

February 6, 1962

To the Leaders of Freeborn Lutheran Congregation,

As your pastor, I would like to add a few comments to the report which we received from the Rev. E.J. Cornils. Since his visit I have talked to some of you to get your reactions to his recommendations. Opinions are varied, I find. Some feel that there is nothing that can be done, while others are convinced that something must be done--and soon. Then there are those who see an "out" in the fact that our membership needs pruning and they feel that if this was done our record would look pretty good!

Since there may be many who feel that nothing more is needed than to "prune" the membership list, let us take a closer look at the statistics. First, let me make one thing clear; I do not feel that it is responsibility of the pastor to "prune" the list, this should be done by the congregation. Nor should my procedure be construed as a recommendation, rather, each case should be determined on its individual merits. Having said this, (and I hope that it will not be misunderstood), this is what I did: to arrive at a somewhat truer picture I deducted all baptized and confirmed persons from our list who lived outside of our area. (That is, all those who lived in other towns or cities, whether they were active or not and whether they were in the Service, or in College, were deducted. True--this will not give us a correct number, but you must admit that it was a generous subtraction!) The figures I arrived at were: 202 Baptized, and 132 Confirmed. Now then, using these figures, and the 1961 statistics where they are available, let us go through Rev. Cornils' report and see how we look.

Due to the change in pastors, the attendance figures are not available for the entire year, however the average for the last half of the year was 64. That means that on an average Sunday 31.68% of our Baptized membership or 48.48% of our Confirmed membership was in church.

In reviewing Rev. Cornils' figures it was learned that he had used the 1961 figure for computing the participation at Communion. The corrected figure should be 25.00% (in place of 36.60%)! For 1961, 63 communed of the 132 Confirmed members (of the "pruned" list) for an average of 47.73%.

Using our "pruned" listing, it was found that the frequency in communion participation was 1.74%.

In order that we can better see how "good" we look let us compare the figures again--listing both the 1960 figures and the new ones.

	<u>1960</u> <u>Average</u>	1961 <u>"corrected"</u> <u>average</u>	<u>Dist.</u> <u>Average</u>	<u>A.L.C.</u> <u>Average</u>
Attendance: Baptized-	22.66%	31.68%	37.95%	41.07%
Confirmed-	36.60%	48.48%	62.96%	62.27%
Communion: (36.60%) =	25.00%	47.73%	81.11%	85.23%
Frequency:	.83%	1.74%	4.10%	3.79%

Although the percentage of Baptized attendance is comparable to the average of the ALC and the District, the Confirmation attendance and the two figures on communion are still quite low.

Being concerned about that 1.74%, I began to wonder about the frequency of communion of those who did commune and discovered that our "best" members are slightly below the average of the ALC. (ALC average = 3.79%, Freeborn's communing members = 3.44%)

Regarding the "Other indications of the congregation's spiritual level" i.e., Adult Bible Class and family devotions, it would be interesting to learn how you--the leaders of the congregation--rate in this department. However, no further comment.

THE CHURCH SCHOOLS:

I refer you to that one sentence: "The facilities are inadequate but with wise planning and immediate determined effort this deficiency can be corrected."

One problem in this area, incidently, which was not touched upon in Cornils' report, is that although the Sunday School is self-supporting, there are no funds available for an educational program in the congregation apart from Sunday School. Furthermore, under the new Constitution the Education Committee brings its recommendations to the Council for action. If there are no funds available, what will be accomplished? This matter deserves serious study by the Church Council.

THE ORGANIZATIONS:

Question: Is 18 the full potential of these two groups? What can be done to encourage participation by more of the members?

Note that final sentence: "There is some money-making which, however, detracts from their glory." How can "money-making", especially for such "worthy causes" as equipping the new Parish Hall, etc. "detract from their glory?" Perhaps it is this: are we teaching our people that the only reason that they should contribute to the Parish Hall is in order to receive a high-priced dish-towel (or something) in return? Should the motivation for our giving come from receiving something in return, or should the motivation be a "thank you" for what we have already received....namely God's Blessings? Furthermore, nowhere in the New Testament accounts of the early Church is there any mention of a "Ham Dinner" (or lutefisk, either) to raise money for the needs of the Church, yet the Church grew and prospered.

The question needs to be asked: Does our witness detract from our profession of faith in God? Also, do "money-making" projects teach our people that it is not profitable to give their offerings to God on Sunday mornings?

GENERAL ATTITUDE OF THE MEMBERSHIP:

Unfortunately, Rev. Cornils has correctly analyzed the situation. However, the question is not "What has been the attitude in the past, but--rather--what is the attitude now, and what will it be?

You are the leaders of the congregation. Where are you leading the congregation?

Note that Cornils' report ends on a positive note: IF!

One further observation. If the effort which has been spent in dodging responsibilities had been used in accomplishments there would have been no need for calling in Rev. Cornils. The "know how" is available, the crux of the matter is--is there any "want to"!

SOUL CARE OF THE COMMUNITY:

Only this one comment: At the organizational meeting of the Church Council, on January 19th, NOT ONE PERSON WAS WILLING TO BE CHAIRMAN OF THE EVANGELISM & WORSHIP COMMITTEE!!!

SOUL CARE OF THE WORLD:

Again, using the "pruned" figures referred to above, the average contribution of Confirmed members is \$1.94 (remember, the need is over \$10.00 per year).

FINANCIALLY SPEAKING:

In 1961 \$5,616.77 was contributed to the support of the congregation, adding the figure computed with the "pruned" figures we find:

<u>Cornils'</u> <u>Report</u>	<u>ALC</u>	<u>DISTRICT</u>	<u>The "Pruned"</u> <u>figure</u>
\$31.03	\$75.00	\$100.00	\$42.55

Note the positive note in Cornils' report: IF!

COMMENTS ON CORNILS' RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. All of the information needed to make this "study" is available. Note especially #3. "Proper procedure" is not to be construed as: "let the pastor do it!" This is the responsibility of the Church Council.
2. Any effectiveness in this area will need to be started by you--the leaders of the congregation. The training is available, but the personnel are not (thus far).

Also, any "program of promotion" will need to begin with you --each one of you. But unless it will begin with you, it probably will not begin.

Incidentally, the pastor's responsibility in this area is to help you in your responsibility--not to do it for you! (This is all spelled out in the Letter of Call that you sent to me).

3. Social events--with a purpose, (and not money-making!).

Several persons commented on how much they liked the last Pot-Luck, (when Rev. Cornils was with us). How about it? Shall we try this recommendation?

The resources for "constructive programs" are available.

4. How will we know whether or not we will arrive at our destination without a "road map"?

Question: Could this best be done by the Council meeting as a whole, or by each committee making recommendations relative to their particular area of responsibility? What do you think?

Note: that final sentence in Cornils' report: "They should then advance it to the congregation along with a time schedule and support it enthusiastically."

5. "a dramatic upgrading of the benevolence response."

How about it? Can we raise our benevolence from an average of \$1.94 per year per confirmed member to the needed \$10.00?

Incidentally, your pastor knows of a congregation which gives 50% of its income to benevolence! Do they have financial problems? Of course--but not nearly the problems that we have at Freeborn!

6. Many have told me of the problems encountered when they used the "E.M.V. Program" here a few years ago. Of course, they admit that they changed certain recommendations here and there. Question: Why blame the program if you didn't use the recommended program? Incidentally, however, one person did comment that that was the only year the budget was ever met here at Freeborn!

There is ample evidence that an E.M.V. Program--rightly used--would produce dramatic results. Furthermore, the Resident Counseling Service stressed by Rev. Cornils would be even better. (For instance, in 1958 Our Saviour's in Stanwood received an average of \$30.00 per member--pretty close to our figure--The Resident Counseling Service was used--in 1961, their average contribution was \$100.00 per member (with about the same number of members as in 1958)!

To those who would suggest that there might possibly be a lot of ill will generated, I can only ask: How do people feel about the present situation at Freeborn? Happy?

You are the leaders of Freeborn Lutheran Congregation. Where and how are they being led?

Are we to sit back and wish for the "good old days?" According to an entry in the Minutes of the Church Council for September 7, 1954--before Pastor Hauge left--there were financial problems then. Maybe those "good old days" weren't so very "good" after all. Maybe it is just that our memory is not very good! (?)

For those who wish to continue as we are, I hope that you recognize that this congregation will not continue for any great length of time if the present trend continues. Let's face it--we're not even standing still---we're slipping backwards!

Incidentally, here is an interesting statistic. The average weekly offering of those who used envelopes in 1961 was \$2.34---and they range from 17¢ to \$10.68. IF this was the average contribution of the 132 Confirmed members of the "pruned" list the weekly Offering would be \$308.88! To meet our budget we only need \$109.61½ per week. And--hold on to your hats--if the average contribution of the Communicant members was \$2.34--the weekly offering would be \$147.42!

Lest you get the wrong idea--my main concern is not your stewardship. Rather it is evangelism and--if you will look at the Rev. Cornils' recommendations again--this is the main stress of the report from Rev. Cornils.

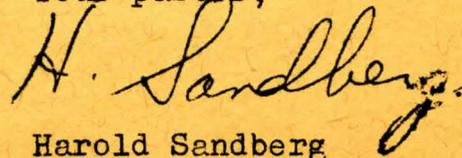
Having had the report of an outsider perhaps you would be interested in the recommendations of your pastor. Some of them are:

1. Forget the past--and forgive! No amount of concern about the past will ever change it.
2. Live in the present! Be concerned about your relationship to Jesus Christ, and about how you fulfill your role in carrying out His Will.
3. Look to the future!

In the six months that I have been with you I have come to feel, more and more, that there are great potentialities here at Freeborn. The possibilities that can be realized here are still untapped. (This is proven by the fact that those of you who have tried have been able to do what you previously were certain that you could not do!)

You are the leaders of Freeborn Lutheran Congregation. Where and how are you going to lead it?

Your pastor,


Harold Sandberg

Freeborn

COPY OF THE REPORT BASED ON AN EVALUATION OF FREEBORN LUTHERAN CONGREGATION--PRESENTED BY THE REV. E.J. CORNILS, REGIONAL STEWARDSHIP DIRECTOR, OF THE AMERICAN LUTHERAN CHURCH. (1/22/62)

	<u>1956</u>	<u>1957</u>	<u>1958</u>	<u>1959</u>	<u>1960</u>	<u>Average Annual Increase</u>
Bapt.	199	251	279	281	278	15.8
Confid.	123	151	165	163	172	9.8
Attend.	---	---	71	68	63	
Communion	--	---	159	145	143	
Frequency of Commun.	---	---	.96	.88	.83	
		<u>Cong. Average</u>		<u>District Average</u>		<u>A.L.C. Average</u>
Attendance	Baptd.	22.66%		37.95%		41.07%
	Confid.	36.60%		62.96%		62.27%
Communion	<u>36.60%</u>			81.11%		85.23%
Frequency		.83%		4.10%		3.79%

Observations on the above:

On the average Sunday 63 persons were in attendance. This means 22.66% of your baptized membership or 36.60% of your confirmed were present. In the District the average is 37.95% and 62.96%. In the A L C the average is 41.07% and 62.27%. It is obvious your record is unusually low and should be a point of great concern and immediate action.

Of your 172 confirmed members, only 63 or 36.60% participated in the communion services. In the District 81.11% did. In the A. L. C. 85.23% did. This area too should cause concern.

As to frequency in communion participation, in the A L C the average member communed 3.79 times a year. In the District it was 4.10%. In your congregation it was less than once, actually 0.83% times a year.

Other indications of the congregation's spiritual level are family devotion participation and Adult Bible Class attendance. An average of six came to Bible Class. "Some" have regular family devotions. Should not the importance of these be emphasized?

THE CHURCH SCHOOLS:

The Sunday School is self supporting. The teachers were adjudged good. Necessary equipment and materials are available for effective instruction. Parents are interested in sending their children. A goodly percentage of those enrolled come from non-member homes. I would presume the same can be said about the D.V.B.S. The facilities are inadequate but with wise planning and immediate determined effort this deficiency can be corrected.

Here is a bright spot, a potential strength, the major area which can contribute to a strong church of tomorrow. The present children plus the non-member doors they can open to you should be viewed as the strength of your future.

THE ORGANIZATIONS:

There is a Ladies Aid and a Luther League. About 18 attend in each instance. This is not bad. The leadership is good. Both follow prescribed programs of the Church. This is undoubtedly their key to success. There is some money-making which, however, detracts from their glory.

GENERAL ATTITUDE OF THE MEMBERSHIP:

Unfortunately I sense a tinge of unwholesomeness in the congregation which leads to a "pickiness", a lacking interest and cooperation. This is due, I believe, to a lack of understanding of what the congregation can and is doing, an appreciation of its potential, and the "know how" to accomplish it. A properly devised program, wisely led, and enthusiastically supported could easily correct this. A busy, happy and productive congregation could result.

SOUL CARE OF THE COMMUNITY:

There has been congregational growth during the span under study. The baptized membership increased each year by almost 16 souls. The confirmed membership increased annually by an average of almost 10. While the members are active in this area of activity, the growth is generally attributed to the pastor.

Having reviewed the progress we must now qualify it because there is evidence that while new members are being added, some members who should be are not subtracted. A needed pruning of the roster is advisable.

SOUL CARE OF THE WORLD:

In 1961 your congregation contributed \$255.65 to A L C benevolences. This averages out to \$1.41 per member. Over \$10.00 per member is needed to make this vital work possible. This area should receive your concern.

FINANCIALLY SPEAKING:

Last year your members contributed \$5,616.77 to the support of the congregational program. This averages out to \$31.03 per confirmed member. In the A L C it was about \$75.00. In the District it was about \$100.00. Here is obviously a major source of your problem. Here is also a problem which can be corrected without too much difficulty.

(Rev. Cornils' recommendations follow on the next page)

RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. I would suggest the Church Council study the membership list to determine, (1) who are presently active members, (2) who are to be reactivated, and (3) who should be dropped by proper procedure.
2. An Evangelism Committee should be organized and properly trained to work with the delinquent members, call on prospective members particularly in homes of non-member Sunday School pupils. They should also devise a program of promotion to boom interest in church, communion and Adult Class attendance plus family devotions participation.
3. Periodic, perhaps monthly social events should be initiated. While sociability is good to knit the membership together, interesting and constructive programs should also be included to further justify them and accomplish the greater purpose of making better members. Money-making should not be the purpose, or you will defeat your purpose.
4. The Council should consider and determine what the program of the congregation should be for the next year at least. They should then advance it to the congregation along with a time schedule and support it enthusiastically.
5. The Council should give consideration to a dramatic upgrading of the benevolence response.
6. To make the two aforementioned proposals possible, I suggest next fall the congregation engage in a full-blown E.M.V. An even better proposal and the one I would urge would be to contract for the services of the A L C Resident Counseling Service.

This report was submitted by:

The Rev. E.J. Cornils,
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January 22, 1962.