

The Iowa Districts Today

A century has passed since the Reverend Lochner made his exploratory tour in eastern Iowa in 1848. The Census of 1860 showed 37 Lutheran churches of all synods in 18 of the 63 Iowa counties reporting, only a few of which have since become identified with the Missouri Synod. In 1947 three-fourths of the counties of Iowa had 229 churches with 78,345 baptized members in the Lutheran Church — Missouri Synod. Thirty-six of these churches, a greater number than existed when the Iowa District was established in 1879, were added in the decade ending in 1947.

During the Civil War, Pastor Doescher was the only representative of the Missouri Synod who could preach in English as well as German. In 1947 only 36 congregations, or one-seventh of the total number, had services in both English and German. The remaining two hundred odd congregations had only English services. In 1860 churches of all faiths in Iowa totaled 949, with a property value of \$1,670,190. In 1947 the 229 churches of the Lutheran Church — Missouri Synod had a valuation of \$6,407,000.

Behind this noteworthy growth in Iowa stands

the mother Synod which today has 3,678 pastors serving 5,472 congregations with a total membership of 1,639,337, one-twentieth of whom may be found in the Hawkeye State. The small log cabin school in Perry County, Missouri, has been superseded by beautiful Concordia Seminary at Saint Louis with 18 buildings and 15 faculty homes on a 71-acre campus costing some three million dollars. Concordia Seminary has 400 students and a faculty of 22, and is said to be the largest Protestant theological seminary in the United States. Reverend J. W. Behnken, who went to Europe four months after VE Day to investigate the spiritual conditions of the Lutheran churches in various countries, and who then reported personally to President Truman on his findings, has served as president of the Lutheran Church — Missouri Synod since 1935.

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