



Oak Leaves

Newsletter of the ELS Historical Society

Volume 18

May 2014

Issue 1

Please register early for memberships, and for tickets to the June 15th program, “In Their Own Words” (see insert). Thank you.

“In Their Own Words”

The June, 2014, Program
of the ELS Historical Society

by Mark O. Harstad

It will be difficult to come up with a program that will top the interest generated by the 2013 program. Michael Lilienthal’s play “The Oak Trees Still Stand” proved to be one of the Historical Society’s most successful ventures in terms of the number of people involved in the production (cast members, support crew, and musicians), and the record number of people who attended. The play provided an opportunity to gain insight into the circumstances that led to the reorganization of the Synod at Lime Creek in 1918. Instead of caving in to the various pressures to conform to powerful social trends, and march in lockstep with majority views at the expense of doctrinal integrity, the little group of a dozen pastors and about 200 lay people heeded the words of the Prophet Jeremiah (Ch. 6:16) which were featured in the sermon delivered by Bjug Harstad:

“Stand in the ways and see, and ask for the old paths, where the good way *is*, and walk in it; then you will find rest for your souls.”

This year we will be peering even farther back into our historical roots. We will be looking into the lives and thinking of the earliest leaders of the Old Norwegian Synod, their spouses, and other contemporaries. Our purpose is to uncover the qualities of those people that shaped the character of the church body which developed from

their work. And what better way to do that than to allow those people to speak for themselves through the legacy of written works they have left us.

A program committee consisting of Lois Jaeger, Erling Teigen, and Michael Lilienthal has been at work for several months. Lois and Erling have culled key quotations from the writings of Linka Preus, Elizabeth Koren, Herman Amberg Preus, Jacob Aal Ottesen, Ulrik Vilhelm Koren, and others. Diaries, letters, and more formal writings generated by these pioneer figures provide the content for much of the program. Correspondence they received from prominent people of their time, including Dr. C. F. W. Walther, will also be featured.



Last year’s talk back after Michael Lilienthal’s play, “The Oak Trees Still Stand.”

Seminarian and Historical Society board member Michael Lilienthal will again put his theatrical skills to work to shape the material into a “Readers’ Theater” format. The effect will be to have

these characters “come alive” and speak to us through their own words. One piece in particular which is sure to delight the audience is a piece of correspondence written by Dr. Walther to Pastor Ottesen. The light-hearted and jovial nature of the letter will put a very human face on the venerable Dr. Walther.

The program will be presented twice this year; on Sunday, June 15, following the Synod Sunday Service in the chapel and evening meal in the college dining facility, and again on Tuesday evening, June 17. The venue will be the Sigurd K. Lee Theater in the Ylvisaker Fine Arts Center.

As the 100th anniversary of the reorganization of the Synod approaches in 2018 the ELS Historical Society is striving to present many programs which will aid our constituency and all interested parties in understanding the unique history of the Evangelical Lutheran Synod.▪

A Very Special Ottesen Artifact

by Becky DeGarmeaux

Tucked into a corner of the Ottesen Museum is a large framed document. Amid beautiful italic Latin, and in very large script, is the name “Jacob Aall Ottesen.” At first glance it appears to be a diploma, complete with an official ribbon and seal. On closer examination, however, it’s something quite different. Housed in a simple wooden frame is J. A. Ottesen’s document of acceptance to the Royal Frederick University, now known as the University of Oslo.

Translated, the document reads as follows:

May it be happy and prosperous [for you]!
In the Royal Frederick University
— Jacob Aall Ottesen —

has been admitted to the number of
academic citizens, having shown himself,
by examination, to have progressed
praiseworthy in literature and liberal arts,
and, by giving his right hand,
having promised that he would preserve the principles
from the standard venerably
entrusted to him.

In trust of this matter, he has received this letter,
confirmed by the great seal of the University
and signed with our names.

Written at Christiania, 1 September 1844.

It is then signed by five members of the faculty: Christopher Hansteen, Christian Boeck, J. Keyser, Matthias Blytt, and Frederick Vibe.

At the far right, an official University ribbon has been attached to the document.



At the center bottom of the document is the University’s official seal. It is the image of the god Apollo playing a lyre, surrounded by the words “Universitas Regia Fredericana”.

In each of the four corners, additional papers have been added. In the two upper corners are Ottesen’s grades from December of 1845 — in essence, his report card. It is complete with the signature of Christopher Holmboe, the Dean of the Philosophical faculty.

In the lower left-hand corner is a list of grades from August of 1844. Since this was also signed by the Dean of the Philosophical faculty, these seem to be grades from his entrance exam. It appears that he did especially well in the subjects of German and Religion, receiving the grade “Udmerket godt” (Excellent-ly good) in each.

Finally, in the lower right-hand corner, is a small piece of paper written entirely in Norwegian. In translation it reads:

That Candidate of Theology Jacob Aall Ottesen today
by me in Oslo church was ordained to
administer the pastoral office for the Norwegian
Lutheran congregation in Manitowoc and area in the
United States in North America and
accordingly sworn in, [I] testify hereby.

Oslo Bishop’s residence, 22 June 1852.
J. L. Arup Bishop in Christiania

Beneath the Bishop’s signature is his official wax seal.

This is just one of many artifacts housed in the Ottesen Museum which ties us to the early Synodical fathers. A new display will feature the lives of Pastor Ottesen as well as Pastors Koren and Preus, the fathers of the Old Norwegian Synod, and their wives. It will be in place in time for Synod Convention in June and will remain up for about a year.

If you are in Mankato in the next year, you are welcome to come to the Ottesen Museum to see this display as well as the rest of the permanent display. Regular hours are Tuesday through Thursday, 1:30pm - 3:30pm or contact Museum Director Rebecca DeGarmeaux at museum@blc.edu for an appointment.▪

A Service Message

by Rev. G. Weseloh

English Lutheran Church, Cottonwood, MN.

Published by Armed Service Commission
of The Evangelical Lutheran Synod.

No. 146, May, 1966

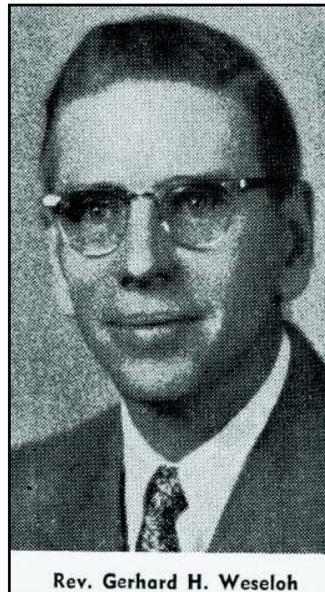
Gerhard Herbert Weseloh was born on July 7, 1917, at Fairhaven, Minnesota. He was the youngest child in a family of seven children, the son of a Lutheran minister, Henry Weseloh and his wife, Minne (Elfers). Baptized in infancy, his earliest childhood was spent in Fairhaven until the family moved to Carlos, Minnesota, where he resided until he finished high school in 1936, and that fall he attended business college at St. Cloud. He then worked in Fairhaven, Chicago, and on the West Coast.

He and Lois Johnson were married in 1941, and to this union were born seven children. In the fall of 1942 he and Lois moved to South Haven, Minnesota where he managed a Farmers Cooperative business.

Believing he could better serve in the Lord's kingdom by becoming a pastor, he entered Bethany Lutheran College in the fall of 1953. In 1958 he was graduated from the Bethany Lutheran Seminary. In June of 1958 he and his family moved to Cottonwood where he became the pastor at English Lutheran Church. In 1964 the Zion Lutheran congregation, Tracy, Minnesota, was added to his flock.

He passed away on January 21, 1967. He was the victim of a rapidly growing type of cancer. His six

daughters were Ellen, Linda, Patty Jo, Debra, Kathy, and Vicki; and he had one son, Barry Scott.



Rev. Gerhard H. Weseloh

Funeral services were held at the English Lutheran Church, Cottonwood, on Tuesday, January 24. The Rev. Paul Anderson conducted the altar service and the Rev. Victor Theiste officiated at the committal. Rev. Norman Madson preached the sermon, basing his message on a text previously requested by Pastor Weseloh, Phillipians 4:4 "Rejoice in the Lord alway: and again I say, Rejoice."

The Best Place to Go For Help!



Pastor Weseloh and
Confirmands 1963

There is no place like home, and it may well be that there is no time in the year when a serviceman realizes this more fully than when a special holiday such as Christmas or Easter rolls around. The

more he thinks about the good times he used to have at home on such occasions, the more homesick and lonely he is apt to become.

Right now we are near to a day which can also bring fond memories of some warm and beautiful days in the past. Mother's Day brings thoughts of Mother's love and devotion, and of how wonderful it was when she was at our side. We thank God for our mothers, and our lips utter a prayer which probably goes something like this:

“Thank God for mothers, young and old,
Who live today within His fold;
Who pattern, as in days of yore,
The godly mothers gone before;
Whose hands repose - complete their task.
Thank God for these. Then, Lord, we ask:
Bless mothers who for us still pray.
Thank God for them this Mother’s Day.”

Having spent three years in the army myself, I know how difficult it can be to think about home and mother and wife and family without getting the blues. Mother’s Day especially can be rough!

What should a Christian man in the service of his country do when he feels lonesome and sad? Should he try to drown his loneliness with a few too many drinks? Should he try to forget it all by going along with the boys on the kind of a sinful pleasure outing which he knows is not in keeping with the will of his Father who is in heaven? God forbid it! The Christian service man is going to find his help in the only place where real help can be found. He will take out his Bible, and in it he will find just the help he needs.

When he is sad and lonesome and blue, when everything seems to be going wrong, then there is no better medicine under the sun than the precious Book of Psalms. For the Psalmist experienced all of these same emotions, and therefore his inspired words have the God-given power to bring soothing balm and healing to the aching, bleeding heart.

Do you sometimes feel like crying? Don’t be ashamed of this emotion, as though it were not the manly thing to do. David was a real He-man. With the help of God he killed a bear, a lion, and the great giant, Goliath. He was an excellent, bold, courageous soldier. Yet David did his share of crying; and he was not the least bit ashamed to admit it. Just listen to what he says in the 42nd Psalm: “My tears have been my meat day and night, while they continually say unto me, Where is thy God? I will say unto God, my Rock, Why hast thou forgotten me? Why go I mourn-

ing because of the oppression of the enemy? Why art thou cast down, O my soul? and why art thou disquieted within me? Hope thou in God: for I shall yet praise him, who is the health of my countenance, and my God.” Psalm 42: 3,9,11

Do you feel discouraged? Maybe it is because you have been trusting too much in yourself and in your own powers and not enough in God. Perhaps God is trying to get you to put all of your trust in Him alone, and to cast all of your care upon Him. Go to the Psalms, and you will learn that that is what God wants you to do. The Psalmist says: “Commit thy way unto the Lord; trust also in him; and he shall bring it to pass.” Psalm 37:5 “I will lift up mine eyes unto the hills, from whence cometh my help. My help cometh from the Lord, which made heaven and earth. He will not suffer thy foot to be moved; he that keepeth thee will not slumber.” Psalm 121:1-3 “God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble.” Psalm 46:1

After you have gone to these Psalms and in them have found comfort for your troubled heart, then you will also want to thank God for helping you through His Word. The joy and gladness which He has restored to your life will make you want to open your lips and praise Him for His undeserved mercy and grace. Here again the Psalmist can supply you with just the words you need. Turn to the 103rd Psalm and what do you read? “Bless the Lord, O my soul: and all that is within me, bless his holy name. Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits: Who forgiveth all thine iniquities; who healeth all they diseases; Who redeemeth thy life from destruction; who crowneth thee with lovingkindness and tender mercies; Who satisfieth thy mouth with good things; so that thy youth is renewed like the eagle’s.” Psalm 103:1-5

The Bible is God’s Word to you. In it He tells you that he has forgiven you all of your sins for Christ’s sake, and that you can get to heaven through faith in Jesus Christ. In the Bible God provides you with advice, and help, and comfort for every time of need. You need God’s help! You may need it much more than you even realize.

Do not procrastinate! Go to the Bible and get what you need for your spiritual life right now!

God's Word a treasure is to me,
Through sorrow's night my sun shall be,
The Shield of faith in battle.
The Father's hand hath written there
My title as His child and heir:
"The Kingdom's thine forever;"
That promise faileth never!

Amen! ■

04/26/2012
HIST 460

Oral History Interview

Date: March 28, 2012

Interviewee: Chaplain Don Moldstad

Interviewer: Jaime Schultz

Rev. John A. Moldstad and the History of the ELS

I began the interview by asking questions about Rev. John A. Moldstad (J.A. Moldstad) and his history with the ELS. The interview concluded with questions for his grandson, Bethany Lutheran College Chaplain, Don Moldstad. It was fascinating to hear about J.A. Moldstad's contributions to the ELS and here at Bethany.

J.A. Moldstad's entire ministry was served in Chicago, where he served as pastor at St. Mark's Lutheran Church. "It was a very big congregation. Most of the people were of Norwegian background. After graduating from Luther College, he was president of a junior college in Clifton, Texas. The Synod tried to get a little college started down there among some of the Norwegian Lutherans. It didn't last very long. There weren't many students."

After this Moldstad returned home to keep the family store going in De Forest, [Wisconsin]. A few years later he studied German so that he could go to the Missouri Synod

Seminary in St. Louis, because he wanted to study under a man named Dr. Franz Pieper, while studying for the ministry. After being ordained, he married Ethelyn Halvorson. They had three sons: John Allyn, Paul and Robert.

Rev.

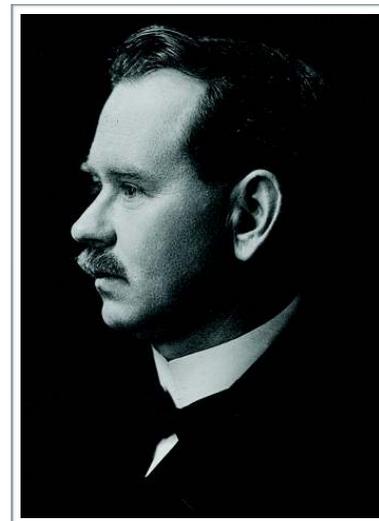
Moldstad served as the vice-president of the little synod at the beginning, and was the editor of their main newspaper. Along with other pastors, he was instrumental in acquiring Bethany.

JS: They had a plan to open a college?

DM: "Bethany had started as a women's college in 1911, but things were not going well financially so it was on the market. Our synod had just re-organized in 1918 and some members realized the need for a college in order to survive as a church body. However, the synod didn't feel they could afford it. So a group of pastors and laymen borrowed the money themselves, and bought Bethany. They created what was called the Bethany Lutheran College Association. They owned it for a year before finally talking the ELS into buying the college."

JS: Do you know what impact Rev. Christian Moldstad [J.A. Moldstad's brother] had on the ELS?

DM: "He was the youngest boy in the family. He served as a pastor in Massachusetts. Later he was called to serve a church in Minneapolis called Fairview. Fairview and one other church [Emmaus] merged to become today's King of Grace Church. He took a call to teach at Bethany. His wife, Stephanie, did not like Minnesota, or the Midwest. She was from Massachusetts. She finally decided she did not want to be in Minnesota anymore, so she moved back to Boston, and he stayed behind to teach at Bethany. Eventually he also moved back to Massachusetts and started a church on Cape Cod.



Christian and his wife bought an old home and turned it into a bed and breakfast. In the huge living room of this old house, he would hold church services, and started a congregation.”



JS: Do you have any interesting stories you remember about Christian Moldstad?

DM: “When I was about ten, we went to visit his house

church. There were probably thirty people in attendance. They had an old pump organ, an altar and a pulpit. My great-uncle Christian was probably in his eighties by this time. He came down the aisle in his gown, went up to the altar and noticed the candles weren’t lit. So this little elderly man took out an old stick match from his pocket. He stood on one foot, striking the match on his shoe, and lit the candle. My siblings and I thought it was so funny! Standing in front of this dignified church, and he just pulled his leg up and lit a match!”

Next, I asked about the original pastors who started the ELS.

JS: What are the doctrines they taught?

DM: “They wanted to stick very closely to what the Bible teaches. And also what the Lutheran confessions would say based on the Bible, and the teaching that really caused the tension, that made some Lutherans leave, was over the doctrine of Election or Predestination. It’s primarily found in Ephesians chapter 1.

“God chose us in Christ before the creation of the world, to be holy and blameless in his sight. In love he predestined us to be adopted as sons through Jesus Christ, in accordance with his pleasure and will.’ God predetermined and chose who would be believers in Christ even before he created the world. That’s called Election.

“Some people started to teach this in certain churches, that God picked people because he saw they would be good Christians. In other

words, He picked them because He saw they would believe in Christ. As if God would look ahead at Don Moldstad and say, ‘Well, he could probably be a Christian. I’ll pick him.’ But that’s not really what the Bible says. The reason God selected me had nothing to do with me. It was all purely by His mercy and His grace in Christ.

“That’s really the issue that started our little synod. The group they used to be in, the Norwegian Synod, was a huge church body, which wanted to join other churches that thought it was okay that God picked you because of something in you. And our little group of pastors said ‘That’s not right. We must stay with the Bible.’ They tried to get their big church body not to go along with this, but they couldn’t stop them. So they had to leave. That’s when the ELS got started. About ten years later was when they bought Bethany.”

JS: Where did the ELS start?

DM: “In 1917 that little minority of about twenty pastors and congregations realized they couldn’t enter this new merger since it would mean embracing some false teachings. They gathered in a hotel in St. Paul, Minnesota and decided that they would meet together the next year in order to re-organize their old Norwegian Synod (now the ELS). In June of 1918 they met in a little church down in Iowa where they had their first real synod meeting.”

JS: Did the thirteen pastors have a lot of power in their own little minority of their community?

DM: “Well, they obviously didn’t have any power in the big church body they left, or they would have turned it around. They tried to convince people, but it didn’t work. So they decided, ‘We have to start our own little group and stay with what we know is right.’ They didn’t think in terms of ‘power,’ but rather were focused on staying with the teachings of Scripture.”

JS: How about ‘influence’?

DM: “Yes, they had influence. Here’s an example. One of those pastors was named Rev. George Gullixson. Bethany’s Gullixson Hall is named after him. His congregation was not sure if they should leave the merger and join the ELS. He met with every family and talked to them—it took a year—and explained why they needed to leave,

and convinced his church finally to get out. I wouldn't call that power, but it was influence worked in people's hearts by the Holy Spirit. Pastors don't like to think in terms of 'power.'"

JS: Did they incorporate hymns into their church services?

DM: "Yes. Most of them came from Norwegian backgrounds and brought a Lutheran faith over with them from Norway. They just kept that going in their churches. They used the hymn books they had been using, so their worship life really didn't change any."

JS: Did they have services in English or Norwegian?

DM: "Depending on the church, some congregations had switched to English early on. Others kept services in Norwegian. Our synod still held a Norwegian service annually at our synod conventions as late as the 1980's."

JS: Do you know how many churches they founded?

DM: "Initially, there were about twenty churches that started the first year, in 1918. And, I think there were other churches that left this merger group that came to them in the next five years or ten years. They had about forty-five churches in their group within, at least twenty years. From that point on, they would try to start new churches. Other congregations joined them through the years, and today we have about 125."

JS: Do you know who the main leader of the ELS was?

DM: "They really didn't have a full-time president. They elected a president who was still a pastor of a congregation. We didn't have a full-time president until—I think it was the 1970s—maybe even in the 1980s."

JS: Were the ELS churches mostly in the Midwestern states?

DM: "Yes. Early on, most of the churches were in Minnesota, Iowa, Wisconsin, Michigan, Washington and Illinois. There were three big churches in Chicago."

JS: Do you know which state had the most members?

DM: "I believe Minnesota has the most ELS churches."

JS: Did any of the pastors write their own hymns?

DM: "It was pretty rare. They would sometimes write hymns for special services, like a church anniversary. But for the most part, they used the traditional hymns and songs. My Grandpa Madson translated an old Danish hymn."

JS: What kind of Bibles did they use, in what language? Did they start their services in Norwegian and then move on to English?

DM: "Yes. My Grandpa Moldstad preached in Norwegian into the 1920s, and maybe early 30s, but started doing both English and Norwegian about that time. My father was born in 1927, and he always spoke English in the house. In some of the rural country churches, where members were mostly Norwegian, they had Norwegian services into the 1950s."

JS: Did the ELS ever visit other countries for missionary purposes?

DM: "They sent missionaries to China, England and Africa. Years later in the 1960s, they sent missionaries to Peru—we still have a large mission down there. And today we have missionaries in a lot of different places."

JS: Did the pastors' wives have any influence on their ministry or the church services?

DM: "I know my grandma was very supportive of my grandfather, and very, very helpful to him in the ministry. She was the head of nurses at a big hospital in Chicago. She was a very well-educated woman; very intelligent. She had various functions in the congregation; she led certain things and helped in certain places."

"Each pastor's wife would be different. In her case, she liked helping in the church. Some pastors' wives wanted to stay in the shadows."

JS: How do you hope your family or your extended family will be remembered because of this history?

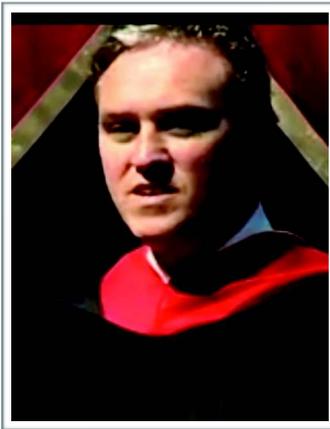
DM: "The one thing I hope will be is that we remain faithful and true to God's Word and to the work of Christ's church."

JS: How did you become a part of the ELS?

DM: "I guess I was born into it." (He laughs). "Both of my grandfathers were ELS pastors."

When I asked if he always wanted to be a chaplain, he laughed and said, "No. If you had

told me when I was your age (that I was going to be a chaplain) I would have laughed at you.” We



laughed some, and then he talked about how he had planned a career in Advertising. He had thought about being a commercial artist.

I asked him what changed, and he said, “Well, I did get my degree in Art at Mankato State. My last two years at MSU, I started to

realize how meaningless and empty life was when you didn’t have Christ in your life. And it made me think that maybe I should do something different with my life. And God used that to guide me into the ministry. I’m glad He did. It’s not work. Being a chaplain is fun.”

Concluding the interview, I thanked Chaplain Moldstad for his time; and for answering so many questions about J.A. Moldstad and the history of the ELS. It was a great interview. ■

Guaranteed Affordable Housing

by
Herman Harstad

Politicians make all kinds of promises they may not intend or have the power to keep. Our legislators are collectively held in record low esteem because of false promises and partisan gridlock. Couples make loving promises at the altar to forsake all others and love each other in sickness or health, in poverty or riches until death parts them. Many don’t keep their word. They find it easier to break their promises when keeping them brings hardship and pain.

Is there anyone we can trust to keep their word? The board of trustees of The Lutheran Academy in Parkland, Washington had assumed some land sale transactions would enable them to repay loans that were taken out to build the school in the 1890s. Howev-

er, an economic recession greatly reduced land values and the school was unable to repay the loans. Rev. Bjug Harstad was the only member left of the original board of di-



rectors – and creditors demanded to be paid. Consequently Harstad attempted to pay the debt by joining the stampede to the Klondike in search of gold. His journey began in February 1898 and ended in July 1899. The heat of the creditors’ demands made him willing to face the cold Alaska/Klondike winter. And it was cold! He, along with Christian friends from Tacoma, Washington and San Francisco, California lived in tents as they wended their way to Dawson. Temperatures reached 20 below zero. When they reached Dawson, they built a 12 by 12 foot cabin.

The thought of the “tent” of his physical body and the tent that housed his body triggered Biblical ruminations about tabernacles (tents). In a letter dated October 14, 1898 Harstad described the cabin as “wretched” with two small windows, a door, and a roof made of birch poles, moss, and earth. It provided better protection from the elements than his tent but neither was elegant or spacious like his home in Parkland. He took comfort from God’s word in 2 Corinthians 5:1-3, “...if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. For in this we groan, earnestly desiring to be clothed upon with our house which is from heaven: If so be that being clothed we shall not be found naked.”

Sometimes we fallible human beings are unable to keep our promises even though we

sincerely want to. The beauty of God is that it is impossible for him to lie and he has the power and resources to deliver all his promises, including new incorruptible bodies and eternal mansions in heaven. We can take God at his word.

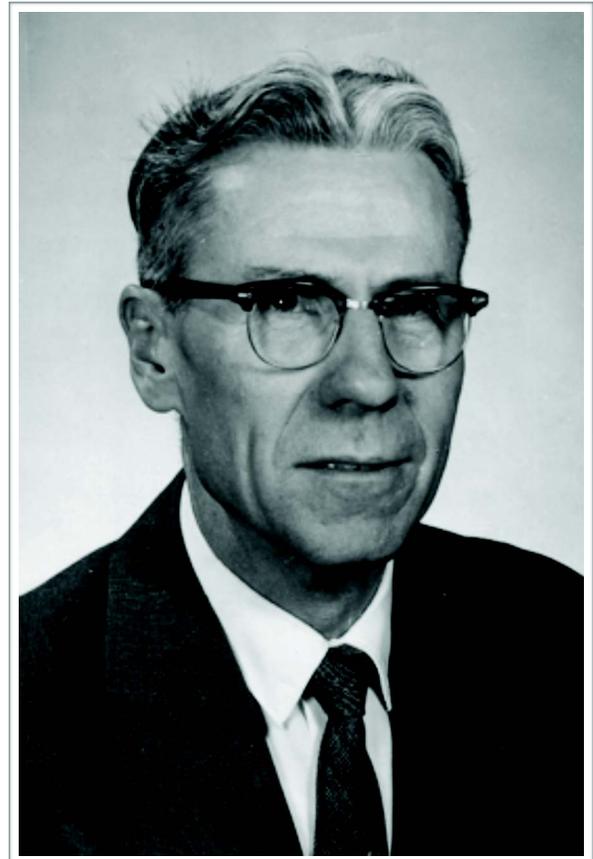
This summer, some ELS Historical Society members and some of their family members will trace Rev. Bjug Harstad's steps in the Klondike as he pulled, floated, or carried his belongings on his back; probably often thinking of his heavenly home. Watch for an article about this trip in a future issue of "Oak Leaves." ■

The following is written in tribute to the Rev. Milton Otto (1914-1982) upon the centennial of his birth.

Milton H. Otto was born December 6, 1914 in Cherokee County, Iowa. He graduated from Concordia Seminary (St. Louis, Missouri) in 1940. He served a year of vicarage at Princeton, Minnesota and was assistant pastor and taught parochial school at Concordia Lutheran Church in Eau Claire, Wisconsin where he married Marjorie Lund on August 9, 1942, two years to the day from when they first met. He also served as the pastor of English Lutheran Church (Cottonwood, Minnesota) and Saude and Jerico Lutheran Churches (Lawler, Iowa). Pastor Otto was the president of the Evangelical Lutheran Synod from 1954-57. He then served as the dean of Bethany Lutheran Seminary and an instructor of Bethany Lutheran College. Until 1976, he served as the Dean of the seminary. He entered the church triumphant on August 21, 1982.

Professor Otto said

The potential pulpiteer sat at the feet of the professor who was forty years his elder. This was not the first time they had met, for the pastor had thrice poured water upon his infant head.



For three years of instruction his pastoral heart shown forth. His words of wisdom still echo in the pulpiteer's heart:

At night, **Keep a note pad nearby your bed.** To write the sermon thoughts that come to your head.

He said, with thumb-worn Bible in hand, **For the first ten years, write-out sermons in full;** knowing full-well that a habit would form.

Then **Number your sermons and correct them after they're preached** because, after all, even **C.F.W. Walther did that.**

When you enter the pulpit **You make a promise** to preach upon the words which you have read.

If you don't preach upon the entire text, shorten it to the words upon which you shall preach.

Remember, the law and the gospel must always be told.
But at a funeral **The law is in the casket** and the gospel must be bold.

On Christmas and Easter, **The gospel of Jesus must sound forth alone.**
And always be careful to **Never confuse a title with a theme!**
The slender man said, Never travel without a sermon at hand;
Because **You'll never know when you'll be asked to preach.**

Church records are important and should be recorded on the day,
Because **You might be killed in an accident on your homeward way.**

Know your members and shepherd them well,
Because **You can't excommunicate someone after he's dead!**

The call to your first church may be of shorter duration,
Unless your mistakes are so small you can live with them.

When courting your wife, and you want to know how she will be,
Go **Meet her mother** and see the house you will have.

When meeting a bride and groom, encourage a wedding hymn by asking:
You want the congregation to participate in the service, don't you?

Take time each day for family devotions, but if this fails,
Then **Leave the book in the bathroom** where it's sure to be read.

He himself would think all these words are too flippant,
But his words still resound in pulpiteer's head.

The future wife of the parsonage was handed a clipping:

No profession can rob any man or woman of the right to love, to have some green Eden of home on which the world cannot intrude, which is their very own, apart from every claim and duty. If the minister's wife did no other thing than to make her husband happy and at rest in a perfect home, then through its effect on him she would have done more for the parish than 10,000 times all other services which she could possibly do. To be his perfect love is her greatest and most sacred duty.

He said, **Your main task, as the pastor's wife, will be to care for the man that he may pursue his great work.**

When the pulpiteer wed his youthful bride, the professor spoke at the altar:

When you make it a point to use God's Word and Sacrament for yourselves you shall be going with Jesus. When you go with Jesus you shall have spiritual life and sustenance. When you go with Jesus you shall receive the needed grace to fulfill your respective roles as husband and wife. When you go with Jesus you will have the necessary strength and patience to meet the problems and disappointments that will come your way.... Yes, when you go with Jesus you will be richly blessed with respect to your personal faith and life, for doesn't He say, "He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit."?

The professor now rejoices with the saints above. But the young pulpiteer, now aged with many years, often thinks back when he says, **Professor Otto said...**

Soli Deo Gloria

Submitted by Rev. Craig Ferkenstad

Norway Celebrates 200-year-old Constitution



Constituent Assembly meets at Eidsvoll, April-May 1814

Note: Compiled by Cheryl Harstad, Editor, all information is from the web site: www.Stortinget.no
The Storting (or Storthing) is the Norwegian Parliament. Stortinget, in Norwegian, means literally “the great council” or “the great assembly.” The article will continue in the August 2014 issue of “Oak Leaves”, with a history of “The Incredible Year,” 1814.

This year Norway is engaging young and old in celebrating the Bicentenary of their Constitution. Since May 17, 1814, the Norwegian Constitution has laid the foundations of democratic development in Norway. As Europe’s oldest and the world’s second oldest prevailing constitution, it is now a unifying symbol of freedom, independence and democracy. The objectives of the celebration are to:

- . Enhance knowledge about the Constitution and its significance,
- . Stimulate increased participation and engagement in democratic processes, and
- . Be a broad and inclusive nationwide celebration, culminating in a celebration throughout the length and breadth of the country on Norway’s national day, May 17th.

Norway is one of only a handful of European nations that, with the exception of the Second World War, when the Constitution and system of democracy were temporarily suspended, has not experienced a breakdown in its democratic development.

The provisions of the Constitution date from different eras. As a result, its evolution also reflects certain questionable features of Norwegian society over the past 200 years. One of the original provisions of the

Constitution specifically excluded Jews, among others, from the realm. In broader terms, the assimilation policy toward other national minorities and the Sami people has caused controversy. One of the central themes of the Bicentenary is to draw attention to the role, conditions and status of minorities in Norwegian society, particularly within a democratic and rights perspective. And to generate an increased awareness and effort to combat discrimination, racism and extremism.

Not only did the Constitution lay the foundations for democratic development, it was also instrumental in providing Norway with status as an independent country.

The Black Death caused the population of Norway to plummet. After the plague the country no longer had a ruling class that could administer the Norwegian state. Government of Norway gradually fell into foreign hands, and a union with Denmark was established in 1380. In 1536 the Norwegian Council of State was dissolved and national sovereignty transferred to Denmark. Because of poor economic conditions after several wars with Sweden, in 1660 King Frederik III turned Denmark-Norway into an absolute monarchy. When Denmark-Norway entered the Napoleonic wars, and trade links with Denmark were severed, people began to assert that Norway would be better off if it broke completely with Denmark.

In 1809 the Society for Norway’s Welfare was founded to promote business development and public education in Norway. The society quickly became the focal point for burgeoning Norwegian nationalism, with local chapters being established throughout the country. They campaigned intensely for the establishment of a university. Permission was granted in 1811.

King Frederik VI approved the creation of a Norwegian bank on January 14, 1814 which was important in promoting the country’s interests.

After 400 years of Danish rule, the hasty formation of a Norwegian Constitution is viewed as a strategic move to liberate the country, perhaps more than a wish to embrace democratic principles. The 112 men in the Constituent Assembly at Eidsvoll were inspired by the United States Declaration of Independence and the French Constitution. Though amended more than 400 times, the Constitution is considered to be the same working document. The original document is still in existence.

After an overall linguistic revision in 1903, the language of the Constitution has basically remained unaltered, and the 1903 norm is still used when changes to the Constitution are proposed.▪

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

Renew your membership!

ELS Historical Society

Name: _____

Address: _____

Send completed form and check (see box below right
for type of membership and correct amount) to:

ELS Historical Society

6 Browns Court — Mankato, MN 56001

Oak Leaves is published periodically by the Evangelical Lutheran Synod Historical Society, 6 Browns Court — Mankato, MN 56001; www.els-history.org

Editors: Herman and Cheryl Harstad - heharstad@charter.net

Board of Directors: Mark Harstad (Chair), Peter Anthony, Craig Ferkenstad, Betsy Hermanson, Lois Jaeger, Michael Lilienthal, Paul Madson, John Moldstad, Erling Teigen

Oak Leaves welcomes articles of both Synodical and local significance for publication. Articles may be edited for style, clarity, or length to allow for publication. Each issue will be deposited in the archives of the Evangelical Lutheran Synod.

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