. In the community there was a general exodus of the population, and where once the homes and people were plentiful now there were empty homes and few people. Rev. Thiele tried

38. Martha Suckow Packer, op. cit., p. 3.

39. Rudyard Record, op. cit., p. 6.

to open a new appointment in Tiber, but this venture was not successful. Many of the people were leaving to make their living elsewhere.

The situation was severe in 1919, and it grew no better in 1920. Again, the area suffered because of light rainfall and poor crops. All that is stated in the record concerning the Bethel congregation is "No crop, people leaving, future looks very dark."⁴⁰ The situation was the same in the Grace church. Salem and what was left of the former Kammerzelt appointment met together in the Eckhardt home. The "War Spirit" had spent itself in the Hingham appointment, and this cleared the way for good work to be accomplished.

Chances for the church look somewhat better, many of the other churches withdrew their men so I was left only for short periods as the only pastor between Havre and Shelby.⁴¹

The year 1921 gave the people some new hope. The crop for this year was light and not general. Some of the farmers were blessed with produce, others again had nothing. Many people had left the Bethel community. Services were still held, but the attendance was greatly decreased. The people in Grace church experienced a revival during this year. At Hingham progress was being made on the field that had been held back during the war years. Pastor Thiele faced a new problem, when other denominations began to move back into the area. Salem church began services again. A successful series of evangelistic

40. Ibid.

41. Ibid.

meetings was held and some new families were interested in the work, and began to attend regularly. The Eckhardt appointment seems to have been injured beyond any hope for a revival. In this area most of the people had vacated.

The prospects for a good crop built the hopes of the people in 1922. Other churches began to move into Pastor Thiele's territory. It seemed hard for him to accept this intrusion, for the past four years of faithful service had made these people his people, and the area his area. In the record he announced with an almost defiant challenge that the Church race was on. He was discouraged at times, and on one occasion stated, "I felt like pulling out, but somehow I felt like our chance was coming."⁴² The prospects for a heavy yield faded when the grasshoppers descended and consumed most of the crop.

In 1923, the same calamity hit this community again. During the spring and early summer, the settlers considered their grain crop well on its way to becoming a productive yield. But again the grasshoppers destroyed it. "This was the straw that broke the camel's back and most of our people left."⁴³ Salem was discontinued and the Eckhardt appointment dwindled until in the fall Eckhardts themselves left the country. At Bethel, the few families which were left, lived in extreme hardship. Again the men of the community had to leave for other points in the state in search of work which would help to provide for their families in the Rudyard territory. Enough feed and grain had

42. Ibid.

43. Ibid., p. 7.

been salvaged to keep the livestock through the winter in the area surrounding Grace church. This group experienced a revival again this year. Pastor Thiele found ready response for a new preaching appointment in Rudyard. The Methodists, although not using their church, refused to have Rev. Thiele conduct his services in their building.

In 1924, Rev. Thiele moved to Hingham. The field became known as the Hingham Mission. The congregation was organized and Johnson's Pool Hall was purchased by the group for eight hundred dollars. They added \$215.00 to this cost and remodeled and dedicated the building to the Lord for a church. The Sunday school in Rudyard was well attended by children. Brief mention was made of the Bethel Union work that was started in the fall of 1923.

After Rev. Thiele's departure from the field, the congregations were served by Rev. H. A. Ritter, Rev. Hoagland, and Rev. J. D. Lindley. These three served until June of 1928 when Rev. H. L. Calvert was appointed as the minister to this work. During this four year period no records were kept by the pastors of their work.

THE PLENTYWOOD MISSION

Mr. Ralph Tammen, a heavy set layman of German descent, felt the call of God to preach the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Because he had heard that most of the land in Rudyard had been taken, he settled down in the Plentywood community. His first opportunity to preach came when he was called on to conduct a funeral service. Very few details are known of the start of this work. We do know that Mr. Tammen came to Plentywood

in the spring of 1910, and announcements of services being held by him appear in the Plentywood Herald, as early as October 4, 1910.⁴⁴ Mr. Tammen, too, was zealous for the Lord, and established preaching points in several communities. In 1910 he established another appointment about two miles east of Plentywood. This work became the first organized congregation on the field.

It was here where the first members were taken into the church, among whom were George Ator, Robert Chapman, M. P. Jackson, Mrs. M. P. Jackson, and Mrs. Abe Malcohm. Mrs. Abe Malcohm is the only one of that number whose name still appears on our membership roll. There were others who joined at that time, but we are unable to name them. The exact date of the taking in of these members is also unknown, however, it must have been during the years 1911 and 1912.⁴⁵

Concerning other preaching points, the record is hazy. Rev. Bott stated that according to a copy of the Plentywood Herald for December 20, 1912, four preaching places were listed, namely, "Plentywood, Jackson school house, Wright school house, and Brightsman school house."⁴⁶

Sometime during the year of 1912 plans were under way for the erection of a church building here in the town of Plentywood and the basement of the church was completed in that year, 1913, when the main church was completed, a building 26 by 46 feet. This church building was named Immanuel. The writer recalls the Rev. C. A. Bremer

44. Bott's History, op. cit.

45. Ibid.

46. Ibid.

telling him that he conducted a revival campaign in the basement before the main church was built over it at which time twenty-two persons confessed conversion among whom were ⁴⁷Mr. Harrison Malcohm and Rev. Webster Lasater...

While authentic information is lacking we do know that in 1913 the Raymond church was built. This building stood seven miles northwest of the town of Raymond. In later years it was moved into the town.

This building is 18 by 34 feet in size and is our present church in Raymond. A class was organized where the church was first built, of nine members, known as the Zion Class, among whom was Mr. Albert Foley.....The first Quarterly Conference record book that we have is that of the year 1913 during which time our work in this field was still connected with the Fargo District of the North Dakota Conference. The first recorded Quarterly Conference was held in August of 1913 with the Rev. Wm. Suckow Presiding Elder and Rev. Tammen secretary. The record does not show the number of preaching places nor the number of Sunday Schools, but it does give the names of four Sunday school superintendents which would very likely mean four Sunday schools. 48

This record also concludes that the next Quarterly Conference was held over a year later on November 22, 1914, at which time

...only two Sunday schools were mentioned and undoubtedly only two Sunday schools were active. There is record of four preaching places at this date; namely, Immanuel, Zion, Bethel, which was a class of fifteen members at Outlook, eighteen miles northwest of Plentywood....and the Shafer class which was in North Dakota east of Williston. 49

Rev. Tammen finished his work as the pastor of the Plentywood field sometime in the year 1915. Under his ministry the Immanuel class reached

47. Ibid., p. 2.

48. Ibid.

49. Ibid., p. 3.

thirty in number. He was a typical pioneer preacher. Many stories center around him, and Rev. Bott included two of them in his historic sketch of the field.

His ministry had within it many exciting adventures as it was in the days when the saloons were running wide open and many were the times when he was not only offered a drink, but almost forced to drink by some of the wild class of that day. In speaking to the writer a few years ago, he spoke of an unusual experience which he had at one of the outlying appointments. He was to have service in the evening in the fall of the year, but on reaching the school house he found no one there and no one in sight. It seemed that no one was coming. It was getting dark and it was a very cool evening. The school house was locked and he had to do something to keep warm, so he set on fire a small patch of brush which was not far from the school house. The brush was dry and the flames shot high into the air. It was but a few moments and people were coming from every direction as fast as they could come, thinking the school house was on fire. The whole neighborhood turned out and after they quieted down, learning that it was only the patch of brush which was on fire, Rev. Tammien preached to a larger audience than he had ever had before and brought the good old gospel story to them until almost midnight.⁵⁰

Rev. L. H. Moore served the field for one year, from 1915 to 1916. In April two Sunday schools were reported to be in good condition and it was decided that the work would be enlarged to include two more Sunday schools at the Collins and the Voight school houses. There was no parsonage on the field, so the Moores lived in the church basement.

50. Ibid., p. 4.

Rev. B. D. Fridley followed Rev. Moore on the field and served in Plentywood for seven years. He served four appointments on this field at Immanuel, Zion, Raymond, and Two Tree school house. He established a Sunday school at Raymond. In the year of 1917, only one of the fields was reported to have grown in size.

The year 1918 brought changes to the field. A new six room parsonage was built and new work was started at Collins school house and at Rock Springs, which is northeast of Plentywood. In 1919 when C. A. Bremer visited the field, he found only one Sunday school and five preaching points. The preaching points were established at Immanuel, Zion, Two Tree, Williver, and Rock Springs. Rev. Fridley, throughout his ministry, supported the young people's work on the field. The organization at this time was known as the Young People's Alliance.

Rev. Max O. Siewert served the field for one year following Fridley's departure from Plentywood in 1924. Rev. H. S. Tool, Presiding Elder, conducted the Quarterly Conference during this year, and the number of preaching points had dropped to two. There were three Sunday schools reported at Immanuel, Two Tree, and Williver. The Raymond Sunday school was also opened. During Rev. Siewert's ministry a prayer meeting was begun which had an attendance from five to eighty weekly. This was the first regular prayer meeting to be reported.

THE FALLON MISSION

The work of the Evangelical church in the Fallon Mission had its beginning in the Cabin Creek Community seventeen miles southeast of Fallon. Families from North Dakota had settled the land around Fallon. Among the settlers were the Fred Brost family, Fred Nies family, John Dewald family, Gottfried Ulrich family, and the Schlintz family. Fred Brost was formerly from Kulm, North Dakota and came to the Fallon community.

When he came into the Fallon community he built a large barn. It was in this barn that Rev. Conrad Oertli held his first service amongst North Dakotan's who had settled in this area. This service was held on April 28, 1910, and for the next three years services were held only occasionally. Mrs. Anna Happel served Fallon every six weeks, while her husband conducted a catechism class of ten, early in 1917. The Fallon Mission was first supplied by a regular pastor when A. H. Rux was appointed to serve the Friedens congregation seven miles southeast of Fallon in 1917. He served in this community until 1920. He was the pastor that organized this congregation. Even though the congregation had been served off and on during the seven years following the 1910 service in the Brost barn, it wasn't until August, 1918 that the people were organized into an Evangelical congregation of thirteen members.

The Cabin Creek Zion church was also organized by Rev. Rux in March of 1919 with eighteen members. The Glockstal congregation met in the Valley school house twenty-five miles southwest of Fallon. This was organized in March of 1920 and had eight charter members. In 1919 the

first parsonage was built on the field in Fallon, and in that same year the Friedens church was begun. This was finished a year later and dedicated by Rev. Wiener of Nebraska.

In the fall of 1917 the initial beginning of the Sunday school work in the town of Fallon was begun by Mrs. J. L. Breum. Mrs. Roy Williams began a Sunday school in the Bethel church located in Fallon, using literature sent from Miles City. Rev. Rux suggested that they use literature from the Evangelical church, which they did.

In 1920, Rev. Max Siewert came to the Fallon mission. Under his ministry the Ladies Aid was organized. In 1921 Rev. Siewert wrote the following article in the Evangelical Messenger.

A few words as to the work here. We have on this mission eight places. Three of these were taken up during the year. Still others should be taken up in this vicinity. Many of the people have not heard a sermon for years. One lady said to me, "I am so thankful you have come to bring us the gospel message. I have been praying for four years that the Lord should send a minister out here." Another told me they had not heard a sermon since they came from Norway until now. At one of the places they had Sunday school and prayer meeting regularly every Sunday without a preacher for nearly a year. We find the people are hungry for the gospel. Whether they be English or German. They show it by their faithful attendance and the many miles they travel by wagon or horseback to get there since in some of these communities very few people have even a "Ford". People of all denominations attend regardless of former affiliations. In most communities we preach in school houses. During the winter we had fifteen weeks of revival meetings at various places. Brother E. H. Wendland, State Supt., assisted one week at Fallon. The Lord has blessed the work with 51 conversions. Twenty five have united with the church thus far. More to follow later.

The Fallon Flat and Cabin Creek people on Mission Day gave \$113.00 for Missions. Fallon missions has given \$312.50 for missions this year which we consider well done. Prospects for the coming year look very good. We have never seen Montana look better than now.⁵¹

One of Brother Siewert's preaching appointments was fifty-five miles from Fallon and another was more than twenty miles in the opposite direction. This made the field he served over seventy-five miles from one end of the field to the other. Rev. Siewert was followed by Rev. C. D. Surerus who served the field for one year and preached in the English language only. Rev. E. C. Hicks preached for one year following Rev. Surerus and also preached only in the English language. Rev. H. A. Thiele served Fallon from 1925 to 1935.

THE BILLINGS MISSION

Rev. William Suckow, Presiding Elder from the Dakota Conference, realized the spiritual need of the German element residing in Billings. He instructed Mrs. A. H. Happel, a deaconess in the Bismarck Evangelical Hospital, to become a missionary on the south side of Billings. The mission work in this city was begun in 1915. The first services were held in the "Old Presbyterian Church" on the corner of First Avenue and South Twenty-ninth Street. This corner at present, is the site of the Auto Paint Shop. Before Mrs. Happel left the field in 1917, she, with the help of Rev. Suckow, organized a

51. Rev. Max Siewert, Evangelical Messenger, May 30, 1921.

congregation. The charter members of the Billings church were: Mr. and Mrs. Jacob Beck, Mrs. Margaret Ramlet, Mrs. Lorenz, and Mrs. Zeigler.

M. O. Siewert followed Mrs. Happel in Billings.

The first two Sundays, S. S. and German preaching was held in the community church in the afternoon. Since this church was out of the community where our people lived, and since we could have but one service on Sunday, we tried to get a better location.⁵²

The Billings group, through special arrangement, met in the Taft Public School building. They were able to hold three services a day. The morning services were still in the German language, but the afternoon Sunday school and the evening preaching service were conducted in English. Mr. Siewert writes,

I was instructed by Bishop S. P. Spreng to preach in English. We continued our services until school began and we were ordered by the Clerk of the City Schools not to use the German any longer on account of the Great War.⁵³

The zeal and missionary vision of this early pioneer is truly commendable.

Since we could have but one service in English, we felt that we could not spend all our time in Billings. Therefore, being the last Sunday in October 1917, I went to Hodges and Wallum and preached there until Conference, going back and forth on the train.⁵⁴

Pastor Siewert kept a good record of the events as they took place for the Evangelicals in Billings. In the following years a move was made that aided not only the local congregation, but the entire Conference.

52. Official Record, Billings Congregation, Billings, Montana, p. 1.

53. Ibid.

54. Ibid.

Mrs. Siewert, my dear wife, continued the Sunday school which was held in our home at 605 South 27th Street. She had a Sundan School in the forenoon with the older teenage boys and in the afternoon with all boys and girls who desired to come. The enrollment was 66. In the meantime I made a survey of the south side, in the section in which we were working and discovered that the nationalities were: Negro, Italian, Mexican, German-Russian, Bohemian, a few Germans. Few of them were church members and most of them attended not any church. Only one out of ten owned their own home, others were renters, many of them were largely there because of the Great Western Sugar Factory. The pulp smell penetrated that part of the city constantly. It had been decided to build a church before we came and lots had already been purchased on S. 29th Street, just one block north of the South Side Park.

We came to the conclusion that if our Church would build at this place we would have one of these "Eternal Missions" on her hands, and the Church is not rich enough to do this. We never received any real moral support from the members except one. C. A. Bremer, P. E., of Bismarck visited the field early in the fall. He was dissatisfied with the location on the South Side. We later made a general survey of the North Side and discovered there was a large district west of Division Street and in Broadwater addition without any Church. Lots were spotted. In Dec. 1917 Bishop G. Heinmiller visited in regard to this affair. Lots were bought, by the Missionary Society of the Evangelical Association of North Dakota on the corner of Broadwater Avenue and Fourth Street West at \$1650 for three.

We made a survey of this section and the result is as follows: 184 homes visited; population 737; of these 124 were owners or were paying off on their homes; 60 were renters; 11% were Catholics; 52% non-Church members; practically all Americans. This report was telegraphed to Cleveland after it was taken in December 1917. Steps were taken by the Missionary Society to build a Chapel. Brother Geo. Johnston, Missionary Secretary and Treasurer came to Billings early in the month of March 1918, with the plans for a bungalow chapel

later to be converted into a parsonage. The contract was let to C. Smith for \$4300. Size of the building 36x46 with front and back porches and full basements.

The Chapel was dedicated on June 2, 1918, by Bishop G. Heinmiller. The attendance that morning was 35 and the evening service was just about the same. Bro. E. H. Wendland, newly appointed S. S. Missionary was also present. Our Church was entirely unknown in this section of the city. The only members present were Bro. and Sister E. H. Wendland and the pastor and his wife. The members we had on the South Side had all deserted us before this time.⁵⁵

The work in the new community was all in English. The work showed marked improvement as time progressed. The Sunday school increased Sunday after Sunday and the attendance for the year averaged seventy-four. The average evening attendance for the first year was about twenty-six.

During the month of February 1919 the first members were received on profession of faith. They were Mrs. Albert P. Dawson, Robert Komoll, Ralph Wendland, Francis Terpening, Florence Terpening, Maynard Mulder, Marlene Mulder, Anna Clark, Wm. Klaisner, Fannie Klaisner, and Lorence Putnam.⁵⁶

The first evangelistic meeting was held by G. W. Bennet of the Layman's Holiness Association of Jamestown, North Dakota. There were a number of conversions and an average attendance of about twenty-eight for the two week series.

Financially, the first year of the mission did not compare as well. It was a mission and the great burden was carried by the Dakota

55. Ibid., pp. 1, 2.

56. Ibid., p. 2.

Conference Missionary Society and the General Missionary Society.

During the conference year 1919-1920 the Young People's Association started, as did the Ladies' Aid. Also

Arrangements were made for a Tabernacle meeting to be conducted by L. M. Nanninga, Evangelist, and George D. Reep, singer. The tabernacle was erected on the corner of Wyoming Avenue and 4th Street West just across the alley from the Chapel. The meeting was held from July 6th to 27th. Average attendance was about 79. The result was 14 conversions.⁵⁷

The Sunday school reaped beneficial results from these meetings and the earnest labors of their pastor shepherd. The average attendance was eighty-four. Previous to this time the pastor and family had made their residence in the back three rooms of the parsonage. Now the space was needed for class rooms. The General Board gave permission to rent a house for the pastor.

Another evangelistic meeting was held in April of 1920. Rev. J. G. Morrison and Mr. and Mrs. W. A. Hoffman were in the team, all of them from the Holiness Association. There were fifty conversions and sanctifications reported.

On May 31, 1920 pastor Siewert was transferred to the Fallon mission and the Billings work was placed in charge of Rev. E. H. Wendland, Conference Superintendent. Webster C. Lasater served as assistant pastor for one year and took turns at preaching to the Billings congregation. Rev. Lasater also was in charge of the Shawmut preaching appointment. Rev. H. U. McCarthy was sent by the Board

57. Ibid.

of Missions and took charge of the work in September 1921. He was pastor for two years and then left the conference. No records were kept of his work. Rev. Andrew Roukema was appointed to the field in May 1923. The Evangelical Messenger printed an article written by Rev. Roukema which summarized the conditions of the Billings church when he came.

It is almost three years since we came to this place. We found a membership of five, two adults and three young people, and because of a series of unfortunate circumstances, we found the community rather against us. We finally concentrated our whole attention on the Sunday School. Only a few came to the service, but these came to make it go. The Sunday School was doing well, but took a decided drop during the summer. We felt that God had a work for us to do here and were from the beginning very hopeful. Today the Sunday School is crowding the building to such an extent that is rather a serious situation. The Sunday before Easter we had 137 present, and on Easter, a very snowy and disagreeable morning, there were 128 present, with about eighty attending the morning service, at which service 11 received baptism, two having received this sacrament one evening during the week previous. But what is still better, the good will of the neighborhood toward us is restored and we now have an entrance into many homes.

We just finished a three weeks meeting, when Rev. H. R. Knosp, of Norfolk, Neb., was with us for 16 days. Under the splendid leadership and excellent preaching of our brother we had a wonderful meeting. About 20 came to the altar, 16 of whom accepted the Lord Jesus as their Saviour, and others for reconsecration. On Wednesday prior to Easter 16 united with the church. We hope to bring this number up to at least 20 or more before the end of the Conference year next month. With other gains made during the preceeding months, our membership is brought to forty or better, with good many

prospects for whose conversion or re-consecration prayer is being made daily.

The need of an adequate building is apparent. The Sunday School classes are too large. The Bible class, which has for many months been a despair to the superintendent and a faithful teacher, because there were so many times but one or two scholars or none at all, has grown to an enrollment of 24 with a large regular attendance. Back to back, as it were, is a girl's class with an attendance as high as 20 or more. And then there is another class with an attendance of over 15, right in front of the Bible class only separated by a curtain. Another class is altogether too large, while the Primary Department is also crying for more room.

One move that can be made, which for the moment, at least, would relieve things somewhat is that, as in the past, the pastor could be given other living quarters; and then the backrooms could be used as class rooms. The need is even greater than that. The congregation being given a building, there is no limit to the growth of the Sunday School; and if we had a regular Church building, many more people would come, who look now with some suspicion upon the Church housed in a private residence.

The rumor has gone the rounds that we have a church here by ourselves with no denominational backing whatever, our church not being so well known in the West.⁵⁸

Rev. Roukema also gave a rather pointed hint that Billings afforded a wonderful opportunity for someone to erect a memorial church in memory of some loved one.

58. Ibid., p. 3.

THE RAPELJE MISSION

On the 8th day of July 1917, a body of Christian people of the Hailstone and Lake Basin came together at the town of Rapelje and were united into a working body as a local church, namely United Evangelical Church, under the direction of said church discipline, formulated by the General Conference held in Naperville, Ill. in 1894.⁵⁹

The congregation was organized into two classes, the Hailstone class which elected J. A. Wohlford their class leader; and the Rapelje class who elected A. J. Macheledt class leader. Rev. Wilber Isley was the pastor in charge of this mission. On September 27, 1917 the building committee met and laid plans for a new church.

Almost a year after the organization of the Rapelje mission Rev. Isley effected the reorganization of the Prairie Bell Class. There were fifteen charter members and Robert Pierson was elected class leader.

Rev. Andrew Roukema was sent to serve this charge in 1919. He served at Rapelje for four years. At the close of his service on this field he made some concluding remarks that summarized his work.

We finished here four years of service on the 15th of March and in a few weeks, conference will gather for the first time in May, that is the 16th of May, at Hastings, Nebraska. I thought it well to write a historical sketch at this time to be preserved in our records. When we arrived here we were welcomed by Br. W. Isley and the next morning we preached our first sermon in Rapelje. We found that there was no parsonage

59. Official Record, Rapelje Congregation, Rapelje, Montana, p. 1.

here and it was our first duty to build a home for our family whom we left in Billings with relatives. The town congregation was very small. There being but two families, those of Newton Eller and A. J. Macheledt. The Sunday School had but seven in attendance. There was a strong opposition to our church. The public opinion had been moved upon by the Congregationals in favor of a Community Church. It was up to us by the grace of God to live this down and slowly build up the work. The Lord marvelously led us. We held a revival each spring, God giving us souls. However, these four years have been very severe for the farmer. Drought, repeated crop failures, hail, grasshoppers, and low prices for grain ruined most of our people and many left. It was a struggle to overcome the losses in membership. We found that the people were, in many cases, not willing to unite with the church, because they did not intend to stay in this community under existing circumstances.

In these four years we gained favor with God and the people and although we have never let down on the preaching of the gospel, somehow the people at least learned to respect the religion of our Lord Jesus Christ.

We gained about thirty members over all the field, which should have been more had the country not been so depopulated.

Our Sunday School in town has experienced a steady growth and lately we had as high as 95 in the regular attendance.

We lost in the last year three of our most active women by death: Mrs. Merrifield, Mrs. J. Ragland, and Mrs. L. H. Norine.

Liberty Valley or Hailstone Basin was a lively little congregation when we first came, but it sustained severe losses by death and removal, so that now it is the smallest of our appointments. The Basin is quite well depopulated at present, only around the edges are a few families living.

Prairie Bell has its own meeting house, although the building and grounds are deeded to the United Brethren Church through the activities of an old U. B. preacher,

Rev. Powel, who has since moved to Missouri. After he left, Br. Isley was invited to preach here and now most of the people belong to the Evangelical Church. Prairie Bell has maintained itself quite well, in spite of the moving away of many of its people. The territory is quite well covered at present.

The Highland Center Sunday School began its activities in the Tacy School House. It was thought best to move the Sunday School and services to the present location, because but very few families were left in the Tacy Community. This move was made about 2 years ago. We began preaching in Tacy about four years ago this coming Easter. It is difficult to build up the work there, because we have covered almost every home, with the exception of a few.⁶⁰

Rev. Fridley followed Rev. Roukema, and he left no record of his work on this field. After serving here three years he asked for his credentials from the conference and accepted work in the Methodist church.

When Rev. F. R. Witmer took up work in the Rapelje mission, preaching services were held in the town of Rapelje, and also in a school house at the east end of Hailstone Basin. During this time he also held services at Pine Crest and Highland Center. These rural charges were closed, however, when most of the people moved away from these communities. The few remaining were tied into the town church.

In the town of Rapelje the work of the church has moved forward and we feel that it is in a flourishing condition at the present time, although there has been no large gain in membership. The debt on the local parsonage has been cared for through the assistance of the Ladies' Aid and the Church building has been remodeled at the cost of approximately \$1400.⁶¹

60. Ibid., p. 2.

61. Ibid., p. 3.

The young people's work was active during this time and for the most part the older folks stood staunchly by the work. Rev. Witmer reported that the church when remodeled was lengthened fourteen feet and a cement basement put under the whole structure. Mr. A. Jr. Machledt donated a new furnace for the church building, while others donated their finances and labor to make the church adequate.

THE RYEGATE MISSION

In 1920 the Union Congregational church and the Methodist church formed a Federation, which Federation called Rev. Wilber Isley, of the United Evangelical Church to serve as pastor.⁶²

During Rev. Isley's ministry in Ryegate, Rev. E. H. Wendland assisted in a revival meeting. Soon after this meeting Rev. Wendland became the pastor at Ryegate and served the field for two years as a Federated church. In June of 1923 at the annual church meeting, the congregation decided to abandon the Federation and join the Evangelical church. The church was organized in June of 1923 and Rev. Wendland continued to serve as pastor. There were twenty-five charter members. The pastor's salary was fixed at nine hundred dollars for the first year. The quarterly conference records show a consistent report from the class leader that the prayer meetings were poorly attended. Rev. H. S. Tool, as chairman, on several occasions urged for a more earnest prayer life on the part of the church. In the first year all bills and obligations were paid in full.

62. Official Record, Ryegate Congregation, Ryegate, Montana, p. 1.

In the conference year 1924-25 the field reported twenty-three members. The pastor's salary was fixed at eight hundred dollars. The pastor became ill during this conference year and due to his absence, prayer meetings were not held. At the last quarterly conference Rev. Tool pointed out the difficulty in obtaining missionary money, and urged this field to try to become self-supporting.

In the conference year of 1925-26 the congregation made a six hundred dollar loan on the parsonage, giving a first mortgage note. This loan was made to settle back taxes standing against the property. The field also had difficulties meeting its bills. The stewards reported a one hundred seventy-five dollar shortage in the pastor's salary. Rev. Wendland left the field after this year. He also left the church. Ryegate received no appointed pastor to follow Rev. Wendland.

THE SHAMMUT MISSION
(no record).

THE BIG TIMBER MISSION

The Evangelical church in Big Timber was organized on June 22, 1922 after a revival meeting. Rev. Wilber Isley was the missionary that established this work. He was assisted in the first revival effort by Rev. B. A. Shively. There were eleven charter members in this mission. Two classes were organized: Glasston and Big Timber. The church organization continued its regular meetings for a time

in the Big Timber auditorium. Rev. N. A. Eller succeeded Rev. Isley after May 20, 1923. Shortly after Rev. Eller came to this field the meeting place was again changed, this time to the Arcade Theater. The group worshipped in this theater building until August 1, 1925. Under the supervision of Rev. Eller the congregations laid plans to build a new church. In the same year two church buildings were erected, one at Glasston and another in Big Timber. The building was under the direction of R. E. Ballard and son Paul, and J. B. Thompson and son. Rev. Eller kept accurate record for the Big Timber church, recording the names of all who worked and all who donated financially to the building. The dedication service was held on November 1, 1925. Bishop Maze preached the dedication sermon. Visiting pastors and laymen from the neighboring fields joined in with the Big Timber congregation for this festive occasion.

From time to time the two churches, Big Timber and Hope, would join in a fellowship day, held alternately at each field. Outside speakers were invited in and neighboring congregations sent representatives. The first Fellowship Day was held on April 29, 1926 in the Big Timber church. Rev. O. L. Peckenpaugh from Livingston preached in the morning and evening. Rev. W. C. Lasater of Reed Point delivered the afternoon sermon.

On November 22, 1926 revival fires burned in the Big Timber area. For three weeks preceeding the scheduled meetings, prayer services had been held. God richly rewarded this congregation for their earnestness and faith. In the three week meeting in charge of Dr. Paris Wells,

sixty decisions for Christ are recorded and fifty new members added to the church. Rev. Eller commenting on this awakening said, "In a general way the church was strengthened, while a number who joined soon moved away, which resulted in considerable loss in numbers, but not, we hope, to the kingdom of God."⁶³

Fellowship day was held in the Hope Evangelical church in 1927. J. H. Oehlerking preached in the morning and Rev. H. S. Tool in the afternoon. The afternoon service was somewhat different than most services. Two laymen, John Sago and John Knapp, delivered messages on "What Should We as Laymen Expect from Our Pastors?" and "The Value of the Church in the Rural Community." Rev. Tool addressed the group on the subject "What Should I Expect From My Members?"

THE REED POINT MISSION

Very little has been recorded about the early history of Reed Point. It was started by Wilber Isley before 1923. Under his ministry the class was organized in town and preaching appointments were started in school houses north and south of town. He preached in these school houses on alternate Sunday afternoons. The Nebraska Conference appointed Rev. E. A. Jackson to serve the charge. He remained one year in Montana and then returned to Nebraska. Rev. Jackson came to Reed Point on January 9, 1923. He found the members of the congregation busy in a church building program. The new church was dedicated on July 22, 1923.

63. Official Record, Big Timber Congregation, Big Timber, Montana, p. 1.

An interesting historic sidelight must be included here. On July 12, 1923 and continuing through to July 22, the Reed Point congregation was host to the first Summer Assembly to be held in the state of Montana by the Evangelical church. From that date the summer assembly has become important in the lives of the members of the conference. From this yearly gathering have come ministers, missionaries and conference lay leaders who have assumed positions of responsibility in the state and in various fields of the general church. The first summer assembly was concluded with the dedication program of the Reed Point church.

The first convention was a great success in every way and a spiritual feast to all who attended. Ten persons were converted during the convention, nine of whom were from this field, six of these joined the church during the year.⁶⁴

Nine members were received on profession of faith in 1923-24. A Women's Missionary Society was organized in October with sixteen members. By conference time the group had three new members and had raised twenty-five dollars for missions.

Rev. W. C. Lasater served the field from 1924-26 but left no record of his work for these years.

THE LIVINGSTON MISSION

From the Official Record of Livingston we take the statement of W. Isley,

We settled in Livingston, Montana the last of June, 1923. We started a little Sunday school in our home with sixteen persons, and a little later

64. Official Record, Reed Point Congregation, Reed Point, Montana, p. 1.

moved the S. S. and church services to the basement of the Episcopal church, for about a year and then we moved three times in succession in about three months. We are not able to pay the price for a permanent place, so we rent a building which we get for \$10 per month to be used for Sunday services, with the understanding that they are for rent for a business place.⁶⁵

Rev. Isley went on to say that they had been successful in interesting many different families that were not going anywhere else to church. But the people would not remain. The group seemed handicapped by the lack of a permanent building.

It seems so many times that we get these people interested and then some other church thinks they need them in their ranks, and so it goes--get out and hunt others. But we still have a nice little S. S. and church attendance.⁶⁶

Revival services were held in July of that first year and Rev. E. H. Wendland was the evangelist. Rev. Roukema led the singing and Mrs. Roukema played the piano.

Another meeting was held in February of the following year. These meetings were successful and eight souls found Christ Jesus as their personal Saviour. Five of these joined the mission church. Two more members came into the mission fellowship by letter of transfer. Originally there were fourteen members. Three were removed from the roll leaving nineteen active members. Rev. Isley mentioned in the record that "We have good prayer meetings, most of our members attend

65. Official Record, Livingston Congregation, Livingston, Montana, p. 1.

66. Ibid.

and a good spirit is shown."⁶⁷ At the close of the first full year he was able to report an active Ladies' Aid that had already purchased songbooks and other items necessary for their congregation.

F. R. Witmer followed Rev. Isley in Livingston and shortly after his arrival in July of 1925 the congregation again moved to a new location at 312 South Main Street. "This building was small, but it was at least well lighted and sanitary."⁶⁸ The previous meeting place had been dark and musty. The new location cost the congregation fifteen dollars a month. At the conclusion of Rev. Witmer's ministry the record shows the church had fifteen members.

In 1926 Rev. O. L. Peckenpaugh was assigned to Livingston.

We received our appointment from the Nebraska Conference held at Dawson, Neb. and arrived on June 4th, 1926. We held our services at 312 South Main St. until fall when we moved over to the North side on North 5th St. and held a two week meeting without any interest and very small attendance. We then rented a room in the A. W. Miles building until they rented it for a saloon purpose; then we used the Salvation Army hall a short time. Finally we bought two nice lots on West Clark Street and built a small church, finishing just before conference, for which we are very thankful.⁶⁹

While there had been some dissention and withdrawals, still this was a year which brought blessings abundant to the Livingston congregation. They received a church building and also with the help

67. Ibid., p. 2.

68. Ibid.

69. Ibid.

of the General Missionary Society, bought a parsonage. At the close of the year the church had eight members with prospects for a brighter future. In the final year of his pastorate in Livingston, Rev. Peck-enpauigh saw the church cement itself together and attendance and interest increase. During the year the membership roll swelled to twenty-five, as eighteen new members were admitted.

THE COLUMBUS MISSION

Rev. Wilber Isley conducted the first services for the Evangelical church in the latter part of the month of August 1925 in Columbus. He conducted a series of evangelistic meetings with W. C. Lasater as the evangelist. There were no results during the two weeks of services, but a Sunday school was organized and church services were held Sunday morning and evening. During that same fall, Rev. Isley held a meeting in the White Bird school house. Several persons responded, repented of their sins, and confessed Christ as their Saviour. Later three of these became members of the Columbus class. Also in the fall of 1925 a Sunday school was organized at Beaver Creek. A spring revival failed to show any visible results.

In January of 1926, Rev. H. S. Tool held special meetings in Columbus, and although there were no visible results, a class organized with eight charter members. A revival campaign was again made in December of the same year when Dr. Paris Wells and party visited Columbus. There were several conversions and new members added to the class.

THE MONTANA CONFERENCE ORGANIZED JUNE 23, 1927.

The initial step toward detachment of the Montana fields from the Nebraska Conference came in 1926 at Lock Haven, Pennsylvania, September 29 to October 3. B. R. Wiener, Field Secretary for the Missionary Society of the Evangelical Church, made his annual report. Regarding the work in Montana he reported:

Montana is one of our expensive mission fields. It is not as hopeful as Colorado or even some others. The extreme cold winters, the repeated crop failures in certain sections and the fact that our work is so widely scattered are among the difficulties that we have to deal with. Yet there is real need here for genuine missionary work and the outlook is not without its encouraging signs. If we have the patience, the endurance, the spirit of sacrificial giving on behalf of the needy and the wisdom to adjust ourselves as speedily as is consistent with the best interest of our cause, we can win in Montana. This Board should at this session consider the advisability of detaching the work in the state of Montana from the Nebraska Conference and organizing it under proper administrative oversight into a special mission under the General Board.⁷⁰

From this suggestion a memorial was prepared for the General Conference that would grant Montana a divorcement from the Nebraska Conference. General Conference convened in Williamsport, Pennsylvania October 7-14, 1926. In the report of the Committee on Boundaries is found the action that gave permission for a separate conference in Montana.

70. G. E. Epp and B. H. Niebel, Missions of the Evangelical Church (Cleveland, Missionary Society of the Evangelical Church, 1925-1926.), p. 29.

In regard to the overture of the Board of Missions, presented through its field secretary, Rev. B. R. Wiener, concerning the work in the State of Montana, we recommend that the work in said state shall be detached from the Nebraska conference and formed into a missionary conference to be known as the Montana Conference of the Evangelical Church; that this action may be taken at any time during the quadrennium at the discretion and action of the Nebraska conference and the Board of Bishops, and that the supervision of the new conference shall be in accordance with the provisions of the Discipline regarding missionary conferences.⁷¹

THE 1927 SESSION

The Nebraska Conference gave approval to the establishment of Montana as a separate conference at their 1927 Annual Conference.

In harmony with the aforesaid action and authorization of the General Conference, of the Nebraska Conference; and of the Board of Bishops of the Evangelical Church;--the Ministers of the Montana District of the Nebraska Conference, and Rev. J. H. Oehlerking appointed by the Board of Bishops, as Presiding Elder of the new Conference, met in the Evangelical Church, Reed Point, Montana, Thursday June 23, 1927, at 2:00 P. M. under the Chairmanship of Bishop J. F. Dunlap of Cleveland, Ohio, to conduct the business incident to the organization of the Montana Conference of the Evangelical Church.⁷²

At this first Annual Conference in Reed Point, June 23 and 24, 1927, the left section of pews in the church auditorium was fixed as the Conference Bar. The time sessions were to be held from 9:00 to 11:30 A. M.

71. A. J. Brunner, Proceedings of the General Conference of the Evangelical Church (Harrisburg, Eastern Publishing House of the Evangelical Church, 1926.), p. 139.

72. N. A. Eller, Proceedings of the Organization Session of the Montana Conference of the Evangelical Church (Cleveland, Evangelical Press, 1927.), p. 7.

and from 2:00 to 5:00 P. M. The appointed tellers were F. R. Witmer and O. L. Peckenpaugh. The elected secretary was Rev. Newton Eller. fifteen standing committees were created during the sessions on the first day.

Greetings were received by the newly organized Montana Conference from the newly organized North West Canada Conference and the Montana men responded heartily.

In this first conference session no record was made as to laymen officially attending. The standing committees were made up from the ministerial ranks. However, on the official register for this session six laymen's names appear. It seems that these were placed on the various committees by the ministers. At the conclusion of the session the secretary was authorized to sign the names of the members of the conference "as a testimony of acquiescence and obedience as in the sight of God".⁷³ The name of Presiding Elder John Oehlerking appears along with the eight ministers: H. S. Tool, W. C. Lasater, W. Isley, H. A. Thiele, N. A. Eller, E. C. Hicks, O. L. Peckenpaugh, and F. R. Witmer. We therefore can conclude that there was no lay representation at the organizing session of the Montana Conference.

The spirit that existed in the organizing conference could perhaps best be displayed by the first item in the report of the Resolutions Committee.

Whereas, we have been privileged, these days,
to meet in happy conference and fellowship to
formulate plans and programs for kingdom extension

73. Ibid.

in organizing the Montana Conference of the Evangelical Church, therefore,

Resolved, That we greatly appreciate this new relationship and its enlarged privileges in extending the Redeemer's kingdom through our beloved church, and, hereby pledge our utmost fidelity and devotion to the tasks of our new day with its enlarged⁷⁴ opportunities and added responsibilities.

The Montana mission in 1926 reported having a membership of six hundred. In 1927 there were seventy-four new members. At this first conference there were 225 conversions reported. There was \$1,585.05 contributed to missions, which averages about \$2.56 a member. The average given per member for all purposes was \$27.85.

Thus the new conference was born. The denomination had given consent to Nebraska, and Nebraska in the following year granted the separation of the work in Montana. June 23, 1927 will stand in historic memory as the day the Montana Conference of the Evangelical Church came into being.

THE 1928 SESSION

This session convened at 2:00 P. M. on May 23, 1928 in Broadview. This session was attended by a lay delegate from each field. Bishop J. F. Dunlap of Cleveland, Ohio presided. The conference lasted three days and Sunday.

The Conference Missionary Society met a half day before the opening of the second session. While this society had been organized at the first

74. Ibid., p. 15.

conference in Reed Point, their constitution appeared in the 1928

Journal.

The object of this Society shall be to gather funds for the furtherance of the missionary efforts of the Conference, to urge Missions to become self-supporting, to urge the establishing of new Missions where possible, and to disseminate Missionary information. It shall be auxiliary to the Missionary Society of the Evangelical Church.⁷⁵

The membership of this group was open to any conference member. that paid the membership fee of one dollar. The ministers under appointment were required to become members. This group met and heard the missionary report for the conference read. They also elected a delegate to the General Board of Missions.

In the presiding elder's report we are given a fairly concise report of the condition of the fields, and the state of the new conference in general.

Evangelism has been the key-note throughout the year, according to reports. 58 precious souls were saved by the Blood of the Lamb, and we are glad to report that the Conference can show a net gain of 44 in membership for the first year of existence.⁷⁶

He continued to report that Big Timber church suffered a loss in membership of 16 because of many moving from the town. Revival meetings were held in both churches, which strengthened the town church, but were hindered at Hope church because of bad weather. He foresaw

75. N. A. Eller, Proceedings of the Second Annual Session of the Montana Conference of the Evangelical Church (Big Timber, Sweet Grass Press, 1928), p. 33.

76. Ibid., p. 16.

a bright future for this work.

In Billings, Bishop Seager of Le Mars, Iowa held a week of evangelistic services. A number of souls were saved and added to the kingdom. This congregation had filled their chapel and needed a new church. The Ways and Means Committee gave permission to the congregation to raise funds for a new church. A lively Women's Missionary Society was organized in the winter of 1927. The membership reached eighty-seven with 254 enrolled in the Sunday school.

Broadview reported good meetings held in both churches. Eleven new members were added to the town church.

Columbus reported the best year financially that it had ever had. The request was made for a church building.

Fallon reported a good series of meetings and a gain of eleven in membership.

From Hingham mission reports came showing a gain of four in membership. The presiding elder stressed that the town of Rudyard should have an Evangelical church.

Plentywood is a mission of plenty appointments. The pastor has been giving part time to six different communities. During the last summer several meetings were held with telling effects. Brother N. A. Eller assisted in a revival meeting in town last March, with good results.⁷⁷

The Young People's Convention was held in the Rapelje church during the conference year 1927-28.

Regarding the conference work at Shawmut and Ryegate, the presiding elder reported:

77. Ibid., p. 17.

These two places could well be served as a mission, but apparently at present our steps are uncertain about re-entering this field. At Ryegate we have a number of very influential members who are very true. We must, however, further inquire as to the Divine Will in the matter of going back where we once have withdrawn.⁷⁸

Four ministers entered the conference at this session. Rev. T. A. Marks presented the credentials of an itinerant elder from the Colorado Conference and was accepted into the conference fellowship in that same relationship. Rev. J. C. Sippel, an itinerant elder from the Washington Conference, was accepted. Rev. B. A. Shively, formerly of the Nebraska Conference, entered on the condition that in order to maintain his elder's relationship with the Montana Conference, he must enter the Superannuation Fund. Joseph D. Lindley was granted license as a probationer.

Statistically speaking, the report for the second conference year was not as glowing as 1927. There were fifty-seven conversions reported and eighty-four new members added to the mission rolls.

MISSOULA MISSION ESTABLISHED

In 1928, Missoula was officially welcomed into the Montana Conference.

Last July the Washington Conference opened a new Mission at Missoula, Montana. A Sunday school was organized. Soon this was followed by the organizing of a church with 19 charter members. Missoula being the University City

78. Ibid.

of Montana and 250 miles from Spokane, Wash. The board of Missions meeting last October at Bay City, Michigan decided that the future of the affiliation of Missoula mission should be determined by the presiding bishops, namely that of Bishop Dunlap and Bishop Seager and the two presiding elders involved. The decision was reached that this mission become a part of the Montana Conference. These people have a place of worship which has a good seating capacity, but the location ought to be changed and the church improved.⁷⁹

Rev. J. C. Sippel transferred to the Montana Conference from Washington. He had begun the work in Missoula, and under the arranged transfer he remained the pastor.

THE 1929 SESSION

The third annual session of the Montana Conference convened at the Big Timber Evangelical church on Thursday, May 9, 1929. Bishop M. T. Maze of Harrisburg, Pennsylvania was the chairman.

In the conference proceedings for this year, the articles of incorporation of the Montana Conference of the Evangelical Church first appear. (See Appendix A).

Eleven missions were reported in 1929 having nineteen organized congregations. There were eighty-six conversions during the year, and eighty new members received into the churches. The church membership was reported to be 781, with 1,364 persons enrolled in the Sunday school. In 1929 there was \$81,850.00 in mission property. Missionary giving increased to \$5.88 per member during this year.

79. Ibid.

A new church building was erected in Columbus and reported at this session. At Rudyard a modern house was purchased for a parsonage. This conference made the initial provisions to begin soliciting funds and planning construction for a new church building in Billings.

Three men received their elder's orders at this session. They were F. R. Witmer, E. C. Hicks, and H. L. Calvert. E. J. Bott was admitted into the conference from the North Dakota conference.

At the 1929 session a committee was appointed by the chairman to secure and purchase a permanent camp ground for the Montana conference.

THE 1930 SESSION

This session, the fourth for the Montana conference, convened in Columbus on May eighth with Bishop L. H. Seager as chairman.

Presiding Elder, Oehlerking, reported that new church buildings were under construction in Missoula and Billings, and that Rapelje and Broadview were being remodeled.

L. O. Flynn and Andrew Roukema from Nebraska, and W. C. Menges and E. J. Bott from North Dakota were received into the Montana conference in the same relation sustained in their respective conferences.

O. H. Schuster was granted a license to preach. At the same time T. A. Marks was transferred to Colorado and Wilber Isley returned to Nebraska. E. C. Hicks requested his credentials forwarded to Oregon's conference. B. A. Shively had been received in 1923 into the Montana conference as an itinerant elder, on the solemn promise that he would enter the Superannuation Fund. He failed to do this, and was dismissed from the Montana conference without credentials. All offices held by

him were declared vacant.

The Ways and Means Committee appointed a sub-committee made up of the pastors of Billings and Columbus churches, together with the conference trustees, to continue negotiations with proper authorities for the purchase of the Riverside Inn property for a summer assembly camp grounds. This committee also made provision for the sale of the Hingham church.

The conference reported ninety-one conversions and thirty-nine new members.

THE 1931 SESSION

Bishop George Edward Epp presided over the fifth annual conference held in Billings. The annual report of the presiding elder tells the reader that Missoula, Billings, and Livingston have new churches. The state and the conference suffered in 1931. Drought and depression were felt in the little mission conference.

nevertheless our good people have almost without exception rallied in a noble way in lifting the financial obligations. However all goals have not been reached, but the people have done very well.⁸⁰

Six months after the conference appointments for 1930 had been read, the conference was saddened by the passing of O. H. Schuster. At the preceeding conference he had been licensed and assigned to preach at Rapelje. The vacancy was filled by Rev. R. R. Roberts, who pastored

80. N. A. Eller, Official Record of the Montana Conference of the Evangelical Church (N. A. Eller, Ed. and Pub., 1931), p. 18.

Rapelje until conference. This was a year for strong evangelistic emphasis on all of the fields. At most of the churches members of the conference assisted each other. There were 162 conversions and 144 church accessions reported.

The Ways and Means Committee recommended the sale of the South Seventh Street property in Livingston as well as the Hingham church and the Shawmut church. Authorization was also made to negotiate with proper authorities concerning the Rudyard and Fishtail Methodist church properties. J. C. Sippel's credentials were transferred to the South Dakota Conference.

THE 1932 SESSION

This sixth session of conference was held in Livingston. Bishop G. E. Epp of Cleveland, Ohio, presided.

A group insurance plan had been presented to the Montana Conference by the North Dakota Conference in 1931. At this session an insurance commission was created with the president of the conference board of trustees as president. The treasurer was to be the conference missionary society treasurer. Claire L. Harris was accepted into the itinerancy as an elder from the Dakota Conference of the Wesleyan Methodist Church.

A motion prevailed that missionary rallies be held on each field, and arrangements for program and time be left to the Officers of the Conference Missionary Society.⁸¹

81. N. A. Eller, Official Record of the Montana Conference of the Evangelical Church (N. A. Eller, Ed. and Pub., 1932), p. 15.

There were ninety-nine conversions reported for the year and an increase in membership of seventy-nine.

The Albright Brotherhood made its first appearance in the conference this year. The Livingston church, where this session is held, is to be congratulated on its fine advance. We rejoice with them in having been the pioneer church in this movement in our state. They reported twelve members, and by now no doubt have more. May this movement spread in the conference.⁸²

Dr. W. S. Bollman, Executive Secretary-Treasurer of the General Missionary Society, submitted a plan to the conference to help them liquidate the \$48,856.00 debt owed by the Montana conference. Rev. Tool and Rev. Witmer were instructed to prepare plans for this liquidation program. The plan prepared, called for one dollar from every adult member and friend of the Evangelical church. It also called for a centenary offering in the Sunday schools in observance of one hundred years of Sunday school work in the Evangelical church "with the aim of twenty-five cents or more from each pupil".⁸³ Then special gifts from one hundred to one thousand dollars were to be solicited. The value of mission property in Montana had increased to \$127,100.00.

THE 1933 SESSION

Bishop Epp again presided over the conference of the Evangelical church in the state of Montana, which met in the Big Timber church for its seventh annual session.

82. Ibid., p. 22.

83. Ibid., p. 28.

This session appointed H. S. Tool, H. L. Calvert, and H. A. Thiele as a committee to compile a History of the Montana Conference. H. S. Tool, chairman of this historical committee, declared that any pertinent materials should be sent to H. L. Calvert. This history was never written.

The general missionary society reported a deficit in funds and the missionary conference of Montana pledged two hundred sixty dollars to help relieve them of their financial obligations. There were 101 conversions and eighty-eight new members reported. Rev. E. J. Bott was advanced to the order of an elder in the church. W. M. Schuster was retained in a Supernumerary relationship with the conference.

The report of the Resolutions Committee bears a fitting tribute to B. H. Niebel, D. D., Honorary Secretary of the Missionary Society of the Evangelical church.

He was run into by a truck as he stepped off a street car and was severely injured. His death was the result of the shock from injuries received.

The church mourns the loss of one of her most faithful servants, who for many years gave himself unsparingly for the welfare of the Evangelical church and in particular her missionary cause. Dr. Niebel was for twenty years secretary of the Missionary Society and for six years treasurer of Western Union College. Through the special efforts of Dr. Niebel, the first missionary to Montana was appointed, the Rev. W. L. Dillow.⁸⁴

84. N. A. Eller, Official Record of the Montana Conference of the Evangelical Church (N. A. Eller, Ed. and Pub., 1933), pp. 23-24.

This conference session proposed and carried out the Pastor-District Superintendent plan for this year. Rev. Oehlerking served the Broadview field in conjunction with his administrative duties.

THE 1934 SESSION

Reed Point was the scene for the eighth annual conference of the Montana conference. Bishop Epp again presided over the meeting. This year Rev. C. C. Hoffman, District Superintendent of the Montana conference of the Church of the United Brethren in Christ, and also pastor of the United Brethren church in Great Falls was introduced and received as an advisory member to this session. He was requested to bear greetings from the Montana conference of the Evangelical church to his own respective conference.

At this session the first announcement was made that the annual convention was to be held at Luccock Park. The dates were announced as June 26-July 1, 1934. C. Lee Birdsall, upon the recommendation of the Billings congregation, was granted a license as a preacher on trial. Rev. L. O. Flynn was placed on the Superannuated list. There were eighty-six conversions and fifty-four members reportedly gained during the year. An interesting comparison of statistics was included by Rev. Oehlerking in his Superintendent's report. He showed that from 1927 to the present time there was a steady increase in every department of this missionary conference with the exception of the Ladies' Aids, which decreased each year. The Woman's Missionary

Society and Albright Brotherhood both showed a steady gain in membership for this year.

THE 1935 SESSION

Bishop E. W. Praetorius presided over the ninth annual session held in Fallon at the Bethel Evangelical church. Again at this conference Rev. C. C. Hoffman of the United Brethren church was present. Two local pastors from that denomination were also welcomed by the conference. From this conference an invitation was given to the ministers of the United Brethren conference to attend and enjoy the minister's retreat held annually by the Evangelicals. Bishop Ira D. Warner of the United Brethren church was the guest speaker.

The Committee on Resolutions, no doubt, clearly set forth the ecumenical spirit existing between the Montana Evangelicals and the United Brethren in Christ when they stated:

Inasmuch as we have heard with pleasure the fraternal address of the Rev. C. C. Hoffman, District Superintendent of the Church of the United Brethren in Christ, therefore be it

RESOLVED, that we have most highly appreciated his presence in our midst and herewith express the desire for a speedy consummation of our negotiations looking toward church union.⁸⁵

F. Everell Wines was accepted into the Montana conference from the Texas conference as an itinerant elder. Rev. L. O. Flynn, at his own request,

85. N. A. Eller, Official Record of the Montana Conference of the Evangelical Church (N. A. Eller, Ed. and Pub., 1935.) p. 29.

was dropped from the records of the Montana conference. H. L. Calvert was placed on the list of superannuated ministers because of physical disability.

Rev. Oehlerking, in his annual report, made it clear that the only obstacle to starting new missions was the huge debt owed by the conference. He said, "Oh that we might open at least one new mission; but we scarcely dare venture much more in regards to debts."⁸⁶

The Ways and Means Committee authorized either by trade or an outright sale, the exchange of the Shawmut property with the Methodists for their Reed Point property. The consummation of this proposal made our church the only active denomination in Reed Point and its vicinity.

The director of Christian Education reported that the first summer assembly held at Luccock Park proved highly successful and also reported that plans were under way to hold it again during the summer months of this year. Luccock Park summer assembly, from this time on, became an annual spiritual blessing to the Montana conference of the Evangelical church.

The conference reported 139 conversions and seventy-three new members for the year. The principle of indebtedness had been reduced by \$1,890.00

86. Ibid. p. 23.

THE 1936 SESSION

Bethel Evangelical church as Broadview, Montana was the scene of the tenth annual session. Bishop Praetorius presided over the conference which opened April 23, 1926 at 2:00 P. M.. Rev. F. B. La Favre, Conference Superintendent of the Montana United Brethren conference, was introduced and welcomed to sit within the Conference Bar. He addressed the conference in the afternoon of the second day.

Rev. Oehlerking reported that death had entered the inner ranks of the conference and had claimed Rev. W. M. Schuster who had previously been on the superannuated list. Although he had never served a field in the conference, he truly was its friend and devoted member. He could only preach in the German language, and Montana had no German openings. He served churches for other denominations, but his membership remained in the Montana conference of the Evangelical church.

Dr. E. W. Petticord, then District Superintendent of the Salem district of the Oregon-Washington conference, was the speaker for the Luccock Park summer assembly. "This assembly proved a great blessing to all who attended, yes it reached far beyond that, for those in attendance took the inspiration back to their home congregations."⁸⁷

Missionary rallies were held on all of the fields again this year. The different brethren of the conference were teamed, and thus an entire conference was given much valuable and beneficial information and

87. N. A. Eller, Official Record of the Montana Conference of the Evangelical Church (N. A. Eller, Ed. and Pub., 1936.), p. 19.

inspiration.as the brethren delivered these missionary messages.

J. D. Lindley was received into the itinerary and granted the order of deacon in the church. There were 142 conversions and 105 accessions to the church reported for the year.

THE 1937 SESSION

The eleventh session of the Montana conference was held in Billings with Bishop E. W. Praetorius presiding. Rev. F. B. La Favre was again received as fraternal delegate from the Montana Conference of the Church of the United Brethren in Christ. He also addressed the conference on matters of mutual interest. At the conclusion of this address, Bishop Praetorius responded with an appropriate message which gave the conference information as to the progress being made in regard to church union.

Rev. Oehlerking, in his annual report, mentioned the severe winter that had just passed, and the hardship this placed on the country appointments.

Because of the long continued cold and snow-blocked roads the country appointments could not be reached during the months of January, February and part of March. This was also true of many of the country folks not being able to attend services in our town churches. We believe, that progress was made in spite of these adverse conditions.⁸⁸

Seven organized men's brotherhoods were reported, the newest being

88. N. A. Eller, Official Record of the Montana Conference of the Evangelical Church (N. A. Eller, Ed. and Pub., 1937), p. 14.

Rudyard. The summer assembly, again having Dr. E. W. Petticord as guest speaker, was reported as being a "very blessed assembly".⁸⁹ He added that "this coming convention is to be a joint convention with the 'Church of the United Brethren in Christ' ".⁹⁰ The superintendent also reported that the district superintendents met at Fargo, North Dakota for an areal meeting. The host pastor in the Fargo church was Rev. Reuben R. Strutz, later to become District Superintendent of the Montana conference. This meeting was significant in that it was the first meeting of what has now become an annual event. (The superintendents met together to study the best methods used to make the work of the church more efficient). These men exchanged experiences and discussed problems together.

Statistically this was a low year. There were fifty-six conversions on the fields and eighty-two new members reported. The conference indebtedness was reduced by \$1,235.48. Members gave \$3.15 per member to missions and \$20.60 per member for all purposes.

THE 1938 SESSION

Bishop Praetorius presided over the twelfth annual conference held in Big Timber, Montana and called to order on April 20, 1938. The conference director of Christian Education, F. R. Witmer, reported that this had been a good year in his department. The

89. Ibid., p. 15.

90. Ibid.

Sunday schools had increased fifteen per cent over last year and there was a twenty-eight per cent increase in credits received for Leadership Training courses. There were 1,405 enrolled in the Sunday school and ninety-two credits issued.

The conference passed the one thousand mark in church membership this year. There were eighty-eight conversions and ninety-five accessions to the church reported.

H. A. Thiele transferred his conference relationship to the South Dakota conference. W. C. Menges, because of ill health, was placed on the list of superannuated ministers. F. R. Witmer's credentials were transferred to the Oregon-Washington conference.

The district superintendent's report relates that Rudyard has a new church. He also told of the damage incurred to the property in Billings.

On the night of June 11-12 Billings was visited by a flood that covered the basement and quite a few of the lower floors in houses.....Our church and parsonage and also the district house were in the flood area...Practically all of the furniture in the basement was ruined and also the floor and wall decorations. However we are grateful that no lives were lost nor any of our people injured. Only those who have gone through a flood in reality know what such an experience is.⁹¹

THE 1939 SESSION

Bishop Praetorius declared the thirteenth annual conference in session on April 26, 1939 at 8:00 P. M. in Columbus, Montana.

91. N. A. Eller, Official Record of the Montana Conference of the Evangelical Church (N. A. Eller, Ed. and Pub., 1938) p. 19.

At this session the conference administrative council was created in harmony with the general conference action.

The purpose of the Administrative Council shall be: (1) To serve as a medium of relationship with the Administrative Council of the General Church; (2) To review the work and study the needs of the entire conference; (3) To integrate and promote the total program of the conference; (4) To give counsel and guidance to the several agencies of the conference; (5) To promote stewardship, and systematic, equitable, and adequate financial support of the various agencies of the Church; (6) To serve as the Standing Committee on Missions and Benevolences.⁹²

This conference also created a Board of Church Extension for the state of Montana of the Evangelical church. The purpose for this organization was "to serve as the medium of relationship between the General Board of Church Extension and the Montana Conference".⁹³ It is also to "assist the conference in locating new missions".⁹⁴ This group was also to help local congregations in building or improving churches and parsonages.

"E. J. Schroeder from the North Dakota conference was received into this conference in the same relationship he had in the North Dakota conference."⁹⁵ The number of conversions was reported as 107. There were ninety-eight new members received during the year.

92. N. A. Eller, Official Record of the Montana Conference of the Evangelical Church (N. A. Eller, Ed. and Pub., 1939), p. 26.

93. Ibid., p. 14.

94. Ibid., p. 15.

95. Ibid., p. 21.

THE 1940 SESSION

The fourteenth annual conference was held in Missoula, Montana. Bishop E. W. Praetorius was the presiding officer.

The conference reported that \$1,866.88 had been paid on the conference indebtedness. The debt at this time was \$40,341.00.

The summer assembly at Luccock was jointly held with the United Brethren conference. There were 127 credits given for completion of Leadership Training courses.

D. B. Mydland was received from the Danish Evangelical Free church as a licentiate. Having completed conference requirements for the deacon's orders, he was received into the itinerancy as a deacon.

There were seventy-seven conversions and eighty-seven members reported during the year.

THE 1941 SESSION

The 1941 session of Montana conference convened in Rapelje, Montana with Bishop E. W. Praetorius presiding.

At this session the way was cleared for the conference board of trustees to sell the Bethel church at Rudyard which was vacant; also the Ryegate parsonage was to be sold by the trustees.⁹⁶ The administrative council made a report on the establishment of a new mission.

Your committee visited Bozeman, Montana December 9, 1940. We viewed the entire city, noting its churches, schools, business center, residential districts and some of the country adjacent to the

96. N. A. Eller, Official Record of the Montana Conference of the Evangelical Church (N. A. Eller, Ed. and Pub., 1941.), p. 24.

city. The city has a population of approximately 8,900, having grown steadily for the past ten years. The city is located in the populous and prosperous Gallatin valley, and is the county seat of Gallatin County. Your committee was very favorably impressed with this city.⁹⁷

There were ninety-one conversions and sixty new members taken into the church.⁹⁸

THE 1942 SESSION

The sixteenth annual session of the Montana conference was declared in session by Bishop E. W. Praetorius. There were eighty-five conversions and ninety-three new members reported for the year. Mission property was estimated as worth \$138,500.00. The conference paid \$2,375.00 on the principle of the debt.

O. L. Peckenpaugh was granted his credentials at his own request. They were transferred to the Methodist church in Maquen, Illinois of the Illinois conference.

THE 1943 SESSION

The Montana conference met in its seventeenth annual session on April 13, 1943 at Big Timber, Montana. Bishop E. W. Praetorius presided at this session. At this conference, Reuben R. Strutz was accepted as the new District Superintendent. Formerly he was an itinerant elder in the North Dakota conference, serving at Bismarck,

97. Ibid., p. 26.

98. Ibid., p. 37.

North Dakota. Rev. J. H. Oehlerking had served the Montana conference from the time of its organization in 1927 until the present time. The final report given by him at this session contains one retrospective paragraph.

A closing word of appreciation: sixteen years ago we were called by the church to this position. That call was answered. These years were full of varied experiences. As we look back we must come to the conclusion that even though they were varied, all have been for our good. We wish to thank one and all for the fine cooperation shown. We enjoyed the good hospitality in the homes and the excellent way we were treated. May God richly bless you one and all.⁹⁹

The Billings congregation became self-supporting during this conference year. This was the first field to be taken off of the list of missions.

WHEREAS Billings is now carrying its local budget in full and is receiving no missionary aid in that respect, therefore, be it

Resolved, That Billings be taken off of the list of missions and be constituted a station.¹⁰⁰

The pastors of the Columbus and Reed Point charges were advised to share the responsibility in providing worship services at the Mouat and Benbow chrome mines.

There were eighty-three conversions and ninety-four accessions to the church. The conference paid \$3,611.00 on the debt during the year.

99. N. A. Eller, Official Record of the Montana Conference of the Evangelical Church (N. A. Eller, Ed. and Pub., 1943), p. 19.

100. Ibid., p. 22.

THE 1944 SESSION

The 1944 session met in Columbus, Montana. Bishop E. W. Praetorius presided over the eighteenth annual conference. Rev. Claire Harris was elected secretary to replace N. A. Eller who had served in this capacity for seventeen years. At this session the Youth Fellowship plan was presented and adopted. Dr. R. H. Mueller, General Secretary of Christian Education, represented the council of the General Youth Fellowship and presented this new plan for Youth work in the Evangelical church. The new Youth Fellowship was to be created at Luccock Park summer assembly.

Robert L. Dunn and Fred A. Dunn were received into the conference in the same relation as that which they sustained in the South Dakota conference, that of itinerant elders. David J. Graff was received as an ~~ideaconant~~ elder from the North Dakota conference. N. A. Eller was listed as an appointee of the Montana conference to the superintendency of the Pacific Old People's Home for the Aged at Burbank, California. D. B. Mydland was placed on the list of appointments as a chaplain in the United States Army.

A new mission project was undertaken when the Ways and Means committee made available sixteen hundred dollars to provide a place of worship on the Buffalo Rapids Irrigation Project Unit No. 1. Superintendent Strutz said,

It is a truism, that that which doesn't grow and develop will most certainly retrogress and eventually die. That is also true with our work in Montana. If we are to be what God wants us to

be, then we must grow as a conference. There are centers of population into which, I believe, we should go with the gospel as soon as possible. Our most likely opportunity at present seems to be in connection with our work in Fallon. A large irrigation project is being set up by the government on the north side of the Yellowstone River. A hundred and fifty families are to be located on farms in this project. I am happy to report that Brother E. J. Bott has shown the true missionary spirit in starting the work in this place. At present, services are conducted in a private home, and at times the attendance has mounted to fifty and sixty. Provision must be made to purchase an adequate place of worship in the near future. This matter is being presented to the conference by the Administrative Council, and I trust will receive adequate and careful consideration.¹⁰¹

The immediate reason for the new mission is explained in the historic record kept by Rev. E. J. Bott.

It was on Sunday, March 28, 1943 at 1:17 P. M. that the large bridge across the Yellowstone river went out by reason of an ice jam leaving six of our families on the north side. The County grader did make a road through the bad lands from north of Terry to connect up with the highway just north of Fallon. This meant that we had to drive west to Terry, cross the river on the Terry bridge, and then drive east until we could get back on the highway, making a distance of forty-two miles where otherwise it would have been only two miles.

We called on our members and made plans to hold a service for them in what was known as the Pete Evans house located on Cracker Box Creek just south of the present location of Calvary Church. The service was to have been on Sunday, June 13th at 2 P. M., but because of an all-day rain it was impossible for

101. Claire L. Harris, Official Record of the Montana Conference of the Evangelical Church (C. L. Harris, Ed. and Pub., 1944), P. 23.

us to make the long trip through the hills. Nevertheless an audience of fifteen people had gathered and though the pastor did not get there, they went right ahead and had a service by singing hymns, reading God's word, and having prayer. Brother Sam Dalke took charge. The C. C. Jensen family gave the little group a welcome to continue such services. Surely this was an evidence that the Lord would have us open an appointment there in Buffalo Rapids Irrigation Project Unit No. 1. New families were constantly moving in.

In the meantime plans were made to cross the river by motor boat and have one of the families to meet the pastor, taking him from the boat to the service and return him to the boat after the service. The first such service was held June 27, 1943 with an attendance of thirty-one. Services were held once each month at 2 P. M. from that time on until immediately after annual conference time in 1944 and since that time (May 7th) services have been held every Sunday afternoon. Up to this time the highest attendance reached was fifty-six.

District Superintendent R. R. Strutz was with us for an evening service at 7:30 P. M. with an attendance of fifty-three. Martin, Andy, and Rebecca Sackman were also with us and sang for us. Daililena Pust and Delila Mittelstaedt gave us an instrumental number. This was on September 5, 1943. Mrs. Arnold Peterson met us at the boat.¹⁰²

The conference indebtedness was decreased by \$5,864.00. There were 129 conversions and eighty-three accessions reported for the year.

The Big Timber church had the distinction of becoming a self-supporting field in the conference. The committee on boundaries recommended; "Whereas, Request has come from Big Timber asking that they

102. Fallon Record.

be taken off of the mission list and be made a self-supporting charge, therefore be it Resolved, That their request be granted."¹⁰³

THE 1945 SESSION

The nineteenth session of the Montana conference of the Evangelical church convened in the Bethel church in Fallon, Montana on April 25, 1945.

A student aid society was organized at this conference. The purpose for this society is stated in the constitution.

The purpose of this Society shall be to give financial aid through loans and grants herein provided, to young men of the Montana conference in their preparation for the ministry of the Evangelical church. That such financial loans or grants from this fund be granted only to students attending schools approved by this society.¹⁰⁴

The committee on Memorials brought the report of the tragic accidental death of Rev. N. A. Eller on June 20, 1944, and the death of Rev. W. C. Menges on April 1, 1945.¹⁰⁵ They were two stalwart men of God who gave much of their strength proclaiming the "unsearchable riches of Christ".

Rev. David J. Graff was ordained elder at this session, and Robert E. Strutz, upon recommendation of the Billings congregation, was granted a license to preach.

Regarding the new mission project near Fallon, Rev. Reuben Strutz reported,

103. 1944 Record, op. cit., p. 27.

104. Claire L. Harris, Official Record of the Montana Conference of the Evangelical Church (Harrisburg, Evangelical Pub. House, 1945) p. 19.

105. Ibid. p. 27.

The work on the new mission at Fallon has culminated in a place to worship with a fine group of worshipers. The untiring efforts of the pastor, the loyal devotion of the people on the field and in the conference and God's providential help have given us victory in this place. The government restrictions on building material seemed to make any hope of obtaining a place of worship for this venture impossible. However a school building, well constructed, located about thirty miles from the Buffalo Rapids project, was offered for sale. Our bid of \$677.00 was accepted. After almost insurmountable difficulties, the building was moved and located. The interior of the building was refinished with Insolite. Pews were purchased from Mr. Peter Barbie of Rudyard at a cost of \$75.00. The pulpit was furnished by the Big Timber congregation, and the people and pastor gave their time and labor doing the construction work necessary. This new mission is now a going concern; the building is ready for service and will be dedicated by our beloved Bishop this coming Sunday evening April 29th.¹⁰⁶

There were 112 conversions reported and one hundred new members received. The conference paid \$7,249.00 on indebtedness. This was matched dollar for dollar by the General Missionary Society in a great effort to clear this debt. R. R. Strutz reported that:

the salaries and financial apportionments have been met by each field in full. We have likewise reached and in many instances passed the goals set for debt reduction. I take great pleasure in reporting that the fields of Livingston, Reed Point and Billings have completed the liquidation of their respective debts. Livingston liquidated its debt of seven hundred dollars. Hearty congratulations to these churches. In the case of Billings, the liquidation of the large indebtedness, which at the beginning of the

106. Ibid., p. 53.

conference year was \$8280.00, was made possible through the generosity and loyalty of the local people, the generous assistance given by the General Missionary Society and the Montana Missionary Society. The General Missionary Society has instituted a plan whereby a dollar reduction is given on all debts owed by a church of a Missionary Conference to other than to Annual Conference agencies, for every dollar paid by the congregation on such debts. Credits thus received and credits received from the Conference Missionary Society during this past year amounted to \$3,554.00. The local church raised \$4725.00 toward this debt, an effort worthy of commendation. Missoula and Columbus have made noble strides toward complete debt liquidation. We are sure that with the help of the Lord, they will come to the Annual Conference a year hence, rejoicing that the financial debt on their present structures are completely wiped out. The debt at Columbus has been reduced from \$2700.00 to \$1500.00 and the debt at Missoula from \$3,680.00 to just a little over one thousand dollars. For all that we have been able to achieve in this respect we give God the glory and praise.¹⁰⁷

THE 1946 SESSION

In the enforced absence of the regular chairman, Bishop E. W. Praetorius, D. D., L. L. D., of St. Paul, Minnesota, at the time appointed, the temporary chairman, Brother H. S. Tool, opened the 20th assembly of the Montana conference of the Evangelical church at Calvary church, Rudyard, Montana, in the name of the Triune God.¹⁰⁸

107. Ibid., pp. 53-54.

108. Claire L. Harris, Official Record of the Montana Conference of the Evangelical Church (Harrisburg, Evan. Pub. House, 1946.), p. 7.

Rev. Reuben R. Strutz delivered a sermon, "The Cross Without a Circle" prepared for this conference session by Bishop E. W. Praetorius.

On Thursday morning the conference was called to order by the temporary chairman, H. A. Tool. After establishing the conference bar the group elected as permanent chairman, District Superintendent R. R. Strutz.

Dr. A. V. Howland, District Superintendent for the churches of the United Brethren in Christ for Montana, was the fraternal delegate representing his group at this session. He was asked by this conference to compile information concerning the proposed church merger between the two denominations.

The conference voted by ballot for the union of the two churches. It approved administrative council action which had requested the General Conference to merge the Montana conferences immediately.

Inasmuch as the former Montana conference of the Church of the United Brethren in Christ and the former Montana conference of the Evangelical church for the last nine years have been working together in their joint summer assemblies and other matters,

And the people are greatly desiring the consummation of our conferences into one conference of 17 fields into one district under one conference superintendent, thus eliminating considerable administrative expense and

Inasmuch as there is no overlapping of fields, therefore be it

Resolved, That we earnestly petition the General Conference to grant the above request immediately.¹⁰⁹

109. Ibid., p. 17.

Arvid J. Lindley, upon recommendation of the Missoula congregation, was granted a license to preach. Harvey E. Bartrum, upon recommendation of the Billings congregation, was granted a license to preach. David J. Graff requested release from the active service so as to attend seminary. E. J. Schraeder was placed on the superannuated list of ministers.

The fields reported 136 first time conversions and seventy-four new members added to the church roll during the year. R. R. Strutz, in his annual report, set forth the prospects for the future of the United Montana conference.

The future for the Montana Conference is as bright as the promise of God. With the union of the United Brethren in Christ and the Evangelical Church assured, we will have a fine conference. But we cannot and must not be satisfied with what we now are or have. New fields must be entered. There is an opportunity now in the city of Kalispell. A study was made of the field in December by Dr. A. V. Howland of the United Brethren Church and F. Everal Wines of our church. I, too, was to be with the group making the study but because of delayed trains caused by a wreck, I could not reach Kalispell at that time. The study shows that there is no church located in all of the north part of town. A site should be immediately purchased, if possible. Some individual should be authorized to do this and funds made available. With the purpose in mind to discover a suitable site, so as to report to you, Dr. Howland, Brother O. Douglas and myself drove to Kalispell Tuesday, April 16. There are several sites that would be very suitable for a church location, but real estate in that place has gone up terrifically and the boom has taken hold of people so they are unwilling to even set a price on their lots, fearing that they might still go higher and they thus be the losers. I believe

that whatever we do should be done in conjunction with the United Brethren Church, for it will be our mutual project within another year. Their conference has already taken action and has appointed Brother O. W. Douglas with their superintendent, A. V. Howland, to act in accordance with their best judgment. It is vitally important, I believe, that when we do locate, we do so in the most strategic place possible. A poor, cheap site is often far more expensive than a good, seemingly expensive one.¹¹⁰

110. Ibid., p. 49.

CHAPTER III

EVANGELICAL MINISTERS OF THE GOSPEL IN THE STATE OF MONTANA

My Pastorate

Where the mountains of the morning, towering above the plain
Send their vapors to the valleys, bathe the prairies with the rain,
Where the blue skies deep above them canopy the glacial snow,
There the wild flowers bloom in fragrance, there the warm winds gently blow.

By the river flowing onward, ever onward to the sea,
They have said that I shall serve, and given a pastorate to me;
There are cabins in the foothills where no prayer was ever heard;
Toilers in the fertile valleys who have never read the Word.

They have asked me to discover where they dwell who die in sin;
There are souls that wait the message; there are lonely hearts to win;
Men are dying in the hill lands, dying without hope of heaven;
I'm assigned to find God's people on the charge that I am given.

I've been told to take the message to the souls whom Christ has bought;
All my honor, my achievement by comparison is naught.
I've a message from the Saviour to a broken human heart;
I'm assigned as heaven's Ambassador to those who dwell apart.

Where a river hurries onward, ever onward to the sea,
They have given me a pastorate, assigned a field to me;
Men are calling from the mountains where the warm Chinook winds blow;
They are calling "Come and help us." I must pack my goods and go.

H. S. Tool
1941

Bartram, Harvey E., was born December 10, 1910 to Mr. and Mrs.

E. D. Bartram in Topeka, Kansas. His parents at that time were farming in this territory. They moved to Montana and Harvey received his early education in Lavina and Billings. His seminary training was secured at Western Evangelical Seminary in Jennings Lodge, Oregon.

An inner Divine Unction to tell the gospel story was felt first in about 1942. Different opportunities to witness and speak were forthcoming at various times. The call was made definite while I was in the Navy during World War II. A wonderful opportunity to preach was given me while aboard a ship that did not complement a chaplain. After being discharged I was given work in the Montana Conference.

When he was discharged from the Navy the conference stationed him in Rudyard. He served this field for three years and then left the state to complete his education.

He was licensed in April of 1946 and ordained at the annual conference session held in Columbus in 1952. He was married to Helen Cook, and blessed with three daughters: Jacqueline June, Judith Anne, and Janice Faye. In May of 1952, he was assigned to the Glendive charge.

Bayles, Francis McPherson, was born in Seward, Nebraska on February 23, 1885. He was the son of George and Isabelle Bayles. His father was a farm laborer. He received his early education and two years of high school training in the Seward Public Schools.

1. Personal Correspondence of the author, from Harvey E. Bartram, Glendive, Montana, January, 1953.

In young manhood he received the call to the ministry, but refused to answer. He married and worked as traveling salesman, farmer, policeman and shipping clerk for various farm machinery companies, before finally yielding to the call to preach.²

He was licensed by the Platte River Conference of the United Evangelical church in September of 1916. He served for three years at the Rosedale church northwest of Hastings, Nebraska before coming to the Broadview field. He served in Broadview from 1919 to 1924. During his ministry at Broadview the two groups, the United Evangelicals and the Evangelical Association, merged. This event took place in Detroit, Michigan in 1922. He took part in the merging of the Platte River United Evangelicals and the Nebraska Evangelical Association Conferences. During his service in Broadview he helped plan the first summer assembly in Montana. This was held in Reed Point in 1923. He was married to Lillie Swan and this union was blessed with five children. Rev. Francis Bayles Junior pastors a charge in the state of Colorado for the Evangelical United Brethren church. Another son, Wallace, lives in Sioux City, Iowa. The three daughters: Lillian, Virginia, and Fleta, live in Dallas, Texas.

Rev. Bayles passed away on June 3, 1944.

Birdsall, C. Lee, was born January 19, 1906 to William Franklin and Rozella Ray Birdsall who were farming near Spirit Lake, Iowa. The family moved to Montana in March of 1911 and settled near Harlowtown.

2. Personal Correspondence of the author, from F. N. Bayles, Seibert, Colorado, February, 1953.

They lost their farm and moved to Billings in 1924. Lee received his early education in Harlowtown schools and surrounding vicinity. Six years after grade school he entered high school. His opportunity came when the family moved to Billings. He attended high school for two years and then missed five years before he could again enroll and complete high school. He graduated in 1933.

I first felt the call to the ministry when I was twelve years old. I was a timid farm boy, so fought the call for about 10 years. When I did give in, and realized that to fulfill that call I would need an education, I had to conquer my pride and enter high school with those much younger than myself. I was 27 years old when I completed high school..... I was a bus driver in Yellowstone Park for 10 summers which gave me a very definite insight into the needs of the world.³

His college training was received at Eastern Montana Normal School in Billings and North Central College at Naperville, Illinois, where he graduated. His one year of seminary training in Naperville counted as the fourth year of college. Lee was licensed by the conference of 1934 held at Reed Point. In 1938 he served the combined fields of Broadview and Rapelje. In 1946 he was ordained deacon at the conference in Rudyard, and on the following year at Missoula was ordained elder. He is at present an active minister and has served at Circle for four years and Rudyard for three. He was married to Lois De Moss and blessed with two girls, Flora Rose and Marion.

3. Personal Correspondence of the author, from C. Lee Birdsall, Rudyard, Montana, January, 1953.

Bott, Earnie John, was born on August 30, 1899 in the home of Valentine and Emma Bott. In 1901 they homesteaded near Donnybrook, North Dakota and to the present time, have been farming in this community. He obtained his early education in the community school which remained open only six months out of each year. He writes,

I came to the full assurance of my salvation in the year 1923, during special meetings conducted by the Rev. H. C. Knuth, as evangelist, in Aurelia, North Dakota. This brother did everything he possibly could to get us established in the Christian life, and gave us opportunity to lead prayer meeting, took us (me) along on revival meetings which he conducted elsewhere. He even had me take charge of the service in the church while he was away from the field for a time.⁴

His call came while attending the annual conference held in Drake, North Dakota where Rev. Knuth asked him one evening if he had ever felt the call of God upon his life for full time service.

I felt at once that he wanted me to be a preacher and I would not have done it for him, but I was willing to do it for the Lord. All paths led to the ministry thereafter.⁵

In January of 1926, E. J. Bott entered Moody Bible Institute in Chicago, Illinois, where he received his preparation for the Gospel ministry. He completed the general Bible course in August of 1928, but continued at the school for one year doing post-graduate work in the field of missions. He was licensed in May of 1929 at the North Dakota Conference held in Napoleon. The deacons

4. Personal Correspondence of the author, from E. J. Bott, Big Timber, Montana, January, 1953.

5. Ibid.

ordination was received in Bismarck, North Dakota in 1931 and ordination as elder was given by the conference upon completion of the conference course of study for ministers in 1933 at Big Timber, Montana. He has served the church in seven pastoral appointments: Plentywood from 1929 to 1935; Broadview from 1935 to 1938; Rapelje from 1937 to 1938; Fallon from 1938 to 1948; Beach from 1943 to 1951; and Big Timber from 1951 to 1953. During his years of service he has faced many problems and difficulties on doctrine arising in the church, and by his personal testimony says, "In all of this we found that a Bible-grounded ministry always won the day."⁶ He was married in July of 1929 to Lethea Coyle and had three children: Archie Earl, David Edward, and Lois Ruth.

Bremer, C. A., was born in Germany, September 24, 1865. He came to this country with his parents when he was seven years of age. They made their home in Saginaw county, Michigan. He was converted in 1884. Sensing his need for an education, he came to Naperville, Illinois and there attended Northwestern College (now North Central) for several years. He returned to Michigan and was employed in a machine shop in Detroit. He was married in 1893 and felt a call to the Christian ministry shortly thereafter. He came to Holmes, North Dakota and worked for a time and still proved to be very much interested in Christian work. The Holmes congregation recommended him to the ministry. The Dakota conference licensed him to preach in 1896.

6. Ibid.

He was ordained deacon in 1898 and became an elder in 1900. He was a real pioneer in the work of the Dakota conference during the early years of his ministry, and later he served some of the strategic fields of the conference. He served as the first superintendent of the Bismarck Evangelical Hospital for four years. He was then assigned to Milbank, South Dakota, and from this field was elected to the office of presiding elder and assigned to the Bismarck District. The missions of Montana, started by the Evangelical Association, were under his care for a short time. The writer remembers this man of God, although he was small at the time. He remembers being hoisted on the knee of this saintly pioneer, and asked the question, "What are you going to be, son?" "He was a strong personality, a capable leader, an outstanding preacher."⁷

Breves, C. G., was the second missionary sent to the Broadview field. He served this field for three years, during which time an addition was added to the church. Very little material is available on C. G. Breves. According to one correspondent, he proved himself to be an exceptionally fine preacher. He was called to the ministry while he was successfully employed in business. He resigned from the Broadview church in 1914 and went to Billings where he was engaged in the insurance business.

7. Correspondence from C. F. Strutz, January, 1953.

Calvert, H. L., was born on March 3, 1886 at Poplar Flat, Kentucky. His parents were L. C. and Mary Burris Calvert who lived in Lewis County. His father was a carpenter and his mother was a school teacher before she was married. His early education was received in the public schools of Kentucky and his own home. He writes,

I was converted at the age of 14, but later I felt the need of a closer walk with the Lord and a more victorious life. I was led to make a complete consecration of my life to God. Shortly after this I felt the call to preach the Gospel. I preached in my own neighborhood and in other places in the county where I lived at that time (Sheridan County Montana) and at the next Conference was licensed to preach.⁸

The license was issued to him by the Platte River Conference May 16, 1925 held at Kearney, Nebraska. He followed the conference course of study and filled the requirements for the office of deacon in 1927 and in 1929 he was ordained an elder. He married Vona Elizabeth Ladd and they had six children: Helen, Lewis, Richard, Dorothy, Pauline, and Paul. Rev. Calvert served the Montana conference fields of Plentywood and Rudyard. In 1935, because of physical disability, he was forced to retire and was placed on the list of superannuated preachers.

Dillow, W. L., was born in Macomb, Illinois on October 25, 1858 into the home of Frederick and June Baxter Dillow. While he was young, he and his parents moved to Creston, Iowa where they remained and

8. Personal Correspondence of the author, from H.L. Calvert, Detroit, Michigan, January, 1953.

settled on a farm. After this they moved to Nuckolls County, Nebraska where he homesteaded. He was the youngest of the family and he assumed the responsibility of caring for his parents until their death. He only had the opportunity for a sixth grade education.

"His Bible was his textbook and the Holy Ghost was his teacher."⁹

He was converted when he was in early manhood, and he assumed an active part in the work of the Lord. Shortly after his conversion he became a Sunday school teacher and then class leader. He felt the call to the ministry early in life. He was licensed by the Platte River Conference in 1884 at Glenville; ordained deacon in 1887 at Dawson, Nebraska; and elder in 1889 at the Plum Creek Conference. He established the first Evangelical church in the Montana conference at Broadview. "There were times in his ministry when revival fires burned and many souls were converted by the Holy Ghost and many were born again."¹⁰ He retired from the active ministry in 1927, but refused to be inactive. He taught a Sunday school class until he was ninety-one years of age and filled the pulpits for other men until he was ninety-two. He gave over seventy years of his life in the service of his Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

He married Gloria Hoagland and they were blessed with eight children. One of his sons, S. M. Dillow, became a minister in the Evangelical church. Rev. Dillow passed away at Verdugo City, California on September 15, 1952 at the age of ninety-three.

9. Correspondence from S. M. Dillow, January, 1953.

10. Ibid.

Dunn, Fred A., was born on February 18, 1889 to Frank B. and Martha Alice Dunn. Both parents were raised in Iowa and his father became a Methodist minister. He served seventeen years in Iowa before moving to South Dakota where he continued for eighteen more years. Rev. Dunn received his early education in various grade schools in Iowa. His high school training was received in Sisseton, South Dakota. He attended college at Brookings and Mitchell, South Dakota. He testifies,

From a lad of eight or ten years of age, I had ~~the feeling~~ that I should be a minister, but I felt I never could preach. I enjoyed mechanical work and decided to become an engineer or mechanic. However, the way opened up to start farming on some land my father owned in Northern North Dakota.¹¹

After this Rev. Dunn was married to Bertha Chopin. They moved to Kidder, South Dakota where Rev. Dunn continued to farm. Later, he confesses,

In a special evangelistic service the call seemed to come anew that I should enter the ministry. I told God that if he wanted me and could use me I was willing to go, provided the way could be opened up.¹²

God provided in a marvelous way and the way opened for him to get advanced education and special training for his ministerial calling. After four years of preaching, the way was cleared for Rev. Dunn to take a leave of absence from the South Dakota conference to attend school at the Chicago University Theological Seminary. In conjunction with this, he took work at the Methodist Training School in Chicago. He was licensed

11. Personal Correspondence of the author, from Fred A. Dunn, Odessa, Minnesota, January, 1953.

12. Ibid.

in Menno, South Dakota in 1922, ordained deacon at Kidder in 1924, and in 1926 ordained elder in Watertown. He came to the Montana conference in 1944 and has served Broadview and Rapelje under the Evangelical church and Harlem church after the Union. In 1948, he was transferred to the Minnesota conference of the Evangelical church. An outstanding feature of his ministry is that seven young men have entered the full time service of the Lord. Three of his four sons are ministers: Robert, in the Montana conference; Ralph, in the Dakota conference; and Merle, in the Minnesota conference. Another son, F. Olin, remains with his parents.

Dunn, Robert S., was born in Kidder, South Dakota on August 22, 1916, the son of Fred and Bertha Dunn. His father was farming at Kidder where he was born. Because of the transition from farming to the ministry that took place in his father's life, he received his early education in several different localities: Groton, South Dakota, Chicago, Illinois, and Hazel and Sioux Falls, South Dakota. In 1938 he was graduated from Sioux Falls College. He went on for one year's seminary work in Naperville. Regarding his call to the ministry Rev. Dunn wrote, "The call to the ministry was very simple and easy for me. It was simply the only work I seriously considered from the time of my last years in high school."¹³ Since coming to the Montana conference in 1943, he has served the field of Plentywood. The field has experienced steady growth year by year under his ministry.

13. Personal Correspondence of the author, from Robert S. Dunn, Plentywood, Montana, January, 1953.

Rev. Dunn served for some time as a missionary in South America. He was married to Luella Bury, June 2, 1940. Four boys: Terry, Fred, Richard, and Robert were born to this union.

Eller, Newton A., was born in Hubbard, Iowa in the year 1887 to Mr. and Mrs. Philip Eller. His parents farmed in the Evergreen community near Hubbard. It was in the Evergreen country school that he received his early education. In 1909 he homesteaded in Montana. He was married the following year to Coila Hartman. There were two children born into this home.

At the age of 19 years, while still on the farm at Hubbard, Iowa, he felt the call of God to the ministry. He fought it. He went to Broadview, Montana to homestead. He became an active worker in the church. He married and had two children. Nothing worked out for him in the work that he would do. Everything seemed to go wrong. One day his little boy Arlys became very ill. He promised the Lord if he would heal his little boy he would go into the ministry. The little boy became well and he kept his promise. He was working in a store in Rapelje when he definitely said yes to the Lord in 1917.¹⁴

In 1917 he took the Academy course offered by Western Union College in Le Mars, Iowa. After leaving school he preached at Odessa, Minnesota and Ronds, Iowa for the United Church. After these two pastorates, he returned to Montana and entered the ministry in that state. He was licensed to preach in 1920 at Nerstrand, Minnesota and was ordained deacon in 1922 at Lafayette, Iowa. In 1927 at Milford, Nebraska he was ordained elder. He was a minister in Montana at the time

14. Personal Correspondence of the author, from Mrs. Rudolph Eller, Hubbard, Iowa, January, 1953.

of the organization of the Montana conference. During his ministry in the conference he served at Big Timber, Livingston, Missoula, Broadview, and Rapelje. Under his direction the churches at Big Timber and Livingston were built and the parsonage at Livingston was rebuilt. He left Montana and the conference in 1944 to become superintendent of the Evangelical Old People's Home in Burbank, California. Six weeks after he took over this work he had a fatal accident. He fell from a ladder while working on some window screens. There were two children born into this home, a boy, Arlys and a girl, Carolyn.

Flynn, L. O., was born in Mason City, Nebraska in 1894. He was licensed to preach in 1916 at Amsworth, Nebraska. In 1922 at Archer, Nebraska, he was ordained deacon and in 1924 at Lincoln he was ordained elder. After thirteen years of preaching experience, he came into the Montana conference. In 1930 he was received into the Montana conference in the same relation sustained in his former conference. He was assigned to serve at Rapelje. In 1932 he requested that he be retained in the itinerancy one year without appointment. This relationship was continued in 1933. The Official Record of the conference in 1934 informs us that Rev. Flynn had left Montana and, at that time, was residing in Colorado Springs, Colorado. The conference rule allowed a minister to remain only two years in the itinerancy without appointment. He requested a superannuated relationship with the conference. This was granted, but the conference gave

no support. On April 27, 1935 by telegram, he requested that his "name be dropped from all Montana Records".¹⁵ His request was granted.

Fridley, B. D., served the Plentywood field from 1917 to 1924 as a part of the Dakota conference. In Plentywood he established a record for being successful in his ministry with young people. During his ministry in Plentywood, the parsonage was built. In 1924 he was assigned to Rapelje and served there for three years. He is not listed in any of the Conference Journals. Through personal correspondence with men who served with him or knew him, a little information was gleaned. "He was a remarkable man, in that he could do most anything as a mechanic. He preached good sermons."¹⁶ He left the conference in the spring of 1926, for his name does not appear in Nebraska or Montana records after 1927. He joined the Methodist church in Montana and has served in various fields.

Graff, David J., was born in Jamestown, North Dakota on January 6, 1919. His parents, John T. and Eva Schwartzwelter Graff, continue to reside in Jamestown where the father is employed as a refrigerator serviceman. Rev. Graff received his early education in the Jamestown Public Schools. He was saved on March 23, 1938 during a series of revival meetings held in the Jamestown church with Rev. Barthel of Denver, Colorado as evangelist. He informs us that,

15. Eller, Official Record, 1935, p. 25.

16. Personal Correspondence of the author, from Andrew Roukema, Livingston, Montana, January, 1953.

During revival meetings in our Jamestown, North Dakota church in March, 1941 with Rev. William Lemke as evangelist I dedicated my life completely to the Lord and His cause. This was a most glorious experience. As I walked from that last pew to go to the altar the Holy Spirit spoke to me. I knew beyond the shadow of a doubt that God wanted me in the ministry the moment I rose to go to the front.¹⁷

In 1941 at the conference held in Napoleon, North Dakota, Rev. Graff was licensed to preach. He was ordained deacon at Bismarck in 1943. In 1945 he received his elder's orders. He attended Jamestown college and was graduated from that institution in the spring of 1942. His theological training was at Western Baptist Theological Seminary, Western Evangelical Seminary, Garrett Biblical Institute, and Evangelical Theological Seminary. He received his B. D. degree from the last Seminary in 1951. Under the Montana conference of the Evangelical church he pastored Livingston for two years, and directed a successful debt liquidation program in this church. In 1948 he returned from west coast schools and in the next two years pastored the Evangelical United Brethren church in Great Falls. Since his seminary graduation, he has served the Columbus church. Rev. Graff has held various offices in the church. At present he is conference historian, conference secretary, and dean of the summer assembly. He was married to Laura Ottens and they have three boys: David, Mark, and Jonathon.

17. Personal Correspondence of the author, from David J. Graff, Columbus, Montana, January, 1953.

Happel, Mrs. A. H., was a woman of remarkable talents. She was consecrated to the work of the Lord, and even before she was fifteen years old, she was instrumental in gathering neglected children to teach them the Word of God. In this way she was able to lead a large number of them into a saving relationship with Jesus Christ. She and her husband served various fields in the Dakota conference. Although as a rule women preachers were not accepted among the German congregations, still it is said that people would come from miles around to hear her preach. She truly preached the Word of God with power. "People came under conviction and were saved in spite of their prejudice against a woman preacher."¹⁸ She faced many difficulties in her ministry. "We can only explain her triumph's by saying she had great faith and was mighty in prayer."¹⁹ Perhaps at no other place in her life did she have to suffer more than during her ministry in the Billings church. In a letter written by C. F. Strutz to Mrs. Robinson, he states,

Later she came to Bismarck as deaconess worker among the patients in the hospital. I was pastor in Bismarck while the "flu epidemic" raged here in 1918, and when often four or more people died in one day--usually at night, many times she was called in the middle of the night to pray with some dying patients. I, too, was busy day and night helping where I could, and I often marvelled at sister Happel's endurance in her ministry to the sick and dying.²⁰

18. Correspondence from C. F. Strutz, January, 1953.

19. Ibid.

20. Letter of C. F. Strutz, Bismarck, North Dakota, to Mrs. Robinson, Billings, Montana, January, 1952.

Her strength failed finally and she had to give up her strenuous work at the hospital. For some years she remained in Bismarck and taught a Sunday school Bible class. The final few years of her life were lived with her son in Minot, North Dakota. She was able to help the North Dakota conference establish their new mission in that city. In 1949, she was brought to Bismarck Hospital for care and treatment. Rev. Strutz continues his testimony concerning Mrs. Happel,

Her candle of life burned down to the socket. It was the privilege of my good wife and myself to stand at her bedside and pray with her shortly before she passed over. She had a clear testimony for her Lord and longed to see "her pilot face to face". This desire was no doubt granted her as she passed triumphantly into the presence of her Lord. I feel certain that the host of precious souls she had led to Christ greeted her over there.²¹

Harris, Claire, L., was born on May 4, 1906 in Pontiac, Illinois. His parents were Mr. and Mrs. L. D. Harris and they farmed until Claire was four years old. At this time L. D. Harris was converted and felt the call to preach. He became pastor of the same congregation in which he had been a member.

Rev. Harris' early education was gained in West Port, South Dakota, Pontiac, Illinois, Aberdeen and Crandon, South Dakota. He attended high school in three schools--his freshman year in the Heldt school south of Baker, Montana, the sophomore year in Miltonvale, Kansas (Wesleyan Methodist school), and the junior and senior years

21. Ibid.

in Mobridge, South Dakota. Regarding his call to the ministry Rev.

Harris said,

I wanted to be a school teacher in the worst way, and declared I'd never be a minister, but while I was working a chemistry experiment in the chemistry department at Miltonvale, Kansas, it seemed that the Lord brought pressure upon me that I should be a preacher. It was at the Watch Night service that ushered in the New Year 1925, that I gave my all to the Lord and told Him He could use me where He wished, whether it be on the foreign field or in the pastorate.²²

He had two years of college work in Miltonvale, Kansas and one year of law by correspondence with Lasalle Extension University. He then completed the Wesleyan Methodist preacher's course of study in 1929. He also had one summer session at Winona Lake and one course in Cascade College. He was licensed in Aberdeen in 1922 and ordained elder in 1929.

In his Montana conference ministry, he served Broadview and Rapelje for one year and Rapelje separately for three years. He served Big Timber church for five years and then left the conference for ten months to serve in the Harden Methodist church. He returned the next year to serve Livingston for two years and then Billings for eight years. During his pastorate in Billings he was host pastor to the Uniting Conference of the Evangelical and United Brethren churches. He married Elizabeth Klamm on May 16, 1928 and they have been blessed with four children: Charles Richard, Glendon, Ellen, and Marlene.

22. Tape-recorded Interview of the author, with Claire L. Harris, Portland, Oregon, February 16, 1953.

Hicks, E. C., was born in 1873 in Bloomfield, Canada. He moved to the United States and made his home in Fallon, Montana. When he was converted he was the banker there. He was licensed to preach in Lincoln, Nebraska in 1924. He was ordained deacon in 1927 at Reed Point, and an elder in 1929 at Big Timber. While he had an increasing interest in the things of God, he was also interested in community affairs. He was an excellent pastor, calling often on the constituents of his churches. He was active and well-liked in his fields of service. One of the laymen said this about him:

If anyone was in sorrow or in need, he would bring what they needed. He was generous. He made you feel as though he'd go without a meal if someone else was hungrier than he was. He always was inviting new people and friends in for dinner.²³

During his ministry at Broadview in 1926, Dr. Perry Wells held a revival in Broadview. J. D. Lindley states concerning him,

The first Sunday Dr. Wells was there the church was nearly filled and Dr. Wells insisted that the church was too small and that a hall should be rented. The city hall was secured and the necessary changes were made to make it suitable for a revival meeting. There were services, during the two weeks campaign, when the building was filled to capacity which was around 600 or more. People came as far as forty miles. There were 110 conversions.²⁴

23. Personal Interview of the author, with Sam Lindley, Tigard, Oregon, February, 1953.

24. Correspondence from J. D. Lindley, January, 1953.

Rev. and Mrs. Hicks have three children: Euna, Vera, and Clayton. He left Montana in 1930 and transferred his credentials to the Oregon-Washington conference. At present he maintains a superannuated relationship to that conference.

Hoagland, Louis N., served the Montana conference for less than one year at Rudyard. He came to the Evangelical church from the Evangelical Lutheran church. Martha Suckow Packer stated that, "He was a most Godly, consecrated, and able man and how glad we should have been to keep him as pastor."²⁵ He left the conference after this short pastorate and went to the Oregon-Washington conference of the Evangelical church.

Isley, Wilber, was the mission organizer in the Montana conference. Under his influence, mission work was started in Rapelje, Reed Point, Livingston, Ryegate, Columbus, and Big Timber.

Mr. Isley came to Montana from Nebraska. Before his conversion he was a very rough man. He farmed and in the harvest time ran a threshing machine. He was noted for his swearing, drinking and gambling, and was a menace to the community. The Rev. H. S. Tool, was appointed as pastor to the Blue Springs Zion Church about six miles east of town. Mr. Isley's farm was near the church. A protracted meeting was held which lasted for many weeks, and on the closing night Mr. Isley came forward. On the way to the altar he persuaded his threshing partner to go with him, and thus both kneeled and received forgiveness for their sins...Mr. Isley now went around the community to tell everybody, how the Lord had saved his soul and now he was even more busy serving the Lord.²⁶

25. Correspondence from Martha Suckow Packer, March, 1953.

26. Correspondence from A. Roukema, March, 1953.

After some months he felt a call to full time service for the Lord. He spent some time in training at Western Union College in Le Mars, Iowa, but did not stay long as he received an appointment in the Platte River conference. Later he was assigned to Montana and in 1917 came to Broadview. He worked to establish preaching appointments west from Broadview. He was successful in school houses in that vicinity, and finally made his headquarters in Rapelje. In the spring of 1928, he returned to Nebraska. He was truly a powerful worker for the Lord in the field of Montana.

Jackson, E. A., was assigned to Reed Point in 1923 from the Nebraska conference. He stayed in this field for one year and then, upon request, was transferred back to the confines of Nebraska. The church at Reed Point flourished under his single year of ministry. The first Women's Missionary Society was started.²⁷ While serving in Reed Point the church building was completed and dedicated. The first convention was held in the new church building.²⁸ Rev. Roukema wrote concerning Rev. Jackson, "He was a very fine spiritual preacher."²⁹

Rev. Jackson served in the Nebraska conference after leaving Montana, and in 1936 was elected to serve as presiding elder of the Nebraska conference. He served in this capacity until 1940 when he

27. Reed Point Record, p. 1.

28. Ibid.

29. Roukema, op. cit.

left the conference and went to Colorado. There he passed on to his eternal reward.³⁰

Kohler, J. H., was the fourth pastor to serve the Broadview field. He arrived in Broadview on April 14, 1916 having made the trip from Cozad, Nebraska to Broadview "by auto".³¹ He served this field for three years. His life was terminated by a tragic accident. He and his brother were drowned while vacationing at the Big Horn River. The funeral sermon was delivered by Dr. B. H. Niebel, the secretary of the Missionary Society of the United Evangelical church. "Kohler was a very earnest preacher, and by doing carpenter work was able to support his family."³²

Lasater, Webster C., was born in Osceola, Missouri in 1898 to J. M. and Anna Lasater. They moved from Missouri to Plentywood, Montana in 1907. In Montana they became ranchers. Rev. Lasater received his early education in the schools of Plentywood. He was converted in 1913 in a meeting held in the church basement by Rev. C. A. Bremer. He testifies "And soon after, at the age of almost 16 years, I felt definitely called into the ministry."³³

He was licensed to preach by the North Dakota conference in session at Cavalier in 1917. His education consisted of the regular conference

30. Personal Correspondence of the author, from A. E. Bashford, Jefferson, Oregon, February, 1953.

31. Broadview Record, p. 1.

32. Roukema, op. cit.

33. Personal Correspondence of the author, from W. C. Lasater, Boulder, Colorado, February, 1953.

course of study along with several correspondence courses and one and a half years of Bible school training. He was ordained to the order of deacon in Lincoln, Nebraska in 1925 and elder in 1927 at Reed Point.

He served in Reed Point, Columbus, Livingston, and in Billings twice. It was during his second term in Billings that this author answered the call to the ministry. He has been an excellent preacher, fine pastor, and a great friend. He was a leader in the Montana conference while serving there, and since 1944 has been active in the Colorado conference. In recent years he has received a Th. D. degree from Boulder, Colorado, after extensive work in that university.

During his ministry he has participated in many outstanding events. He was a member of the uniting conference in 1922 when the Evangelical Association and the United Evangelical churches merged. In 1927, he actively participated in the organization of Montana conference.

Rev. Lasater was married to Anne Bladéau Lasater. Three children were born to them: Mrs. Ruth D'Arcy, who is married to a ministerial student in training at Western Evangelical Seminary; Mrs. Marie Anderson, whose husband is in aeronautical work and Roy W., who is an accountant.

Lindley, Arvid J., was born in 1929 in Billings, Montana to Rev. and Mrs. J. D. Lindley. He has lived the life of a "preacher's kid", receiving his early education in Rapelje, Broadview, and Missoula.

His college training was received in Hillcrest and Westmar. He was licensed to preach in 1946 under the Evangelical church. He was active in youth work during high school days. Arvid has held the Rapelje charge for one year under the Evangelical United Brethren church. He states,

I thank God for Christian parents. I feel that it was their prayers that brought conviction to me. I don't remember the date that I was saved, but I do remember the night I said yes to the call to the ministry. It was in an evangelistic campaign with Rev. Charles Fogg in 1946.³⁴

Lindley, Joseph Daniel, was born August 18, 1905 in Robinson, Illinois, the son of Mr. and Mrs. Thomas Allen Lindley. His parents homesteaded five miles southwest of Broadview in September, 1909. He received his early schooling in a country school seven miles southwest of Broadview, and attended high school in Broadview. He was not able to graduate because of the need for help on the farm.

He was saved under the ministry of O. L. Peckenpauh at the age of ten years. He informs us that,

Even then the Lord began to speak to me concerning the ministry. There was an inner urge which only those who have experienced can really understand. I answered the call in the fall of 1926 and began preaching in the Methodist church in Nebraska in February, 1927.³⁵

He began his ministry in the Montana conference at Rudyard in December, 1927. He was licensed at Broadview in 1928; ordained deacon

34. Personal Interview of the author, with Arvid Lindley, Jennings Lodge, Oregon, March, 1953.

35. Correspondence from J. D. Lindley, January, 1953.

in Broadview in 1936; and ordained elder in Big Timber in 1938. He has served in Rudyard, Plentywood, Rapelje, Broadview, and Missoula. Under the united church, Harlem and Bozeman have been in his charge. Rev. Lindley took charge of the mission building program in Bozeman. He is a faithful and earnest servant of the Lord.

He was married to Alice Bonner. They have five children: Beulah, Arvid, Vivian, Alta, and Nancy.

Magsig, Louis E., was born in Wilber, Washington in 1918, the son of Mr. and Mrs. John Magsig. His early schooling was received in Ohio. He states,

I was called to the ministry at the age of twelve, under the preaching of a returned missionary from Africa. I have never doubted the reality of that call.³⁶

He graduated from Taylor University, Upland, Indiana and has had two years of training in Asbury Theological Seminary.

He was licensed by the Methodist church in Ohio in 1938, and was ordained elder in the Montana conference of the Evangelical church in session at Missoula in 1947.

He served the Livingston congregation from 1946 to 1950 and then went to Missoula. Under his ministry both of these fields have become self-supporting. He has been active in the conference and

36. Personal Correspondence of the author, from L. Magsig, Missoula, Montana, February, 1953.

has held key positions in the united conference. He was married to Ethel Overmeyer and they had two children--Linda and Philip.

Marks, T. A., was born May 22, 1883, the son of William and Anna Marks in Logan county, Colorado. They were ranchers in this country. He received his early education in country schools in Logan county.

God's Holy Spirit definitely revealed his will for our life to be the work of the ministry in three very interesting incidents in the adolescent years of my life. Definite response to the call of God was made at the age of 22.³⁷

He attended North Central College Academy for three years, and then entered the ministry in the Nebraska conference. He was licensed in 1908; ordained deacon in 1910; and elder in 1912. His ministry in the Montana conference of the Evangelical church was only two years in length, but important years. Under his ministry the chapel church in Billings was moved and made over into a parsonage. The new church was begun. He was married to Anna Marks and they have two sons, Harvey and Silas, both active in young people's work while in Billings.

McCarthy, H. U., served the Billings field for one year. He was a member of the Evangelical Association and was assigned by the missionary society to serve Billings in 1921. He left no record of his work in Billings, and we have no record of him from the General Board of Missions.

37. Personal Correspondence of the author, from T. A. Marks, Denver, Colorado, January, 1953.

Menges, W. C.,

This servant of God was born in Germany in 1869. He came to Dakota from the city of New York and labored on a number of fields in the Dakota conference and later in the North Dakota conference. He was a gifted musician and song leader and as director of the Dakota conference Ministerial chorus rendered noble service. He was energetic and enthusiastic....He was ordained deacon in 1901, and elder in 1903 by the Dakota conference.³⁸

Mrs. Martha Suckow Packer of Inverness, has helped us considerably with some of the men. She pointed out that while Menges was pastor at Bismarck, North Dakota, the idea of an Evangelical Hospital in that city was conceived and carried out. Much credit for the hospital goes to Rev. Menges who, with Rev. Suckow, carefully planned the institution. He came to Montana in later years and was appointed to serve as missionary at Missoula.

He built the church at Missoula and did some very good work while there. He also was pastor at Fallon for several years and worked very efficiently. He retired at Missoula where his wife passed away and then he served again at Plentywood when Bro. Mydland left the field.³⁹

He served for about eight months in Plentywood after Rev. Mydland left. He suffered a partial stroke while serving in this place. He passed on to his eternal reward at Missoula in the spring of 1945.

Moore, L. H., served in Plentywood, Montana in 1915. There are no available records on his life.

38. Correspondence from C. F. Strutz, January, 1953.

39. Personal Correspondence of the author, from J. H. Oehlerking, Archer, Nebraska, January, 1953.

Mydland, D. B., was born in Norway. After receiving his early education there, he came to the United States and continued college work in Minnesota. He was licensed by the Norwegian-Danish Evangelical Free Church. He was assigned to Plentywood in 1940 as an itinerant deacon. Two years later he received the elder's ordination at Livingston. He was granted leave of absence from the conference in 1942 and returned to Minneapolis for more schooling. Shortly after that he entered the army as a chaplain. He has served in this capacity for ten years.

Oehlerking, J. H., was born December 18, 1882 to Henry and Magdalene Oehlerking who were farming in Cass county, Nebraska just east of Murdock. His early education was obtained in a country school about two miles walking distance from his father's farm. Concerning his call to the ministry, he has written:

I was reared in a Christian home. I had good Sunday school teachers, I became quite active in Young People's meetings (Y.P.A.) to bring the Gospel to those in sin.⁴⁰

He attended North Central College into the junior year when, because of a shortage of preachers, he returned to Nebraska and took an appointment. A license to preach was granted to him in 1909 at the United Evangelical Platte River conference held in Sutton, Nebraska in 1913. One year later in Talbesta, Nebraska he received his elder's orders. He was serving in official capacity in the Nebraska conference when he was called by the Board of Bishops to

40. Ibid.

shepherd the new little conference of Montana. He unselfishly and devotedly gave sixteen years of his life to guide the affairs of the Montana conference. He was a key figure, as presiding elder, in the organization of the conference in 1927. Under his leadership, the conference made steady gains in all departments. He was always interested in missions, and for many years represented the Montana conference on the General Board of Missions. During the latter years of his ministry in Montana, he expressed a desire to clear the conference from indebtedness. He took initial steps to bring this about. He represented the Montana conference at four different sessions of General Conference.

He was married to Elsa Helen Goetz, a minister's daughter. They have three children: Vivian (Mrs. Ray Howard), Clinton R., and Dwight L..

The earnest labors of this man will long be remembered in the Montana conference. He now serves in the Nebraska conference of the Evangelical United Brethren Church.

Oertli, Conrad, was born in Switzerland in 1842. He came to this country as a young man, and served as an officer in the Union Army during the Civil War.

He carried many characteristics of the army officer into the ministry which he entered in 1871, in the Wisconsin conference. Later he joined the Minnesota conference and in 1884 became a charter member of the Dakota conference. He was elected Presiding Elder in 1887 and served continuously until 1898. He

served a charge from 1898 to 1901, when he was again elected Presiding Elder, and served until 1905, and after that from 1908 to 1912. Thus he served nearly 20 years as Presiding Elder and gave 38 years to the active ministry. He was a firm but kind disciplinarian, a tireless worker, a good administrator and a capable leader. He died in 1924 in California.⁴¹

He is included in this history because of his efforts to hold the Dakota families to the Evangelical church after they had moved to Montana. He conducted the first organized preaching service in Fallon, and made the preliminary steps for the church. He was truly a consecrated pioneer, yielded to the cause of Christ in the Evangelical church.

Peckenpaugh, O. L., was born in Galesburg, Illinois in 1875. He was the son of Horton and Celeste Peckenpaugh. They lived near Galesburg and farmed, but because of ill health the family moved to Kansas. They returned in 1894 and remained in Illinois until death.

He received his early education in a country school in Kansas. He had no high school education and only two years of college in Hedding College, Abingdon, Illinois. His college training was received after he had a wife and three children to support.

The author has personally visited with this man of God on several occasions. In securing the material Mrs. Rudolph Eller interviewed him, using supplied questions to gain the needed information.

41. Correspondence from C. F. Strutz, January, 1953.

While he was serving a charge in Illinois, God spoke to him concerning work in a mission field. The need presented itself when he was in Colorado on a visit. There he attended a revival meeting, and saw the eagerness of the people for the gospel. In March of 1915, he answered the Call of the Spirit and went to Broadview, Montana. For seventeen years he was in mission work in Montana and Wyoming. He served in Broadview for one year and then went to Wyoming for ten. Rev. Tool visited and persuaded him to return to Montana. He was assigned to the Livingston field. While serving here he was also an evangelist in the conference.

Rev. Peckenpaugh made this statement concerning his Montana ministry:

One of the outstanding meetings was 12 miles up toward the mountains from Livingston. It was a four week meeting. We lost count of the converts, the Holy Spirit was in such convicting power.⁴²

His call to the ministry came when he was twelve years of age.

He himself testifies,

One night while getting the cows from the pasture, at the age of 12, I felt definitely that I should become a preacher of the gospel. At the age of 17, my pastor also felt that the Lord could use me and approached me on the subject. He asked me to fill some appointments for him. So from the age of 17 I began to preach. All of my life, from little up, was centered about the church and its activities. I felt a definite call to do mission work.⁴³

42. Personal Interview of Mrs. Rudolph Eller, with Rev. Peckenpaugh, Hubbard, Iowa, January, 1953.

43. Ibid.

He moved his household goods and family from Montana to Wyoming by covered wagon. While in Wyoming he started a church in Buffalo. The United Evangelicals maintained it for three years with the Montana fields, but then, because of a lack in finances, let it go to the Methodists.

He was married to Mary Terpening and had four children: Nina and Beulah Eller, who are housewives near Hubbard, Iowa; Horton in Salem, Oregon; and Orlan in Livingston, Montana.

Ritter, Henry A., was born in Dashwood, Ontario, Canada on November 14, 1879, the son of Albert and Margaret Ritter. They moved to Osnabrook, North Dakota and it was here that he received his early education. He was licensed by the Dakota conference in Marion, North Dakota in 1905, ordained deacon in Aberdeen, South Dakota, and ordained elder in Cavalier, North Dakota in 1909. In 1909, he was stationed at the Inverness mission. In this capacity he became the first full time pastor from the Evangelical Association to start work in Montana. He was a hard worker. He farmed and served the Lord. A number of preaching points in the Rudyard vicinity were started under his ministry.

He married Sarah Herman, and to this home four children were born. They were Mary Elizabeth Lincoln, Clarence H., Roland A. and Samuel A. Ritter.

Roberts, R. R., served less than a year for the Montana conference at Rapelje after Rev. O. H. Schuster passed away. He was not a member

of the Evangelical church or of the Montana conference. He attended the 1931 conference session and led in prayer at the close of the Thursday evening session. During this year he reported to have held revival meetings at Broadview and Reed Point churches.

He was from Michigan and is a brother of Mrs. F. R. Witmer. His father was a medical doctor and this young man later took up medicine, practicing in California.⁴⁴

Roukema, Andrew, was born on March 17, 1883, the son of Mr. and Mrs. Folkert Roukema in Amsterdam, Netherlands. His father was a sailor. Rev. Roukema received his early education in Amsterdam. He says,

I came to Montana in 1909 from Iowa. I did not come as a preacher, but as a printer. In August of that year, I stepped off the train in Huntley and found work the next day on a farm on the Billings bench. In December of that year I happened in Billings, and inquiring in the Gazette office for work, I was told that the printer in Broadview was in great need of a printer.⁴⁵

He went to Broadview and became printer for the local paper. Shortly after that he became managing editor. He was a member of the Dutch Reformed church, and since no work by that denomination was carried on in Broadview, he attended the Congregational church. Further testifying, he states,

44. Personal Interview of Rev. R. R. Strutz, with Mr. L. H. Norine, Billings, Montana, January, 1953.

45. Correspondence from A. Roukema, February, 1953.

In the spring of the next year, I accompanied a friend of mine to the Evangelical church. He wanted to see a man there. We were well-received and greatly enjoyed the people, especially since there were more young people, than in the other church. They made us welcome and so I continued to attend services there.⁴⁶

Here he became acquainted with Emma Schuster, daughter of Rev. William Schuster, who was a member of the Evangelical church but preached in the German Congregational church in Laurel. In 1914, this acquaintance led to a lasting matrimonial bond.

He became active in the Broadview church holding such offices as class leader, Bible class teacher, president of the Young People's League, and "the janitor without pay".⁴⁷ He states,

I always felt that the Lord wanted me to be a preacher, but felt so unworthy of the high office that I ignored the call. A few years before, a lawyer in Iowa, whom I had befriended offered to pay my way through college, but I refused this fine offer, because I was afraid it would lead to becoming a preacher. One day, however, Mr. George Waterman, a former Evangelical preacher, real estate man and banker, whose paper I edited, offered to send me through Moody Bible Institute. It then I heard as it were a voice saying 'Now or never'. And becoming fearful, I accepted the offer and enrolled as a student in the M. B. I.⁴⁸

He graduated from Moody Bible Institute after two and one half years of schooling. He received his first appointment from the Platte River

46. Ibid.

47. Ibid.

48. Ibid.

conference in 1917, which was Blue Springs, Nebraska. He served there for two years and then was sent to Rapelje, Montana. He was licensed August 13, 1917; ordained deacon August 26, 1921; and elder May 18, 1923, all in the city of Hastings, Nebraska. He has served in Rapelje, Big Timber, Billings, Reed Point, Columbus and Livingston. He has been a faithful preacher of the Gospel in the Montana conference. His was a Bible-centered ministry that brought results in leading souls to Christ and young men into the ministry.

The Roukemas had one daughter, Dorothy, who has been an associate professor in the Colorado State College of Education at Greeley, Colorado.

Rux, A. H., was stationed in Fallon, Montana, as their first preacher, in 1916. He served there for four years and then M. O. Siewert was assigned that charge. "He had a gift of fluent speech and could hold the interest of an audience. In his earlier ministry his work was attended with considerable success in evangelism."⁴⁹ C. F. Strutz writes,

I knew him from his youth up. He worked for us on the farm near Holmes, North Dakota when he was a young lad, and there he felt the call into the Christian ministry. I think I was one of the first persons to whom he confided that God was calling him into the ministry. He attended North Central College (then ⁵⁰ Northwestern) at Naperville, also the seminary.

Under his ministry the Fallon church was organized. He did considerable pioneering in and around the Fallon field. He helped to build the first parsonage in Fallon.

49. Correspondence from C. F. Strutz, January, 1953.

50. Ibid.

Some time after his Fallon ministry, he left the church and preached for the Congregational people for awhile and later for the Assemblies of God.

Schroeder, E. J., was born on May 20, 1895. He was the son of John J. and Kathrina Schroeder. His father was a pioneer pastor in the Dakota conference and North Dakota conference for about forty years. His father passed away in 1942.

Rev. Schroeder received his early education in public schools in Minnesota and North Dakota. E. J. Schroeder states,

I felt the call to the Christian ministry while I attended High School in Grand Forks, North Dakota. I stayed with our aged minister, Rev. William Fritz who was pastor in Grand Forks. His wife had died and he wanted someone to be with him, so my parents thought that it was a fine place for me to stay, and it was. I have never doubted my call to the ministry, but I felt so unworthy that I went into this great work very reluctantly, but I had no inner rest until in my room I promised God that I would go where He wanted me.⁵¹

His education was received in the Academy at North Central College and he also had some work in the seminary in Naperville. After he returned from service in World War I, he continued his education in the University of North Dakota and Wesley College School of Religion. Both of these schools are in Grand Forks, North Dakota. He graduated from the Wesley College School of Religion in 1925.

He was licensed to preach in Big Stone, South Dakota in 1916. He was ordained a deacon in 1920 at Jamestown, North Dakota and in 1924 at Drake, North Dakota, he was ordained an elder in the church.

51. Personal Correspondence of the author, from E. J. Schroeder, Fallon, Montana, February, 1953.

He was a pastor in 1920 when the Dakota conference was divided into North and South Dakota conferences. In 1922, he saw the merging of the Evangelical Association and the United Evangelical churches. In 1948, he was present at the merging conference when the Montana Evangelical and the Montana United Brethren conferences merged. He pastored in Billings, Reed Point, and Fallon. He also supplied in Rapelje for one year. He was married to Justine Schmidt, and their daughter Lorraine, is now Mrs. K. P. Zeller, minister's wife in the California conference.

Schuster, Otto H., was born the son of Rev. and Mrs. William M. Schuster in Barrington, Illinois in 1891. He served as a soldier in the United States Army in World War I. He was a graduate of the Saint Paul Bible Institute. He was licensed in Columbus, Montana at the 1930 session of annual conference.

He was a good song leader and a very earnest preacher. The great concern that he had for the work, and with the disease, no doubt hastened his death.⁵²

He suffered from diabetes and had served only a few months in Rapelje when death claimed him.

Schuster, William M., was born in Germany in 1850. He was licensed to preach twenty-three years later in Elgin, Illinois. In 1877, at Washington, Illinois, he was ordained a deacon. In 1879, at Genese, Illinois he was ordained an elder in the church. Rev. Schuster brought his

52. Roukema, op. cit.

family to Montana in 1908 "seeking healing for two of his sons, who were suffering from tuberculosis".⁵³

Pastor Schuster could preach only in German and therefore could not accept a pastorate in our Montana conference. He passed away in January 1936. Father Schuster preached for the German Congregational church and the Missouri Synad Lutheran church, but he never released his membership in our Montana conference.⁵⁴

Rev. and Mrs. Schuster were the parents of O. H. Schuster and Mrs. Andrew Roukema.

Shively, B. A., was born in Newport, Pennsylvania in 1881. He was licensed twenty years later in Hazelton, Pennsylvania. Deacon's ordinations were granted to him in Callaway, Nebraska in 1904, and in 1906, in Hastings, Nebraska he was ordained elder. After preaching in the Nebraska conference for a time, he came to Montana and served with the Methodist church. He asked for work in the Evangelical church and was admitted to the Montana conference. The Conference Journal of 1928 says:

B. A. Shively, formerly of the Nebraska conference, having presented papers and desiring entrance into this conference, we recommend that he be received in the same relation he sustained in that conference, namely that of an Itinerant Elder, on condition that he enter the Superannuation Fund.⁵⁵

He served for two years and then was dismissed from the conference.

53, Ibid.

54. Ibid.

55. Eller, Official Record, 1928, p.33.

At its session two years ago, B. A. Shively was received into the Montana conference as an itinerant elder, on the solemn promise that he would enter the Superannuation Fund; and

Whereas, after being reminded of his promise, and being warned as to what would likely follow his failure to make good he has deliberately failed to take advantage of his privilege of entering the fund; therefore, be it

Resolved, That B. A. Shively has forfeited all of the ministerial courtesies tendered him, and that he is not a member of the Montana Conference; and be it further

Resolved, That all his offices are hereby declared vacant.⁵⁶

Siewert, M. O., was born on September 8, 1886 to Carl and Emilie Siewert in Neuteuch Kreis Friedenberg, Germany. They lived in Germany until he was one year old and then came to the United States. They settled at Courtland, Minnesota, but later moved to Wabasso, Minnesota where they farmed. He (Rev. Siewert) received his early education in public schools in southern Minnesota. Later he attended the Normal College in Austin, Minnesota, and still later went to the Academy at Naperville, Illinois. He also attended the Seminary at Naperville from 1914 to 1916. He was licensed in Hutchinson by the Minnesota conference on May 7, 1909. He was ordained deacon on May 5, 1917 and later he was ordained an elder in the church at Streeter, North Dakota.

Regarding the call to the Ministry, I can only say that I know Max's call was very definite and he was very sure and fully consecrated, determined to do God's will in spite of difficulties

56. N. A. Eller, Official Record of the Montana Conference of the Evangelical Church, (N. A. Eller, Ed. and Pub., 1930), p.19.

and objections or people who tried to dissuade him from his purpose. He often told me of how little encouragement he received.⁵⁷

His pastor and parents were certain that he was mistaken. He was a young man of nineteen years and in the third grade. He had a slight impediment of speech and those close to him felt that he was mistaken in thinking himself called to preach.

But nothing could shake his faith and determination. By these he started to prepare himself. His education was very limited to begin with. In third grade at 19 years of age did not deter him. With God's help, he kept on, so that at the age of 29 he completed his college and seminary training, earning his way alone.⁵⁸

He served one year in Minnesota and then came to Montana, serving with the Dakota conference. He was married to Winnifred Bornholdt and had three children: Evelyn E., a teacher in Sisseton, South Dakota; Carl B. Siewert who is farming at Marvin, South Dakota; and Henry B. Siewert, who has been serving for nine years in military service.

He served Billings and was responsible for relocating the church from the south side to its present location. He served in Fallon for three years and then was appointed to Plentywood in 1923. On December 9, 1924, he passed on to his eternal reward.

Sippel, J. C., was born in September of 1887 in Eisenach, Germany to John and Regina Sippel. "His father sold souvenirs of Wartburg Castle to tourists at the foot of the mountain."⁵⁹ He says,

57. Personal Correspondence of the author, from Mrs. Siewert, Thiele, Twin Brooks, South Dakota, January, 1953.

58. Ibid.

59. Personal Correspondence of the author, from J. C. Sippel, Vermillion, South Dakota, January, 1953.

I was converted in an Evangelical church in Eisenach, Germany. I left a good government position, to answer a summons by the bishop to come to America to preach to the people in the German language.⁶⁰

His early education was received in Eisenach, Germany. In this country he was graduated from Montana University. He received his Master's Degree in Education at Vermillion, South Dakota. Later, at Iowa City, Iowa, he earned a Master's Degree in German.

He was licensed in Lomira, Wisconsin and was ordained elder in 1917 at Prairie Due Sac, Wisconsin.

In Montana he served at Missoula. He came from the Washington conference when Missoula was transferred from that conference to the Montana conference. He helped organize the first work in that city. He stayed in the Montana conference for one year. In 1929, he remained in the conference without appointment. In 1931, his credentials were transferred to the South Dakota conference. At present he is a professor at South Dakota University in Vermillion, South Dakota.

He was married to Linde Sumnicht and they have had six children: Nathan, Freda, Waldemar, Margaret, Flora, and Joseph.

Strutz, Reuben Robert, was born June 30, 1900, the son of Robert and Emma Kahl Strutz. His father was a minister for forty-six years in the Dakota and the North Dakota conference. He received his early education in public schools in North Dakota, beginning in a country school in Union Township of Grand Forks County, and completing grade school in Bismarck, North Dakota. He attended high school for three

60. Ibid.

years in Bismarck and then graduated from Jamestown high school when the family moved there in 1918. He testifies,

I was converted as a boy of nine. I early felt the call to the ministry but rebelled against it, for being a preacher's child, I felt there was so much that was unnecessary hardship. As a boy in my early teens however, I yielded to Christ and accepted the call to the ministry.⁶¹

He graduated from Jamestown College in 1923 and from The Evangelical Theological Seminary in 1926. He was licensed to preach in Great Bend, North Dakota in 1921, ordained deacon in Holmes, North Dakota in 1925, and was ordained an elder in the church in 1928 at Lehr, North Dakota.

He was appointed by the Board of Bishops to serve in the Montana conference in 1943 as the District Superintendent. Under his leadership, the conference continued to make steady progress spiritually and numerically. During his administration the conference freed itself from indebtedness. When he retired from the superintendency there were eleven self-supporting fields, and three new missions established. Previous to church union he served as superintendent under two Bishops, from the Evangelical church and also the United Brethren church. The Montana conference was the first to unite in the Evangelical United Brethren church. The basis of union adopted by these two conferences was widely referred to by other conferences coming into union.

61. Personal Correspondence of the author, from R. Strutz, Billings, Montana, January, 1953.

He was married to Rosalie Pabst Strutz and they had three children: Robert, Rosalie Jean, and Roland.

Strutz, Robert E., was born April 1, 1928 in the Bismarck Evangelical Hospital to Rev. and Mrs. R. R. Strutz. His father was a minister in the North Dakota conference of the Evangelical church. He received his early education in Fargo, North Dakota. One year of high school was obtained in Bismarck, North Dakota and the three following years from Billings High School. This was after his father was transferred to the Montana conference. He was licensed in 1945. The author used to testify to the fact that he was unwilling at first to serve. Actually from boyhood the ministry had been presented as sacred. The only rebellion came when he became actually concerned as to whether God was speaking and calling him or whether it was a personal desire to be a part of that select group chosen for special service. The convincing evidence came when he was a sophomore in high school and the Spirit of God spoke definitely concerning his life. He yielded his life, and from that time he has sought the mind of the Spirit and followed His direction as best he could.

After four years of college, in Westmar, he came to the west coast where, at present, he is attending Western Evangelical Seminary at Portland, Oregon.

Suckow, William, was born in Prussia in 1855 and came to America in his early teens as an orphan. In Germany he had what perhaps is equivalent to our high school education. He could speak French and English as well as the native German. In America he came under the

influence of the Minnesota conference of the Evangelical Association near Winona, Minnesota. "He was soundly converted and soon felt the call to the ministry."⁶² In 1883, he was accepted by the Minnesota conference which had undertaken the Dakota Territory as their Home Mission field. His first assignment covered most of what is now the southeastern part of North Dakota. "The extent of this mission was almost a sixth of the state."⁶³

When he heard of a new settler coming in he called there and invited them to his next 'preaching'. He met with every type and kind of reception. There were no churches, no school houses--he preached in private homes that were opened to him. He preached every day in the week, going on to the next place by day and preaching there in the evening.⁶⁴

It was this pioneering spirit that brought him to Montana to keep the members with the church. His devotion and self sacrifice are well illustrated in the following illustration.

One night his horse got on her back in the manger and was dead by morning. He borrowed a skinny mule to ride 60 miles home bareback and his diary tells that he mortgaged his entire 160 acres of Red River Valley land to get money to replace his mount.⁶⁵

In later years he served sixteen years as presiding elder.

62. Correspondence from Martha Packer, January, 1953.

63. Ibid.

64. Ibid.

65. Ibid.

"He had a great interest in the missionary work in Montana, and was Presiding Elder of the Fargo District when the missions of Plentywood, Fallon and Inverness were established."⁶⁶

He married Matilda Blanchard in 1879 and had three sons and three daughters.

Surerus, Clarence D., was originally from Cavalier, North Dakota. His parents were farmers. He served the Montana conference under the Dakota conference. He was appointed to Fallon and served one year as a supply. In 1938, he again helped the conference when W. C. Menges was stricken with paralysis. He married Magdalene Haidle and had six children: Viola, Eunice, William, Lorraine, Sharon, and Janice.⁶⁷

Swift, Kent, was born July 26, 1920 at Wales, North Dakota. Shortly after his birth his parents moved to Montana. He writes,

I was converted at Grace church of Rudyard in the fall of 1943. Revival services conducted by Rev. E. J. Schroeder, now of Fallon, Montana were instrumental in convicting me of my sin. Then, under the love and guidance of Rev. F. Everal Wines, I met the Lord.⁶⁸

Regarding his presence in the ministry he says,

As early as Luccock time in 1946 I knew definitely that the Lord was dealing with me for some full-time service, although I had no idea as to what it might be. After an evening service at Rudyard one Sunday night

66. Correspondence from C. F. Strutz, January, 1953.

67. Personal Correspondence of the author, from Gottlieb Haidle, Fallon, Montana, January, 1953.

68. Personal Correspondence of the author, from K. Swift, Broadview, Montana, January 29, 1953.

in April of 1947, Joanne and I had the privilege of driving Rev. R. R. Strutz to Havre to meet the train back to Billings. On the way, Rev. Strutz, having been impressed by some chance remark which I had made, asked me if I had ever considered going into the ministry, and would I be interested in taking the charge at Broadview. After spending much time during the next week in prayer, we were led to inform our pastor, Rev. Harvey Bartram, that we had felt led to accept the call into the ministry.⁶⁹

He was licensed to preach by the annual conference of 1947 in session at Missoula, Montana. At that conference session he was sent to Broadview, Montana where he has continued to serve as a minister of the Evangelical United Brethren church.

While serving this charge he has received his college education. Two years were spent at Eastern Montana Normal School and he was graduated from Rocky Mountain College in 1953.

He was married to Joanne Nichale La Croix and they had two children: Linda Jean and Kathy Lynn.

Tammen, Ralph, was a short heavy set man of German descent. He was a close friend of Rev. William Suckow.

The Suckow's had taken land in the Rudyard community and Mr. Tammen was on his way to find some land in that same territory, when he learned that it was about all taken, so he stopped off on his way and drifted into the Plentywood community, where he settled on a

69. Ibid.

homestead about four and a half miles south of town in the spring of the year 1910....
Mr. Tammen was a Christian and felt God calling him to preach, but, as he told the writer only a few years ago, he was one of those who tried to run away from God and not preach. However it was soon found out that he could preach, and before he had finished moving to his new home he was called upon to preach a funeral sermon.⁷⁰

He was able to handle the German language capably. It is reported that in Plentywood itself he had most of his congregation learning German so that they could better understand the precious gospel truths. He was a typical frontier pioneer preacher and had many interesting experiences. Two have previously been related in the historic survey of the Plentywood field.

God used this untrained layman preacher to start the work in the Plentywood community. He preached for the first five years of the Plentywood church.

Thiele, H. A., was born July 10, 1879, the son of Carl and Augusta Thiele. They farmed near Twin Brooks, South Dakota. He received his early education in the public schools in and around Twin Brooks. He writes,

We came in touch with the Evangelical church in my grand parents home. Later, services were transferred to a public schoolhouse, where I was converted in 1898. Shortly after which I felt the call--but did not yield until in a revival meeting at Twin Brooks in 1903.⁷¹

70. Bott, History of Plentywood, p. 1.

71. Personal Correspondence of the author, from H. A. Thiele, Twin Brooks, South Dakota, January, 1953.

Upon the recommendation of this congregation, he was licensed to preach that same year in Kidder, South Dakota.

His education was received in Naperville, Illinois. In 1903, he enrolled in what is now North Central College. In 1909, he was graduated from seminary. One year later he was ordained deacon at Hazel, South Dakota and in 1912 at Holmes, North Dakota he was ordained elder.

Twenty-two years of faithful service under some severe hardships were given in Montana. He spent ten years serving the Inverness mission, and ten years in Fallon. One year each was spent at Rapelje and Reed Point.

He was married to Winnifred Siewert and had one son, Roy, who is farming.

Tool, Howard S., was born on November 7, 1880 to Eugene and Hanna Trumbaer Tool in Ackley, Iowa where his father was employed in a lumber concern. Later the family moved to Murdock, Nebraska where the father became owner of his own lumber yard.

His early education was obtained in the Ackley and Murdock Public Schools.

He was converted in a meeting held by L. G. Brooker evangelist in Murdock, Nebraska....I believe at about the age of sixteen and received the call to preach soon afterward.⁷²

72. Personal Correspondence of the author, from Mrs. Tool, Reed Point, Montana, January, 1953.

He had no college or seminary work. He was licensed in 1900 at Blue Springs, Nebraska; ordained deacon in 1902 at Longford, Nebraska; and ordained elder in 1906 at Hastings, Nebraska. In 1916, he was elected to the position of presiding elder over the Lincoln District of the Platte River conference. Montana was part of his district. Rev. Tool, in this capacity, made two or three trips each year to supervise the work. While supervising the work at this time, he wrote the following summary of the work in Montana.

In connection with the work of this (Platte River) conference is the newest and most attractive of all our western work and a field which is prolific in opportunity, our work in Montana. In the midst of the Rockies in one of the great basins, the Big Horn Range far to the south, and Big Snowies to the north, the Crazies to the west, located between the Yellowstone and the Musselshell Rivers is our smallest isolated mission!

This new work of our Church so different from the great conferences of Pennsylvania, so small in its beginnings, so vast in its opportunities, has come to attract the interest of the whole Church. This interest has not to any appreciably extent materialized into action, but it will, and we believe this will constitute a center of interest equal to any in our denomination.⁷³

So interested was he in the work of Montana, that when his term expired he personally requested the conference send him to Reed Point. Rev. Isley had started preaching services in the Reed Point school house and also in school houses north and south of town.

73. Benjamin H. Niebel and Homer H. Dubs, Evangelical Missions (Home and Foreign Missionary Society of the United Evangelical Church, 1919), pp. 137-38.

Rev. Tool organized these classes into congregations. He acted as supervisor over the Broadview and Rapelje work. In 1924, he was elected as presiding elder over the Evangelical work in Montana; so the family moved to Billings. During his administration, the District House at 215 Burlington Avenue was purchased.

In 1928, Rev. J. H. Oehlerking became presiding elder and Rev. Tool again returned to Reed Point.

As a pastor he served in Reed Point twice, Columbus and Absorokee, and Big Timber. His last charge was Reed Point for the third time. He loved this field, nestled in the Yellowstone valley, and bordered on the north and south by hills. He was assigned this field at the annual session of the Montana conference of the Evangelical United Brethren church in 1948. (The appointments were read on June 25). Less than two months from this time, Rev. Tool passed on to his eternal reward.

The 1949 Conference Journal relates the event that transpired shortly after the appointment.

Rev. Howard S. Tool, one who has been in our midst and in our hearts for many years, has gone to be with Him whom he loved and proclaimed, his passing taking place August 8, 1948. We know that if the earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.

Servant of God, Well done!
Thy glorious warfare's past
Thy battle's fought, the race is won
And thou art crowned at last.⁷⁴

74. Claire L. Harris, Official Proceedings of the Montana Conference of the Evangelical United Brethren Church (Harrisburg, Evangelical Press, 1949), p. 40.

On August 1, 1948, he wrote a poem about his favored Reed Point field.

Back Again to the Village

Back again to the village
That lies on a world's highway;
Where hills look down on the country town
And a man has time to pray.
Back again to the beauty
Of skies that are azure blue,
To the river's sheen and pastures green,
To the old, old paths I knew.

Back again to the village
Back to the paths that wend
Through fir and pine, through shade and shine
Where skies with hilltops blend.
Back to the rocks along the stream
Where the waters dash and roll,
Where a man may find new peace of mind
And food for the famishing soul.

Back again to the village
And here I shall wait until
The sun at last when the day is past
Descends through the trees in the hill.
These are the hills of promise
And here the paths I plod
Shall lead at last when the day is past
To heaven's heights and to God.

He faced eternity unafraid, for he had the peace of God within his soul. He knew Jesus Christ, and proclaimed Him as the Saviour of mankind. He loved to take his fishing pole and Bible and sit on the bank of a stream and memorize verse by verse and chapter by chapter large portions of scripture. In June, 1944, he penned the following phrases on the Life to come.

The Beckon to Me

Where the river of life runs out to the sea
 The dear friends I have lost awhile beckon to me.
 The shadows lie long in the hills; and the day
 With its toils and its pleasures is fading away.
 Youth fades as the flowers that bloom in the grass.
 The hours of noonday, how quickly they pass.
 To the home of the soul where the spirits dwell free
 Old friends I have lost awhile beckon to me.

I linger among those I love for a day.
 The flowers are faded that bloomed by the way;
 But deep in the soul is the memory of these
 Who sleep in their graves in the shade of the trees;
 Near at hand when the passing winds whisper they seem;
 Surely, years in their going are only a dream.
 And now, where the river runs out to the sea
 The dear friends I have lost awhile beckon to me.

Just over the sea lies the city of God.
 They sleep not in death in their graves 'neath the sod;
 They wait at the portals; they watch till the dawn
 Of eternity breaks and the shadows are gone.
 They dwell in the presence of God, we are told;
 In the city of God where the streets are of gold.
 To that home of the soul where spirits dwell free
 Those friends I have lost awhile beckon to me.

Rev. Tool was married to Grace Enrich and three children were born into their home. They were Eugene E., Arthur R., and Grace Kinfield.

Wendland, Emil H., was born August 12, 1886, the son of Fred and Sophia Wendland who farmed in Kansas. He received his early education from the Peach Grove school in Kansas. He also had one year of college work in Naperville, Illinois.

He came to Montana under an appointment by the Evangelical Association in 1918, and served as presiding elder over their work until

1923, when the conferences merged and Rev. Tool became the supervisor of the work. He was also the pastor of the Billings church while he supervised the other work. From 1923 to 1926, he served the field of Ryegate. After 1926, he transferred his credentials to the Methodist church of Montana. He passed away while serving in Deer Lodge, Montana on November 28, 1947. His wife, in a letter, stated that he had and felt a definite call to preach. The time or circumstances are not available. We do know that he was licensed in 1909 by the Kansas conference. He was ordained in 1911 and became an elder in 1913 by the same conference.

Several have stated that he was one of the most powerful preachers to serve the Montana conference. He was a man of the Word and he loved to preach. Mrs. Wendland states,

Mr. Wendland was called upon, to help in evangelistic meetings, many times, and God blessed these efforts....In all of his services he never failed to proclaim Christ as the Saviour and Redeemer of mankind.⁷⁵

He was married March 11, 1909, to Emma Sandker and there were five children born into the home. They were Ralph, Lawrence, Mrs. Bernice Mc Nully, Noble, and Wesley.

He had an unfortunate truck accident in 1926, shortly after transferring from the Evangelical church. His back was broken and he suffered much with this affliction. After this accident he was not able to get along without the help of supports.

75. Personal Correspondence of the author, from Mrs. E. H. Wendland, Livingston, Montana, January, 1953.

His interest in the work carried on by the Evangelical church in Montana never died, and often when not preaching he would attend services in one or another of the churches. His wife has been active in the Livingston congregation.

Wines, F. Everal, was born on November 7, 1901 at Adrian, Michigan. He was the second of ten children; three boys and seven girls. Six of these ten children are in full time service for the Lord. His father farmed near Adrian.

He received his early education through high school at Adrian, Michigan. He was conscious of a call to preach even before he became a Christian. Upon finishing high school, however, his chemistry teacher advised him to go into pharmacy or some related field of work. He considered this and began to make preparation toward this end. He writes,

Rev. Charles Bailey, then pastor of the First Friends Church in Adrian, insisted that I should fill the pulpit, the last Sunday in August (1922), and as he would not take no for an answer, I was left with a service on my hands for the first time. We were members of the Raisin Valley Friends four miles north of Adrian. This of course would help me settle the question of my life's work, so I asked the Lord for what I considered almost impossible without His intervention. As this was to be my first sermon, I asked that, if He wanted me as a minister, He would cause someone to be saved when I gave the altar call. That evening He answered four fold, for three young people of the Raisin Valley church who had gone in to hear me, and one mother of that church came to the altar and were saved.⁷⁶

76. Personal Correspondence of the author, from F. Everal Wines, Rapelje, Montana, January, 1953.

He received his training in Cleveland Bible Institute, graduating in 1926, and then took a short period of post graduate work. He came to Montana from the Texas conference of the Evangelical church, where he had been licensed and ordained. He licensed in San Antonio, Texas in 1930. In 1931, he was ordained deacon and in 1934 became elder. He was stationed at Rudyard and served on this field for eleven years. Two churches were built by the Rudyard congregation during his ministry.

He was married to Ruth Lytle and they have a daughter, Mrs. J. L. Bunge, living in Garwood, Texas.

Witmer, F. R., was born November 22, 1899, at Wilton Junction, Iowa, the son of John and Gertrude Witmer. His parents later farmed near Lincoln, Nebraska. He attended grade school and high school in Lincoln. He received his call to preach at the Nebraska summer assembly held at Riverside Park, Milford, Nebraska in 1917. In 1925, he graduated from John Fletcher College at University Park, Iowa. In 1922, he received his license to preach. At the first annual session of the Montana conference, he was ordained deacon. In 1929, he was ordained elder at Big Timber, Montana. He served at Livingston for one year, Rapelje for four years, and Billings for eight years. During his ministry in Billings, the present church building was completed and dedicated. In 1938, he transferred to the Oregon-Washington conference.

He was married to Ruth Roberts and at present is living in Eugene, Oregon.⁷⁷

77. Personal Correspondence of the author, from F. R. Witmer, Eugene, Oregon, January, 1953.

Ziettlow, Carryl, was born October 17, 1920 at Virgil, South Dakota.

His parents are Oscar and Ella Ziettlow, living at present in DeWitt, Nebraska. His early education was received in Swanton and DeWitt.

His initial call to the ministry came in 1936 at the summer assembly of the Nebraska conference. He testifies,

It was the culmination of a number of factors. My final decision was not made until 1946, while in the service. I realized then that I could not escape the call. The basic guidance into the ministry came as a result of one of our pastors who took particular interest in my life's work.

He received the major portion of his college training at Westmar College, Le Mars, Iowa and two quarters at Eastern Montana College of Education. His seminary training was received at Evangelical Theological Seminary, Naperville, Illinois where he graduated in 1950. He was licensed in Kearney, Nebraska in 1946, and ordained elder in Big Timber, Montana in 1950. He served the fields of Broadview for one year (1946-47) and Columbus one year after his seminary training.

He was married to Mary Ann Burns, and they have had two children, Janice Lea and Richard Craig. At Present he is field representative for Westmar College, Le Mars, Iowa.

78. Personal Correspondence of the author, from Carryl Ziettlow, Le Mars, Iowa, February, 1953.

CHAPTER IV

PLANS FOR MERGER WITH THE UNITED BRETHREN CHURCH IN CHRIST

In the 1946 annual session the Evangelicals cast a unanimous ballot favoring merger with the United Brethren. This was not entirely one-sided. The United Brethren were equally anxious that both denominations would merge and especially interested in uniting the Montana conferences into one organization.

When the question of Church Union came before the conference, all ministers and delegates seemed eager to vote. The two churches in Montana had somewhat united for several years. Their summer camps had been held together at Camp Luccock for about eight years with the exception of one year when the United Brethren held theirs separately. The vote went in favor of the union without one vote of dissension.¹

Rev. R. R. Strutz, in the conference superintendent's report for 1947, gives information of historic significance.

In August of the past year I received a telegram from Bishop I. D. Warner, who was then conducting the annual session of the Church of the United Brethren in Christ, at Circle, Montana, requesting that I accept the superintendency of their conference along with ours. I immediately conferred with the Board of Missions and with our Bishop about the matter, and received instructions to assume both responsibilities.²

Rev. Strutz further stated that:

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1. Stine O. Douglas, History of the Montana Conference of The United Brethren In Christ (1909-1945) (Great Falls, Electric City Printing Co., 1946), p. 31.
 2. Claire L. Harris, Official Proceedings of the Montana Conference of the Evangelical United Brethren Church (Harrisburg, Evangelical Press, 1947), p. 20.

November 16, 1946 will go down in the history of our church as a great day. Those of us who were privileged to be present in Johnstown, Pa. when the Evangelical Church and the Church of the United Brethren in Christ joined to form the Evangelical United Brethren Church, can never express the thrill of our souls at that high moment. To us in Montana this union means much. It means that eventually the two Montana Conferences of our church will become one,³ giving us a conference with seventeen charges.

Throughout the conference some were questioning the need for delay, since the General Conference had granted permission for the Montana conferences to unite immediately. The superintendent continued in his report and made sufficient explanation for the delay.

Permit me to state that the General Conference did give the Montana conference permission to unite as soon as everything is in proper order. The Lord willing this should be possible by the conference session of 1948.⁴

He further stated that a "plan and Basis of Union" had been worked out by special committees from each of the two conferences. This plan was presented to the conference at this session.

It will likewise be presented to the conference session in Great Falls next week. After the two conferences approve this plan of union, it will be submitted to the General Council of Administration. After their approval has been granted the two conferences can then join and proceed in their endeavors as one conference in our one church.

This planning was not consummated in the "realm of ideals". The

3. Ibid., p. 20.

4. Ibid., p. 21.

5. Ibid.

conferences both faced the reality that each must give as well as take.

There will be, of course, many problems and difficulties arising out of such union. Only as we enter into every aspect of it with a genuine Christian spirit, and a willingness to give as well as take, can these be solved without friction.⁶

The 1947 session was held in Missoula, Montana. Bishop E. W. Praetorius presided over this twenty-first annual conference. The Council of Administration reported that Superintendent Strutz with C. L. Harris and F. E. Wines had been appointed to help arrange the "Basis of Union" between the conferences. This plan was presented as follows:

BASIS OF UNION

The Montana Conference of the Evangelical United Brethren Church.

I. Conference Year

The conference fiscal year shall be from June 1 through May 31.

II. Conference Session

The conference session shall convene on Wednesday evening at 8 p. m. preceding the fourth Sunday in June 1948.

III. Place of Meeting for Uniting Conference

The place of meeting for the uniting conference shall be First Evangelical United Brethren Church, Billings, Montana.

IV. Conference Organization

A. Area.--The area to which the Montana Conference of the Evangelical United Brethren Church shall belong shall be determined by the Board of Bishops.

B. Name.--The name of the conference shall be The Montana Conference of the Evangelical United Brethren Church.

C. Superintendent.--There shall be a full-time Conference Superintendent.

D. Conference Offices.--

1. Secretary--The Secretary shall be elected from the Montana Conference (Ev).

2. Treasurer--The Treasurer shall be elected from the Montana Conference (UB).

6. Ibid.

3. Secretary of Evangelism--The Secretary of Evangelism shall be elected from the Montana Conference (Ev).
4. Director of Christian Education--The Director of Christian Education shall be elected from the Montana Conference (UB).
5. Treasurer of the Board of Missions--The Treasurer of the Board of Missions shall be from the Montana Conference (Ev).
6. Secretary of Stewardship--The Secretary of Stewardship shall be from the Montana Conference (UB).
7. Statistician--The Statistician shall be from the Montana Conference (Ev).
8. Historian--The Historian shall be elected from the Montana Conference (UB).

V. Conference Boards, Commissions, Societies.

A. Council of Administration--The membership of the Conference Council of Administration, except where specifically designated, shall be: a representative from the Board of Trustees, from the Montana Conference (Ev); a representative from the Brotherhood, from the Montana Conference (UB); a representative from the Board of Missions, from the Montana Conference (Ev); a representative of the Youth Fellowship, from the Montana Conference (UB); a representative of the WSWS, from the Montana Conference (Ev); and a representative from the Commission of Evangelism, from the Montana Conference (Ev). Any additional members shall alternate in the following order, from the Montana Conference (UB) and the Montana Conference (Ev).

B. Trustees.--There shall be five (5) Trustees, three (3) from the Montana Conference (Ev) and two (2) from the Montana Conference (UB).

C. Board of Christian Education.--The members of the Board of Christian Education not designated shall be chosen in alternating order, from the Montana Conference (Ev) then from the Montana Conference (UB).

D. Board of Missions.--The members of this Board not designated shall be chosen in alternating order from the Montana Conference (Ev) and the Montana Conference (UB).

E. Commission on Rural Life.--The members of the Commission on Rural Life shall be three (3) from the Montana Conference (Ev) and two (2) from the Montana Conference (UB).

F. Student Aid Society.--There shall be a Student Aid Society organized according to the constitution of the Student Aid Society of the Montana Conference (Ev). The personnel of this Board shall be two (2) from the Montana Conference (UB) and three (3) from the Montana Conference (Ev). The officers shall be elected from among the members of this Board as follows: President, from the Montana Conference (Ev); Vice-President, from the Montana Conference (UB); Secretary-Treasurer, from the Montana Conference (Ev).

G. Committees--

Judicial.--The members of the Judicial Committee shall be composed of two (2) itinerant Elders elected from the Montana Conference (UB) and three (3) from the Montana

Conference (Ev). Should there be an insufficient number of itinerant Elders in either group to meet the disciplinary requirements for membership on this committee the basis set forth above shall be carried out as far as possible and the balance of the membership shall be elected from the eligible Itinerants without respect of their relationship to either group.

Court of Appeals.---The members of the Court of Appeals shall be one (1) from the Montana Conference (UB) and one (1) from the Montana Conference (Ev).

VI. Colleges

The Montana Conference of the Evangelical United Brethren Church shall support two (2) colleges namely York College at York, Nebraska and Western Union College at Le Mars, Iowa. Two (2) trustees shall be elected, one (1) from the Montana Conference (UB) who shall be the trustee to York College, and one (1) from the Montana Conference (Ev) who shall be trustee to Western Union College.

VII. General Missionary Appropriation

In order that our missionaries shall receive reasonable support, we request the amount of \$9,000.00 from the General Board of Missions; \$6,000.00 of this amount to come from the General Board of Missions (Evangelical) and \$3,000.00 from the General Board of Missions (United Brethren).

VIII. Conference Finance

The Montana Conference accepts the Missions and Benevolence apportionments as adopted by the General Conference, a total of \$8,360.00; \$1,930.00 for General Causes, \$6,430.00 for Conference Interests. This amount is to be raised as follows: \$6,833.00 from the churches of the Montana Conference (Ev) (\$1,373.00 for General Causes and \$5,460.00 for Conference Interests) and \$1,527.00 from the churches of the Montana Conference (UB) (\$557.00 for General Causes and \$970.00 for Conference Interests).

IX. Obligations

There are no debts resting on either of the Conferences coming into this union.

In the matter of a commitment made by the Montana Conference (UB) to pay annually the sum of \$500.00 for Living Endowment into the treasury of York College for an undesignated period or until it shall

be terminated by conference action. It is agreed that this obligation will be assumed by the churches of the Montana Conference (UB) for the balance of this quadrennium.

X. Treasury Balances

Treasury balances on hand at the time of the union of the Conferences shall be transferred to their respective funds in the new Conference and be used for the purpose for which they were given.

XI. Parliamentary Procedure, Rules and Agenda

The Parliamentary Procedure, conference rules and agenda for the Uniting Conference shall be formulated by the Presiding Bishop, Conference Superintendent and the Secretaries of the two former Conferences and be submitted to the opening session of the Conference for ratification.⁷

Louis E. Magsig and C. Lee Birdsall were ordained elders. Kent Swift, upon recommendation from the Rudyard congregation, was granted a license to preach. Carryl Zietlow was received as a probationer from the Nebraska conference. F.A. Dunn and C. Lee Birdsall were assigned to serve on United Brethren fields, and Merle Blinn, a United Brethren pastor, served the Evangelical conference at Rapelje.

The boundaries were changed on two fields. The Frieden's church (Evangelical) merged with the Bethel church. The Frieden's property was declared conference property and placed at the disposition of the conference trustees. The Livingston field became self supporting.

The Committee on Christian Education reported that the conference brotherhoods of the two churches in Montana had united in Billings on March 15, 1947.

Rev. Strutz reported that the conference was growing spiritually.

7. Ibid., pp. 20-22.

He said that,

The ultimate test of a year's progress is to be found in the souls won to the Lord Jesus Christ, and lives built up in Faith and into the church. Were we to build our churches larger, increase the salaries of our ministers, acquire even a more cultured and well-trained ministry, and were we to show no souls won for Christ, and no progress in building Christ-like character, then ours would be a sad record of failure. We thank God for the spiritual victories which have been achieved this past year. The statistical report will show a goodly number, of conversions, others that have been reclaimed from a backslidden state. A goodly number, too, have been added to the membership of our church, but at best our achievements are nothing worthy of boasting.⁸

The statistical report reveals that 189 conversions and 164 new members were reported for the year. The conference superintendent recorded his person impression as to the spiritual value of the yearly Youth Convention and Women's Missionary Society Convention held jointly at Luccock Park.

This assembly is becoming more vital each year as a week of Pentecost for our conference. I believe it would be well for each pastor with his people to pray much, select the young people for whom the church has been praying, to go to this great spiritual retreat.⁹

At this conference Dr. H. E. Mueller, former District Superintendent of the Minnesota Conference of the Evangelical Church, was introduced with his wife and welcomed to sit within the conference bar as advisory

8. Ibid., pp. 17,18.

9. Ibid., p. 18.

members. Dr. Mueller was instructor in the newly-formed Western School of Evangelical Religion.

THE 1948 SESSION

The twenty-second annual session of the Montana Conference (Evangelical) of the Evangelical United Brethren Church was opened by Bishop E. W. Praetorius June 22, 1948 at 8:00 P. M. in First Church, Billings, Montana. This session was the last for the Montana Conference of the Evangelical Church, and it compared in length to the first session held in 1927. Both conferences were two days long; the first conference convened at 2:00 P. M. of the first day; the last conference convened at 8:00 P. M.. Thus the 1948 session is the shortest on record, but its length was terminated by action that placed it with its fields into a new and greater future.

At this session the committees of the church made their final reports before consolidating their records in the new conference. Fred A. Dunn transferred to the Minnesota conference and H. E. Bennett was received from the Oregon-Washington conference. The names of Vernon Vark of Livingston, Jack Dabner of Billings, Laurence Thornton of Billings, and James Zottnick of Missoula were placed on the records as ministerial students.

Superintendent R. R. Strutz reported on the future outlook of the church in his final report.

preliminary work toward this end should be done this year, so that the project could be launched with the next conference session. It is well to face the fact that two factors are essential to begin new work. The first is a real missionary, the second is adequate finance. I am persuaded that God will have a man for us at such a time as we are willing to give him the necessary financial support. Toward this end, I would like to suggest a plan which we will put into operation for the balance of the quadrennium, should the conference approve. This plan has been discussed with some of the leaders of the Brotherhood, with very favorable reaction. This plan will call for the enlistment of laymen within and outside the conference to give one, two, five or even ten dollars per month, for the launching of new work in the Montana Conference. This project would definitely be promoted by the Brotherhood of the Conference. If we could get a thousand laymen to subscribe even one dollar per month to this cause, over and above any other giving, annually, we would be able to launch a new mission this year. This must be done and it can be done. I would therefore suggest that this matter be studied by the Conference Board of Missions, that such plan be formulated by them and submitted to the annual meeting of the Brotherhood, convening here Saturday afternoon and evening for their acceptance and promotion.¹⁰

Union-It is gratifying indeed that the two Montana Conferences of our Church will be uniting at this conference session. We believe that it is the will of God and will result in greater good for His Kingdom. We appreciate greatly the permission granted by the Board of Bishops and the General Council of Administration to consummate this union, and we assure our beloved Church that we will be loyal to her, her Discipline, to the Word, and to our Christ.¹¹

The Uniting and Sacrament of the Lord's

10. Claire L. Harris, Official Proceedings of the Montana Conference of the Evangelical United Brethren Church (Harrisburg, Evangelical Press, 1948), pp. 61-62.

11. Ibid., p. 62.

Supper Service was presided over by Conference Superintendent, Reuben R. Strutz. This solemn service began with an Organ and Piano prelude, "Under His Wings" played by Barbara Volstad and Joan Dabner. Hymn, "All Hail the Power of Jesus' Name," was sung. The scripture read by Reuben R. Strutz, was selected from Psalm 133. The "Declaration of Union" was read by Bishop E. Praetorius as follows:

"WHEREAS, The Montana Conference (UB) and the Montana Conference (Ev) of the Evangelical United Brethren Church, by their respective Annual Conferences, in harmony with the authorization given them by the General Conference to effect union according to the provisions of the enabling act for union or changes in boundaries of Annual Conferences, did appoint Commissions on Conference Union; and

"WHEREAS, These Commissions at a joint meeting, by joint action, did agree upon, approve and adopt a Basis of Union for the organic union of these two Annual Conferences, and thereafter presented said Basis of Union for the Montana Conference of The Evangelical United Brethren Church to their respective Conference bodies, and

"WHEREAS, The Montana Conference (UB) and the Montana Conference (Ev) of The Evangelical United Brethren Church, each acting in its own behalf and in accordance with the Basis of Union, did approve and adopt the proposed Basis of Union for the Montana Conference of The Evangelical United Brethren Church in accordance with the provisions, rules, regulations and usages of their respective Conferences; and

"WHEREAS, This Basis of Union has been submitted to, and approved by, the General Council of Administration; and

"WHEREAS, The separate Sessions of the Montana (UB) and Montana (Ev) Conferences have been held to conclude their respective business and this joint Annual Conference, thus authorized and constituted according to the Basis of Union, is now in session in the First Evangelical United Brethren Church, Billings, Montana, on this 23rd day of June, 1948;

"Now, therefore, we, the Bishops of these uniting Annual Conferences do solemnly publish and declare in the Presence of God, and before all men, the following statement of facts:

"I. The Montana Conference (UB) and the Montana Conference (Ev) are now and shall be one Annual Conference, known as the Montana Conference of The Evangelical United Brethren Church.

"II. That the Basis of Union, as adopted, is the basis that shall govern the procedure of the Montana Conference during its first conference year.

"III. That the Montana Conference of The Evangelical United Brethren Church, as thus constituted is, and shall be the ecclesiastical and legal successor of the two united Annual Conferences in accordance with the provisions of the Basis of Union now in full force and effect.

"IV. That by the adoption of the name, The Montana Conference of The Evangelical United Brethren Church, for this united Conference, no right, interest or title in and to the respective names by which the two uniting Conferences have been identified and known through many years, has been nor is surrendered, but all such rights are specifically reserved against the claims of all persons, associations and organizations whatsoever.

"In humble acknowledgment of Divine Guidance, we do hereby solemnly and reverently invoke upon the Montana Conference of The Evangelical United Brethren Church, thus established, the blessing of Almighty God. Amen."

Bishop Ira D. Warner and
Bishop E. W. Praetorius.

Bishop I. D. Warner then led in prayer. The church choir then very commendably rendered the anthem, "My God and I", by Sergei. Bishop Ira D. Warner gave the Communion Meditation, "The Secret of Victory". This message was clear, forceful and inspired us to enter into greater sufferings of Jesus symbolized by the Communion.

Bishop Ira D. Warner was the Communion Celebrant and was assisted in distributing the emblems by the Brethren, Reuben R. Strutz, Stine O. Douglas, Andrew Roukema, Merle Blinn, J. D. Lindley, F. Everal Wines, G. K. Bergland, and Claire L. Harris. Hymn "Blest Be the Tie", was sung and the impressive service closed with the benediction by Bishop I. D. Warner.¹²

12. Ibid., pp. 15, 16.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION

God's Hinterland

I shall make my way to the hinterlands
Where the hills of God reveal
The mysteries of ages past,
And where the things I feel
Mean more to me than in the vale
Where gilded cities stand.
For the world is clean where the grass is green
In God's great hinterland.

I shall watch the mists from the hinterland
That cover the vale below;
Suns shine bright and skies are blue
In the hinterlands I know.
Flowers bloom in the open fields
As the Great Creator planned;
New courage waits beyond the gates
Of God's great hinterland.

There are gifts for me in the hinterland
Of greater worth than gold.
Wealth the vaults of a million banks
Of earth could never hold.
Men may scorn my sort of wealth,
May never understand;
For mine is the wealth of heaven itself
In God's great hinterland.

H. S. Tool
Big Timber, Montana
December, 1944.

CONCLUSION

Isolated Beginnings. A number of Evangelical church people came to Montana to homestead in the early 1900's. Both the Evangelical Association and the United Evangelical Church responded to their plea for preachers. In 1908, W. L. Dillow started the first mission in Broadview among a loyal group of Evangelicals who had homesteaded in that vicinity. Bishop Heil stated that the United Evangelical Church would support the missionary effort in the state of Montana. The Dakota conference followed the settlers into several areas in the state and showed willingness to launch a strong missionary movement for the Evangelical Association.

Hardship. Much hardship was suffered by the early preachers and congregations. The land that seemed to have such great prospects failed during drought years to produce enough to supply the needs of the new population. The general denominations poured money, clothes, and supplies into the mission area to help relieve the suffering. Many people left the state, and where once there had been promising settlements, the area was vacant. In rural sections where the population once was abundant, and where the denominations had established congregations and built churches, the farm lands became deserted and large companies controlled vast acreages of land. The conference was faced with the problem of relocating some churches to population centers and closing others. Lack of money caused a serious handicap in the conference program. Conference leaders refused to start new missions

until the debt was paid which originally was incurred when the mission churches were built. Hard winters caused an added hardship on the mission fields. Crop failures caused poverty among the people. These difficulties caused some migrations and definite population changes. The ministry changed with the population; in thirty-eight years fifty-three men served the eleven and twelve churches of the conference. The ministers went to other denominations and other conferences. This was a distinct handicap on this missionary conference. It was slow to produce its own ministers.

Progress. In spite of the difficulties, the conference showed steady progress. Some at times thought Montana to be an expensive mission field. But the money invested was used to develop the conference and resulted in a steady increase, although at times it was slow. Some conference churches were relocated and became successful. In 1927, the fields within the state of Montana were organized into a separate conference on a missionary basis. A great deal of money was borrowed to develop the conference. It proved hard for the churches to clear themselves from indebtedness. Many efforts were made to pay the balance, and the concentrated effort in the middle 1940's cleared the indebtedness. Slowly the conference was able to build reserves, for as the people prospered the church prospered. In 1943, the Billings charge was the first to become self-supporting and by the time of the merger Big Timber also became self-supporting.

Sum

Summer Assembly Grounds. The summer assembly program proved to

be valuable in the life of the conference. Discussion was provoked at several annual sessions on the location and purchase of a site that could be developed for a permanent location. This was not accomplished by the Montana Conference of the Evangelical Church.

New Missions. In several sessions the desire to start new missions was expressed but action was slow in coming. There was a reticence on the part of leaders to go into debt even though opportunities were presented to them.

Distance. The distance involved between fields was in a sense a handicap to the northern fields and to the superintendent who spent much valuable time traveling between the points in the conference.

The Merger. The conference as a separate body under the Evangelical church no longer exists. In 1947, it was made part of the Montana Conference of the Evangelical United Brethren Church. In the new capacity growth was sustained, and the missionary passion was deepened when new work was started. Under the new enlarged role the conference was ready to do a greater work for Christ in the state of Montana.

Suggestions For Further Study and Investigation. Several areas for further study and investigation were revealed, by the data collected, which should prove helpful in assisting future studies in this field.

A combined history of the Montana Conference of the Evangelical United Brethren Church is needed. It is remarkable that the two, as separate denominations, did not overlap in their work. This

study would also show whether the merger was profitable or whether the results individually were greater or lessened by the merger.

The conference historic records need to be brought up to date. The materials gathered in this study will be added to the conference historic record, but the same material should be obtained for every man who has served in the denomination and for every field within the borders of the conference.

A critical study on the methods of missions and evangelism used during the history of the Montana conference would be valuable. A record of such methods would prove helpful in determining future action in this field.

Specialized investigation and critical evaluation of methods of Christian Education used in the Montana Conference would be profitable to the conference. A study of this nature would help future planning and promoting. This study would reveal weaknesses that could be corrected and strong points that could be enlarged upon.

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APPENDIX

APPENDIX A

ARTICLES OF INCORPORATION OF THE MONTANA CONFERENCE
OF THE EVANGELICAL CHURCH

KNOW ALL MEN BY THESE PRESENTS, That, Whereas, at a meeting of the members of the Montana Conference of the Evangelical Church, held at the Evangelical church at Reed Point, Montana, June 24, 1927, Wilbur Isley, Howard S. Tool and John H. Oehlerking were duly elected as Trustees of the Montana Conference of the Evangelical Church, which said Board of Trustees were given authority, May 26, 1928, in annual conference session at Broadview, Montana, to form a corporation for holding and administering of trust funds for general or special purposes, and to hold the legal title to real estate for use and in trust for the said Church and Society, and for conducting and transacting the business affairs of such Church and Religious Society, and Whereas, further, the Board of Trustees of the Montana Conference of the Evangelical Church composed of Wilbur Isley, Howard S. Tool and John H. Oehlerking, at a meeting at Broadview, Montana, on the 26th day of May 1928, voted to form a corporation in accordance with said authority, to be known as the Montana Conference of the Evangelical Church,

That Wilbur Isley resigned from said Board of Trustees and has been succeeded by Newton A. Eller.

NOW THEREFORE, We, the undersigned, Newton A. Eller, Howard S. Tool and John H. Oehlerking, as such Trustees of the Montana Conference of the Evangelical Church, in accordance with the rules of such Church and Society, and under and by virtue of the laws of the State of Montana, do hereby incorporate ourselves and form a corporation, as follows, to wit:

I. The name of this corporation shall be the Montana Conference of the Evangelical Church.

II. This corporation is formed for and shall be a strictly religious corporation and is for the following purposes:

(a) The promotion of the Christian religion and the spread of Scriptural holiness.

(b) To purchase and own such real estate and other property as may be necessary for the purposes of the Society.

(c) For the purposes above specified, to receive donations, to receive, manage, take and hold real and personal property by gift, grant, devise or request.

This corporation shall be a non-profit organization and shall have no power to contract debts, binding at law or in equity upon it, its members or its property, except for the purchase of real estate

for the actual use of the corporation, and then only when authorized by a two-thirds vote of all members of the Board of Trustees.

III. The affairs of the corporation shall be governed and conducted by the Montana Conference of the Evangelical Church, which shall be held during the fourth week in May, each year, unless otherwise determined by the said conference, and by the Board of Trustees composed of three or more members of the corporation, to be elected at the annual session of the conference, and who, when elected shall be and constitute the Board of Trustees until successors in office shall have perpetual succession by the name of the corporation, and by such name shall be capable of making any legal contract and prosecuting and defending suits, and shall have capacity to acquire, hold, enjoy, dispose of and convey all property, real or personal, which may be acquired by or for the corporation by purchase, donation or otherwise, for the purpose of carrying out the intentions of this religious corporation.

IV. The Board of Trustees of the corporation shall consist of not less than three nor more than five members, as the Montana Conference of the Evangelical Church may determine and the following named persons shall constitute the Board of Trustees of the Corporation for the first year and until their successors are elected and qualified:

NEWTON A. HILLER.....Big Timber, Montana
HOWARD S. TOOL.....Reed Point, Montana
JOHN H. OEHLECKING.....Billings, Montana

That said trustees shall have the management and control of the property within the bounds of said Montana Conference belonging to the Evangelical Church. The trustees may adopt by-laws, rules and regulations not inconsistent with the Discipline of the Church and any determination of the Montana Conference of the Evangelical Church, or the laws of the State of Montana and such by-laws may be changed, amended or altered by the Board of Trustees of/by the Montana Conference of the Evangelical Church, notice of such change having been given in writing at a previous regular meeting.

That a majority of said trustees shall be a quorum for the transaction of business.

The trustees shall make an annual report setting forth the acts and doings of the board during the year, which report shall be prepared prior to the meeting of the Montana Conference of the Evangelical Church, and a copy of such report shall be presented to the said conference. The Board of Trustees shall hold an annual meeting after their election and not later than immediately following the adjournment of the annual conference, at which time the officers of the Board of Trustees shall be elected. Special meetings of the Board of Trustees shall be held when requested by two members of the Board of Trustees,

if the Board of Trustees is constituted of three members, and three, when the board is constituted of five members. The Board of Trustees may hold meetings and transact business at such times and places as in the judgment of the trustees the demands of the church may require. The business of the corporation may be transacted at its principal office in Billings, Montana, or at such other places within the State of Montana, where the annual session of the Montana Conference of the Evangelical Church is held, or other designated places within the said state.

Any vacancy occurring in the Board of Trustees by death, resignation, or otherwise, unless otherwise provided by the Discipline of the Evangelical Church shall be filled, until the election of a successor by the Montana Conference of the Evangelical Church, by a vote of a majority of the remaining members of the Board of Trustees at either a regular or special meeting of such board.

V. The officers shall consist of a president, one or more vice-presidents, a secretary and a treasurer, to be annually chosen from among the members of the Board of Trustees in May, 1928, the following named persons shall be constitute the officers:

NEWTON A. ELLER.....President
 HOWARD S. TOOL.....Vice-President and Secretary
 JOHN H. OEHLEKING.....Treasurer

VI. All real estate conveyed to said corporation, and all property received by it shall be in trust, and such property shall be kept, used and maintained and disposed of only for the use and benefit of the ministry and membership of the Evangelical Church, and any real estate of the corporation may be sold and conveyed by the Board of Trustees in the corporate name of the corporation when such trustees shall be duly authorized so to do by the action of the annual conference; that any deed or conveyance of real property or other instrument of a legal character shall be deemed to have been sufficiently executed when signed in the name of the corporation by the president and secretary of the corporation, or in the name of the corporation by a majority of the members of the Board of Trustees of the corporation, and sealed with the common seal of the corporation.

VII. The common seal of the corporation shall consist of an impression of an "Open book" and the words "The Montana Conference of the Evangelical Church Corporate Seal".

VIII. That this corporation appropriates to itself all the rights, powers, privileges and immunities which are now and which may during the existence hereof be conferred by law upon corporations of a similar character; that the provisions of the Discipline of the Evangelical Church and the action of the Montana Conference of the Evangelical Church shall be looked to and strictly followed in the government of the corporation and in the conduct of its affairs.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, The undersigned have hereunto set their hands and seals this 28th day of February, 1929.

NEWTON A. ELLER
HOWARD S. TOOL
JOHN H. OEHLEKING

In the presence of:
R. C. DILLAVON.

STATE OF MONTANA
YELLOWSTONE COUNTY ss.

On this 28th day of February, 1929, before me the undersigned, a Notary Public, personally appeared John Oehlerking and Newton A. Eller and Howard S. Tool, known to me to be the persons whose names are subscribed to the foregoing Articles of Incorporation and acknowledged to me that they executed the same for the purpose therein set forth.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand and affixed my Notarial Seal the day and year in this instrument first above written.

R.C. DILLAVON,

Notary Public in and for the State of Montana,
Residing in the city of Billings.

My commission expires March 9, 1930.¹

1. N. A. Eller and B. A. Shively, Proceedings of the Third Annual Session of the Montana Conference Evangelical Church (N. A. Eller and B. A. Shively, Eds. and Pubs., 1929), pp.33-35.

APPENDIX B

QUESTIONNAIRE

Name _____

Born _____, Year _____

Parents _____

Where did they live and what did they do?

Where did you get your early education?

Give some of the facts surrounding and concerning your call to the ministry.

Have you had Bible School Training, College or Seminary work? If so, where? How much? and When?

Where were you licensed? _____ When? _____.

" ordained Deacon? _____ When? _____.

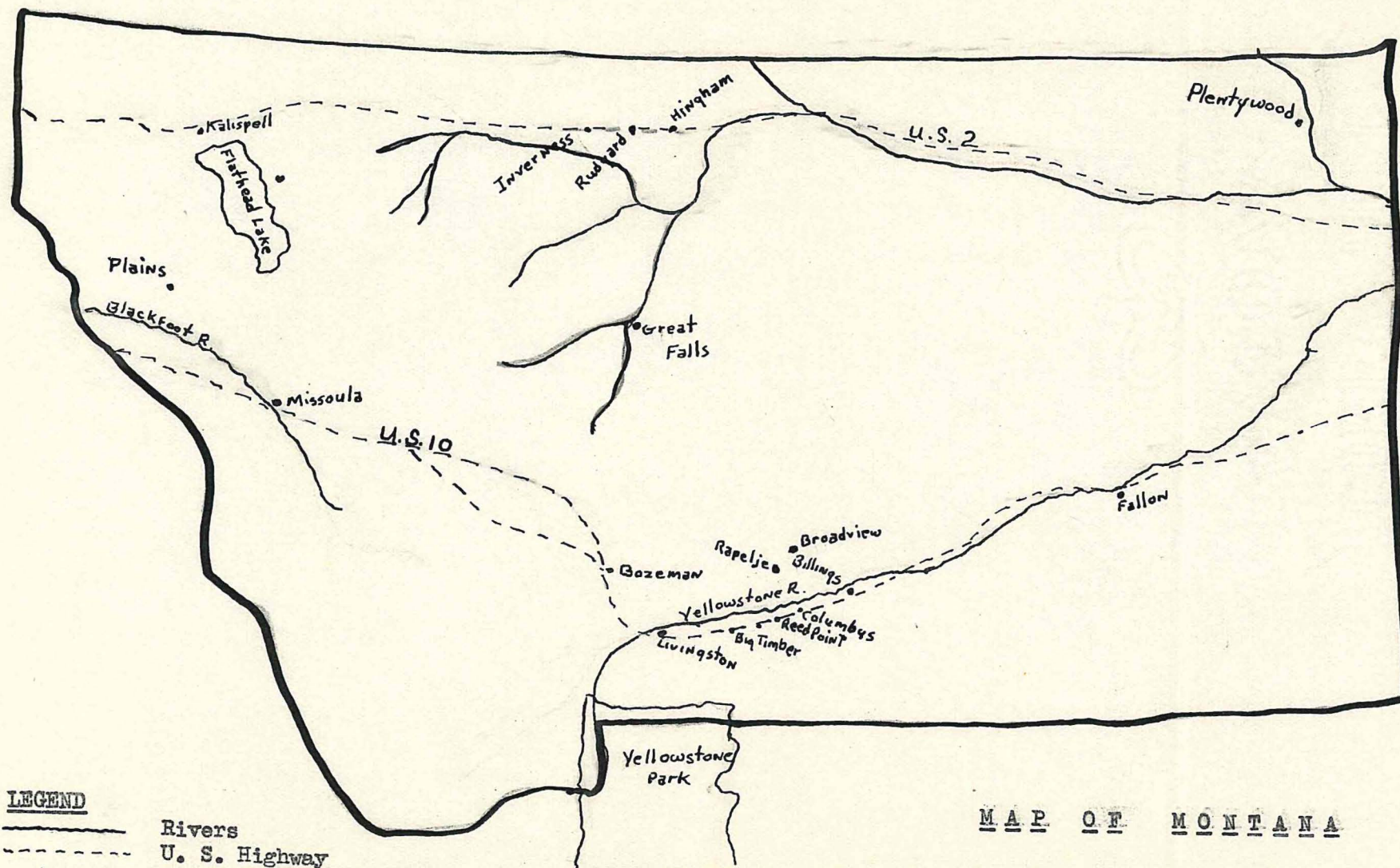
" ordained Elder? _____ When? _____.

What fields in Montana did you serve?

Outstanding events that have taken place in or during your ministry which you took part in.....

Married? _____ (yes or no). If so, to whom? _____.

The names of your children if you care to list them and what they do now.



LEGEND

————— Rivers
 - - - - - U. S. Highway
 | | | | | Approximately 40 miles

MAP OF MONTANA

Appendix C