



Oak Leaves

Newsletter of the ELS Historical Society

Volume 20

August 2016

Issue 2

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A report on the Home Missions Symposium at the ELS Historical Society Annual Meeting, held at 6 p.m., Sunday, June 19, 2016, Bethany Lutheran College, S. C. Ylvisaker Fine Arts Center

by Ted Gullixson

The twentieth annual meeting of the ELS Historical Society was held on June 19, 2016, in the Ylvisaker Fine Arts building.

Prof. Erling Teigen, president of the Society, welcomed the attendees to a symposium on home mission work in the Evangelical Lutheran Synod.

Rev. Peter Faugstad moderated the program, noting that every congregation is a mission congregation. Even rural congregations are islands of gospel-lights. One can discern three areas of mission work in the synod: first, early mission efforts from 1917 to 1950; second, establishing mission congregations through the Mission Board from 1950 to 1990; and third, mission work in population centers from 1990 to the present.

Representing the first era, the Rev. Bernt Tveit spoke about the mission of Holy Cross Lutheran Church in Madison, Wisconsin. In the 1870s, the old Norwegian Synod established a seminary in Madison. Many Norwegian Lutherans were attracted to the city. In 1922, the fifth annual synod convention of the re-organized synod was held in Madison. At the time, Our Saviour's Lutheran Church was in downtown Madison, with S.C. Ylvisaker as pastor. The delegates resolved to call two missionaries-at-large to serve scattered groups. Rev. Sophus Lee was called to Our Saviour's in 1925 to begin exploratory work on the north east side of Madison. Then in 1926, Erling Ylvisaker became the first pastor of Holy Cross and by September the congregation was organized at the home of S.S. Reque. A wood framed building was purchased and dedicated in 1927. The church grew rapidly to 300 members by 1930.



Prof. Michael Smith spoke about his mission work at Bullhead City, Arizona—representing the second era of mission work. Bullhead City (or Fort Mojave) was started in 1984 for workers on the Hoover Dam. After he



arrived in November 1988, Prof. Smith did six months of canvassing with a brief survey to find interested people. This was followed by a phone survey of 6,000 homes. In October 1989, the church held its first service in a mortuary building. Seventy-five people attended; some were students from Arizona Lutheran Academy, who sang during the service. By 1994, when Richard Fyffe served the congregation, they had started a Christian Day School.

The third era of missions was represented by Mr. Benjamin Wolff, a layman from Leander, Texas. This mission was started in May 2013. After four years of canvassing, 25 people came to the first service. Greater Austin is growing from the technology companies moving in. In ten years, Leander grew from 10,000 to 30,000 people. The synod purchased land with a building on it. Its patio has served as the outdoor worship area. The mission is seeking ways to serve the community, especially children! ■



U. V. Koren's Works — Now in English!

Ulrik Vilhelm Koren (1826-1910) was a beloved pastor and church leader for the Norwegian Synod, the first Norwegian pastor to live west of the Mississippi. He guided the Synod through difficult controversies, and helped establish relationships with the Wisconsin Synod and Missouri Synod, as well as helping to found colleges and academies throughout the Midwest. His writings are a clear application of Law and Gospel in a timeless way.

Four volumes of Koren's works were published in Norwegian shortly after his death in 1910. They are being made available in English translation. Three volumes have been published so far. Volume four is scheduled for June 2017. Prof. Mark DeGarmeaux has compiled previous translations and completed the translation work for this set.

- Volume 1 — sermons for the church year
- Volume 2 — addresses to synod meetings, etc.
- Volume 3 — journal articles
- Volume 4 — memoirs, poems, letters, short articles

Copies are available by mail from the ELS Ottesen Museum for \$25 for members of the ELS Historical Society, and \$27.50 for non-members (prices include postage). Checks can be made out to:

ELS Historical Society
6 Browns Court
Mankato, MN 56001



ELS Historical Society Annual Meeting Minutes Sunday, June 19, 2016

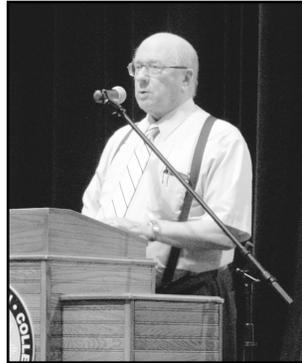
Lee Theater, Ylvisaker Fine Arts Center

The annual meeting of the ELSHS followed the evening's program presentation, "100 Years of Home

Missions of the ELS." Rev. Peter Faugstad moderated the program, a series of presentations beginning with early home missions under the Norwegian Synod Mission Board followed by work under the Board for Missions 1950-1990, and finally a report from a current home mission member. Rev. Bernt Tveit began with a brief history of Holy Cross Lutheran Church in Madison, Wisconsin. Rev. Dr. Michael Smith then spoke about Family of God Lutheran Church in Ft.

Mojave, Arizona which was organized in 1989. And finally Ben Wolf, a member of the current mission congregation in Leander, Texas, spoke about life and work in that mission field. Approximately 75 people were in attendance at the program.

President Erling Teigen called the meeting to order. The secretary and treasurer's reports were read and approved. The balance in the treasury as of June 19, 2016 was \$4341.64.



President Teigen then gave a brief summary of business that the board had discussed over the past year and Rebecca DeGarmeaux brought the group up to date on activity in the ELS Museum and



also sales of the first two volumes of the translated writings of Rev. U. V. Koren and the anticipated arrival of the third volume.

Election of board members followed

with board nominees Lois Jaeger and Erling Teigen both being reelected to serve their second three-year terms.

President Teigen made note to the group that the ELSHS is celebrating their 20th anniversary this year and credited past ELS President Rev. George Orvick, synod secretary Rev. Craig Ferkenstad and the late Norman Holte for their work in beginning the society.

There being no other old or new business the meeting adjourned to refreshments and fellowship in the gallery.

Respectfully submitted,

Lois Jaeger, secretary ■

Ottesen Museum Update

by Becky DeGarmeaux

Church History in Monetary Form

Church history isn't just found in books. One of the goals of the ELS Ottesen Museum is to SHOW as well as TELL the history of the Synod. The types of artifacts that can serve that purpose can vary. Personal possessions of the Synod's founders, church ware, photographs, and even an entire room set up to replicate a log cabin are all things that the Museum uses to tell the story of the Evangelical Lutheran Synod. The hope is that these things will make Synod history feel more real to us when we can see the actual objects that our synodical forefathers used in their everyday lives.

A recent donation to the Museum helps to shed light on one more aspect of the lives of the Synod's missionaries and their parishioners - money. But this is not money to be spent by the Museum, it's currency from the various mission fields. A collection of paper money from The Czech Republic, Czechoslovakia, Latvia, Ukraine, Chile, Peru, as well as the former East and West Germanys is one of the most recent accessions at the Museum.



These colorful slips of paper give us a record of what missionaries and natives alike would have used to make everyday purchases. They were issued in the years 1960 to 1994 and so cover over two decades of ELS mission work. They are now on display in the Ottesen Museum as well as other objects that tell the story of mission work in our Synod. ■

Luther Days

A special event designed to teach about various aspects of Lutheranism is being planned for this fall. Luther Days is being held on September 17, 2016, on the campus of Shoreland Lutheran High School near Somers, Wisconsin. It is being sponsored by a variety of organizations within the Wisconsin Synod and will

feature presentations on church history, worship, art, mission work, etc.

Several of the presentations are being given by members of the ELS, including Prof. Mark DeGarmeaux, Museum Director Becky DeGarmeaux, Mr. Kirk Meyer, Pastor Tony Pittenger, Pastor Jay Webber, and Pastor Paul Webber.

Find more information about sessions, times, and admission, go to the Luther Days website: <http://www.lutherdays.org>. ■



Acorns from the ELS Archives by Ted Gullixson

(The following is excerpted from a 1975 college paper "Menighedshistorie," recounting the early history of the Saude and Jerico congregations in north-east Iowa, by Craig A. Ferkenstad)

An Early Pioneer Pastor in North-east Iowa

The early, pioneer pastor served an extremely large area. A fine example of this is found in Ulrik Vilhelm Koren. He was born in Norway and attended Christiania University in Oslo. After he graduated he received a letter from America. In this letter, four congregations in north-east Iowa asked him to be their pastor. Koren accepted the call. He gave his first sermon in Iowa on Christmas day in 1853. It was four years until another minister arrived to serve the Norwegians west of the Mississippi River. Until this time Koren served settlers in eight counties in Iowa and Minnesota. His parish included: Little Iowa (on Washington Prairie), Paint Creek, Turkey River, Big Canoe, Little Turkey, and the settlements in Fillmore and Houston counties in Minnesota. In 1853 F.C. Clausen took charge of Big Canoe and much of the work in Minnesota.

Many congregations were organized in north-east Iowa while Koren was serving the area. Most of these were formed out of the earlier missionary work of N.O. Brandt and C.L. Clausen. These men had visited the area four times in the years 1851–1853. There are only two congregations in the State of Iowa that

Koren organized from his own missionary endeavors. These congregations are Little Turkey and Crane Creek, in Chickasaw County. It is to these two congregations that we shall now turn.

The last settlements made in the continuous westward movement of the Norwegians in Iowa, are found in Chickasaw and Howard Counties. These were distinct settlements. To the east we find settlements such as Muskego, Koshkonong, Paint Creek, and Washington Prairie. Here we find two settlements: Little Turkey River and Crane Creek.

In 1854 the first Norwegians arrived at the Little Turkey River Settlement. They came to this area in ox-drawn schooners. Most of the settlers were born in Telemark in Norway. In 1863 the first Norwegian settlers arrived at the Crane Creek Settlement. These settlers had first settled near Stoughton, Wisconsin. They then:

...settled near Vermillion [South Dakota]. The Civil War had broken out and there was unrest and disturbance in the air all over. The bloody Indian outbreaks at Spirit Lake, New Ulm, Willmar and other places occurred. The new settlements in South Dakota were fearful of a like fate but were at that time unmolested. The day came, however, a year or two later when they too fled for their lives. The old covered wagon, sunbaked and rickety, was hurriedly loaded, the oxen hooked on and the flight, at a snails pace, was on.

These pioneers ended their flight when they made their new home at the Crane Creek Settlement. The next year, families began to come to the Crane Creek Settlement directly from Jostedal, on the Sogn Fjord, in Norway.

U.V. Koren conducted the first service at the Little Turkey River Settlement in 1855. The services were held wherever there was enough room. This was done because the settlers did not have either the time or the money to erect church buildings. They had to work hard just to keep themselves alive. Finally, in the early 1860's, a church was built in Little Turkey. It was built of logs, just as their homes were. This church was twenty feet wide and thirty feet long. In describing this church, one person writes:

There was no tower and no stained glass windows. The seats were made of pine planks supported by oak legs snugly fitted into the planks through auger holes. There were no cushions, of course, and no other invitation to let the attention lapse. There was no organ and no choir, but in their places the parochial teacher, a stout and pleasant gentleman, acted as precenter ("Klokker"), and step by step the service came to an appropriate conclusion. The min-

ister wore a black gown and the old-style broad, white collar. There was no promiscuous handshaking at the door, as has become rather common usage of late. It may be noted, too, that during the service men and boys sat on one side of the middle aisle, and women and girls on the other. At the exit a collection was taken up to help defray church expenses, but instead of modern collection plates one or two men's hats were sometimes used. Part of the minister's salary was paid in oats and hay to keep his horses, for he needed a team and buggy to enable him to get around among his people.

Life was hard for the pioneers. They were forced to work hard carving their farms out of the forest. They also shared the fears of any frontier settlement. Even though the dangers of Indians were not directly present, they still feared them. One day when Rev. Koren was making the journey to Little Turkey to hold services he "...met the entire congregation fleeing to Calmar." They were scared of being attacked by Indians. Along with these fears there was a very high death rate. It was common in most settlements that death's toll was very heavy in the early years. In 1877, at Little Turkey and Crane Creek, the death rate was nine percent of the baptized membership of the churches. There were thirty funerals at Little Turkey and forty funerals at Crane Creek. Many times the funerals were held in the absence of the minister. When the minister next came to the community he would deliver the funeral sermon.

The minister would come to the congregations several times during the year. When he did come the services would usually last several days. There would be funerals, weddings, and baptisms. The Little Turkey congregation received only ten to twelve services each year from Koren. When studying for confirmation, the children had to walk to Washington Prairie. This is where Pastor Koren lived. They would walk to Washington Prairie, stay overnight, and walk home the next day. It is a distance of over thirty miles from the settlements.

The settlements grew. Soon the people decided to organize a congregation. This was first done in the spring of 1857. The "Dale Norsk Evangelisk Lutherske Menighed" was formed at Little Turkey. It was organized by eleven families. A log church was built as their House of Worship. About the time the church was built the cemetery was moved. It had been located in a field several miles to the north. The departed loved ones were "...interred near the old oak tree with the usual commitment service on May 19, 1862." The first confirmation service was held in 1869. Before this, confirmation was held in the Washington Prairie church.

It was ten years later when a congregation was formed at Crane Creek. At first, the people had to go to Little Turkey to attend services. In 1864 U.V. Koren conducted his first service in the settlement. For a number of years services were held in schoolhouses. Services were held every six weeks. In 1867 the church was organized. There were sixty charter members. Originally it had the name Crowe Creek Congregation. The first confirmation service was held at Crowe Creek in 1875. This was a joint service for both the Little Turkey and Crowe Creek congregations.

The congregations were affiliated with the Norwegian Synod. Little Turkey became a member when it was organized. Crane Creek did not join the Synod until 1877. They both regularly sent delegates to the synodical conventions. They also supported the work of the Synod through gifts of money. A fine example of their dedication can be found in Luther College. In 1857 the Norwegian Synod voted to form a college. The college was moved to Decorah in 1862. Money was needed to construct the main building for the college. There were over 9,300 people in the Synod who gave money. The average gift was a little over sixteen dollars. Little Turkey also supported the work. By the time the building was dedicated in 1865, they had given close to three hundred dollars. One individual (John Landsverk) gave the large sum of one hundred dollars. We can here see the dedication of the pioneers. Even though there was much work to do at home, they still felt the urge to help others.

More pastors began to arrive to serve the immigrants. The result was that parishes became smaller. The first resident Norwegian minister in Chickasaw County was John Christian Tordenskjold Moses. He was born in Norway and immigrated to America in 1865. He then attended Concordia Seminary in St. Louis, Missouri. This is where the Norwegian Synod originally trained its pastors. After he was ordained, he served a call in Minnesota for one year. In 1869 he moved to the Little Turkey River valley. Here a parsonage was built. At this time the congregations of Little Turkey and Crane Creek became a separate parish. For twenty years Pastor Moses served these congregations. He also served the "Norwegian Lutheran Congregation in Cresco" and the "Plymouth Rock Congregation" (Orleans, Iowa) for several years.

Later the congregation at Crane Creek relocated to near the small town of Jerico, Iowa. The names of Little Turkey and Crane Creek were retained until 1923. Then the members of the Little Turkey congregation changed the name to Saude Lutheran Church and the Crane Creek congregation changed its name to Jerico Lutheran Church. ■

Symposium on the Future of the Lutheran Church

Presented by Glenn E. Reichwald
at the Reformation Lectures held at
Bethany Lutheran College and
Bethany Lutheran Theological Seminary
Mankato, Minnesota
October 29, 1987

(From the September 1988
Lutheran Synod Quarterly,
theological journal of the
Evangelical Lutheran Synod.)

Dear Students, Colleagues,
Visitors, and Friends,

It is with some trepidation that I express myself on the future of the Lutheran Church in the United States with three distinguished historians present: Dr. August Suelflow, Dr. Robert Kolb, and Prof. Arnold Koelpin.

When one looks around today at the various groups and individuals which label themselves "Lutheran," one sees infinite variety. Were one to use the familiar question of the quiz program, "Will the true Lutheran Church please stand up," all would do so. But a closer examination would reveal a total theological spectrum—from a decision-spiritual experience type to the opposite extreme of a semi-Marxist or even Marxist liberation theology. An entire spectrum of theological choices is available to anyone who wants to call himself a Lutheran. Hence when one looks at the future of the Lutheran Church, the present—which serves as the theological foundation for the future—is in itself the problem.

What I am trying to say is that we are, humanly speaking, creating the future by what we say, by what we do, and by what we are today. But what do we see when we look around? I speak here as a member of the Evangelical Lutheran Synod and against its background.

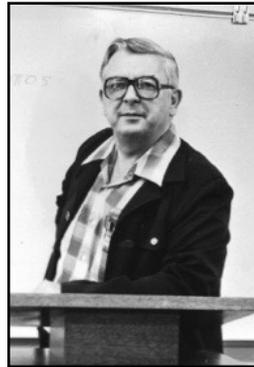
We see a loss of a sense of the past. Hence we have nothing to carry us into the future. The Evangelical Lutheran Synod, or the ELS, arose out of a split. It refused to enter into a merger which, prompted by Norwegian nationalism among other things, rather

completely ignored present doctrinal differences. The ELS reacted against a merger document which allowed for two forms of divine election. But that merged church has disappeared, having gone through three additional mergers as an independent body or as a part of others. What is the ELS to react against today? This also raises the question of why the ELS exists as a synod today. It certainly knew why it existed in the past. It certainly was very Waltherian in the person of its great theologian, U. V. Koren.

Grandsons now fill the pulpits of the ELS. Sociologists tell us that this is a very dangerous time in the life of any church body. The Lutheran Church - Missouri Synod learned this the hard way. The fathers contended for the truth, and the sons honored the fathers. But the grandsons tend to homogenize into the American scene. They tend to want to be like others; they may even know the words and the watchwords which their fathers and forefathers used. But the urgent thrust and meaning those words had for the fathers is often muted or even gone. In the ELS such words were "the unconditioned Gospel," "Unionism," and a host of others. How can we revive that zeal of the past as we move into the future?

What has happened to theology in the Lutheran Church? More and more time is spent at synodical conventions on church business—budgets, etc.—than on the business of the church: doctrine and missions. The ELS still has a doctrinal essay at its synodical conventions. But many Lutheran synods have either completely dropped them or substituted a so-called Bible study. What is happening in Lutheran Church bodies?

Another problem today is that laymen are often left out of the business of the church theology. Theology is reserved as the special preserve of the theologians. The actual practice of theology has become a kind of Gnosticism, reserved for those in the know. Perhaps this is the price that must be paid in any church body whose theologians run after the changing fads of the historical-critical method. Thus laymen are permitted to pay the bills of the church, but are not allowed to participate—beyond the token lay member or two on some boards—in the discussions of theology and in the resolution of theological questions. It is strange that pastors often do not really seem to trust the members whom they have instructed, preached to, and taught in Bible classes. It should also be remembered that in the ELS a number of congregations were family congregations. An individual family or two refused to enter the merger and so formed the nucleus of present-day congregations. Laymen could and did make the right choice when properly informed. Today



laymen are too often left out of the theological process; hence they do not involve themselves either.

Another problem which the Lutheran Church faces—and must solve—as it moves into the future is the tendency and fact that conservative Lutherans love to fight each other. If anyone questions this, all he need do is read the letters sent to *Christian News*. Such conflicts will certainly hinder any impact of the Lutheran Church on the future. Conservative Lutherans also at times adopt certain political forms and processes as Christian. One must ask what has happened to the doctrine of the two kingdoms. I intentionally leave this area vague because I have no desire to illustrate what I said in the first part of this paragraph. What I am really saying is that conservative Lutherans very often have a tendency to “shoot themselves in the foot.” This is shown by their approach to each other and to certain issues. There will be no future if we destroy ourselves in the present. The past offers excellent perspectives so that we do not ride theological “hobby horses.” This is a luxury which we cannot afford.

Another problem is that conservatives live so much in the past that they do not keep up on current issues and trends in theology in a way that they should. This includes both reading and continued education. It is interesting what has happened in certain Lutheran bodies. They lost their seminaries to the liberals; the conservatives did not always comprehend what was happening. The “Don’t-rock-the-boat” administrators insisted that all was well. But it was not! Scripture was denied, and basic doctrines of Christianity were often denigrated. Look also at what has happened today with the Lord’s Supper. Luther devoted reams of paper to define the mode of Christ’s real presence in the Lord’s Supper. Yet we hear those who call themselves Lutheran saying that the various formulations offered about the mode of Christ’s presence in the Lord’s Supper are little more than differences of opinion. They have learned nothing from Luther and from the stand of the faithful Lutheran confessors in the early 19th Century. But this should not be surprising, since a number of men who took part in the formative meetings of the ELCA did not even want to use the name “Lutheran” for the new body.

What does all this mean for the future of the Lutheran Church? Does the Lutheran Church have a future? Do I believe that the Lutheran Church has a future? Yes, I do! I believe this most sincerely because our Lord has promised us that His Word will never return void. Wherever the Gospel is preached, there souls will be won for Christ. I believe that the Lutheran Church will have a future when it turns for guidance to the great teachers of the past and *experiences* the same

thrills and blessings which those heroes of the faith experienced as they searched the Word of God, and as they created and later reaffirmed the truths of the Lutheran Confessions.

I believe that the Lutheran Church will have a future when it involves its laymen in its theology. The Lutheran Church today also needs a C. F. W. Walther to lead it. The Lutheran Church will have a future when its synods become what they were in the past—a fellowship of a common faith both *fides qua* and *fides quae* [The faith which believes and the faith which IS believed; That is, the act of faith, vs. the faith which we confess, i.e. the teaching of Scripture, the faith of the creeds]. We will have a revival and a future for the Lutheran Church when it becomes less institutionalized and more conscious of the means of grace. After all, the orthodoxy of a church body is not established by a balanced budget, but by what is taught and practiced in the parishes. Perhaps the best way to move into the future is to look back and carry into the future that which made the early Synodical Conference such a vital body.

I believe that the Lutheran Church will have a future when the pastoral office is seen once again as a vocation and not as a profession, and when pastoral conferences will once again place the study of the Word at the top of their agendas. Then pastors will act and react in the light of the Word. They will be prophets—messengers of God—and not mere priests or church functionaries.

I believe that the Lutheran Church will have a future when it treats the Word of God as a message from God and not as the object of philosophical speculation. After all, theology is a means toward an end—the salvation of mankind—and not an end in itself. I believe that the Lutheran Church will move ahead dynamically when it does not approach theology with the mind set of the Pharisees, but as our Lord did in His dealing with people. He had both flexibility when He dealt with the individual and yet singleness of purpose. So also the Lutheran Church must not just pass resolutions but act with resolution.

In other words, the Lutheran Church does have a heritage to build on as it moves into the future. It has a rich heritage illustrated and illuminated by men such as Luther and Walther. But it needs to rediscover that heritage for itself, restudy that heritage to make it its own, build on that heritage, and finally move with vigor into the future with guidance from the past. The Lutheran Church must know whence it came. Then it will know where it is going. It will have a future when it knows, uses, and builds on its theological heritage. ■

He Asked for the Old Paths

Centennial Series

by Norman A. Madson

Submitted by Craig Ferkenstad
From a *Lutheran Sentinel* 1952 issue

His name was perhaps known to but few outside of his own township. And even those who knew him did not fully appreciate the true character of the man. As a little lad I learned to know him as one who “had pity upon the poor.” While many of his neighbors perhaps suspected him of miserliness, since he lived most frugally, denying himself many of the comforts and conveniences which his means would have afforded him, I got to know him early in life as one who did not love money. On occasion, when my father would send me across the fields with the interest money due on the loan he had made to father, Knut Worsted would send me home again with the interest saying: “Tell your father that he can make better use of that than I.”

When I therefore as a young pastor was in need of means to help a worthy student preparing for work in our church as a parochial school teacher, I did not hesitate to turn to Knut for help; nor was the help denied me. Again it was the same reasoning he followed—the poor student would make better use of the money than would he. But while I had learned to know the old bachelor as perhaps few others knew him with respect to his attitude toward money, even I had not as yet learned to know him for his confessional steadfastness.

It grieved him, of course, that his own congregation went into the merger of 1917. But when a Synod congregation was organized in the community, Knut was one of the first to seek membership therein and to support it most generously. He was now an old man, and had ceased farming, living with some of his relatives. But every time I returned home for a brief visit during the summer months, Knut was anxious to see me, and to talk about the things which pertained to the interest of our little synod.

Then I discovered that Knut was well grounded in our confessional writings, and that it was his concern for the preservation of the truth as we have it expressed in the 11th article of the Formula of Concord, Thorough Declaration, which had made him leave the merger and seek membership in the synod which still wanted to remain faithful to the prophet’s admonition: “Stand ye in the ways, and see, and ask for the old paths, where is the good way, and walk therein, and ye shall find rest for your souls.” Jer. 6:16.

Grace Lutheran Church of Manitowoc County, Wisc., stands as a testimony to his quiet but steadfast adherence to the truth, which meant more to him than anything which this world affords. It is erected on the farm he so laboriously tilled and so dearly loved during his earthly sojourn, but which he deeded to the Norwegian Synod in his last will and testament. It is still true, thank God: “Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth. Yea; saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labours; and their works do follow them.” Rom. 14:18.■

Farewell Sermon

by Rev. Adolph M. Harstad

FOREWORD from the *Lutheran Synod Quarterly*,
September 1988:

On August 17 of this year a veteran of the cross, The Reverend Adolph [M.] Harstad, was called to his eternal rest. Shortly before his death he sent to the editor a copy of his farewell sermon which he preached at Holy Cross Lutheran Church, Madison, Wisconsin, upon his retirement as visitation pastor. In an accompanying note he said, “I am sending a copy of my farewell sermon at Holy Cross in 1984 for possible publication in the Quarterly. It could be sort of a farewell on my part to pastors and others of the Synod. None of us knows how much longer the Lord will give us to live, and at 86 I think it may not be much longer.” Blessed be the memory of our friend and brother, Adolph Harstad!

(**Editor’s Note:** We include this sermon as “sort of a farewell” as editors of *Oak Leaves* for five years. It is now 90 years since Herm’s dad was ordained.)

Farewell Sermon, preached by The Rev. Adolph M. Harstad, at Holy Cross Lutheran Church, Madison, Wisconsin (ELS) on March 25, 1984, after serving as Visitation pastor for fourteen years and having completed almost fifty-eight years in the ministry. [Also served at Thornton and Story City, Iowa, 1926-1930; Our Saviour’s Lutheran Church, Madison, Wisconsin, 1930-1946; Our Savior’s Lutheran Church, Princeton, Minnesota, 1946-1953; Chaplain at Bethesda Lutheran Home, Watertown, Wisconsin, 1953-1970.]

Prayer:

O Thou, who are the Help and the Strength of all them that trust in Thee, we thank Thee for enabling us to work together here in administering the Gospel of the grace of God in Jesus Christ to souls in need of forgiveness of sins and assurance of life and salvation.

Thou hast gone with us as we have preached Thy saving Word in nursing homes here in our city and when we spoke Thy Word in public and in private. Thou hast not despised our humble service. Thou hast daily forgiven us all our sins. Forsake us not, we pray Thee, as we enter into retirement after these many years of administering the Means of Grace in Thy church. May the Word of salvation continue with us all, yea, till heaven's morning breaks and earth's vain shadows flee. Thou hast promised to be with us always even unto the end of the world. Fulfill in us all this Thy great and wonderful promise. We trust in Thee, Lord Jesus. Amen.

The word of our text is written in the second chapter of the First Epistle of Paul to the Corinthians and in the second verse of that chapter, where we read as follows:

I determined not to know anything among you save Jesus Christ and Him crucified.

In Christ Jesus beloved Christian Friends:

This is the text which I have chosen for this occasion, and it is the text, by the way, on which I preached when I first entered the ministry almost fifty-eight years ago. I had this same text before me then, and I present it before you and before me today. *I determined not to know anything among you save Jesus Christ and Him crucified.* The crucified Lord Jesus Christ! He endured that cross for your sake and for my sake. He suffered death for us. He is our Hope and He is our life—spiritual life now and eternal life hereafter. And He it is who makes temporal death, or the death of the body, a blessed thing for those who believe in Him. In the Christian church, dear friends, we have been told by the Lord that we are to preach and teach. It has not been left to us to choose our subject. The Lord tells us: Preach Jesus Christ and Him crucified. That is the very center of our message, as it is the center of the Bible. The whole Bible points us in one direction, to the Lord Jesus Christ hanging on the cross for us to forgive our sins. And on the third day he rose victorious from the dead after He had made full payment for all our sins.

A man who had misspent his life by walking in sin lay critically ill; turning to the pastor he asked, "Do you think that a death-bed repentance does away with a whole life of sin?" And the pastor answered quietly: "No, but Calvary does." It isn't our repentance that does away with our sins, but Calvary. The blood of Jesus Christ, shed on the cross, cleanses us from all sin. We are saved by God's mercy in Jesus Christ and not by any works of ours. A great preacher by the name of Spurgeon said: "God's mercy is so great that it forgives great sins, to great sinners, after great

lengths of time, and then gives great favors and great privileges, and raises us up to great enjoyment in the great heaven of the great God." As John Bunyan says: "It must be great mercy or no mercy. For little mercy will never serve my turn." I have got to have a lot of mercy for my sins, and I am sure you feel the same way. You must have all the mercy that God has. And His mercy is endless to forgive us our sins of our youth, of our middle age, and of our old age. And may it be your determination, as it is mine, to know nothing save Jesus Christ and Him crucified. This has been the theme of my ministry, thanks be to God. And in the chapter that immediately precedes this text, we are told what Jesus Christ has become and what He is to us. And this is God Himself telling us.

We read in verse 30 of chapter one: *Who of God is made unto us* (and now notice these four things) *wisdom and righteousness and sanctification and redemption.* Let us take up these things, one by one, as we have time to do so this morning.

The first thing that is mentioned here that God has made Him unto us is Wisdom. You see, dear friends, Jesus crucified is God's wisdom to the world, and God's strength for our salvation. The acme of real wisdom that God wants us to have is Christ crucified. We know that mere worldly wisdom will save no one. It is Christ crucified that saves, so that is the wisdom which, above all, you and I want to have. If one has not learned to know Jesus Christ, he is lacking the only saving wisdom. Such a person is to be pitied. There is no salvation outside of faith in Jesus Christ. And when we believe in Jesus Christ as our Savior and the Son of God, which He was, then we want to follow all of the teachings of Jesus Christ, and not single out just some of the things, and not be willing to confess other things. Fie upon us if that is the case with us. I want to follow the things which Jesus Christ confessed and believed and taught. There are things in His teaching which are not popular in our day, and which some do not want to hold to. But we have to hold to them if we want to follow Jesus Christ.

The plenary inspiration of the Bible is one of these things, namely that the Bible is from beginning to end God's Word, reliable, dependable, without mistake. Jesus taught that. He said: *The Scriptures cannot be broken.* John 10:35. And to the Emmaus disciple He said: *O fools and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken.* (Luke 24:25) But in our day, you know, even in some churches, it is denied that the whole Bible, from beginning to end, is God's inspired Word. Follow Jesus? One does not follow Jesus if one denies that. I want to follow Him here and believe that my Bible is God's Word from beginning to end.

Another thing: The Ten Commandments. If Jesus is our Wisdom, we must hold to the Ten Commandments as God's standard of morality for all times. We must not yield to the idea of situation ethics or to the idea that the Commandments are outmoded and that we are not bound to them any longer. God gave us our body and life and He gave us the Ten Commandments by which to guide us in the use of our body and life. We see how any departure from them leads to grief and disaster. Jesus marvelously explained the Commandments for us in the Sermon on the Mount.

And again: If we follow Jesus as our Wisdom we will hold steadfastly to Creationism and not yield to the foolishness of evolution which holds that all things came into being by chance over countless ages of time and that man came up from the animals. Did Jesus believe that? He certainly did not. He said: *Have ye not read that He which made them at the beginning made them male and female.* Matt. 19:4. Jesus is Himself the Creator. He made all things. So if I am going to honor Him as Savior, I must accept Him also as my Creator. He is both my Redeemer and my Creator.

Here at Holy Cross Church, a few years ago, we started a Creation-Science Association. Some of you may remember me in that connection, and I am happy over that. For this doctrine of God's creation is one which all Christians should support.

The next thing mentioned here is that Jesus Christ is our Righteousness. You and I have to have righteousness if we are going to be acceptable with Him. It takes a holy person to be accepted with the holy God. Can you become holy? Can I become holy, sinner that I am? Through Christ crucified we can. And this because in Him all our sins are gone. Christ died for the sins of the whole world. That includes you and me and all men. We are righteous through the righteousness of Jesus Christ imputed to us. God counts it as being ours. He lived a holy life for us, and it is counted as though you and I had lived a holy life. And not only that, but He also died for our sins, so it is the same in God's sight as though we had died for our own sins. You see, we have a Substitute, who took care of our cause, the Lord Jesus Christ who was crucified and raised again. He is our Righteousness, as it says here that He is.

And He is our Sanctification. It is only through Jesus Christ that you and I can begin to live what the Bible calls a sanctified life. That means one that is dedicated to Christ and is walked as best we can in His ways. The believer in Jesus Christ does not want to walk in sin's ways. *Let every one that nameth the Name of Christ depart from iniquity,* the Bible says. Live a holy life as best you can. Not that that makes you holy. It is Christ's life that makes you holy. But when

you have accepted Him as your holiness and righteousness, you want your life to conform to His holy life. We are told to follow Jesus' footsteps. We want to walk as He walked in a life of love.

And lastly, it says that He is our Redemption. He has redeemed us lost and condemned creatures at the price of His own blood. So these are the things that the Bible says Jesus is made unto us: Wisdom, Righteousness, Sanctification, and Redemption. That is what Jesus is to you.

If there is anything that I have wanted to be in my life it is to be a man of the cross. When I left Bethesda Lutheran Home almost fourteen years ago to come over here, the best compliment that I received from patients over there at Bethesda Home was spoken by a young fellow whom I had instructed for Confirmation, teaching him to know Christ crucified. When I left there he came to me and said, "You know, when I look at the cross, I think of you." A man of the cross, that is what I want to be.

And now let me thank you, one and all, for the great privilege of serving you for almost fourteen years. It has been a position exactly fitted for me at this stage in my career in a ministry which has continued for almost fifty-eight years, thank God. May He go with me into retirement. And I want to speak a word of thanks especially to my dear friend and co-worker, Pastor Orvick. We have worked together wonderfully. Above all, thanks be to God. Amen, in Jesus' Name. ■



60th Anniversary of Ordination of Adolph M. Harstad at Parkland, Washington, August 10, 1986. (Bottom, Right) George M. Orvick. (Back row, L to R) John Schmidt, Mark O. Harstad, Vance Becker (LCMS), Adolph L. Harstad.

Editor's Note: Val Imm Drive is a road going up the hill to the Minnesota State University campus here in Mankato. Val Imm was a Mankato newspaperman and a decades-long Republican state senator. His daughter, with the same name, graduated from Bethany High School and also took some college courses at Bethany. She is the 2016 Distinguished Alumna. Following are some remembrances, congratulations and encouragement for the graduates, and her thanks for the award. The video of Bethany's graduation is on YouTube, which includes the following presentation by Val Imm Bashour, recorded in Dallas, Texas. An article by Robb Murray, *The other Val Imm comes home*, from the October 4, 2007 Mankato Free Press is on the internet, as is an article by Lance Schwartz in June's *Bethany Magazine*.

BLC Graduation, May 13, 2016

Val Imm Bashour

2016 Distinguished Alumna

Congratulations, Class of 2016! I'm so glad to be [there,] although it's not in person, however, I know that you are surrounded with proud, proud parents, faculty, and friends. I know also that you are so young and that you are dreaming, as we've all dreamt. I know I did. I was a young dreamer who dreamed very, very much about a stellar career in journalism and that career had its beginnings and its eventual development right there in Mankato Minnesota, where you all are now and where my dad had a weekly newspaper where I worked with him endlessly, it seemed to me at that time, and tirelessly, it seemed to me at that time.

In any event it nurtured my dream of journalism and as I entered the portals of Bethany, which I treasure the memory of, and spent subsequent four years there, I received a lot of encouragement in my English classes where I used to do, at the behest of my teacher, little newspapers that we thought we might apply to things that we were reading as though we were covering it in the very days that those authors were writing their novels. It was a wonderful thing.

Ultimately, after college, my life led me to jobs in New York, where it was public relations rather than journalism, for an art gallery, then to suburban Chicago, a newspaper, and that was advertising as opposed to writing, and then finally, Tacoma Washington, back to advertising, and ultimately to Dallas, Texas, where my wonderfully satisfying, and even historical, in some regards, career began to be really serious for me. It was wonderful because not only was I exposed to a lifestyle that I certainly hadn't seen previously—Texas being Texas—but also I had, by virtue of the newspaper affiliation, the opportunity to experience splendid historical events such as covering the JFK

assassination, [and] the visit of Adlai Stevenson, when very embarrassingly he was struck over the head by an irate person. We were rather ashamed of that, but there I was talking to him at the very time that happened. And I must say that I was really embarrassed.

Aside from that, the job I had as a society editor for the Dallas Times Herald as a society columnist also gave me great opportunities for travel abroad where I was able to do many business stories, so this job was not a confining thing and it was a very enlightening thing, one I will always treasure.

It's also the way I happened to meet my husbands. Now you notice, I said plural. Don't get nervous ... I was widowed in both cases, and they were both wonderful, wonderful God's gifts to me. My husband, Dr. Bashour, to whom I was married for 25 years, was an outstanding physician, much recognized internationally as well as nationally. And he was also a great philanthropist. He passed that to me, although I had a good deal of that inclination myself, and we became rather serious, although low-key philanthropists. ... In any event I maintain that interest now, probably more than I do in any other area, though I am still trying to do some writing and I will certainly let you know if that manifests in any way.



I want you to know whatever career path you choose, I hope it will be God-guided, because you have a wonderful thing awaiting you on this wonderful journey you're about to begin called Life.

Don't forget—in the good times and there will be good times, but there will also be bad times, and there will be tough times—He will never leave you nor forsake you. You have known that, you have learned that here at Bethany. You have a great Spiritual grounding, you have a great intellectual grounding, and I know that everyone here wishes you the very best. I certainly do. And I will look forward to keeping up with you through Bethany and my contacts there.

I would like very much to thank the president, the faculty, the selection committee for according me this honor. It is an honor I will treasure and really truly appreciate as I appreciate everything that Bethany gave me. Thank you and God speed. ■



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