

MORA UNITED METHODIST CHURCH, MORA

GAUGHAN, REVEREND JAMES; ELLENS, MARGARET; and BRONNICH, MARGARET

Reverend Gaughan tells of his leaving the Catholic priesthood and his acceptance into the Methodist faith. Included is the Methodist doctrine and the changing role of the pastor. Margaret Ellens and Margaret Bronnichi relate the church's early history and some reminiscences about Mora's past.

INTERVIEWERS: John LeDoux and Al Niels~~e~~nDATE: August 7, 1979SUBJECTS COVERED: Tape 1 Side 1009 PERSONAL BACKGROUND OF REVEREND JAMES GAUGHAN:

- 011 Rev. Gaughan was born on December 6, 1938 in Boston, MA.
- 013 His parents were Irish immigrants to the USA.
- 015 He has six brothers and one sister; they were raised as Roman Catholics.
- 017 He pursued the ministry in the Catholic church.
- 019 He got married and taught college for several years.
- 024 He has been a pastor in Waite Park for two years on a trial basis; it worked out really good, and he was assigned to the Mora/Ogilvie charge.
- 033 In 1954 he entered the miniscinary when he was in the middle of high school.
- 034 He finished high school and went four years of college and four years of theology.
- 035 He was ordained as a priest in 1966.
- 037 He got his B.A. from the University of New York.
- 038 After ordination he went to the University of [Auduborn] and got his Master's degree in theology.
- 042 His family, environment, parish, priests, and schooling influenced him to becoming a priest.
- 052 St. Anthony's in Massachusetts; Mt. [Como] in Mt. Vernon, New York; and St. Anthony's in Grenich Village were some of the places that he served in.
- 059 He left the priesthood to get married.
- 064 He could continue on at the ministry as a Methodist; he was very eager to do so.
- 071 In 1977 he came to the Mora United Methodist Church.

073 PERSONAL BACKGROUND OF MARGARET ELLENS:

- 075 Margaret Ellens was born on May 10, 1916 in Mora, MN.
- 076 As a child, she was ecumenical; wherever her best friends went to church, that is where she would go to church.
- 081 She was confirmed as an adult in a Lutheran church.
- 082 In 1954 she joined the Methodist church because she wasn't happy with the Lutheran church.
- 084 Her mother was born here; her father came here from New Stockholm, Sweden when he was a small child.

- 088 Her father came to Duluth, then moved to Mora before the Hinckley fire in 1910.
- 093 She feels that the Methodists have more freedom than the Lutherans.
- 104 As a child, she belonged to a gang.
- 110 After high school she took a year of business; she hated it, but she ends up doing it for 40 years of her life.
- 113 She worked in various stores and then bought her own hardware store.
- 114 In 1938 she got married.

118 CHURCH HISTORY:

- 119 The Mora United Methodist Church was founded in 1889.
- 120 It was the first church organized in the area.
- 123 Mora was instituted in 1882 with the main part of the town being the government.
- 126 Some of the Sunday schools were held in homes before 1889.
- 129 When the church was built, the Zion German Lutheran and the Grace Swedish Lutheran used the church, also.
- 132 When the Hinckley fire came, the church was used as a hospital.
- 152 The fire covered from Carp to the Sandstone area.
- 157 Hinckley is about 22 miles from Mora
- 162 The natives that settled in Mora were from Maine, Massachusetts, New York, and Pennsylvania; they were Scotch-Irish- English people.
- 168 Later the Scandinavians came and named the town.
- 172 Isreal Isrealson named the town Mora because he came from Mora, Sweden.
- 177 Each year the church has the Vassaloppet, cross-country ski race; people from Sweden come over here for this race.

195 PERSONAL BACKGROUND OF MARGARET BRONNICH:

- 196 Margaret Bronnichi's maiden name was Gorenson.
- 198 They lived on a farm in Arthur Township.
- 202 She went to school in Mora.
- 204 Her father was a County Commissioner in Mora.
- 208 She liked shorthand and typing.
- 212 She was born on December 12, 1913.
- 214 Her mother was a Catholic, and Margaret was baptized as a Catholic.
- 218 The early church of the community was a mission church.
- 220 After she was married, she joined the Methodist church.
- 225 She was married on April 19, 1938.
- 229 She worked in stores, cleaned houses, and finally became the county treasurer.
- 236 During World War II, her husband went to war.
- 242 When her daughters were in high school, she went back to work until 1978.
- 247 Her husband is a Methodist.
- 251 Her husband's occupation is an auto mechanic.

259 CHURCH HISTORY:

- 260 The Scandinavians started coming in 1836.

- 276 In the 1920's the church changed over to English.
- 309 The early settlers were more Scotch-Irish-English because they were large landholders out east; they sold the land later to the Scandanavians.
- 325 Logging was the main industry back when the church was first settled.
- 343 The church has been going up and down with growth.
- 347 With the influx of other religions, they have eleven denominations in the small area around Mora which has contributed to small memberships in these churches.
- 361 In the last fifteen years, there has been a decline in membership.
- 364 There was a surge at the time of the building of the church.
- 367 This church was built in 1955. The church before was built September 29, 1889; it was built on a different location.
- 375 The old church was sold to the Nazarems; the structure survived until 1977 when it was destroyed by a fire.
- 405 The old Methodist parsonage is being reconstituted into the Social Servies building.
- 415 The old church was located east of Maple, west of the court house, and adjacent to the water tower.
- 443 The historical center in Mora has copies and information on this church.
- 470 The Methodists have historically have been social activists.
- 489 Mora is unique because the ecumenical atmosphere between the churches is high.
- 504 They have a weekly study group; the churches in Mora have united and formed a joint approach to requirements for marriage.

SUBJECTS COVERED: Tape 1 Side 2

002 CHURCH HISTORY:

- 002 The church is trying to get people more involved in the marriage preparations.
- 005 The church has premarriage inventories and counseling sessions for the couples.
- 012 Six months to a year after a couple is married, they share their experiences, problems, and resolutions with other couples and counselors.
- 031 The church is starting more religious education programs--nursery thru six grade meet every Wednesday afternoon.
- 039 The Catholic priest for four years has taken the seventh graders for one day a month; another day he has eighth and ninth graders; another day he has tenth thru twelfth graders.
- 055 When Mrs. Bronnichi was actively involved in the church, she taught Sunday School.
- 063 The church she was raised in was a mission orientated school.
- 066 Their Sunday School was active, and they had a strong youth group.
- 079 Rev. Gaughan starts his day at 9:00 in his office; his other duties involve working at the hospital and counseling.
- 086 He also does administrative details, organizing events, worship planning, and gathering the cooperative and ecumenical meetings.

- 098 The Mora United Methodist Church is a two-point charge.
115 Rev. Gaughan has been averaging two funerals a month.
119 He does different eulogies for different people.
138 It is hard to be organized because everything is so unplanned.
146 He feels there is more of a need for one-to-one counseling; it is good for a person just to hear themselves talk.
183 Years ago the pastor never did any of the counseling.
199 The United Methodist Church is more Catholic than Protestant.
211 Historically, the Methodists came out of the Anglican church in England.
218 Theologically, the Methodists are rooted from Catholics.
239 The Methodists are far more democratic and involved in laity than the Catholics.
263 Rev. Gaughan served in a rural church--Ogilvie.
286 The rural church tends to be more of a chapel.
310 There is some validity to the idea that rural churches have a deeper sense of roots while the urban churches have a higher turn over rates.
362 People don't seem to worry about what religion they are.
376 Rev. Gaughan feels that the roots aren't that deep.
403 The People in Maine and Massachusetts are more religious than people in the Midwest.
412 Many people in the Midwest have an individual religion; they feel that they are ethical if they just believe in God.
432 Everyone has there own God and moral codes.
460 With older people the church is there, and they believe in it more.
492 When Mrs. Bronnichi was growing up, her mission church was mainly concerned with "thou shall not's."

SUBJECTS COVERED: Tape 2 Side 1

003 CHURCH HISTORY:

- 003 Rev. Gaughan feels that people should find out more about the church's doctrine.
014 People want to know about their roots and where they came from.
037 The local United Methodist church is autonomous with having its own administrative board, carrying out the details of the church, and having no set ritual that is written down.
042 The local church is owned by the Minnesota Conference.
044 The pastors are appointed every year when the District Superintendent comes around.
046 The annual church meeting is chaired by the District Superintendent.
048 Each church must make so much money by their outreach programs.
052 The autonomy is limited.
064 The Methodists, UCC, and Presbyterians in this area are smaller, and they pull together.
081 The UCC is very independent, socially liberal and theologically liberal.
085 The Methodists are liberal when it comes to major decisions.
125 Rev. Gaughan would not run for political office.
146 He is left-of-center politically.
158 The Methodist denomination is strongly affirmative toward women being ordained.

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181 In 1956 women started to be ordained.

228 Rev. Gaughan's wifes name is Blaire Coaci; she was originally from Toronto.