



Oak Leaves

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The Life and Ministry of the Rev. Sophus Christian Nels Peterson

By Myra Jeanette (Peterson) Gibeson, Jeanette Gibeson Eggert, and John Eggert



The pastoral ministry of Rev. C. N. Peterson spanned more than 45 years, from his ordination in 1889 until a health crisis caused his retirement in 1935. In 1918 he joined with twelve other pastors at Lime Creek, Iowa to form the Evangelical Lutheran Synod. The thirteen founding pastors were Christian Anderson, Lauritis S. Guttebo, Emil Hansen, Bjug Harstad, Henry

Ingebritson, L. P. Jensen, George O. Lillegard, J. A. Moldstad, G. P. Nesseth, Holden M. Olsen, C. N. Peterson, J. E. Thoen, and A. J. Torgerson.¹ This article summarizes the life and ministry of Rev. C. N. Peterson from historical sources and personal recollections from his daughter, Myra Jeanette (Peterson) Gibeson.

Formative Influences

Rev. C. N. Peterson was the first-born son of Nels and Marta Peterson, who named him Sophus Christian Nels Peterson. He was born in Norway Lake, Minnesota on July 17, 1864. His father Nels, with his three brothers, Peter, Hans, and Kristian left their home in Norway to come to America in 1856 because they were not happy with the religious struggles of the Norwegian people. They first settled in Beloit, Wisconsin, but moved with their wives to Norway Lake, Minnesota in 1859. Each family established a homestead farm. Nels and his brothers survived by farming, hunting, and developing peaceful relationships with the Indian tribes in the area.

¹ Theodore A. Aaberg. *A City Set on a Hill, A History of the Evangelical Lutheran Synod (Norwegian Synod) 1918 - 1968* (Mankato, Minnesota: Evangelical Lutheran Synod, Board of Publication, 1968), 80.

Nels had been a parochial school teacher in Norway so he was instrumental in the establishment of educational opportunities in his new community. Nels also had a log church built on his property. Over time other larger churches were built in the area. Today, the Norway Lake Lutheran Historical Association maintains “The Old Log Church,” which may be that original church or a home for one of the Peterson families during those early days. It is known that for many years the log structure was used as a granary before being restored. Worship services in Norwegian are held annually in “The Old Log Church.”²



Theological Education

Christian was encouraged by his father to become a minister. He attended Luther College in Decorah, Iowa, from 1880–1886. He began his theological training at Luther Seminary in Madison, Wisconsin that same year. His ordination was reported in the November 16, 1889 edition of the *Evangelisk Luthersk Kirketidende*. Christian’s daughter, Myra, has translated this report into English:

Friday, October 25th, Candidate Christian Nels Peterson was ordained in Elk Grove Church by Iowa District Vice-President, T. A. Torgerson. The installation address was given by Pastor H. J. Strand based on Romans 12:13-16. The basis for the ordination address was 1 Corinthians 4:1-6. The celebration of communion was

² Information supplied by the Norway Lake Lutheran Historical Association, 2002.

performed by Pastor O. Smeby. Besides the pastors already named, Pastor L. P. Jensen also assisted. An offering was taken for Home Missions.

The ordinand’s *Vita* [biography], prepared by himself, reads thus: Sophus Christian N. Peterson is the son of Nels Peterson and his wife Marta, born in Santiago, Minn., on July 17, 1864, baptized October 23rd of the same year, and confirmed April 6, 1879, by Pastor L. J. Markhus. He came to Luther College in 1880 and graduated in 1886. That same autumn he was accepted as a theological student at Luther Seminary in Madison, Wisconsin, where by an examination held from the 11th through the 15th of June, 1889, he was found capable of taking up the Office of the Holy Ministry.

When he ventures to present himself today for ordination into the Office of the Holy Ministry, it is only in the hope and comfort that the faithful God, who has until now helped and directed everything for the best, will continue to do so. He asks for the intercession of this congregation and of every Christian believer. He has received a call as interim assistant pastor for Northwood and affiliated congregations. The ordinand is not aware of having used any means forbidden by God to enter the Office of the Ministry.³

³ *Evangelisk Luthersk Kirketidende* (November 16, 1889): 726. “Fredag den 25de Oktober blev Kandidat S. C. N. Peterson ordineret i Elk Grove Kirke af Iowa Distrikt Viceformand T. A. Torgerson. Intimationstalen holdtes af Past. H. J. Strand over Rom.12,13-16. Til Gundlag for Ordinationstalen lagdes 1 Kor. 4, 1-6. Altergangen forrettedes af Past. O. Smeby. Foruden navnte Prester assisterede ogsaa Past. L. P. Jensen. Offer optoges til Indremissionen.

Ordinandens Vita, forfattet af ham selv, lyder saaledes: Sophus Christian N. Peterson er søn af Nils Peterson og Hustru Martha Peterson, født i Santiago, Minn., den 17de Juli 1864, døbt den 23de Oktober same Aar, og konfirmeret den 6te April 1879 af Past. L. J. Markhus. Han kom i 1880 til Luther College, hvorfra han graduerede i 1886. Samme Høst blev han optagen som theologisk Student ved Luther Seminar i Madison, Wis., hvor han ved den fra 11te til 15de June 1889 afholdte Examen blev befunden dygtig til at overtage det hellige Predikeembede.

Naar han idag trør fremstille sig til Ordination for det hellige Predikeembede, er det kun i det Haab og den Fortrøstning, at den trofaste Gud, som hidtil har hjulpet og styret alt til det bedste, fremdeles vil gjøre det. Han beder om denne Menigheds og enhver troende kristens Forbøn. Han har modtaget Kald som midlertidig Hjælpeprest for

Life and Ministry – The Early Years

Christian served congregations in the Forest City, Iowa area for a year. He was then called to his home congregation in Norway Lake, Minnesota, to serve as an interim pastor. The congregation had no parsonage at the time, and asked Christian to stay with his parents. After two years there, he served at Sioux Falls Normal School in South Dakota for a year and then for 16 years as pastor in Effington, South Dakota.

In 1909, Christian began two years of service as financial secretary of Willmar Seminary, in Willmar, Minnesota then as pastor in Hibbing, Minnesota for three years. In addition, he served as secretary of the finance committee from 1902-11 and on the Board of Pensions from 1913-16. From 1917-19 he served as editor of the *Evangelisk Luthersk Tidende*.⁴

Christian married Anna Sophie Sander. They had no children, but cared for an “adopted daughter,” Ella, who came to them from a troubled family in one of the communities where they lived. Anna died in 1921.⁵

After the formation of the “Little Norwegian Synod”

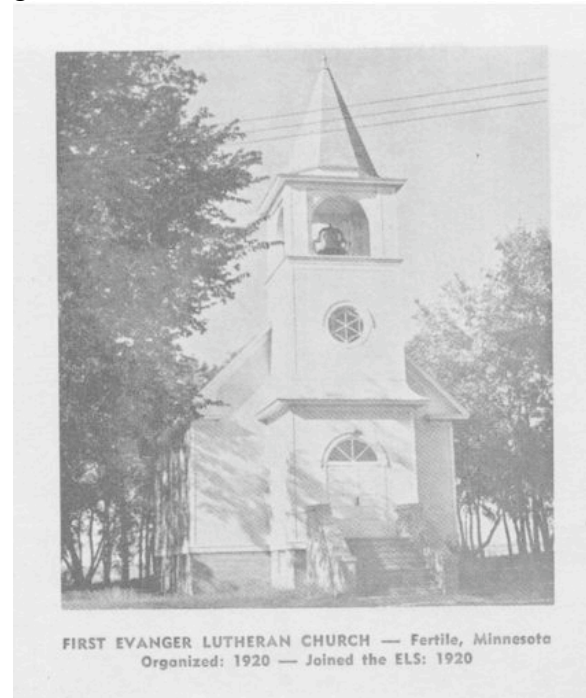
Rev. C. N. Peterson served as secretary of the newly formed Evangelical Lutheran Synod from 1918-19. He worked to connect pastors and congregations. By 1922 he was serving as pastor in New London, Minnesota, then from 1923 until his death in 1936 in Fertile, Minnesota. Ministry in rural Minnesota had many challenges. Small congregations were scattered and travel was difficult. The congregation in Fertile, Minnesota was named Evanger Lutheran Church, based on a common church name from Norway.

Northwood og annekterede Menigheder. Ordinanden er sig ikke bevidst at have brugt noget af Gud forbudtt Middel til at komme i Embedet. [This is quoted from a typewritten copy that has been kept by C. N. Peterson’s family.]

⁴ Aaberg, 78.

⁵ Family records.

Along with the congregation in Fertile, Rev. C. N. Peterson served a congregation in Bygland.



It was during those years that Rev. C. N. Peterson met and married Jeanette Thoreson. Their daughter, Myra, tells their story:

My father drove many miles to assist pastors. It was in this way that he met my mother. He assisted with the Sunday Service in Scandia, near Ada, Minnesota. Jeanette Thoreson served as organist there. The next time he was traveling to that area to conduct services for Rev. Runholdt, he stopped by my grandfather’s farm and asked permission to take Jeanette with him to serve as organist for the worship service he would be leading. Another time Jeanette traveled with him to assist Rev. Nesseth in Lengby. This friendship resulted in a wedding performed by Rev. Gullerud in St. Peter, Minnesota on the way to the Synod meeting in Lake Mills, Iowa, on June 1st, 1924.

More than two years later, I was born in Minnesota while he was on a train to a conference in Seattle, Washington. When he arrived there, friends met him with cigars and balloons announcing to him that his daughter had been born. He was 62 years old.

Rev. C. N. Peterson continued to conduct many worship services in the Norwegian language since most congregations had

some members who did not understand English. Myra learned to read Norwegian from the Bible and to sing many Norwegian songs before she was school age. She recalls:

Norwegian services were held for a small group of families who walked to my grandfather's farm. They gathered in the living room. My grandfather had built a pulpit and communion rail and my father conducted a full Norwegian Service complete with robe and *Prestekrage*, a stiffly starched white collar. The *Prestekrage* had two or three rows of ruffles that were ironed with a long iron rod with a wooden handle that was heated on our wood cookstove.

Myra was only nine years old when her father died in 1936. However, through the years she has gained additional information about his ministry from people she has met who knew him. In 1972 Myra met a pastor who told her that he recalled meeting Rev. C. N. Peterson at a Synodical Conference in Hibbing, Minnesota. This pastor was only a young boy at the time, but came with his father to the Conference. He remembered Rev. C. N. Peterson's strong interest in mission work. Rev. C. N. Peterson spoke out boldly encouraging cooperative efforts with all three synods so that mission work could go forward.

During her life journey, Myra has met people who were confirmed by her father in both English and Norwegian. She now realizes that many of the bedtime stories that her father told her were not fairy tales but true happenings from the early years of his ministry.

He told how families gathered together on Sunday, someone read the Bible, usually the father, and they sang some songs. Some families dressed up in their Sunday Best as they called it. He told about the excitement within a community when a Circuit Rider would come. With a pastor in their midst, services would be held including many baptisms, weddings, and even funerals.

Myra also recalls her father explaining to her some of the concerns that caused divi-

sions within communities of believers. Beliefs related to Holy Communion and worship practices were among those concerns.

Answering God's Call

Rev. C. N. Peterson faithfully served communities of God's people in Iowa, South Dakota, and Minnesota. He was a man of strong convictions, willing to stand firm with his like-minded colleagues in 1918 to establish the Evangelical Lutheran Synod. He served as pastor of congregations, but also at a school in South Dakota. He often traveled to conduct services in small communities in remote locations. He did not retire until a stroke forced him to at the age of 71. Only a few months later, God called him to his heavenly home on June 8, 1936.

Authors:

Myra Jeanette (Peterson) Gibeson graduated from Bethany High School in Mankato, Minnesota and then Concordia Teachers College in Seward, Nebraska. She married Richard E. Gibeson and together they had four children, Richard Jr., Jeanette, Paula, and Karl. Richard and Myra served as Lutheran teachers in Nebraska and Missouri. Myra also served many years as church organist at Immanuel Lutheran Church in Leland, Michigan.

Myra was assisted in writing this article by her daughter, Jeanette Gibeson Eggert, and son-in-law, John Eggert. Myra now lives with John and Jeanette in Portland, Oregon. John is an ordained minister in The Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod. Both John and Jeanette teach at Concordia University, Portland, Oregon.

Photo Credits:

Photo of Rev. C. N. Peterson from page 249 of *Norsk lutherske prester i Amerika, 1843 – 1913*, published by Augsburg Publishing House, Minneapolis, Minnesota, 1914.

Photo of First Evanger Lutheran Church in Fertile, Minnesota, from *A City Set on a Hill, A History of the Evangelical Lutheran Synod (Norwegian Synod) 1918 – 1968*, by Theodore A. Aaberg, published by the Board of Publication of the Evangelical Lutheran Synod, Mankato, Minnesota, 1968.

Photo of "The Old Log Church" by Myra Gibeson, 2009.

Katherine Oesleby: Pastor's Wife

Editors' note: Katherine Oesleby wrote this biography in 1987 for the 100th Anniversary celebration at Our Saviour's congregation in Madison, Wisconsin. Since then, she has moved to Mankato, Minnesota, as have her daughter and son-in-law, Ruth and Bob Heidenreich. She also now has two more great-grandchildren.



I was born in 1915 in Scarville, Iowa. I went to local school through high school. From 1933 to 1935 I attended Bethany College. After that I taught in rural schools for several years.

Nils and I met at a Youth Convention (June 1935) in Albert Lea, Minnesota, when he was a vicar in the Somber Congregation which was located about 12 miles from Scarville. We were married in 1941 by the Rev. J. A. Peterson. At that time Nils was serving a new mission in New Hampton, Iowa.

The next year he was called to Bethel Congregation in Sioux Falls, South Dakota. Ruth and John were born there. Our country was involved in World War II during the four years we lived there. A large Air Force

Base was located in Sioux Falls. We invited a soldier who visited our church to have dinner with us on Christmas Eve. He appreciated the lefse my mother had sent us. His mother had also made lefse, and he told us about growing up in a parsonage. His father was a pastor in the old Norwegian Synod.

In 1946 Nils was called to be pastor at Our Saviour's Church in Madison, Wisconsin. Young men in the congregation had recently returned from war service, and it was a happy and exciting time. Esther and Tom were born in Madison.

In 1960 Nils accepted a call to Pinehurst Church in Eau Claire, Wisconsin. In 1971 he became ill with cancer and died in May 1972. Our family appreciated the kindness and concern of the members of Pinehurst at that time.

I continued working in the office at Presto Industries until my retirement in 1980. In 1986 Ruth and Bob urged me to move to Hudson where I have lived happily ever since within walking distance of their home. During the Christmas holidays my children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren cherish their time together.

After retirement I have found gardening a rewarding hobby. For several years I have enjoyed the stimulation that my talented music teacher and her piano lessons provide.

I am a member of Salem (WELS) Lutheran Church in Stillwater, Minnesota. I am thankful to my gracious Lord for the blessings of good health.

John - Napa, California

Ruth - Hudson, Wisconsin

Esther - New Richmond, Wisconsin

Tom - Cody, Wyoming

3 grandchildren

4 great-grandchildren, including twins - boy and girl

To My Wife on Our Silver Anniversary **By Ulrik Vilhelm Koren**

“Hail to you, seated among roses, yourself a rose so lovely,
Little Elsa, I have loved you for so long secretly!”
That’s how I often greeted you with joking and jesting,
Yet you knew what sincerity was hidden under the joking.

While lost in thought you strolled among your father’s flowerbeds,
And lonely made your way to your mother’s resting place,
And were busy at home, strong-willed, gentle, sacrificing for your duty,
You knew, least of all, that you were like a lovely poem.

The happy Christmas days on the old estate —
And the path beside Lake Farris, where the dog roses stand —
And the stroll around Nanseth that bright summer eve —
And Rambling Rose Corner — you remember it all well!

There came the question: Do you dare follow far across the sea?
You answered: Not really, but I’ll do what I ought.
And you asked little about the danger or dread;
You knew Him who gives both salvation and bread.

A tearful farewell to each familiar and beloved place,
To Father’s home and Mother’s grave and your homeland as well,
And then the final sight, while the wagon rolled away:
An old bent figure standing in the manor gate!

But with confidence you embarked on the dangerous path,
Your father’s blessing did not let you down.
In dangerous sea and safest harbor the same quiet courage,
God’s Word in your heart and for a lamp to your feet.

And you kept busy in your distant and lonely home;
You never looked back with sadness, nor ahead with worry,
Without thought for yourself, with your God and your duty,
Quiet, praying, happy, you made your home rich.

And the years passed on, and you became a mother so rich,
And sons and daughters on your apron strings did hang;
Like your cherished flowers you raised them with love;
Your wealth and your joy was to sacrifice for them.

What reward did you ask for all these years?
The same as the flowers that stand in your garden:
They seek not their own, but with color and fragrance pure
They bring joy to everyone else and ask for nothing more.

You know “you promised nothing”; but much you have retained;
And what you have wished for, by God’s grace you have gained:
The peace and honor of your home, your husband’s joy so great;
That is the effect of your heart and your quiet action’s trace.

Hail to you, seated in honor, my noble silver bride!
My heartfelt thanks I bring; may you be blessed by God!
Our sons and daughters will bear you in their hands
Till one day up to heaven the angels bear your soul.

Editors’ note: Koren’s poems have meter and rhythm. This is a draft translation in free verse, attempting to retain the essential meaning and effect of the poem. The translation is by Mark DeGarmeaux.

God-given Talents at Work (Part 2 of 2)

By Julian G. Anderson

(Reprinted from the 1954 *Synod Report*)

Note: The theme of the 2009 ELS convention essay was stewardship. The following is part one of an essay on stewardship presented at the 1954 convention.

The subject of this essay is eminently practical—"God-given talents at work." It is also one which is highly personal, a topic which invites the most serious kind of soul-searching and self-examination, as we shall see. As a guide for our discussion we have divided the essay into four chief parts, as follows: 1) What Do We Mean By The Words "God-given Talents?" 2) What Are These God-given Talents Which We Have Received? 3) How Are We Expected To Use These God-given Talents? 4) How Does All This Apply To Us of The Norwegian Synod?

III. How Are We Expected to Use These God-given Talents?

"Straightway he that receiveth the five talents went and traded with them, and made other five talents. In like manner he also that received the two gained other two. But he that received the one went away and digged in the earth, and hid his lord's money. Now after a long time the lord of those servants cometh, and maketh a reckoning with them. And he that received the five talents came and brought other five talents, saying, 'Lord, thou deliverest unto me five talents; I have gained other five talents.' His lord said unto him, 'Well done, good and faithful servant: thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will set thee over many things; enter thou into the joy of thy Lord.' And he also that received the two talents came and said, 'Lord, thou deliveredst unto me two talents: I have gained other two talents.' His Lord said unto him, 'Well done, good and faithful servant: thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will set thee over many things; enter thou into the joy of thy lord.' And he also that had received the one talent came and said, 'Lord, I knew thee that thou art a hard man, reaping where thou didst not sow, and gathering where thou didst not scatter; and I was afraid and went away and hid my talent in the earth: thou hast thine own.'" But

his lord answered and said unto him, "Thou wicked and slothful servant, thou knowest that I reap where I sowed not, and gather where I did not scatter; thou oughtest therefore to have put my money to the bankers, and at my coming I should have received back mine own with interest. Take ye away therefore the talent from him, and give it unto him that hath the ten talents. For unto everyone that hath shall be given, and he shall have abundance; but from him that hath not, even that which he hath shall be taken away. And cast ye out the unprofitable servant into the outer darkness: there shall be the weeping and the gnashing of teeth.'" (Matthew 25:16-30, A.S.V.)

"Let a man so account of us, as of ministers of Christ, and stewards of the mysteries of God. Here, moreover, it is required in stewards, that a man be found faithful." (I Corinthians 4:1-2, A.S.V.)

Before we can answer our question: How are we to use our talents? We must first find the correct answer to still another question: How are we to regard ourselves? And the simplest way of finding this answer is to study carefully the two words, "servant" and "steward," which are used in the above-quoted texts and so often elsewhere in Scripture.

In the Parable of the Talents the word translated "servant" and the word, therefore, which represents us as Christians, is one which was used to designate *slaves* in Jesus' day—common, ordinary slaves. The word "steward," on the other hand, is one which was used to designate a particular kind of slave—one who had been appointed as a kind of superintendent over the other slaves, one who had been entrusted with the overall management of his master's household or property or business. Combining these two words, therefore, we find that we must regard ourselves as *slaves of Christ*, slaves who have been bought with a great price—

His own blood! Properly speaking, then, we belong to Him body and soul. But at the same time, we are slaves to whom have been given great responsibilities and great privileges. We have been *placed in charge* of our Lord's household and business, raised to the position of "stewards." To us has been entrusted the management of our Lord's business during His absence, as is brought out in the Parable of the Talents.

This means, therefore, that as slaves we must look upon all our talents and gifts as not belonging to us at all, but entirely as the property of Christ our Lord! The most we can say about our possession of such talents is that they have been committed into our hands as a sacred trust. In this respect our example is the early Church in Jerusalem, where "not one of them said that aught of the things which he possessed was his own."

It also means that as stewards our principle interest in life should be the successful prosecution of our Lord's business. It means that we should put our talents and gifts to work for the profit and advantage of Christ, our Lord and Master, and not use them for our own selfish ends. This is the point which is emphasized particularly in the Parable; of the Talents—that those who were commended as "faithful servants" were the ones who had put their Lord's talents to work for him and had earned for him a profit. It is specifically stated that he expected them to "put his money to the bankers" and to earn for him a profit. On the other hand, the one who failed to use his talent and to make such a profit was denounced as a "wicked and slothful servant," and was cast out of his master's household. In this connection the Scriptures are full of warnings against the misuse of our talents, as in the Parable of the Pounds, the Parable of the Rich Fool, and various other texts on the topic of faithful and unfaithful servants. Therefore Paul says that these various manifestations of the Spirit are given to us "*to profit withal*"—to

show an eternal profit, that is, with regard to the work of the Kingdom. And to do so, of course, we must first put our talents and abilities to use!

It remains for us, then, to define more accurately this work of the Kingdom with which we are to occupy ourselves and use our talents. And here again it is the apostle Paul who gives us the answer in the fourth chapter of his letter to the Ephesians, verses 11-12, where he says that the work of the Church consists in the "perfecting of the saints," "the work of ministering," and "the building up of the Body of Christ."

The Church of Christ, in other words, has a duty and responsibility towards itself and its own members—to help them to grow in grace and knowledge and sanctification. To this end those who have the gifts of prophecy and teaching and exhortation must exercise their talents, faithfully and diligently, and those to whom the Lord has given material gifts must give generously to build churches and schools. In carrying out this part of the Lord's work those who preach and teach are admonished that they must make their preaching and teaching conform to the "analogy of faith," teaching only those things which are in full agreement with the inspired Word of God, without addition, subtraction or alteration.

At the same time the Church has a duty and responsibility towards those of its own number who are in some sort of need or distress—to the poor, the aged, the sick, the dying, and to all those who are in any other kind of trouble or difficulty. To this end those who have the gifts of management and service and the various works of mercy must put their talents to work; and again the others must give liberally of their wealth to make all such works of charity possible!

And finally, the Church has a duty and responsibility towards all those who have not yet come to know Christ as their Savior. They are to send forth the saving Gospel of

Christ to all the world and preach it to every creature, and thereby to build up the Body of Christ and enlarge the Kingdom! To this end those who have the gifts of prophecy and languages must use their talents, and once again those who are financially able to do so must give of their substance to send out the preachers and missionaries and to build churches and schools.

There we have the picture of the Church in action, working as one great body—the Body of Christ—with each and every member *using* his God-given talents and performing his function perfectly. This is the picture that we should hold before our eyes. As Peter says, “According as each hath received a gift, ministering it among yourselves, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God; if any man speaketh, speaking as it were oracles of God; if any man ministereth, ministering as of the strength which God supplieth: that in all things God may be glorified through Jesus Christ...” (I Peter 4:10-11, A.S.V.). Yes, there we have the goal for all our work as Christians—“that in all things God may be glorified through Jesus Christ,” whose slaves and stewards we are! And finally, then, let us ask one last question:

IV. How Does All This Apply to Us of the Norwegian Synod?

“To whomsoever much is given, of him shall much he required; and to whom they commit much, of him will they ask the more.” (Luke 12:48, A.S.V.)

In the Parable of the Talents with which we began our study there is one significant fact which is well worth our serious consideration, namely: that the results expected in each case are proportionate to the number of talents given. That is to say, the servant to whom the five talents were given produced five talents of profit, and the servant to whom only two talents were given produced a proportionately smaller profit—namely, two talents. All of which illustrates the principle laid down by our Lord in Luke 12, that

“to whomsoever *much is given*, of him shall *much be required*.”

Let us now apply this truth to our own case. Perhaps someone will say that this principle can hardly apply to us of the Norwegian Synod, inasmuch as we are only a very small group, with small resources. And yet the facts prove otherwise—namely, that this principle does apply to us in a very appropriate manner. To us of the Norwegian Synod *much has been given!* We have received, indeed, many talents from our Lord!

Consider first the matter of our material resources. While it is true! that we have no extremely wealthy members in our synod, yet it is likewise true that our membership is made up of good, average American families. And it is well to remember that this average American family today has more money and more property and a higher standard of living than any other citizens of any country at any time in history! Assuming that we have about 3,500 families, and that each family is earning the current average American income, published recently of about \$5,000 per year, the annual income for all the families of our synod is about 17½ million dollars! Now then, if each family in our synod would follow the example of the New Testament Church and not regard this income as their own, and would give, therefore, a tithe or a tenth of this sum for the work of the Lord, the congregations of our synod would enjoy a combined annual income of 1¾ million dollars—about five times as much as reported last year! Such giving would raise our synodical budget to over \$300,000! Giving only 5% of our total income would enable every congregation in synod to have its own parochial school and still have \$150,000 left over for synodical purposes! Think what we could do each year with a budget of that size! No, we must surely admit that the Lord has given us *much* in the matter of material resources!

Then consider also the talents which the Lord has given the various members of our synod for management and service and works charity. Here, too, it is only necessary to recall that the American nation today has a much larger proportion of professionally trained men and women than any other group of people in history! With our system of schools and colleges more and more men and women are being trained each year in the professions of law, and medicine, and social work, and business. And we of the Norwegian Synod have as many of these professionally-trained people as any other group in proportion to our numbers—perhaps more. We have a plentiful supply of Christian doctors and nurses and businessmen. Here also the Lord has given us much!

But when we come to the primary gifts of prophecy, or preaching” and teaching, and wisdom and knowledge of God’s Word, we find that we have received these talents in a measure which is far out of proportion to our numbers! From our fathers we have received their saving doctrines of God’s Word pure and unadulterated. From our fathers we have received the tradition of thorough Christian education in parochial schools. Our pastors and teachers, therefore, are well trained, and can present and expound the Word of God in all of its; fullness

and purity in a manner absolutely unknown in many other church groups. The laymen of our synod possess a greater knowledge; of the Scriptures than perhaps any other church group in America! It is here that we realize how much—how very much—we have been given!

And in the face of all these facts we must remember also, therefore, that “to whomsoever much is given, of him shall *much be required.*” We dare not do as little as possible, or as much as the “average” church group. We must do more! We must bear *much* fruit, even as the Lord expects much fruit from us! Our pastors and teachers must continue to speak, as it were, the oracles of God in a world in which religious errors are being tolerated more and more and compromise is the order of the day! We must be busy with the works of charity! We must give generously and freely of our material resources to build new churches and schools and to expand the Kingdom of God over ever-widening horizons! All this we must do so that when our Lord re turns for judgment we may hear Him say to us, “Well done, good and faithful servant: thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will set thee over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy Lord!”

Oak Leaves
ELS Historical Society
6 Browns Court
Mankato, MN 56001

Renew your membership!

ELS Historical Society

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Send completed form and check (see box below right
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6 Browns Court — Mankato, MN 56001

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low for publication. Submitted manuscripts will be deposited in the
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MEMBERSHIP

All membership
renewals are due **June 1**

Voting Membership:
\$10/year: individual
\$15/year: husband & wife

Associate Membership:
\$15/year: individual
\$25/year: institutional
\$5/year: student

Lifetime Membership:
\$200