

Narrated Biography

March 28, 2008

My name is Jakob Heckert. I was born January 13, 1931 in a town known as Cervenka, Yugoslavia, to a German couple known as Jakob and Krisztina Heckert. I went to public school until I was twelve years old. After that I attended the gymnasium in Verbas for one year from 1943-1944. In the fall of 1944 (August), warned by the retreating Germans to leave before the Russian army arrives, my mother send my brother me with my grade school teacher to Austria. Later my mother together with her parents and siblings came to Austria too. After she found out where we were, she came to take us to her place of residence, where the other members of her family stayed. My father had been drafted into the German army. He joined us in Austria.

After two year's stay in Austria, my parents, mother's parents, siblings and their families left for Germany. We resided in Germany for four years. Because my parents intended to immigrate into the United States, they felt that it was easier to get a visa from Germany rather than from Austria. Since my father had an aunt in New York, my parents contacted her and asked if she would be willing to sponsor us, so that we could immigrate into the United States. She was willing to sponsor us and to secure jobs for my father, my brother, and me. So we emigrated by boat from Germany in May of 1950 and after a week landed in Brooklyn, New York.

Since I had learned the optical trade in Germany, I started working as an optician. During my time working as an optician I became interested in studying for the ministry. I spoke with my pastor, the Rev. Rippe about this. He suggested that we travel to Bronxville to find out whether I could start in junior college. Because I did not have a high school diploma, I needed to acquire one. Therefore it was suggested that I attend the prep school for two years. I started high school in 1951 and graduated in 1953. After that I entered junior college from which I graduated in 1955.

After graduation from Bronxville Junior College, I applied to Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, and was accepted. I started my seminary education in the fall of 1955. At that time seminary education was four years plus vicarage. After the first two years I received a BA. After the second two years, a vicarage, and a thesis I received a BD (bachelor of divinity). I had a summer vicarage St. Paul Lutheran Church in Ottawa, Canada under the Rev. Kanning and a full year vicarage at Concordia Lutheran Church in Cincinnati, Ohio.

After my graduation from the seminary in 1960, I continued my education to attain a MA. June 3 1961 my wife Ilona and I were married. We have three children, Paula, Stephen, and Mark. They are all married. Our daughter is childless. Our older son has two sons; our younger son has a daughter.

Upon working two years for Synod in the Office for Fraternal Organizations as research assistant, in the spring of 1963 I accepted a call to Immanuel Lutheran Church, Wentzville, MO. I served the Lord there until 1970. During our stay there I started my PhD program in that I was taking course at the seminary, since Wentzville was about 35 miles away. In 1970 I took a call to Bethlehem Lutheran Church, Sheboygan, WI to be associate pastor together with the Rev. Finnigsmeier. During that time I finished my dissertation and received my doctor's degree. After a stay of three years in Sheboygan, in 1973 I received a call to Good Shepherd Lutheran Church, Oshkosh, WI. There I stayed only half a year, when I received a call from Concordia Seminary to teach exegesis and preaching.

After two years at the seminary, 1974-1976, I received a call to serve as assistant professor a Concordia College, Ann Arbor. We have been here ever since. In 1998 I retired from teaching at Concordia, but I have continued as instructor part time ever since. In addition I assist the Reverend Frank Pies and Reverend Christopher Thoma at Our Savior Evangelical Lutheran Church, Hartland, MI by preaching once a month, visiting sick and shut in members once a week, and teaching Bible class twice a month. I also preach German several times a year at St. Lorenz Lutheran Church in Frankenmuth, and once a year at Historic Trinity in Detroit. In addition I preach at two other congregations several times a year. As you can see, I keep quite involved in the work of the church. Thanks be to the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ through the power of the Holy Spirit.