A Visit to Poland

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My first episcopal assignment was to the Geneva Area, which included Poland. Methodism was started there as a great relief program of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, at the close of World War I. When I reached Warsaw in 1944 the whole city was in ruins, with only one hotel standing in the city. I was able to take further relief and to repair our great central building on Mokatoska Street, the first to be reconstructed in Warsaw. Here we had an English-language school which eventually enrolled around 3,000 students. The people were cordial and the government was cooperative, although restrictive laws had been passed and were later renewed.

In the area of former East Prussia the German population had been driven out and numerous great churches with large memberships were without pastors. These the government offered to us if we could provide pastoral leadership, which we were able to do in many cases, and we thus acquired some of our best and largest churches.

Against this background I welcomed a return to Poland in December, 1961. I had not been there since 1950, and I hardly knew what to expect or how I would be received, for in 1950 I had been charged by Bulgaria with being an American spy. There was a delay of hours at the Zurich airport and when the passengers were taken into the dining room for dinner, we were segregated from all the other persons in the room. It seems that the Swiss were quite skeptical about everything having to do with Poland. We did not get away until about 7:30 P.M. and reached Warsaw around ten o'clock. The steward served some tea but most of the other passengers had packages of wine and other liquors and they proceeded to drink most of the way.

At Warsaw the customs and security officers checked the baggage of returning Poles carefully but paid little attention to me, and I passed through the barriers quickly. I was met by Witold Będenyctowicz, pastor of our Central Church, with a group of his young people who had been waiting for me for nearly four hours. The pastor had secured a taxicab and I was taken to the Grand Hotel. I had first met this pastor in 1946 when I ordained him and two others at our Central Building when only two rooms of the seven-story structure could be used, one as a chapel and the other as the home of our superintendent, Konstanty Najder. At the hotel I
heard the *Voice of America* and also *Moscow Reporting* on the radio, each explaining the Katanga situation from its own angle, Moscow being antagonistic to America.

At breakfast the waiter told me that he could get more than the government rate in zlotys for American dollars, the old black market dodge with which I had been familiar in past years, but I told him I dealt only in traveler’s checks; I suspected that this might be a trick to catch Americans violating financial regulations. I had my own coffee pot but was not allowed to use it, and since the Polish coffee was atrocious, I drank tea.

Brother Benedyktoowitz came for me and we walked to the office of Mr. Jacoby, the new Minister of Cults. I had never seen him before but found him very nice and courteous. He served coffee and cakes and again I had some very terrible coffee. He had some nice china cups and saucers and he told me they came from a special manufacturing firm in Poland that went back to the Middle Ages and even survived the Nazi Occupation. I was assured that the government of Poland was not anti-church but anti-clerical and had always to fight the attempt of the Roman Catholic hierarchy to control political affairs. Mr. Jacoby said that the *New York Times* recently attacked the Polish government for not permitting religion to be taught in the schools and that this had been given to the paper by Roman Catholic leaders. Mr. Jacoby said that any church in Poland could teach religion to the young people in their own churches if the teachers could qualify as teachers in that field. He said there were more Roman Catholic priests now in Poland than ever before, and that Methodists could have our own schools for religious training if our preachers could qualify. He thanked me for what the Methodists had done to help Poland at the close of World War II and was happy that I had been given the decoration of *Polonia Restituta* as a token of that appreciation. As in the past there was a secretary who took down all that was said. I said nothing important but the government is suspicious of everybody.

After the interview Benedyktoicz took me to see rebuilt Warsaw. Instead of the wrecked University which I saw in 1946 I found the entire University rebuilt and an enrollment of 11,000 students. The Ghetto, which in 1946 was a heap of rubble with thousands of Jewish bodies in the ruins, had been erased and there was only a marker telling what the Nazis did to the Jews and another erected by the Jewish people thanking the Polish people for trying to protect them during the Nazi Occupation. All around the old Ghetto are new apartment buildings. From a material standpoint Warsaw has become a new city.

Back at the hotel Brother Benedyktoicz brought me up to date on Polish Methodism. He said that 1971 would be the fiftieth anni-
versary of Polish Methodism and that it would be fittingly cel¬
brated and that this should be linked with the 1,000th year of
Polish history, for it was in 966 that King Mieszko I was baptized
and had brought Poland into the family of European nations. It is
interesting that this king baptized himself. The Roman Catholics
are having a ten-year celebration, the Lutherans are preparing a
History of the Polish Reformation, while the Reformed Church is
having a special exhibit for the millennium celebration. Benedyk-
towicz said that the Lutherans had lost 100,000 members during the
past ten years because so many of their members had returned to
Germany. The Reformed Church was not growing and was not
concerned with any type of missionary work.

Benedyktowicz said the Polish people feel that the Methodists
and Baptists really mean business and people interested in Protes-
tantism turn to them rather than to the Lutheran and Reformed
Churches. He said that Jehovah's Witnesses, although not recog-
nized by the government, are growing secretly. The Baptists have
recently erected a modern building in Warsaw and it was dedicated
a short time ago.

He told me that our Methodist property at Klarysew was now
being renovated through the gifts of the Woman's Division of the
Board of Missions. This has been our property, about ten miles
from Warsaw, from the early days of Polish Methodism. The
aim now is to make Klarysew a center for youth camps, study
conferences for pastors, and similar activities. Klarysew was once
used as a Methodist Theological School, but during the Stalin
period it was closed as were the other denominational schools.

When I left Poland in 1951 we had a Methodist Theological School
and any church could have one if desired. There was also the
School of Theology at the University of Warsaw. After 1951, how-
ever, these were closed and the School of Theology of the University
of Warsaw was changed into an Academy at Chylice, the Lutheran
Center near Klarysew, where the government wants all Protestant
preachers to be educated. The state pays the salaries of the profes-
sors. We had three Methodist students there and all were graduated
in June, 1962, with the degree of Master of Theology. Three more
will take their place next year and by this process it is hoped
gradually to have a trained ministry in Polish Methodism. We
have no Methodist professors in the Academy and Benedyktowicz
would like to come to America for additional graduate study in
order to qualify. Our Methodist pastors receive 1,600 zlotys a
month, but a professor in the Academy is paid 5,000 zlotys by the
state. It is interesting that in this welfare state the professor is
considered very important and is granted one of the largest salaries
in Polish society.
Benedyktowicz talked about Konstancin, our Polish Methodist Orphanage. We have fifteen girls there and have room for thirty. It is supported from the profits of our English Language School in Warsaw and by gifts from the Woman's Division of the Board of Missions.

Benedyktowicz listed the following needs of our Polish pastors. All should have bicycles; a Polish bicycle costs 2,000 zlotys or $30. Motorcycles would be better but they cost from 6,000 to 10,000 zlotys or from $90 to $150. Above all, he said, an automobile for the pastors would help most, but would cost 60,000 zlotys or $900.

Dr. Josef Szczepkowski, the superintendent of Polish Methodism, arrived about noon. He is also a professor of English in the University of Torun. He is a graduate of Syracuse University and was a student at Garrett Biblical Institute. His parents were Polish immigrants to America and Szczepkowski served in the American Navy as an officer during World War I. He became a Methodist preacher in America and was a member of the Detroit Conference; he would have remained in America but his wife became homesick for her native land, so Szczepkowski returned to Poland. During the Nazi Occupation he was put in Auschwitz Concentration Camp and it is a miracle that he survived. When I met him at the close of World War II, he was emaciated and I shall never forget how he told me about eating rotten meat of a dead animal because he and others were so hungry. He became head of our Polish Methodist Theological School from 1948 to 1951, and has been Superintendent since 1956.

Our Mokotowska Building has been restored and is occupied by our Central Church, the English Language School, offices, and a number of tenants. I found our Central Church filled at 6:00 P.M. on a Wednesday night. This is one of our largest congregations. I was welcomed by the pastor, the superintendent, the young people, and the head of the Protestant Ecumenical Council. The rector of the Protestant Academy was also present. I compared this with my first service in that building when we had benches without backs and only an old stove with the pipe going out the window. I was amazed at the number who told me of being there on my first visit. Some brought the Bibles that I had autographed fifteen years ago while several showed my picture in old newspapers they had kept.

After the service I met with our Warsaw pastors and workers. Aleksander Sulikowski is the assistant pastor and I remembered him from former days. Stanislaw Kulikowski, our pastor at Praga, a suburb of Warsaw, was present. I was especially impressed by Adam Kuczma. He is pastor at Bytom but is in Warsaw part of the time as a senior in the Protestant Academy. Szczepkowski
hopes that Kuczma may go to England next year for graduate study
to prepare to take his place as the Director of our English Language
School. I met Miss Stefania Taflinska, a most charming Polish girl.
She has a Protestant background and has a degree from the Prot-
estant Academy. Her own Lutheran Church permitted her to
prepare for the ministry or to be Director of Religious Education
but upon completing her academic work she offered her services
to the Lutheran Church but was told that there was no place for
a woman preacher. She has been associated with the Methodists
and Szczepkowski would like to have her as Director of Religious
Education, but feels that she should have additional graduate study
abroad. She has secured a Crusade Scholarship but the Polish
government has twice refused to give Miss Taflinska a permit to go
to America. One reason for this is that she has been employed in
the American Embassy and that puts her under suspicion. One
suggestion was that Miss Taflinska should study in England, and
another was that I use my Polonia Restituta citation to urge the
Polish Ambassador in Washington to help her.

Szczepkowski took me to some of the classes in our English
Language School. All that we teach is English. We have six thou-
sand students during the school year and could have many more
if we had the space. We are not allowed to teach courses in religion
but all who attend know that it is a Methodist school and indirectly
we have a great influence even along religious lines, and certainly
the school has been of great value in public relations. Most of the
Polish leaders who speak English were trained there and students
at the University of Warsaw are sent. We have a large faculty,
many being wives of persons connected with the American and
British Embassies and Consulates. We make good profits from the
school, which so far the Polish government has not taxed, and we
put these profits into the budget of the Conference.

On the next morning Szczepkowski and I went to the Klarysew
property. We have about ten acres of land and a number of nice
buildings, one of which is being renovated for a chapel and a place
to hold the proposed Youth Conferences and other activities. When
this building was empty three families moved in as squatters, and
by Polish law we cannot evict them unless we find another place
for them to go and we cannot do this. These squatters pay no rent.
It will not do us much good to renovate the building if they remain.

After luncheon Szczepkowski and I went to the railroad station
to proceed to Lodz. The new station is being built and in the
temporary station there was no heat and we had about one hour to
wait. Szczepkowski suggested that we find a coffee house near the
station. We found one several blocks away and although the coffee
was abominable it was warm in the building and we spent an hour
and then stood on the open station ramp for quite a period before
the train came. A big sign over the tracks read, "We demand im-
mediate and unconditional disarmament."

Although we had first-class tickets we had a scramble to get into
the car and luckily we found two seats, although they were not
together. I sat by a Polish officer who seemed very nice, but there
was no heat and I kept on my overcoat and gloves and hat. It took
four hours by train to go to Lodz, where we were met by our
pastor, Wincenty Winniczek, who is a senior in the Protestant
Academy. We went to the Grand Hotel, and although they said
they were giving me the best room and that it had a bath, it was
ice cold and any person who took a bath in that room would have
pneumonia. I had only a few minutes to worry for our evening
service was at 6:00 P.M. Lodz is an industrial city and the second
largest in Poland. Our members are mainly industrial workers
and the audience was somewhat different from our Warsaw congre-
gation. We have a nice little church but there was one small stove
and the heat never reached me. Again I was royally welcomed by
the pastor and laymen and young people, who gave me a bouquet
of flowers. When my time came to preach a man in the rear began
to talk out loud to the people around him. I knew I could not
compete with him and I stopped until he was led out of the church.
He was a drunk who had seen lights and came in.

At the close of the service the official board had a supper for us
and this gave me an opportunity to hear the local leaders tell of the
opportunities which the Methodists had in Lodz. Under the leader-
ship of Brother Winniczek real progress has been made. The mem-
ers seemed appreciative of the fact that I had made them a Christ-
mas visit and I was asked to thank our Methodists at home for their
support and prayers.

Back at the hotel I found that by trying various knobs I could
hear some heat coming up in the radiator. Then I went to bed in
my heavy underwear and bathrobe and put the heavy overcoat
over the bed, and as a precaution took some of the different kinds
of cold medicines that I had with me. We had to arise at 5:30 A.M.
in order to get the train to Poznan. Brother Winniczek came with a
cab and we had time to get breakfast at the station. Then I saw
again the poverty of our pastors, for when we purchased some fruit
and Szczepkowski took it out of the paper bag, Brother Winniczek
asked to have the bag for it would mean much in his home.

Brother Winniczek is representative of the young men who have
entered the Conference in recent years. I was struck by the fact
that the ministry is much younger than when I left in 1951. Many
of these young men are graduates of our own Theological Seminary,
which I helped to found, and which was closed during the Stalin
period. Then in the past few years, through the assistance of Dr. Gaither Warfield and the Methodist Committee for Overseas Relief, funds have been made available for the education of young preachers and this year three of them, including Brother Winniczek, will graduate, and Brother Szczepkowski stated that three more would enroll in September.

Szczepkowski pointed out that the Methodist Church has now become really a Polish Church. In the earlier years many of our members were of German background, and even in the war and post-war periods some persons of German background in Silesia, Poznan and Mazury became Methodists to save themselves from the attacks made upon Germans after the close of World War II. Now there are only about 50,000 Germans remaining in Poland. Some of those who left became connected with German Methodist congregations upon returning to Germany. Szczepkowski stated that Polish Methodism after World War II had its share of "rice Christians" and even some of the Polish pastors who joined us after the War can be so described. In recent years we have eliminated elements of little value and the church has been sifted of those who no longer get relief assistance. Our members and preachers are loyal and continue to work under difficult conditions because of love of the Church. Instead of 15,000 members as formerly reported we have only 6,000 real members. Szczepkowski says that Polish Methodism today is 85% of Roman Catholic background and that 35% are first generation Methodists or children born of first generation Methodist families.

A second feature Szczepkowski mentioned is the growth of the Central Fund. In early days the local churches made no contribution to a Central Fund from which the pastors are paid, but now 20% of the budget of the Methodist Church in Poland comes from the contributions made by the local churches. Most of the churches are now able to take care of the minor repairs on their property and pay local expenses, and some even pay the rent for the parsonages.

Another matter stressed was the gradual education of pastors through the assistance of the Methodist Committee for Overseas Relief. As stated above, our students are trained at the Protestant Academy near Warsaw, and Szczepkowski stated that the time may come when we can reopen our own Methodist Theological School at Klarysew. The main point is that the academic standards of the Polish Methodist pastors have been raised in recent years.

Szczepkowski says that Roman Catholicism is no longer a threat to Methodism in Poland, as its political power has been broken. He says the loyal Roman Catholics are resentful of the present government regime but are without power to overthrow it. On the
other hand, the Polish Roman Catholics, although denouncing at times the government, will make terms with it in order to get certain concessions. He was somewhat alarmed at the exchange of greetings between Khrushchev and the Pope and the fact that this was printed in the Communist papers of Poland. However, he feels that never again will the Roman Catholics be able to persecute the Methodists as was done in the early days of our mission.

Many who have left the Roman Catholic Church are still basically religious people, but they cannot go to the Lutherans for they are reactionary and have an exclusive attitude toward other churches. Lutheranism is also still tainted with being German and the saying in Poland has been that no person joins the Lutheran Church except by marriage. The Reformed Church, according to Szczepkowski, is made up of the old Polish Unitarians and is cold, formal, stiff and lacking an evangelistic or missionary spirit. The Baptists in Poland also are being very exclusive, dogmatic, demanding immersion and also very primitive in ethics. The pseudo-Catholic groups made up of priests who have left the Roman Catholic Church do not have an appeal. Some of the American sectarian groups are very active but will not in the long run appeal to Polish people. The Methodist Church, with its evangelistic and liberal spirit, will have a greater appeal to people leaving the Roman Catholic Church than any other group in Poland.

In regard to the negative aspects Szczepkowski placed the financial problem as the most acute. The Polish people do not have a background for individual church support, for in the past the state paid the priests and many members feel no financial responsibility. Then the Methodists have appealed in general to the lower middle classes who earn only enough for existence and have not yet recovered from the vicissitudes of World War II. Polish members are not yet able to assume the full support of the churches.

The financial picture has been made worse by the change of exchange rates. The last change cut the income from the Board of Missions by 66%, since funds from abroad sent for administrative purposes receive now the lowest rate of exchange, twenty-four zlotys for the American dollar; about forty zlotys per dollar is allowed if used for repairs of property, and seventy zlotys per dollar if sent direct to the individual pastor for relief purposes.

Closely related to the financial aspect is the problem of maintaining a ministry on such small salaries. Szczepkowski states that the Polish Methodist preacher is in the lowest paid category of workers. He receives 1,600 zlotys a month. This is aggravated by the fact that the government excludes clergymen from social security, old age pensions, and housing, and the pastor is left on his own while all other citizens have such rights and privileges. The basic salary
allowed by the state for workers may be considered low, but the worker gets a coal allocation, free medical and hospital service, an assured place of residence, a vacation of one month a year with pay, reduced rates on transportation, et cetera. All of these are denied Methodist preachers.

There is also no retirement fund for pastors and widows of pastors in Polish Methodism. The widows of pastors must subsist on starvation funds which are made available by the Methodist Commission on Overseas Relief and from the English Language School. Pastors will have to be kept in service long after the normal retirement age in order to provide them with funds on which to live. One admires the loyalty of the pastors who live daily under financial pressures and who cannot see much possibility of change in the future. One result is the temptation for the pastor or his wife or both to secure outside employment that will give not only financial help but above all secure the fringe benefits now denied Methodist preachers.

In addition our pastors face a problem in regard to their parsonages. The Polish government has ruled that no individual needs more than eight square meters of space, and one in a house that has more than that space for each individual must pay a high tax upon the excess space, or if unable to pay the government will place another individual or family into the home to use the space and to share the kitchen and other parts of the house. If a pastor, for example, should have only one child the church must pay a tax on the excess space, for the next pastor might have three children, and if a second family had been placed in the parsonages by the government there might not be space for the new preacher and his family. Space thus plays an important part in making pastoral appointments.

Transportation for our preachers is also a major problem. There are 364 preaching places, which means many large circuits, and to reach these appointments only one preacher has a motorcycle, one a motor bicycle, three have bicycles and none has an automobile. The distance from the parsonage to some of the preaching appointments is from ten to twelve miles.

As I came into Poznan I remembered my visit there shortly after World War II, when the city had been about 50% destroyed by the retreating Nazis. We had restored an old destroyed church and had held the first dedication of a Polish Methodist Church after World War II. At the station we were met by Brother Jan Kus, another young pastor whom I had ordained. He is now one of the recognized leaders of Polish Methodism and is being mentioned as the successor of Szczepkowski as Superintendent when he retires.

I was again touched to find that all the preachers of the Poznan section and the whole area had gathered to greet me. Many of
them I had ordained or served with when I was in Poland. There was Jan Kalinowski from Katowice in whose church we held the first Polish Annual Conference after World War II; Brunon Raskiewicz from Tarnow, a young preacher whom I had ordained in January, 1946, in the ruins of our Mokotowska Building; Lucjan Zaperty from Krakow, another young man I had ordained in January, 1946; and Michael Jamny who was entering our ministry in 1946 and is now our pastor at Bydgoszcz. Then there were the two Ostorwskis, Janusz and Miecyslaw, with whom I had served. There were fifteen pastors present, including Mrs. Ewa Dolejowa, who serves a small church near Krakow. Some of these I remembered as theological students and some were new preachers who entered the Methodist ministry after I left Poland in 1951.

We met in the home of Brother Kus and for three hours I talked with the preachers and they asked many questions concerning Methodism in America. I stated that I had come to Poland upon the invitation of Bishop Sigg, the Polish Methodists, and the Board of Missions. I reminded them that I was not their bishop but only another Polish Methodist preacher returning home after an absence of ten years. I made it very clear that I came in no official capacity but only as a brother bringing greetings from their colleagues in American Methodism. And then I said that the leaders in our Board of Missions and the Methodist Committee for Overseas Relief had devised a plan of sending not only verbal fraternal greetings but also a Christmas gift for each of our fifty-eight leaders in Polish Methodism. I said that each would receive this gift and we hoped it would come by Christmas Day. I had given Szczepkowski a list of all who had contributed in America and I told the group that Szczepkowski would thank all the donors and that it would not be necessary for each pastor to write letters of thanks. I was also able to state that by the generosity of American Methodists each worker would receive a second Christmas gift in January or February. Our happy preachers expressed their gratitude by a standing vote of thanks and by statements, and I was deeply touched when one preacher said they were ashamed not to have anything to give in return except the assurance of their love, appreciation and prayers. I doubt whether any similar amount of money has lifted the morale of our Polish preachers or of any other group of preachers as has the Christmas gift to our brethren.

The pastors told me that it was difficult to live on their salaries. Their opinion was that if each could receive $25 more per quarter at the exchange rate of seventy zlotys per dollar, this would lift them above the poverty line. They also explained their need of transportation facilities and visual aid materials and tape recorders.

We discussed the need of major church repairs and the cost of
maintenance of the properties. The government says all property in Poland is owned by the state, including church buildings, but that congregations can use the property on the condition that it is kept in good repair. The need is decided by a committee of the state. Our people fear this is an action to control all the churches, not by direct persecution, but by the threat of withdrawing the right to use the property on the ground of failure to keep it in repair, when the foreclosure might be for other reasons, among which would be the failure to fall in line with the state program.

At the evening service in Poznan we worshipped in a cold church, but we had a large congregation and the service lasted over three hours. As in the other places I was given a royal welcome back to Polish Methodism. Two laymen presented me with a book on the history of Poznan and thanked me for what I had done to help them restore their church building after the War. The people were most attentive during the long service.

The next day Szczepkowski and I rode in the train almost all day from Poznan to Ostroda. The latter place is in the Mazury region of what was old East Prussia. I was in Poland when the transfer was made of this territory to Poland. In this section had been the great landed estates of the Germans, one of them belonging to General Von Hindenburg. When the Russians entered they ravaged the country and one can see today at Dabrown and Ostroda the ruins left by them. The Germans fled and left behind vacant properties, including many large churches. The Polish peasants who had worked on the Prussian estates remained and others came in and the government declared that the church properties could be used by any group that could provide pastoral leadership. Most of the churches were of Protestant background, known as the United Church, being a compulsory union of the Lutherans and Reformed under the orders of the King of Prussia. In 1946 the Methodists were about the only Protestant group able to accept this offer. As explained, the Lutherans were in disrepute and the Reformed were not interested. As a result Methodism after 1946 spread into the Mazury territory and today we have large congregations in places like Ostroda, Dabrown, Olsztnek, Kroplewo, Elk, Kalino, Lipowo, Kalno and Koszalin. We have one congregation only forty-five miles from the Russian border. In fact one-third of our members are now in the Mazury District.

At Ostroda we were met by Brother Adam Hercun, our preacher. He had planned Sunday services at Dabrown and Ostroda. It was cold at Ostroda, for we were not too far from the Baltic Sea, and the cold spell was abnormal. On Sunday morning we went to Dabrown, about thirty miles from Ostroda. The pastor is Tadeusz Dzierko, who is also the superintendent of the Mazury District. The temperature
was below zero and there was no heat in the church, so the preachers wore overcoats, and except when I spoke and gave the benediction I wore my gloves.

At Dabrowno we have an historic church which has been used by many groups. It was started during the period of the Knights Templar who had come to this section after the Crusades and by the sword the pagans had either been liquidated or forced to become Christians. On the walls are a number of inscriptions about the Knights Templar. It was for a period a Roman Catholic Church but became Protestant during the Reformation and there is a large picture of Martin Luther. Then under Prussian control it became the United Church. There is a marker with the names of 128 persons who died in World War I fighting for the Kaiser. The Church was assigned to the Methodists in 1946 and we have a good congregation.

Several of the pastors who did not have morning services were at Dabrowno. They were wearing "loud" yellow shoes, and I found that the state controls all stores and a planning committee of the government decides what is to be sold. This year it was decided that shoes were to be yellow. I asked one pastor if they did not have a choice, and the reply was, "Yes, we have a choice. We either buy or do not buy." The planning committee decided how many oranges were to be sold for Christmas. One pastor said there were three thousand people in his town and the town had been allocated three hundred oranges.

We visited our church at Gierzwald, where Henry Hukisz is the pastor, and returned to Ostroda where we had another service in a cold church, with four hundred people present. This is the former military garrison church in old East Prussia in which General Von Hindenburg worshipped when he was on his East Prussia estate.

Here I learned something new about church collections. In all the services there was little money in the plates, and I thought our people were too poor to make large gifts, so I put into the plate at least one hundred zlotys and sometimes more. After the service Szczepkowski said that the government taxes all collections, unless the proceeds are used for sacramental wine and candles, neither of which the Polish Methodists use in their services.

Here again I heard about the need for transportation. Some Lutheran agency had given to each Lutheran pastor in Mazury a Volkswagen, and people wondered why the Methodist pastors had to walk or take a bus or bicycle while Lutherans traveled in automobiles. It is said that the Lutherans now want to take over all Protestant work in Mazury on the ground that they are the successors of the United Church. Szczepkowski stated that the Lutheran bishop asked him to remove all Methodist pastors from Mazury, and even thanked him in advance for what the Methodists had done
to hold the congregations together until the Lutherans were able to resume control. Lutheran pastors have returned into nearly all parts of Mazury and asked the Polish government to evict the Methodists from the churches which they have served for fifteen years and where the people have become Methodist. The government refused but ruled that the buildings are large enough for both Methodists and Lutherans, and in some cases we have both Lutheran and Methodist services. At Dabrowno the Lutherans have only eight members but Dzierko says the pastor has told Methodists that relief supplies will be sent to all Lutherans; however none of our people have defected. It has been said that the government will be glad if there is trouble between the Methodists and Lutherans, as this would hurt religion in the eyes of the people. It is also said that little money from the World Council of Churches ever reached Polish Methodists, the implication being that the World Council was interested in the Lutheran and Reformed Churches but not in Methodism. The pastors were alarmed over the aggressive spirit of the Lutherans and the apparent aim to drive the Methodists out of the Mazury District. If Methodists had not been able to take over these churches after 1946 most of them would now be in the control of the Roman Catholics.

Some of the Christmas money above mentioned actually arrived when I was in Poland. At Ostroda a telegram came to the pastor announcing the arrival of over five thousand zlotys as a gift from the American Methodists. When I returned to Warsaw Brother Benedykto wicz said that his gift had arrived, as well the gifts for the other workers in our Mokotowska Building.

I am unable to say what will be the future attitude of the Polish government toward Methodism and other religious groups. At the present time there is no outright persecution and none of our leaders are in prison. We have been assured that we can carry on our work unmolested, but the government does not consider religion to be necessary and preachers therefore are denied the rights and privileges granted to other citizens.