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2,600 LWML Members Pledge to Invest Selves

By BRUCE STRADE
Special to the WITNESS

LOUISVILLE — A challenge to "make this a building convention," greeted more than 2,000 women gathered for the 54th annual convention of the Lutheran Women's Missionary League (LWML) convention here June 22-24.

"Not merely the building of budgets and programs," keynote speaker Rev. Andy Sabo explained, "but the building of people.

Meeting in a colorful convention center decorated with red roses, gold tablecloths, and a 16-foot red and gold banner displaying the convention theme "Declare His Glory" and reproduced in miniature at place cards, the delegates were reminded that God has "put us in the community for ministry, mission and service.

All of this, Rev. Sabo added, takes place when people are.

The former international LWML counselor urged the delegates to change and new methods, to place a greater emphasis in the World of God, to listen to people, and to serve the people.

Providing the keynote address was a procession of 20 banners depicting Biblical variations on the convention theme, designed and constructed by women members of the wagon's Indiana District, convention host.

A significant part of the convention schedule included a little study on the concept of glory in the Old and New Testament. Rev. Gary Schaper of Indianapolis, Indiana, general adviser of the Indiana district, led the sixty session.

During the convention the women heard several addresses, including a talk by Mrs. Robert Kroenke, Missouri Synod lay minister missionary for 55 years. She shared her personal experiences with her listeners "to trust in God all the way." She also gave them some practical advice on what they could do for missions.

Dr. Raedeke, now executive director of Key 72, said the basic objective is "more forcefully and fully to confront people with Jesus Christ by proclamation and demonstration, by witness and ministry, by word and deed.

"Never will we on the national level dictate what must be done or how they should be done," Dr. Raedeke expounded. "However, we will endeavor to supply resources material to give them the finest evangelistic tools.

"We do not minimize or ignore our conscience, our restaurants among denominations. In the organizational structure of Key 73 we explicitly state that doctrinal differences not only exist but that they should be respected, and never should a denomination be forced or frustrated for not participating in every phase of Key 73."
Village Church (Continued from Page 1)

saying. "Well, when it comes, we will do something about it."
This is the one fear I have," he confided. "maybe we are going to take things too lightly, and then it is going to happen on us."
Stid's expectations are echoed by another teacher at the school, Joe Battle, who was born and raised at Divida, a few miles away, and who joined the congregation as a young adult.

"When I was in senior high school," he remembers, "the whole school, grades one through senior, may have had three or four hundred students. Now the school through senior high alone has more than 1,400 students."
"South Seminole over here was like this, a swamp, lots of woods, houses here and there. But the growth of South Seminole has been such that the political power has shifted from the north end of the county to the south."
He feels that the people of Slavia are aware of just how great a change in their community will be in the next few years.

Mixed Emotions
"I have mixed emotions about it myself," he says. "I think the growth is going to be good, but I don't want to see it happen at my heart, and I'd like to find some way to slow it down and still have several acres of land."
But he doesn't want to see this growth. "I know it's going to come, but I'd like to see it come, and yet if you are going to do anything, you're going to have to accept the change."
On the whole, he says conscientiously, "the congregation will respond very well to these changes."

Pastor Kucharik says, "The congregation through leadership, vision and the congregation itself can change the world."
"It is up to us to tell the world what God has done for us and what He wants us to do for Him."

The congregation's goal is to "be active in the community." This is the challenge facing the congregation. They are starting to take things more seriously, they are starting to walk up to their challenge, and they are starting to make a little progress.

Rev. John Kucharik, present pastor at Slavia.

A son of one of Slavia's founders remarks: "You can see the hand of God much more clearly on the farm than you can in an office or factory job."
Although the colonists were without a pastor for its first 22 years, worship services were held faithfully "every Sunday and holy day," and declares Ferdinand Duda, president of the congregation (and Sunday school teacher of a class of pre-schoolers), "if a person didn't attend church in the old times, he was sick."
A resident pastor arrived in 1934. He was Rev. Stephen M. Tyl, who remained as shepherd of the colony for 33 years.
Under Pastor Tyl's leadership the congregation matured. Not only did the congregation build a new church—a architectural gem which reflects Pastor Tyl's interest in history and woodworking—but St. Luke's founded a school which has swelled in confidence and respect of the entire area and serves a great many children beyond the congregation.

Synod Leader
Also, St. Luke's became a leader in the Synod of Evangelical Lutheran Churches, which was founded by Lutherans of Czechoslovakian descent. Eventually Lutheran Haven, a complex which includes a children's home, a home for the aged, and a retirement village, was founded on land next to the church in Slavia.

Under Pastor Tyl's leadership the congregation reached out to serve and gradually include many more than simply those of Slavic heritage. With the congregation's knowledge and by its own choice it became less and less a distinctly Slavic group.

"The larger percentage of the people in the congregation are not of Slavic descent," Pastor Kucharik says. They are as likely to be of English, Irish, or German background, and are descended from other places and some native central Florida.

ON SCHOOL GROUNDS teachers Joe Battle, left, and Kenneth Markert, right, talk with Parent-Teacher League president Mrs. Walter Duda, center, and several students.

AT CHAPEL SERVICES for children of St. Luke's school Pastor Kucharik makes a point about prayer by using an object. Fewer than half of the students at the school are members of St. Luke's congregation.

whose family has farmed the Florida flatland for generations, observes: "Our church has branched out. Not everyone comes from here anymore."
"It was strictly a church of farming people as it started, and it remained that way for a number of years." Ferdinand Duda says. "But now it is compounded of different segments of people. That the congregation has been active in reaching out in the community "can be seen by the growth," he maintains.
A former teacher at St. Luke's school, and currently president of St. Luke's LWML, Mary Ann Weisberger, remarks that "it wouldn't be a healthy church, would it?" for the congregation to have remained in one place.

Although the congregation already has a strong sense of mission which causes them to reach out into the community, some members of the congregation want to see this aspect of congregational life developed more.

Rev. George Marek, retired SELC pastor and a resident of Lutheran Haven retirement village, says that "a great challenge" facing the congregation is the need "to be more active in personal mission work by witnessing to Jesus and His kingdom. But our people are starting to wake up to their challenge, and they are starting to make a little progress."

Mrs. Walter (Judy) Duda, who comes to the congregation about 13 years ago as a teacher and later married into a Slavia family, says she has always been impressed with the congeniality of the congregation.

CONGREGATION'S PRESIDENT, Ferdinand Duda Sr., right, confers with St. Luke's pastor, Rev. John Kucharik. Mr. Duda has also taught a class of preschool-age children for more than 35 years.
AT CHAPEL SERVICES for children of St. Luke's school Pastor Kucharik makes a point about prayer by using an object. Fewer than half of the students at the school are members of St. Luke's congregation.
ON SCHOOL GROUNDS teachers Joe Battle, left, and Kenneth Markert, right, talk with Parent-Teacher League president Mrs. Walter Duda, center, and several students.
ONLY FOUNDER of St. Luke's Lutheran Church and of the Slovak community who is still living is George Jacobcin Sr., right, telling Pastor Kucharik about the congregation's original church building (background), now used for storage.

A high school sophomore told a seventh-grade student at St. Luke's that the world's temptations and wickedness have moved in and threaten to move in altogether.

St. Luke's school is growing so rapidly that a smaller percentage of our congregation's providing money will be needed. Ending generosity but that "if I would be that we are a little humble and quiet people. They hesitate to go out and knock on doors and push themselves." A strong evidence of the congregation's openness to outsiders is the growth of the Parent-Teacher League, members of various churches, other denominations and the community. The atmosphere of the school is not just in the classrooms, but in the courtyard, in the cafeteria, in the hallways, in the gymnasium, in the auditorium, in the science labs, in the home economics classes. The parents see a need for a basic education for their children, the school leaders say. They are beginning to make inroads on academic excellence, crowded public schools, and the dissatisfaction of parents with what they see as relaxed standards and lack of control in public school classrooms. Parents are concerned about the education of their children. Principal Bellhorn says: "Many parents today are concerned about the education of their children. They are sharing with the school administration the problems that every other congregation has. They're maturing so much faster in terms of worldly sophistication: knowing what is missing in the lives of classmates who had turned to abuse of drugs and to other antisocial behavior. And that has changed things a bit. Our school is growing so fast that a smaller percentage every year are actual members of St. Luke's. And that has changed things a bit. It's the price you pay for expansion and progress." Judy Duda, who is president of the Parent-Teacher League, notes: "I would certainly think that the parents are really concerned now of a metamorphosis here, when we are actually coming to terms with what purpose we want our school to actually serve." The community whose forefathers decided to "take our children on the farms where there will be less temptations of the world and of the wickedness of a large city" has found that the world's temptations and wickedness have moved in and threaten to move in altogether. Still, through some take occasional sidelong glances at the past, the few in the congregation seem resentful or repentant of past decisions.

Wouldn't Go Back Steve Sidlik, remarks, "In a little village church, you have your advantages, and then as you grow larger, well, there are some things you wish you could have back again, and you didn't want to go back, he says. Judy Duda, remembering her impressions the first time she came from Chicago, says: "There's a community spirit which is, I have to admit, changing a little bit. You just can't help it. You know, its been so much faster in terms of worldly sophistication: knowing what is missing in the lives of classmates who had turned to abuse of drugs and to other antisocial behavior. And that has changed things a bit. It's the price you pay for expansion and progress." Anyway, many parents say, it wouldn't make sense. They're concerned about the Christian faith and not want to share it, even if they see risks that must be taken. Congregation president Fer­dinand Duda declares emphatically: "You can't have faith and not try to practice it."