

THE MISSION OUTREACH RESOLUTION OF 1945

1. - The 1945 Resolution defined by a Committee in 1946
2. - Statement by Pastor Arthur Wacker in January, 1951 at the request of the S. E. Michigan Pastoral Conference
3. - Condensed Report of the Africa Exploration Commission written in 1949 by Revs. Arthur Wacker and E. Hoenecke
4. - Report of Committee appointed to submit recommendations to the Synod for action on the Exploratory Report, 1949

THE RESOLUTION OF 1945

passed by
the Synod Convention in 1945 in response to
the Exhortation of the
Indian Mission Executive Committee
which was endorsed by the
General Mission Board
and passed by the May meeting of the
Synodical Council for inclusion in the
Book of Reports and Memorials

REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE

appointed by the 1945 Convention to study the Function and Scope of the Resolution
(Designated as the Foreign Missions Committee)

Thiensville, WI
Sept. 20th, 1946

In defining the Functions and Scope of the Foreign Missions Committee your committee was guided by the wording of the resolution adopted by the Synod. (Proc.1945, page 34):

“Resolved, that the President appoint a committee to gather information regarding foreign fields that might offer opportunity for mission work by our Synod. When ready, this committee shall report the results of its study, first to the General Mission Board, and then to the Synod.”

The function and scope of this Foreign Missions Committee, as your committee sees it, is threefold:

to gather information.
to study the information and
to report the information.

1.- By GATHERING INFORMATION we understand the following:

- A. To receive any and all information from members of the Synod concerning promising foreign fields.
- B. To solicit information about foreign fields on their own accord. (The resolution of the Synod, however, does not provide for a personal, on-the-spot investigation of any prospective foreign field by the Foreign Missions Committee.)

2.- By STUDYING THE INFORMATION we understand this:

- A. To consider each foreign field as to its merits. Questions such as the following must be considered and answered: Is there hope of success, humanly speaking? What are the difficulties involved? Are we trespassing on another's field of labor?
- B. To consider each field in relation to the Synod's ability. Questions such as the following must be answered: Is the Synod able at the time a new field is before us, to undertake work in that field? Will other commitments of the Synod suffer? Are we able financially to carry through the work begun? What is the over-all picture of the Synod's work?

3.- By REPORTING THE INFORMATION we conclude the following:

- A. The Synod has not in any way changed its established order of carrying out its missionary endeavors through the General Mission Board. The Foreign Missions Committee must first report to the General Mission Board. Here the matter is thoroughly discussed.
- B. Any new work contemplated by the General Mission Board, such as opening a new foreign field, must then be sanctioned by the Synod.

Respectfully submitted by the committee,

Carl Lawrenz H. Shiley G. Hoenecke

Statement by Pastor Arthur Wacker
to the Michigan Pastoral Conference
January, 1951

Note: This document was found in Pastor Arthur Wacker's mission files and turned over to Executive Secretary Edgar Hoenecke by Pastor Wacker's widow in 1976. It was written in Pastor Wacker's own handwriting. At the top of the first page, also in Wacker's handwriting, is this note:

“Decided to discontinue mission battle ...tired... temperamentally unsuited ...looking at facts, I can't (continue?) ... Backed down?”

This copy is being made for WELS history June 26,1993 by Edgar Hoenecke.

**The Procrastination
of the
Wisconsin Ev. Lutheran Synod
in pursuing the course
set by the Synod in Convention
in August, 1945**

In 1945 the New Ulm convention resolved, “That the President appoint a committee to gather information regarding foreign fields that might offer opportunity for mission work by our Synod.”

This resolution did not come out of a blue sky. The General Mission Board had previously and carefully considered Rev. Edgar Hoenecke's plea, given in connection with his report on Indian Missions, to use the post-war opportunities to launch out. (See Conv.Proceedings,1945)

The move was endorsed by the General Mission Board and Rev. E. Hoenecke was appointed spokesman.

For advocating it he was severely rebuked by the Chair. The Chair made it clear that he did not want our Synod to be bitten by the “Expansion Bug” that was infecting business and social ventures of the day; or be carried away by the unsound, visionary “Mission Fever” making itself felt in other churches, particularly by the Missouri Synod.

At first it seemed that the convention would be maneuvered to keep the issue from being voted on, but at about the third attempt it succeeded in passing the resolution.

A committee was appointed: Rev. A. G. Wacker, Rev. B. Schlueter, Rev. H. C. Nitz, Rev. L. Koeninger and Prof. Bliefernicht.

Soon after the committee began its work it became evident that a difference of opinion existed between several of the committee members and the President of the Synod as to the scope of the resolution under which they were to work. The committee felt that “gathering information” meant to uncover promising fields and prove them to the Synod as such. The President contended it meant merely “receiving the information” that might be directed to us.

Neither side yielding, the matter was referred to a special committee appointed by the President: Prof. C. Lawrenz, Rev. H. Shiley, Rev. G. Hoenecke - composed the committee. Their report is attached.

Under this interpretation the committee pursued its work, though it should be stated that no more meetings for the purpose of study were possible from then on. Three members of the committee found their other pastoral and synodical work too pressing. One of the members died in the meantime and no one was appointed in his place.

A report for the 1947 convention was nevertheless prepared and the entire committee assembled at Manitowoc in July of that year to hear and pass upon it. After several minor deletions it was approved, but the

members hesitated to affix their signatures. Two of them had previously tendered their resignations from the committee to the President, but neither had been accepted.

Ultimately, all members signed the report, however, with the proviso that they be excused from defending it before the convention. Their signatures were accepted by the Chairman of the Committee with all that those signatures implied.

A tentative draft of this report had been previously sent to the General Mission Board; at its May meeting in 1947, and it was decided that the committee report to the convention substantially said what had been reported to them.

Since at least the essence of a report of a standing committee ought to be printed in the Prospectus for a Convention, one was supplied for that purpose. Two drafts of the report were rejected and a third, much abbreviated report was finally accepted (for publication).

Before the convention the President was duly informed that the Committee was ready to report to the convention.

Grudgingly; the time was allotted for its reading; but not before an announcement by the Chair, however, that this was a one-man report and not the report of the committee.

In reply, the affixed signatures of the other members of the committee were read into the record. Since the precise reading of this report has a definite impress on the resolution that followed it, and since for some unknown reason this report was never printed in the Proceedings of that convention, as is normally practiced among us, it is urged that this report be recorded verbatim into the body of this instrument. In place of the committee report, the abbreviated and mutilated copy for the Prospectus was reprinted on p.51 of the 1947 Proceedings.

The Committee had at the conclusion of its report placed several resolutions before the voters. Unfortunately, they were printed only on the original report, not in the Synod files. We have no copy of these. Since these resolutions seemed too sharp and pointed for the Chair, he ordered them back into the hands of the General Mission Board for reformulation and toning down. This was done, and the General Mission Board brought in substitute resolutions. These were also rejected by President Brenner and the General Mission Board was ordered into session again for the purpose of reformulation. The wording was still too clear and unequivocal and placed too much responsibility for the launching of a new foreign mission with the General Board for Missions. This time, after some hectic discussions, the General Mission Board came forward with the resolutions as they none stand recorded on p.51 of the 1947 Proceedings:

- I. - A motion prevails to dismiss the Committee on Foreign Missions with the thanks of the Synod;
- II. - That the Synod authorize the expansion of our mission work in foreign, heathen fields;
- III. - That the General Mission Board be instructed to continue its investigation and explore the most promising fields and report to the General Synodical Committee for further instructions."

As member of the General Mission Board I violently opposed the exact reading of Point III, referring particularly to the words.. "and report to the General Synodical Committee for further instructions." My objections here based on the express words of the Synod's Constitution that "all mission work of the Joint Synod is under direct supervision of the General Mission Board," and that no ultimate decision could be delegated to the Joint Synodical Committee or anyone else, but the Synod itself.

I proposed the alternate reading; "And consult with the General Synodical Committee before taking final action." This proposal was defeated because the General Mission Board was painfully aware that no resolution favoring expansion into heathen fields could be obtained from the convention unless the decisions of the General Mission Board were made dependent on the final approval of the General Synodical Committee, especially the Chairman of it, President John Brenner.

When the resolutions were brought before the convention, President Brenner still opposed them violently and used the advantage of the Chair to defeat them. He contended that the Synod would act unwisely

in adopting them, since it had neither the men nor the money to carry them out. During two subsequent sessions of the assembly he steadfastly refused to call for a vote.

At this juncture two members of the Committee on Foreign Missions withdrew their signatures from the report, although they had not once spoken a favorable word for the truths spread over their signatures. The remaining member was absent from the convention at the time.

The Chairman not only permitted debate after this, but actively engaged in it and carried the brunt for the opposition. Debate, finally, turned to the ability of the General Mission Board to make a wise, final decision in the event that the Synod ordered this expansion.

It was stressed that the past record of the General Mission Board spoke for itself, and that thirty men with experience and skill in the work of missions could be entrusted with the final decision. I stress this because it was contended that the decision in this matter be taken out of the hands of the General Mission Board and be vested in the General Synodical Committee.

The resolution, however, was not placed for vote until a motion from the floor forced a close of debate and moved the question. As you know, in spite of this handicap, the convention passed the resolution resoundingly.

The Chair at once made a public declaration that he had been disavowed and insisted emphatically that the convention had been stamped into a foolish decision. (For a time it even appeared that grave, physical consequences might be suffered by the President.). If he felt disavowed and unable to carry out the resolution, he should have resigned honorably at this juncture.

The report to the convention had pointed to fields on two continents, one in China and two separate fields in Africa. The General Mission Board decided to explore both areas. Rev. Tim Adascheek was chosen to go to China; I was selected to survey the two fields in Africa. Later it developed that Rev. Adascheck could not go, and that the push of Communism south ruined the prospect of that field. The General Mission Board also decided that two men should go to Africa.

A second member of the expedition (for Africa) could not be obtained in 1948. One refused on the grounds that it was not a popular venture. There were more refusals for a 1949 trip, until finally, (after two refusals to release him by his congregation), Rev. Edgar Hoenecke consented so the expedition would not fail altogether. During these preliminaries President Brenner did not in any way interfere with the General Mission Board's planning. There were attempts by others, which were not discouraged by him.

It must be said that twice, when official interference was attempted, President Brenner refused to condone it. Once, during our preparation for the trip, the Board of Trustees were tempted to refuse further monies, because costs were mounting beyond expectations, but President Brenner insisted that the Synod had voted the exploration and it should be made. A second time, while we were in Africa, the Board of Trustees reported the cost of the venture to the General Synodical Committee (May, 1949) and there were requests to recall us for the same reason of excessive cost, but again he (Brenner) refused to entertain the suggestion for the same reason.

From time to time the Exploratory Commission (team?) sent reports of progress to Rev. Wm. Roepke, Chairman of the General Mission Board, from Africa. After completing our trip and while still in Johannesburg and fearing that we could not return in times for the convention (1949), we sent a detailed, preliminary report of our findings to Chairman Roepke, a four-page letter, informing him that he could use it all or part of it to report to the convention. As it turned out, we returned to the States a few days before the convention, but did not feel that we should appear there unless called. (In fact, Rev. Hoenecke returned under strict health department quarantine because of the fact that a polio victim had been illegally carried on his plane from Holland. This quarantine kept him confined to his home for a month with periodic reports and checks. E. H.)

The President was informed that a letter from us was at hand, but he refused to let the convention hear it, reasoning that it was not a letter for the assembly, but only for the General Synodical Committee. Accordingly; Chairman Roepke reported to the convention that he had no information or report from us. It was known, however, also to him, that we were available in person.

Upon our return, Rev. Hoenecke and I prepared a detailed, printed report for the General Mission Board and the General Synodical Committee, the latter for the October meeting.

This report was first read to the General Mission Board, then to the General Synodical Committee. No sooner had we completed the bare reading of it, when a member of the General Synodical Committee rose to move that the report be received and tabled.

He was at once reminded by the Chair that he did not mean “tabled,” but that it be placed in the hands of a special committee for further study. The mover then changed his motion to read thus. Without debate this was adopted with the proviso that the Conference of Presidents appoint that committee. This procedure happened so suddenly that many of us were stunned by the events.

The committee thus appointed was composed of President J. Brenner, Chairman, Rev. Walter Pankow, Rev. Norbert Paustian, Mr. Haack, Mr. Wm. Steljes, Prof. Conrad Frey. Later, Rev. Arthur Voss was added because it was felt that the Board of Trustees should be represented by their chairman.

It is strange that the Chairman of the General Mission Board was not considered equally necessary. It is also more than passing strange that the only member of that committee from the General Mission Board was the one who had previously, and publicly indicated that he was not in favor of the venture. Stranger still is the fact that the President of the Synod, who had often and officially reiterated that he had no open mind on this subject, permitted himself to be designated Chairman of this committee by the Conference of Presidents.

At any rate the matter had been taken out of the hands of the General Mission Board, where it properly belonged, and placed into the hands of a special committee by the General Synodical Committee. And the Constitution accords no action-taking powers to the General Synodical Committee! Even so, three members of the committee were not even members of the General Synodical Committee!

Since that day the General Mission Board neither has nor had, in its opinion, the right to discuss their own problem of a near foreign mission.

This new committee lost no time in getting to work, and its work so far constitutes the last weird chapter in this grotesque story. It was obvious from the report of our Exploration that the “Hook of the Kafue” region in Northern Rhodesia offered the best opportunity for work by us. The committee also came to that conviction. That should have concluded their work. That was all that needed to be decided.

But the committee considered itself called to decide also whether the Synod had men and money enough for the work. Most of the committee time was spent on this question. Note that the proper board had already made its decision in this question, that is the General Mission Board. Note, too, that the 1947 convention had made its decision to enter this new work on the basis of our committee report which concluded that we had men and money enough for the work.

Now this committee of seven men felt it a duty to sit in judgment on the decision of the General Mission Board and the convention of 1947, and determine whether they had acted wisely or not. I suppose, perhaps when and if they reach a decision another committee will have to be appointed to sit in judgment on their decisions. I don't know of a better picture than that of a dog twisting, in a circle to catch his tail. If the Synod ever catches up with its tail they'll be so dumfounded they won't know what to do with it.

Afraid of just that eventuality, it seems, the committee to replace all committees has been unable to come to a decision. It was created in October, 1949, and was to report its findings in May, 1950. In May, 1950, the committee reported that they had nothing to report and asked for another six months' time for crystal-gazing. Four reasons were listed for the delay:

1. Conference with Missionary Schweppe,
2. An unofficial appeal on behalf of the Bleckmar Mission,
3. Concern over men and money shortages,
4. Concern with the condition of the “Church at Large.”

Reasons 2-3-4 had no bearing on the case, since the Synod had decreed that we are to proceed in spite of difficulties. Reason No-1 was pertinent. A conference with Pastor Schweppe might change their decision as to which field to enter. The additional six months for further study were granted.

And at this juncture a sad and disappointing fact must be stated. Pastor Schweppe was in the United States and had declared his readiness to attend a meeting. But for six months no meeting was called! or held!

In October, 1950, the committee assembled to acknowledge that nothing had been done and that they must ask for another six months for further study. This request was calmly granted by the General Synodical Committee, though they were apprized that the committee neither met nor worked in the previous six months of grace. There was one lonely, dissenting vote!

Since then the committee has done some work. Inquiries were sent to Northern Rhodesia to determine if the field (Hook of the Kafue) were still available. Investigation of the Bleckmar Mission and its mission work in Africa are proceeding. Estimates of cost of launching a new venture are being gathered, though such estimates were extant and considered long ago, as they were submitted by the Exploration Commission in 1949. Inquiries are being directed to the British Colonial Office to determine what we must do to qualify for work in Northern Rhodesia. All of these should have been done at once, beginning in October, 1949.

The one and only thing that seemed urgent, as indicated before, was a meeting with Pastor Schweppe. He was still in the United States from October 15 to December 9, 1950. But no meeting with him was arranged.

The committee will report to the General Synodical Committee in May. It is difficult to say what they will report. I feel constrained to say that in the event that another six months' study is requested, it must be denied. They have already sat on the report of the Exploration committee for 18 months. During all these months neither the General Mission Board nor the General Synodical Committee have had an opportunity to discuss or express their views on the proposed venture.

I do not think it necessary to draw the implication from this sequence of events. They speak for themselves. President Brenner does not believe it wise to expand the work of the Synod and thus far has been instrumental in blocking not only action, but even consideration of the project, the clear mandate of the Synod notwithstanding. In the event that he pursues this course until the convention, an appeal demanding the execution of its resolutions seems the only course pleasing to an orderly God and a sovereign church.

We warn against appealing to the President directly. It will be construed as needling by Hoenecke and me.

We warn against a formal protest by this conference for the same reason.

If nothing happens in the May meetings, I suggest a memorial by the Michigan District convention.

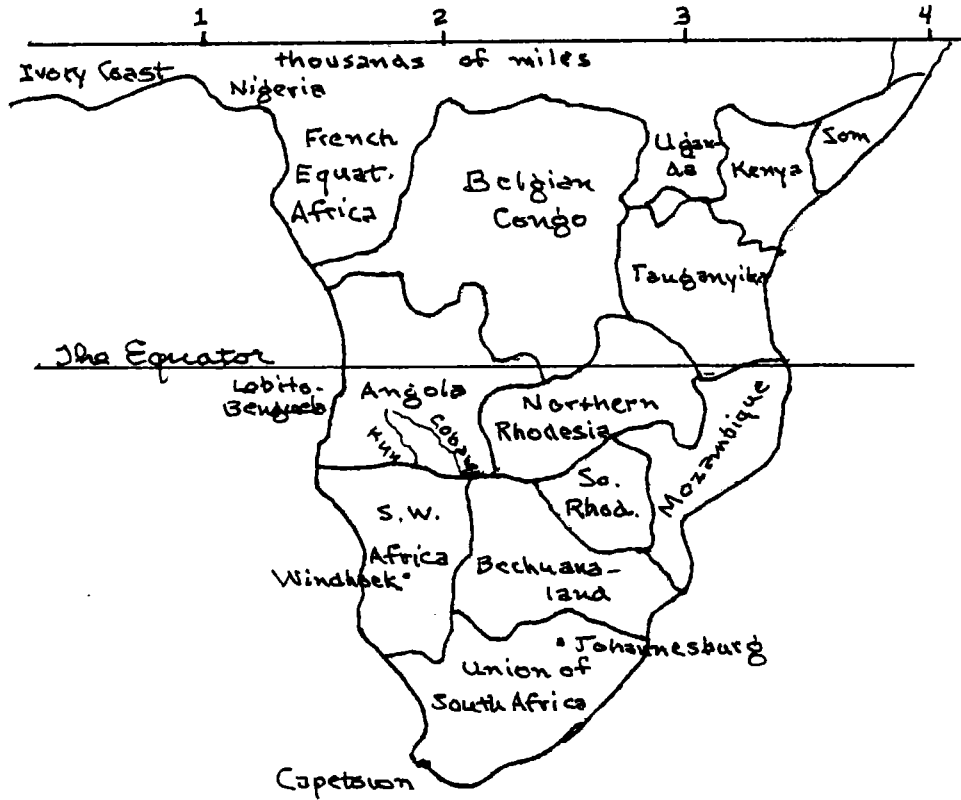
Arthur Wacker

Note: Delivered by Pastor Wacker to the Southeastern Michigan Pastoral Conference winter session, early 1951.

Note by E.H.: - Although I attended the S.E. Michigan Pastoral Conference and heard Pastor Wacker, his report was not read by me before this meeting. Because our Plymouth congregation was engaged in a major relocation and church building project, I had promised not to take part in the African mission matter until our building project was completed in 1955.

CONDENSED REPORT OF THE AFRICAN EXPLORATION COMMITTEE 1949

Prepared by Wacker – Hoenecke



Our Wisconsin Synod has twice resolved to enlarge the scope of her mission work into foreign fields. Once in 1945, when the Convention resolved “that the President appoint a committee to gather information regarding foreign fields that might offer opportunity for mission work by our Synod;” and again in 1947 after hearing the Exploration Committee report, when the Synod adopted these resolutions:

- “(1) - That the Synod authorize the expansion of our mission work in foreign, heathen fields;
 (2) - That the General Mission Board be instructed to continue its investigation and explore the most promising heathen fields, and report to the General Synodical Committee for further instructions.”

This means that the General Mission Board together with the General Synodical Committee are empowered and instructed to determine the most promising field and to begin to work there.

It does not mean that this body is to restudy the entire question of whether our Synod can or ought to enter upon foreign work; or whether this is a propitious moment; or whether we have the men and the money; or whether we should refrain from foreign work because of the unrest in the Church. This existed already at the time of the above conventions.

The Synod has plainly authorized foreign, heathen work in the 1947 resolutions.

Permit us to point up the reasons why the “Hook of the Kafue” region in Northern Rhodesia has been submitted by your Exploration Committee as the most likely field and why also the committee of the General Synodical Committee after its study of our report, also selected this field as their logical choice.

The General World Outlook

Periods of political upheaval and economic unrest are not conducive to the launching of missions. Asia is in that condition today. China and the Orient are all heavily infiltrated or overrun with Communism. Christian missions are either being driven out or are having a hard time of it. All of Indo-China and the Malay Peninsula are explosive territory because of the Communist push southward. Even if this danger were not real, the Animistic religions of that world area would prove a great barrier to work there. The East Indies, with vast unchristianized areas, are seething with political unrest; and the Dutch make it practically impossible for any but Dutch missions to work there.

Japan and the Philippines, due to American occupation, are the only peaceful spots in Asia; and in both places our sister synod of Missouri has begun extensive work. She has also begun work in India.

In Arabia, Iran, Iraq and Turkey conditions are far from peaceful and the Moslem influence is so strong that our work there would be painfully slow.

Asia, with the possible exception of Japan, is hardly the place to turn now with Christian missions. Here a list of Christian missions in Japan was exhibited.

Australia and the South Sea islands are quite well provided. Mexico, Central America and most sections of South America claim strong Catholic occupation. Brazil and Chile offer opportunity, but there, too, beside Catholic strength, there are many Protestant missions.

Africa, the Great Remaining Mission Frontier

That leaves Africa to be considered, especially the entire northern portion of this vast continent. It is a third again as large as North America! Africa has 11.2 million square miles; North America only 7.9 million. It is already under Moslem influence. This influence, especially through Mohammedan pressure from Egypt, is steadily and surely creeping south of the Sahara under the cry “One continent, one people, one God!” This would be the most difficult assignment for us as a first foreign heathen mission!

In the south the Union of South Africa is the most expansive and important area, but with the exception of some backward outlying regions and the great native settlements, called "locations," surrounding the mines and cities (such as the infamous "Reef" of Johannesburg), it is fairly well occupied by Christian missions.

These native "locations" which are the devil's spawning ground as centers of crime and immorality ought not to be neglected by our Christian missions much longer, even though few of them have hitherto mustered the courage to attack them.

The work in the "Union" would be difficult, to say the least, because of the anti-American attitude of the Afrikaans party of Dr. Malan which is in sway since 1949. It has documented most rabid racial discrimination in the so-called "Apartheid" policy. This has provided fertile soil for rabble and race-rousing Communist agents in this large country, agents who have discredited white missionaries as "advance agents of capitalistic imperialism."

All of Africa cannot be designated anymore as "the sleeping giant." In the north the Moslem lands are simmering with unrest. The "Union" in the extreme south must also soon face the serious consequences of its discriminatory racial policies. However, the large central region, just south and north of the Equator, still sleeps or is at least the most tranquil place left on this or any other continent.

From west to east this includes: French Equatorial Africa, the Belgian Congo, Angola, Northern and Southern Rhodesia, Mozambique, Tanganyika, Uganda, Kenya and the Somaliland. Some of these countries must be ruled out for a novice in foreign mission work because of complications of prevailing foreign languages, such as French, Portuguese, Belgian and Italian; not to mention the impediment of Roman Catholicism. Some of the others are already well staffed with Protestant missionaries who, especially in recent years are representatives of the more rabid sects. They are expanding by leaps and bounds.

Opportunities in Angola

On the way north from Southwest Africa to Northern Rhodesia your exploration committee, because of a forced detour due to engine trouble, stumbled upon two vast prospective mission fields in the second-largest of the mid-African countries, Angola.

Until we came to the "Hook of the Kafue" area of Northern Rhodesia, we were ready to recommend that our Synod consider work here. For here, in a large forested area of 70,000 square miles, lying in a triangle formed by the Kunene and Cubango rivers and the southern border of Angola; live about 200,000 natives, largely of Ovambo stock, who have not been touched by Christian missions.

The Romans have a small mission along the road south, but have not penetrated into this wild elephant country. Years ago some native Finnish-trained Lutheran boys tried to enter the field, but died a martyr's death in the attempt.

The area is quite easily accessible from the northwest and the climate is fairly healthful, although malaria prevails. The soil is suited for agriculture: as the very successful mission establishment of Rev. Sam Coles to the northwest proves. We drove the extra twenty miles through the bush to his place, were warmly received and invited to a delightful fried chicken dinner. He said that the natives are almost completely pagan.

Again, stretching eastward from the Cubango to the very border of Northern Rhodesia, is another area at least twice as large and harboring presumably twice as many natives who have never heard the Gospel. Much of this latter area is, however, swampy country at the head waters of the mighty Zambezi. That these fields would offer us ample room for a mission is evident.

There are difficulties in Angola. The country is Roman Catholic-controlled, but thus far has not hampered the work of Protestant missions to the north. Language presents another double barrier. The Portuguese colony requires that incoming missionaries must speak the Portuguese language fluently. Six months to a year's residence in Portugal might be indicated to acquire this. Besides this, the native vernacular must be mastered before effective work can be done. It must be pointed out also that thousands of natives are now migrating eastward from this part of Angola into the Congo and Northern Rhodesia for reasons referred to later.

Northern Rhodesia and the “Hook of the Kafue”

In the Union of South Africa; we found the burning issue to be the “Apartheid” policy, as it must be when there are 20 or 25 blacks for every white person. This policy separates natives from Europeans in every phase of daily life and has resulted in political and economic exploitation spelling virtual slavery for the great underprivileged mass of people concentrated in their miserable “locations.”

This policy, dictated by fear, engenders hate and unrest; especially since the “Union” under the more kindly British influence of the Smuts government, previously pursued a much more liberal policy. Jan Christian Smuts was succeeded by Pr. Minister Malan and “Apartheid” just before we landed at Capetown in May of 1949.

The two Rhodesias, immediately north of the “Union,” are most apprehensive as to the outcome of the struggle between Afrikaans and African. Southern Rhodesia, bordering on the Union of South Africa; is inclined or forced for economic reasons to take a more tolerant attitude toward the “Apartheid” policy. While the Angola administration appears tolerant toward the natives, the impression one gains is that this is dictated largely by a basic program of economic exploitation.

Northern Rhodesia has by far the sanest and at the same time the most equitable approach to the native problem. A definitely friendly attitude is pursued as government policy, which we found quite apparent when we were guests of the Legislative Assembly and witnessed the full participation of native representatives at Lusaka. This may not all be due to humanitarian and unselfish interests. Northern Rhodesia is a British protectorate. The far-flung British Empire is crumbling. China is taken away, India has self-rule, South Africa has seceded and Egypt is taking less and less dictation from London. Of all the former vast holdings central and east Africa seem still the most secure.

Northern Rhodesia is a rich land. Mining and lumbering operations so far have only scratched the surface and agriculture is just being nurtured into being. The land is being roused from the sleep of centuries. The climate is as nearly ideal as any in Africa. Northern Rhodesia is bound to “go places” and Great Britain will have a rich stepchild if it can keep control. The best known colonial techniques are being applied to keep this so. Known as the best colonial administrators; the British are exceeding even themselves in this territory.

To get the most out of this land they are assiduously developing every phase of its varied and lavish natural resources. They have begun with the mines and are now out to improve and cultivate the soil of its high-lying (3 to 6000’) tropical savannah land.

The “Hook of the Kafue” area is the first of eleven projected development centers. One can grow almost anything in this part of Africa if water is made available, so the Kafue River is being dammed.

The Department for Native Development, under Mr. John Moffatt, has set up an agricultural agency in the area to teach natives how to farm. Other arts and crafts and sanitation, hospital and educational facilities are being established to keep pace with farming and population advances.

Because they believe that economic progress can neither be maintained nor complete for human life without spiritual stability (which they openly acknowledge is none of the business of the government as such to provide, establish or maintain), they are more than eager to have conservative Christian missions follow into these development centers!

Mr. Moffatt, Mr. Price and Mr. Bush, the latter two of the department of education, were interested especially in our type of mission financing because of the prevalence of “head money” allowed to other missions for education.

The “Hook of the Kafue: area measures about 40,000 square riles, the size of Ohio; in which now live about 105;000 natives. The friendly policy of government toward Africans is encouraging them to migrate into this center from as far away as Angola and the Congo, and this is expected to yield a population of 300,000 eventually.

The established churches in Northern Rhodesia, stating themselves in no position to enter the field for a lack of manpower, also encouraged us to take up work there. Notable among these leaders were Doctor of the

Wesleyan Methodist Church, Padre Hewitt of the Church of England and Rev. R. Nightingale, member of the Legislative Assembly.

Visiting Doctor Grey and his son-in-law, Dr. Merfyn Temple, at Broken Hill, the retired missionary, Dr. Grey, told us that our coming seemed like a godsend to him, since he had earlier promised a dying chief, Kabulwebulwe, in the Kafue area to open work in his tribe and been prevented from doing so because of the press of other work. The area was described by Dr. Temple, whose mission is in a nearby district, as "virgin territory." Mr. John Moffatt assured us when we had lunch at his home, that "there is plenty of room and you will not run out of territory."

Mr. Moffatt is a Christian, descendant of the Bible translator Moffatt. He spoke into our tape recorder giving us a half hour interview for our home church. He described the pitiful and critical condition of detribalized natives who because of employment away from their villages in the mines and cities, have been uprooted from home restraints and mores. They have been set adrift in a bewildering, often evil, society that is so different from the stable village to which they were accustomed and they are in grave danger of becoming confirmed agnostics, if their spiritual void is not filled with the stability of a "firm religious belief." The time, however, he emphasized is NOW and not much later, or it may well be too late to win the native in his new surroundings and culture in the resettlement areas.

There is now no Lutheran Church in Northern Rhodesia, five times as large as Wisconsin! Nor is there one in Southern Rhodesia, Angola, Mozambique or Bechuanaland, the Lutheran Church being practically unknown south of Nigeria with the notable exceptions of Tanganyika, Natal and the Union of South Africa. The danger of occupying an area that might be claimed by some other Lutheran group is remote, to say the least.

Once Rhodesia was land-locked and inaccessible. Today it has railroad connections to the ocean southward to Capetown, to the Atlantic northwestward through the Congo to Lobito-Benguela, and the new rail line now being surveyed will connect it with the Indian Ocean at Beira, cutting the distance to the sea by two-thirds.

Good roads lead north and south and are beginning to penetrate the bush and veldt to serve the mines and development centers. The rich natural mineral deposits and potential products of the land will assuredly open this territory rapidly to the growing demand for Rhodesian goods on the world market.

Ought we to be less eager to bring them the "Pearl of great price," the Gospel of our Savior, since He has also commanded us to carry it into "all the world?"

R E S U M E

To sum up: We have an opportunity to begin work not only on the most peaceful continent, but also in the most tranquil area of that continent.

We are directed to a field into which no Christian church has ever penetrated and to which the churches of the land are pleading with us to go.

We would be privileged to work in a field where the government, friendly to Christian missions, will not interfere, but will provide all physical advantages for health and agriculture, where even electricity can become available for at least the main mission station; where a mission, because of government-initiated prosperity, can hope to become indigenous and self-supporting. The land is rich, the climate is healthful, the country is in its infancy.

Where in this world can you point to a field that can give you all these advantages?

Add to all of that the fact that we would be dealing with pure pagans who have already largely shed their tribal cults, but have not as yet been converted to some form of organized religious idolatry. One who has made a study of the world mission situation will concede that this is indeed a rare opportunity, a God-given moment!

If we, then, still hesitate we should be honest to admit that it is not due to any shortcomings of the field. Then it must be because we are not sure of ourselves and our duty: Counting the cost by merely material standards, we find ourselves short of the men and the money. Or because we would feel more fleshly security if

we did not “over-expand.” Or because we fail to find a “Call to come” into this field, but overlook the greater fact that we have been “sent;” sent by our Lord of the Church Himself in His Great Commission!

While the Lord enjoins us to “count the cost,” He does not therewith dissuade us from doing His clear bidding, but to do, as He concludes, “whosoever does not forsake all that he has, he cannot be My disciple!”

For the Church Militant, as in life, there can be no material security, especially none based on fallible human calculation. There is only opportunity, underwritten by the blood of Christ and sealed with His final will and testament when He ascended, “All power is, given unto Me in Heaven and in earth, GO ye therefore and make disciples of all nations. - And, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world!”

Security for God’s people comes then, when in simple faith they accept the opportunity which He has set before them. The security we would fashion by counting our strength in men and money is in reality plain weakness. How could we doubt our ability, if in simple faith we undertook this thing in the name of Him unto whom is given “all power in Heaven and in earth” and has given us, in turn, the solemn honest assurance, “Lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world?”

**Wacker-Hoenecke Report
submitted Aug.7th, 1951**

The General Synodical Committee
Milwaukee, Wisconsin
The Ev. Luth. Jt. Synod of Wisconsin and Other States,
New Ulm, Minnesota

Brethren:-

The special committee appointed to bring in recommendations on the basis of the report of the African Exploratory Commission presents its report.

It represents the opinion of the majority of the Committee. The secretary cast a negative vote and asked and received permission to state his reasons in writing following the majority opinion.

The majority opinion is as follows:

“Of the fields visited by the Exploratory Commission Northern Rhodesia seems to offer the most favorable conditions for starting a new mission, but the majority of the Committee recommends to the Joint Synod that we refrain from entering upon this particular type of mission work at this time for the following reasons:

1. The present, disturbed condition of the Church: to the majority of the Committee does not seem to warrant entering upon a new phase of church work instead of concentrating on the preservation of the Truth for which we stand.

2. The demands made by our mission fields on our Church Extension Fund far exceed the monies on hand; other obligations will greatly increase the sums required in support of our current work.

Signed: John Brenner, Chairman
Conrad Frey, Secretary (dissenting)
Walter Pankow
Norbert Paustian
Paul Pieper
Arthur Haack
William Steljes

Briefly stated, the following are the reasons why the Secretary was of the opinion that he could not endorse the report of the majority:

1.- The majority states that “the present, disturbed condition of the Church does not seem to warrant entering upon a new phase of church work instead of concentrating on the preservation of the Truth for which we stand.” The Secretary does not feel that either he or the Synod is compelled to make a choice between expanding into foreign missions and concentrating on the preservation of the Truth.

The Secretary is of the opinion that the Synod can do both.

To him the disturbed condition of the Church is one reason why we ought to expand into foreign, heathen work at this time.

2.- It is true, as the majority contends, that the demands of our mission fields on our Church Extension Fund far exceed monies on hand. It is likewise true, as the majority contends, that other obligations will greatly increase the sums required in support of our current work.

The Secretary contends, however, that the cost of opening a field in Northern Rhodesia can be borne within the framework of the present mission budget, especially in view of the fact that this venture, including buildings, would cost no more than one home mission, and in the second year it would cost less.

Signed, Conrad Frey

(copied by E.H.-6/29/93)