

Dr. Lawrence W. Wick

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The pages that follow constitute the transcript of an interview conducted as part of the Wilmette Public Library District's Oral History program, started in 1975 by a committee of the Friends of the Wilmette Public Library which has been chaired since its inception by Rhea Adler, a resident of the Village of Wilmette since 1932.

A copy of the tape on which this transcript is based is available for circulation, and may be obtained by checking with a Reference Librarian concerning circulation procedures.

This program would not have been possible without the cooperation of the many long-time residents of the Village interested in helping to preserve particulars of a fascinating past, and the patience, energy and effort of a small but dedicated group of interviewers, transcribers and typists who share the belief that the past is too important to be forgotten.

Richard E. Thompson
Director

ABSTRACT

Interviewee: Dr. Lawrence Wick

Interviewer: Rhea S. Adler

Date of interview: April, 1978

Pastor - Wilmette Lutheran Church - Third parish served · Family and community participation · Home- owner

Educational background · Sears Roebuck international scope Theological training at Lutheran School of Theology · Chicago -

Frederick Lutheran Church, Virgin Islands - Chaplain at

Elgin State Hospital - Institute of Pastoral Care -

Ordination · Richmond, Illinois pastor · Purdue University,

Master of Science degree in Counseling · Doctor of Ministry degree, Chicago Theological Seminary

Community activities - Board of Rotary - Wilmette Library Board - Wilmette Clergy Council

Elaboration of the Wilmette English Lutheran Church · Back (south end) of church first built - 1929 built sanctuary for

\$60,000 - Crash - Couldn't make payments · Moved out -

Worshipped in Masonic Temple. Church building sold to

Board of American Missions of old United Lutheran Church Eighth pastor ·

Congregation strongest it's been - Debt free

Endorsement fund · Large contribution to Wilmette community · Three charter members in present congregation

Controversy among Lutheran churches · Mergers · A.E.L.C. · Danish ·

Finnish · Lutheran Church of America solidified -

Dr. Robert Marshall of Kenilworth - Member of Wilmette

Church made president

Local congregation strong in worship and music · Organ · Overhauling by Curt Roderer of Evanston

Church staff

Illinois Synod of Lutheran Church of America · 800 acre camp near Oregon,

Illinois

Changes in congregation · Youth activities · Church extension ·

Benevolence

Church related colleges

World missions · Peace corps · Third World attitudes-changes

First church in Wilmette - Community Church - Included various denominations

Lawrence Wick

LW: My name is Lawrence W. Wick. I am the pastor at Wilmette Lutheran Church in Wilmette and have been the pastor here for three and a half plus years. To give you a little information about myself -- I am thirty-eight years old. I have...this is the third parish that I have served with the Lutheran Church of America, having come here from the Flossmore area in the south suburban region of Cook County.

RA: Was that your first?

LW: That was my second parish. Prior to that I was in, uh, Grace Lutheran Church in Richmond, Illinois.

RA: Oh, yes.

LW: Ah, my, uh.. .You had mentioned prior to our taping as to why I am here. I suppose my track record in parishes has been going to congregations that are having difficulties and putting them back together. (Laughter)

RA: This seems to be the forte of most ministers today, isn't it?

LW: So it's been a very fun parish to be here. I am married. My wife's name is Cheryl and we have two children. Anders who is four and Annika who is fourteen months. And we have our own home here in Wilmette and are both actively involved in the community.

RA: This is interesting from a church point of view. Uh, are you now being compensated what was formerly.

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LW: This is becoming increasingly popular, at least in the Lutheran Church where in our district of about nineteen churches, seventeen of those pastors own their own homes....

RA: This is very interesting.

LW: ð rather than the previous arrangement of having parsonages. Here in Wilmette, Nick May at St. John's owns his own home and Jim Kidd of the Congregational Church owns his own home and I believe Jim Pike of the Community Church owns his own home.

PA: The Congregational idea is rather new.

LW: Um, huh.

PA: I happen to be of that group, so that I know.

LW: Well, it's a much better arrangement for both church and(-ndtLnc..t

RA: I think so.

LW: Unmmmm, educationally, I received a bachelor of arts degree in 1961 from Wartburg College in Waverly, Iowa - a Lutheran school in Waverly, Iowa. I majored in economics and international finance which are precisely those things which are not necessary for ministry, (*Laughter*) but it did give me a broad background. I had no intention of going to the seminary. In fact, after graduation from the baccalaureate degree, I went with Sears Roebuck and worked on the international scope

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with them. Then, uh, but shortly thereafter, I decided that was not for me. I went to the Lutheran School of Theology at Chicago and received a Bachelor's of what was called a Master of Divinity degree and I received that in 1966. Ah, I interned at Frederick Lutheran Church in the Virgin Islands, which was an interesting place to be.

RA: How long were you there?

LW: A year. We have one year internships.

RA: I see.

LW: I returned from the Virgin Islands and, uh, worked for a while as a chaplain at Elgin State Hospital while I received a certificate of certification as a . . . from the Institute of Pastoral Care. Then, upon ordination, I went to my first church which is in Richmond. I later then picked up a Master of Science degree in counseling from Purdue University and then in 1976, while here in Wilmette, I completed the requirements for the Doctor of Ministry degree from Chicago Theological Seminary. So at thirty-six years old I quit going to school for the first time. Haven't really had the desire to go back yet....

PA: You haven't?

LW: ..but will probably in the future.

RA: I still....

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LW: Still have that feeling, right?

RA: Yes.

LW: Uh, as I mentioned I am active in the community in Wilmette. I am a member of the Rotary Club, on the Board of Directors of that organization. I edit the club newsletter on a weekly basis and am, as you know and as you participate in that process, newly elected to the Board of Trustees of the Wilmette Library in which I have a great degree of interest.

RA: I am glad.

LW: And, I, uh, really enjoy that. I am also in the Wilmette Clergy Council, and, uh, work actively in that.

RA: You have a fine background in counseling which I know is rather important today and really foremost today and I salute you for it.

LW: Well, pastors do more and more of that.

RA: I know they do. Hopefully, they are qualified to do it.

LW: Yes, not all are, but, uh....

RA: I belong to the North Shore Mental Health and so I have been interested for a good many years in what is being done within the ministry itself. Many ministers have served on that Board and are serving now on that Board.

LW: Well, that is one of my fortes, I guess. Um, I don't know as far as hobbies and interests. When I work, I love to work, and when I am on vacation, that is when

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probably do my relaxing. I like to sail and I love to read - a lot of reading as you can tell.

RA: Well, and I would gather from your interest in the Wilmette library which is....

LW: I do. I do do a lot of reading. Um, and enjoy Wilmette and plan on being here for a long period of time.

RA: Good. I'm glad. And I do know from your parishioners that they are very happy with you.

LW: Ah, well, it's good to know. It's a mutual arrangement. We just love each other, I think, by and large. So the congregation, as far as the history of the congregation is concerned - - Lutheranism is the only non-English speaking immigrant church other than Roman Catholicism. Roman Catholicism, though, had the Latin Mass which served as a very unifying factor, and, uh, the Polish and the Irish, the French, the Spanish, could all come to a new land and could retain their cultural roots and yet participate in that common Latin Mass. And so the Latin Mass was a tremendously effective unifying factor for the immigrant Roman Catholic. Lutherans didn't have that. Lutherans came from a diversity of cultural and ethnic backgrounds and they each participated in worship in their own indigenous tongue, which meant that, uh, the Norwegians and Danes and Swedes and the Finns and Germans, each developed their own Lutheran

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church.

RA: And I notice you have English in the title of your church.

LW: That's right. That was the original title of the church. It was Wilmette English Lutheran Church. Now what happened was that as these various ethnic groups came to the United States they retained -- the church was the one place they could retain that kind of ethnic cultural identity. The roots of this particular congregation, which is now a member of the Lutheran Church of America, uh, was a denomination which quickly began the process of acculturation . . . began to identify themselves as Americans and less as immigrants for a cultural identity.

RA: The true melting pot idea.

LW: That's right. More so than than the others. The Missouri Synod, which is the most conservative element and of which the other Lutheran Church of Wilmette is a member, has been, uh, retained a stronger ethnic identity and worshipped in German and the educational program was in German. So that when this congregation was established in 1921 to make a distinction between these two Lutheran churches, its name was Wilmette English Lutheran Church.

RA: I see.

LW: So that it was an English speaking church from the very

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beginning.

RA: Perhaps you can answer one question for me then. What is the Zionist Lutheran Church? Can you answer that?

LW: No, I don't. Unless that's a particular congregation's name is Zion Lutheran Church.

RA: No. It is throughout the country. Very strong in the state of Pennsylvania and there is one at Deerfield, Illinois.

LW: Well, now Zion Lutheran Church in Deerfield is a member of the Lutheran Church of America.

RA: It is.

LW: It's just that their name is Zion Lutheran.

RA: But do you know there was the Zionist and in Pennsylvania... I'm wondering. Luther went to Stuttgart very early and converted a great many people. I come from that line. My father's line and I have tried through many ministers to find out what the original meaning was because I have a theory that I've never been able to disprove or confirm and that is they were originally Jewish and were converted in Strausbourg by Luther....

LW: That may be.

RA: ...in the nineteenth century.

LW: I'm not familiar with any of that history.

RA: I'm sorry you aren't.

LW: I've never heard of any of that. But, uh, there are a

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lot of Lutheran churches by the name of Zion Lutheran.

RA: I see.

LW: But is now a, uh, it is not any designation of, uh, an early Jewish cultural identity. It's just been a name that's been adopted but, uh, this congregation was an English speaking congregation started in 1921.

RA: That late?

LW: That late. With thirty- nine charter members. And it, uh, was really consisted, as all North Shore churches were in the early days were comprised of Scandinavian and German domestics, who had jobs working in North Shore homes. And, uh, so that I would say that the bulk of the membership in those days were of, of people that were domestics.

RA: There were far many more Norwegians, Swedes and so forth in Wilmette in 1880 than I think we have come to realize. I have the census of 1880....

RA: Oh, is that right?

LW:and it shows the names.

RA: The names. And it gives in that census their profession and what they do for a livelihood.

LW: Isn't that something?

RA: And it is. We even had ship captains then.

LW: Huh. Well, this congregation then started in 1921 with thirty-nine people. It built this building that you're

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sitting in. This little bungalow at the end of our lot -- having purchased the lot, and the intent being they would build the bungalow, the first floor was their sanctuary where they worshipped. The second floor was an apartment for the pastor.

RZ: I see.

LW: They, uh, intended to then build a larger sanctuary and make this the parsonage . . . the home of the pastor.

RA: Oh, then this is the back of the church to the south. I see.

LW: And, uh, so in 1921 -- we have pictures of it -- uh, this first floor was all open and it was the sanctuary for the worship. They worshipped here for eight years -- till 1929 and when they decided that they had, uh, the, uh, had grown enough and they had the desire enough to build a sanctuary. So in 1929 they, uh, built what is now the sanctuary on the front end of the lot and they remodeled this bungalow into the parsonage and it became the parsonage and remained so until the late ~~40s~~ . . . perhaps the early ~~50s~~. Uh, when they built that sanctuary in ~~29~~, which was just before the Crash, the whole sanctuary cost them approximately sixty thousand dollars.

RA: Unbelievable.

LW: We just recently had it appraised and the sanctuary, ex-

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cluding the stained glass windows and the woodwork was appraised at just a little shy of a million dollars. The, uh, when the sanctuary was constructed in 1929, uh, the windows . . . the stained glass windows . . . at that time cost \$2,350. We had them appraised and they were appraised at eighty- seven thousand, five hundred. So....

RA: And you can't get them today.

LW: You can't get the same quality. Right.

RA: Oh, indeed.

LW: The congregation, of course, went heavily in debt to build that sanctuary -- at sixty thousand dollars, which was a lot of money in those days. And, of course, we all know what happened right after 1929 was the Crash. Uh, the congregation quickly realized it could not keep up their payments. Uh, they made an arrangement with their creditors to have the building taken over by the creditors and that they would rent the facility. Then the creditors increased the rent. The congregation couldn't afford to pay the rent and, uh, the congregation vacated the property....

RA: Oh, really?

LW:and worshipped at the Masonic Temple.

RA: I came in 1932. Were they worshipping over there then?

LW: They.. .well, in 1931 they were. They only had to do

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that for about a year. Maybe two years. And, uh, then the, uh, property was sold and the Board of American Missions of the old United Lutheran Church purchased it for the-congregation and satisfied the creditors and the congregation was able to move back into its facility.

RA: This congregation was not the only one in Wilmette that had difficulty. When I came, what is now Trinity Methodist Church was about to be purchased by another denomination and there was much furor and concern, but the members of the Trinity got together.

LW: They had a bigger base and they were able to pull it off.

RA: And they had a greater investment.

LW: And so this congregation, then, did go through that kind of turmoil. Yet have since resided in the same location and have grown and have gotten stronger. Yet as I'm eighth pastor to serve the congregation, which is a fairly large number of pastors to serve a congregation in that number of years. And went through several periods in its history of some rapid turnovers. Um, but, uh, today in 1978, uh, I think objectively I can say that it's as strong as the congregation has ever been . . . stronger than its ever been with the largest Sunday school the congregation has ever had. We have an increasingly

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large number of young couples joining the church. So, uh, and financially we are completely debt free. Now we have a fairly substantial endowment fund and, uh, we have no financial problems. So the congregation is very strong and is doing very well and I think is, uh, a very large attribute and contributor to the community of Wilmette.

RA: I would agree. Tell me, do you have any charter members?

LW: Yes. We still have a few charter members left. We have, of course, Florence Melby and Marion Dorband, both of whom live in Wilmette. In fact, they lived over near you.

RA: That's right. They were my neighbors for twenty-five years.

LW: And, uh, they were and are charter members.

RA: And their parents before them?

LW: Right. And, uh, Olga Arguette who lives in Glenview is our third surviving charter member. So we have three charter members still on the rolls. Um, we serve a rather diverse geographical area. Probably more so than most congregations in Wilmette because there were not . . . for many years . . . there were no Lutheran Church of America congregations on the North Shore from Evanston to Waukegan. Uh, so we really had a big area to serve. We have families right now in, uh, Glencoe, Highland

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Park, uh, many in Winnetka, some in Kenilworth. Uh, many of our families live in north Evanston and, uh, we have people from the city of Chicago who are actively involved in the congregation. Skokie, Park Ridge, Glenview..

RA: Oh, you do cover a wide geographical area.

LW: Yes. We do, which is rather interesting.

RA: It is most interesting. I was interested in Mrs. Long's account of how she was

LW: She lives in Glenview.

RA: That's right, but she said she was originally from Wilmette and then when they moved there they changed and now she's back.

LW: And she's really been a -- one of our very good members.

RA: I had never met her until the evening I attended the forum. She's a delightful person.

LW: Yes, she is. She really is. Very delightful. So, the congregation has gone through its ups and downs like every congregation does, It has . . . at one period in its history . . . uh, when they decided that the pastor ought to have living quarters separate from this, they purchased a little brick bungalow at Eighth and Greenleaf. And that became the parsonage then. While that was the parsonage, they were able to purchase the house at 700 Linden which was immediately behind the alley there. And then within,

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oh, a four year period in the late sixties they purchased 706 and 720 Linden. They owned those three houses together and then they were able to purchase 707 Greenleaf which is the house next to the church over here. So when I came the congregation owned four houses and, uh, we have diverted ourselves of three of those.

RA: At, I'm sure, a profit.

LW: Yes, it was a wise investment, but we've retained the house next to the church which we . . . you saw . . . for a number of reasons we have kept that house. We sold the others because there just wasn't a use for us to have them. We were not in the real estate business. So that's basically, I think, uh, a rough sketch . . . a history of our . . . of our church in a nutshell.

This is the local history. Would you care to comment about, uh, now you said you came here to bring together the congregation. Was it just the congregation or was it a wider area? I do know about the controversy in the Lutheran Church. Would you care to comment on that?

LW: Okay. That's more the Missouri Synod. Uh, and that controversy has not affected us. Uh, St. John's in Wilmette. I don't know if you've done a history there yet or not.

RA: I haven't done the history there.

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LW: They are embroiled and I think will come out the other end of that particular controversy. They were a congregation of the Missouri Synod but, due to the controversy, they dropped out of the Missouri Synod and now they're part of a new denomination called, uh, *Association of Evangelical Lutheran Churches* - A.E.L.C.

RA: That grew out of the St. Louis group, I believe.

LW: Yes. We've not been part of that. The Lutheran Church of America has been the, ah, came about in the early sixties . . . or mid- sixties . . . ah, as a merger of the United Lutheran Church which was predominately a German ethnic group, the Augustana Lutheran Church which was, uh, Swedish, the old A.E.L.C. which is different than the A.E.L.C. you hear about today which was a Danish church, uh, and which centered mainly in Des Moines, Iowa. And then a Suomi Synod which was Finnish. So those four, ah, elements of Lutheranism merged and, uh, formed the Lutheran Church of America. It is the largest, most liberal, most socially and theologically of the Lutheran bodies in the United States.

RA: I see. Very interesting.

LW: It has its national headquarters in New York and, ah, has been, ah, just has been a solidifier of the denominations. The president of the Lutheran Church of America has been Dr. Robert Marshall who was a member of this

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congregation who lived in Kenilworth.

RA: Oh! oh!

LW: And, uh, and has been president for, oh, ten to fifteen years. And is now resigning. Going on to other things..

RA: Oh, yes. And he never was minister here when he lived in Kenilworth?

LW: No. No. No, he was president of the Illinois Synod...

RA: I see.

LW: õ when he lived here in Kenilworth. Was just a member.

RA: Oh, yes.

LW: The church has had a staff ministries. Uh, its never been big enough really to need staffs. However, its been able to afford them and, uh, I would say that right now our staff centers around worship and music. We have an exceptionally fine worship and music program here.

RA: You have always had, have you not?

LW: We have always had fairly strong ones. Its stronger now than it has ever been. We have an exceptionally fine organist and exceptionally fine choir director. We are in the process of rebuilding the pipe organ here at Wilmette. The pipe organ we have was put in in 1929 when they built the church and it cost us \$6,000. We are in the process of rebuilding it at the cost of some \$30,000. And when we are through, we will have a pipe

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organ comparable to a new instrument that we would have to pay \$100,000 for. Should have about twenty- six (*Indistinct*). May I ask whose organ....

LW: It was originally called a Kilgen organ, which was in the Twenties a popular pipe organ because Kilgen had the pipe organ in St. Patrick's cathedral in New York and so everybody thought that if St. Patrick's put one in, its got to be a good organ. It really wasn't the Cadillac of organs, uh, and also organs that were built in the Twenties of which this one had very much a theatre sound....

RA: Oh, yes, the big organ.

LW: The lumbering sounds and not the high sharp pitches in really good church music - the Bach and French music - so our music was limited by our instrument and, uh, by ripping out some ranks and, uh, changing ranks and by putting in some new ranks, it has become an entirely different instrument and much more diversified. We're still in the process of doing it.

RA: Did you have trouble finding a skilled craftsman?

LW: No.

PA: No?

LW: We found an exceptionally skilled craftsman in Curt Roderer up here in Evanston, uh, who just recently rebuilt the Rockefeller Chapel organ at the University

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of Chicago which is probably one of the best pipe organs in the United States. So he's been doing the work and we've been very happy with it.

PA: You mentioned staff. How large a staff do you have?

LW: We have now . . . we've just, uh, done some re-shuffling. Uh, there's myself as the pastor. We have a full-time music director, choir director, a part-time organist, a youth choir director, uh, a custodian and then we had a second pastor whose main area of concern was calling and, uh, the elderly. But as our congregation has changed in composition, we have decided to change our emphasis from a ministry strictly to elderly to a ministry to youth.

RA: To youth....

LW: And so, uh, our second pastor has retired and, uh, we will be in the fall be making arrangements for a youth worker. We probably, I think, have a fantastic youth program. I just came back, as you know, from a retreat with our high schoolers and, uh, the Sunday before that they had the services in church, so we have an excellent program.

PA: Do you have.... You mentioned your retreat. Uh, do you own the property?

LW: Not the congregation. The Illinois Synod of Lutheran -- of the Lutheran Church of America . . . owns an eight hundred acre camp near Oregon, Illinois, which is called Lutheran

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Outdoors Ministry Center, and we have just invested over a million dollars in building programs there. It's an exceptionally fine facility.

PA: Now is it the Lutheran Church in America that has Wail Camp?

LW: No. That's Missouri Synod.

PA: Missouri Synod. That's interesting.

LW: So, ah, you get the.... For non- Lutherans it's very confusing. And for Lutherans it's even confusing.

RA: Well, the Evangelical in your church seems familiar to me because in my hometown we had a German Evangelical Lutheran Church, but rather than joining with the Lutheran Church in America, it became the Church of Christ.

LW: Oh, is that right?

RA: When the German speaking people died out, they went to English sermons and that was started in the late nineteenth century. It was a very small congregation, always, but, I think, it was the second Lutheran congregation in our community. The other one is a very strong Lutheran community. Today I would be interested to know to which synod it belongs.

LW: It is in Pennsylvania?

RA: No. It's here in DeKalb County in Genoa.

LW: Oh, yeh, I think that's one of ours. I'm not sure. We

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could look it up for you.

RA: Well, it isn't that important. I know the people in it, but at the time I was growing up, they had their own parochial school.

LW: Sure.

RA: Those children were....

LW: Then it might have been Missouri Synod because Missouri Synod has maintained parochial schools. The Lutheran Church in America Congregation say we really don't support parochial education. We would rather see public education improve.

RA: Well, it died out back in, I must admit, back in the twenties. So that, uh, they haven't had... .uh, so it could be yours.

LW: That's been a basic premise of ours is to support public education.

RA: Let's go back to the retreat. How many young people, um, did you have?

LW: We had fourteen. High schoolers.

RA: This was a good group to work with.

LW: That's not....

RA: Not a huge group.

LW: Not a huge group. We have a much larger high school group than that, but those were the ones who would make it away for the weekend.

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RA: What is your *present* congregation?

LW: We are just shy of four hundred confirmed members. Ah, and we don't anticipate getting much bigger because there's not the growth potential in Wilmette. Uh, as people move out, others move in. We are, though, drawing non-Lutherans. You know, for a long time the Lutheran Church grew as immigrants got off the ships in New York. And that's not happening anymore, and our growth has to come from other sources.

RA: But many young people are coming. Even not in this community, but I've been aware as we go west, and travel west on Sunday many times, uh, of the Lutheran churches that are along the route.

LW: We're, uh..... Our particular denomination.... We're starting five new Lutheran churches....

As I was mentioning, we in the Illinois Synod are starting five new congregations in 1977 and we're starting five new ones in 1978 within the state of Illinois. That's one of the other hats that I wear, as I'm chairman of the Illinois Synod Committee on church extension, whose responsibility it is to start new missions and to support those congregations that are not self-supporting. And so I get involved extensively in that work. Uh, for a long time we were unable to do that kind of work because of, uh, inflation and, uh, lack of money. Uh, now we find

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giving to churches and church causes has increased considerably and, uh, I think that is a sign of the times. It is a return to the tradition.... It is a return to the institutional church by people and, as such, there is more money available to do work that's needed like starting new congregations.

RA: Would you say it's maybe, perhaps, that churches themselves are doing better? Trying to do a better job?

LW: Oh, I think so. I think part of what hurt churches was the social upheaval of the sixties where people felt alienated from the churches that were taking leadership roles and people resented that. Uh, and I think there is a return from, by and by, both the institution and by the public to, uh, to those traditional patterns of life which included the church. I think it's interesting and it... .and we would expect it to be so, that within the Illinois Synod this congregation has one of the highest per capita in giving. Probably within the community of Wilmette I would guess it has one of the highest per capita giving. Ah, and, uh, we also have, in the Illinois Synod, the distinction of being one of the highest congregations of benevolence giving. Um, our people give approximately \$460.00 per confirmed member per year. That includes all high school students and elderly and what not.

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RA: This is amazing.

LW: Uh, the congregation gives approximately sixty- five dollars per confirmed member a year to benevolence.

RA: And those benevolences are.... Do you maintain orphanages anymore?

LW: It goes to the Illinois Synod, and out of that, of course, its distributed to Lutheran welfare services of Illinois which is our parent group in that area. Orphanages really don't exist.

RA: Well, I was wondering because I knew the one out....

LW: Nachusa?

RA: No. Closer in here. An old one that I knew on the periphery of the city. Uh, in one of the old German areas. It's now being converted to an elder . . . to a home for the elderly.

LW: Foster homes have taken over the role that orphanages had, but we have homes for the, you know, aged. St. Matthew Lutheran Home in Park Ridge is the closest one. And, uh, we do an extensive amount of social work in that... We have Augustana College in Rock Island, Carthage College in Wisconsin. We also, I believe, have nine or twelve church- related colleges. We have the seminary at Hyde Park. The Lutheran School of Theology which is affiliated with the University of Chicago.

RA: Is that part of the whole theological, or is it its own

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theological school?

LW: It's its own theological school. Uh, it is . . . there is a cluster of theological schools which centers around the University, and....

RA: Are they interchangeable as far as subjects....

LW: That's right.

RA: . . . you can take? That was my understanding. There was a great deal of controversy....

LW: Your own denomination, Chicago Theological Seminary, has a theological seminary down there which is where I got my doctorate-.

RA: Oh, yes.

LW: Uh, so, our support is rather extensive in world missions. So this particular congregation, I think, has one of . . . I would guess . . . within the community of Wilmette, in comparing notes with the other pastors, we have perhaps one of the highest per capita giving, uh, from our people and then in turn we are the highest in per capita giving outside of the community in supporting programs of the church at large.

RA: Now you mentioned missions, foreign missions. How far, uh, under....?

Wasn't there a radical change a few years ago about foreign missions. Were there a lot of the missionaries pulled back?

LW: For a number of reasons. First of all, there was the de-

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sire by Third World countries to, uh, not have, uh, foreigners in their country. And, also, there was a kind of rebellion against having Western religion imposed upon them. That changed as they realized the amount....

RA: . . . the benefits.

LW:the benefits that were being received. Uh, but there also was a change then in direction. Maybe partly because of that, partly because of attitude that no longer are missionaries there to . . . to do the work for others, but to give guidance for the indigenous leadership to develop. And I think that's been a new emphasis in world missions. Part of the other problems in world missions was the same as with American missions, the crunch of the dollar, uh, and inflation and, uh, as well as the exchange rates of the dollar. We couldn't afford, for the same dollars, to keep as many people in foreign situations. That, too, is changing. We are sending more and more people to foreign situations, but foreign missions today is a partnership of the indigenous church and the American churches. They seek and strive to work together. It's not a case of a parental church with a parent church in the United States who's there to tell you how to do it. So that has created a far more wholesome attitude. And so I think foreign missions are on a much greater level today than what we

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traditionally thought of them being.

RA: This is a very good explanation because I can't help but remember having Lawrence Bambi from Salisbury, Rhodesia, in our home, uh, through the Institute for International Education, for dinner and him saying to us, he would have been a chief of his tribe in Rhodesia and his parents could never understand why he went to Salisbury as he called it, to get an education as a black man. Yet he became the editor of the only black newspaper in Rhodesia and when Ian Smith came in, his struggle to be a part of the government, but not to have too many blacks in the beginning. He was a middle-man, in-between, so he went to Britain, to London, where he has remained all these years as an advisor to the Queen on Rhodesian affairs and there was a big article in the American papers, within the last five years, that one of his daughters had married a titled Englishman. A white man. And this to me has always been very interesting because the one statement that has stuck in my mind is, he said, "Rhodesia: Our tribes brought Rhodesia to a standstill, but the American missionaries came in and converted our people and it was their downfall." And this startled me so. I was so shocked and he said, "When your grandparents gave to the American missionaries, they really undercut."

LW: I suppose there's a feeling that part of the missionary

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thrust of the last century was one of servitude . . . that we're the superior people and we're here to tell you how to do it.

RA: Sort of like the Viceroy of India. I just finished Lord Curzon's....

LW: Right. I think there's a lot of that where the churches.... The churches also came in and imposed very moralistic and legalistic restrictions.

RA: It wasn't just the church. It was socially our whole....

LW: Oh, yes. Right. The whole....

RA: . . . attitude.

LW: Kind of a parental attitude of Colonialism. Not really....

RA: They thought they were trying to educate the natives at the same time.

LW: But what they were doing is educating them to a submissive role.

RA: That's right. Can we give the Peace Corps any credit? We separate church and state.

LW: Oh, I think the Peace Corps served a big impetus, a good example, to the churches of what could be done in that kind of thing.

RA: Changing the philosophy.

LW: When I was in the Virgin Islands.... We had several schools that had been built by the Peace Corps, a Peace Corps training center there, was definitely had made an

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impact, had made its mark.

RA: And yet today we have had to reduce the Peace Corps. Can we say this has been due to inflation?

LW: I think so. And I think also that the attitude that developed by Third World countries towards the United States, not wanting to have that....

RA: .. overall.... Oh well, I can't help but say thank you for an excellent presentation. You did ask how many other churches we have done. Uh, I have a very good St. Francis report and I have a very good historical report of St. Joe from Elizabeth Kirk so that, uh, we have... we don't have them all. We've been trying to find somebody who would do Trinity. And there is one man, but he's moved away (*Laughtert*) and tried to get another person to, ah, to do it. Because the history has been done and, of course, Trinity started.

LW: It's over a hundred years old.

RA: Well, it didn't start as a Methodist church, you know. It started We have the abstract at the library in which people gave so much money and the Dingees, I believe, gave the ground. And then they were to be repaid if, and when, there were enough of their denomination to start a church in the community. They would receive the money back.

LW: . . . and start as a community church.

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RA: It was a community church in the very beginning. And there were, at least, six or seven denominations that were. And it mentions each man's true denomination and yet he was joining the original community church.

LW: Well, I have enjoyed the opportunity to share with you. I think I know a little bit about the life of this congregation myself and its impact on the community.

RA: It's been a great pleasure, I'm sure, and I hope the community will profit from our morning together. I'm Rhea Adler signing off.

(End of tape)