Gospel DNA

Five Markers of a Flourishing Church

Learning from a Movement Called Missouri



Peter and John said:
"For we cannot but speak of what we have seen and heard."
Acts 4:20



WHY?



Why did a pastor in the Dakota/Minnesota area serve 42 mission stations and 500 families during the late 1800s?



Why did a Dakota pastor during that time report: "I preach at 26 stations and serve about 225 [Russian] families...scattered over eight counties, making it quite impossible for me to preach more than once every four to six weeks in the larger congregations. Including these...families, I also have to serve from 50 to 60 German families at several preaching-places."



WHY?

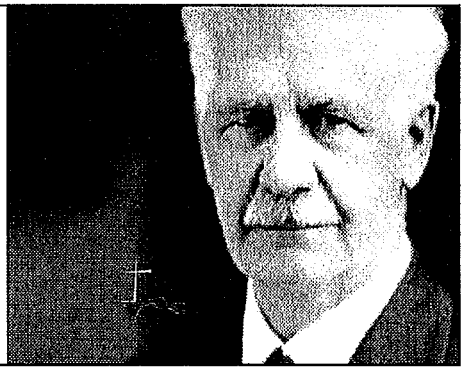


Rev. John Schroeder

Why?

Why was this happening throughout the LCMS in the 1800s, resulting in the development of 4000 new churches and 1 million members in its first 70 years?

Rev. Dr. Friedrich Pfotenhauer, Pioneer of the Synod's Northwest District: Dakotas, Minnesota and Canada



Because…these were
"self-sacrificing men, their hearts throbbing with the love of Christ and his people."



This is our LCMS DNA



"Our churches teach that people cannot be justified before God by their own strength, merits, or works. People are freely justified for Christ's sake, through faith, when they believe that they are received into favor and that their sins are forgiven for Christ's sake. By His death, Christ made satisfaction for our sins. God counts this faith for righteousness in His sight"
(Concordia Lutheran Confessions, Readers Edition, CPH, 2005-06, p. 36).



"So that we may obtain this faith, the ministry of teaching the Gospel and administering the sacraments, was instituted. Through the Word and Sacraments, as through instruments, the Holy Spirit is given. He works faith, when and where it pleases God, in those who hear the good news that God justifies those who believe that they are received into Grace for Christ's sake. This happens not through our own merits, but for Christ's sake"
(Concordia Lutheran Confessions, p. 36).



C.F.W. Walther

"Bringing Souls to Christ: Every Christian's Desire and Duty"
1842

Walther's Appeal

"The Christian looks upon his neighbor with sadness when he knows that the neighbor does not yet know the Gospel..."

Walther's Appeal

"A Christian might even wish that he could persuade the whole world to know that they can leave their sins and futile life behind and take hold of Christ. **The holy desire to bring souls to Christ** begins immediately, as soon as the light of true faith comes into a person's soul bringing with it the fire of true love for others."



Walther's Appeal

"This holy desire is inseparable from a true faith. Whoever has no desire to bring someone else to the knowledge of the saving Gospel has certainly not yet come to know the heavenly power himself."



Walther's Appeal

"Dear friends, through faith a Christian receives not only the holy desire to bring souls to Christ. He receives this task as a sacred duty. No one should say, 'I am not a pastor, teacher, or a preacher; let them teach, instruct, comfort, and lead souls to Christ. I wish to remain in my own vocation.'"



Walther's Appeal

"No. Christian, you are baptized, and through holy baptism you have already been called and anointed to be a priest of God."



Walther's Appeal

"Go through all the chief parts of the Catechism and in each part you will find the declaration that a Christian should care for the salvation of his neighbor...The Christian Church is a great mission-house. Each Christian in it is a missionary sent out by God into his own circle to convert others to Christ."



"Faith is a divine work in us, that changes and regenerates us of God...Oh, it is a living, busy, active, powerful thing that we have in faith, so that it is impossible for it not to do good without ceasing"
(FC IV, 10)



"This we ask [Thy Kingdom come], both in order that we who have accepted it may remain faithful and grow daily in it and in order that it may gain recognition and followers among other people and advance with power throughout the world. So we pray that, led by the Holy Spirit, many may come into the kingdom of grace and become partakers of salvation..."
(LC 52)



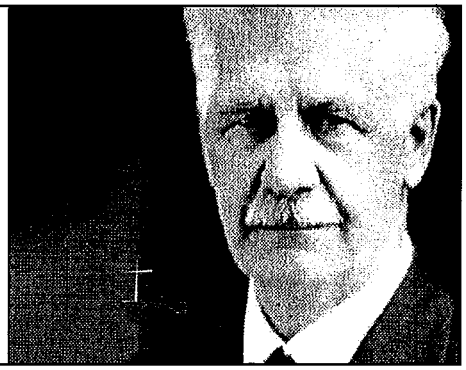
"We should take pains, with the greatest earnestness and our utmost ability, to attend to those matters that promote the extension of God's name and glory; the spread of His Word from which alone we hope for salvation"
(Preface 22, p.18)



"For the Son of Man came to seek and to save the lost."
(Luke 19:10)



Rev. Dr. Friedrich Pfotenhauer
President of the LCMS
1911-1935



Our Synod meets this year under very extraordinary conditions. In the world a terrible war is raging, in which nearly all the nations of the earth are engaged, so that streams of blood are flowing daily, and thousands, yea, millions, of human beings are being cut down by the sword, or by famine and pestilence.

Although we are living in such troublous times, and all happenings are pointing to the end of the world, **yet we Christians may not become slothful or discouraged, but we must lift up our heads and be active.**

Lest we think that it would be useless for us at this convention to plan for the extension of Christ's kingdom, the Lord tells us that even during war and rumors of war, during famine and pestilence, the Gospel is to have free course and is to be preached. **The signs of the times should urge us to labor incessantly and with all our powers.**



Are we:
"Self-sacrificing servants of our Savior, our hearts throbbing with the love of Christ and his people"?



DNA Strand #1:
People



"It was in order to discharge its missionary obligations more effectively that Synod resolved in 1853 to divide itself into four synodical Districts. Each District was to have its own Mission Board which would serve the opportunities within its own boundaries. With the passing years the multiplying mission doors have made it necessary for Synod to divide itself into additional Districts."

(1950 LCMS Convention Proceedings Mission Report)



"Luther's efforts at making the Christian Church doctrinally sound were designed to strengthen Christians for their witness and confession to the world. His emphasis on the Word of God, the Sacraments, faith and obedience, catechesis, worship and liturgy, and translation makes most sense in view of the Church's primary mission of preaching the Gospel and bringing in the lost."

(Schultz, p.53)



HOW?



DNA Strand #2:
Multiplication

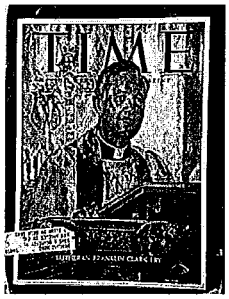


The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod added on average ONE NEW CHURCH EVERY WEEK for its first 100 years.



HOW?





"Converts are pouring in, attracted by billboards, magazine ads, TV programs and, in the *Lutheran Hour*, the most widely broadcast sermon on radio (1,209 stations). A campaign of 'Preaching, Teaching, and Reaching,' organized by the Evangelical Lutheran Church is ringing doorbells and organizing study groups."

April 7, 1958 Time Magazine

"The synod's salesmanship is traditionally aggressive. Its *Lutheran Hour* radio program is the best known denominational broadcast on the air, and its TV program, *This is the Life*, is the biggest-budget religious telecast in the U.S."

April 7, 1958 Time Magazine

HOW?



- Find an existing community opportunity (a nursing home, a restaurant, a farm, business, a park)
- Start a "church within the church"
- Meeting helpers in the community
- Starting a preaching station
- Partner with others to call a missionary
- …



Questions for Discussion

1. What new outreach action might God be showing you that could lead you and your congregation to reach new people with the Gospel?
2. What one step can you take in the next 90 days to advance that reality by 20%?



DNA Strand #3:
Truth



"Pure doctrine is never an idle or dead thing: from it, and from it alone, flows spiritual, Christian, divine life...Wherever there is purity of doctrine, there will be found miracles of divine grace."
(C.F.W. Walther, 1872 Sermon for the 25th Anniversary of the LCMS)



"True Biblical orthodoxy is *always* full of spiritual life, full of missionary zeal, full of unfeigned helpful, compassionate love, for it is the work of the Holy Spirit in the hearts of His believing children."
(Ebenezer, 446)



"In the exclusive doctrinal position of the Lutheran Church is not only to be found its strength, but therein also lies its great missionary possibility."
(Rev. John H.C. Fritz, 1919)



Matthew 25



Questions for Discussion

1. How might you partner with other people, churches or ministries to help send workers into the harvest with new ministry action?

2. What can change in your life and/or in your church that might help you reach souls who are being lost?



DNA Strand #5:
Self-sacrifice



"For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God."
2 Corinthians 5:21



"Resolved, That the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod call upon its total membership for an even greater love and devotion to the Lord and Savior of mankind, and a consequent burning zeal for the lost souls of men."



"So bountifully did the Lord bless the work in South Dakota that in 1906 it was made possible to organize South Dakota as a separate District, which is earnestly striving to enforce sound methods of church-work in the congregations and to extend its mission-work.

We praise God for spreading His Word rapidly throughout the Northwest. May He keep and **evermore spread it in that territory for the salvation of many immortal souls** and unto the glory of His holy name!"

Question for Discussion

1. What one course correction for your church and ministry has the Spirit stirred in you during this convention so far?

