

Oak Leaves

Newsletter of the ELS Historical Society

Volume 22

Fall 2018

Issue 4

PREUS, OTTESEN, KOREN - HOW THEY FACED DEATH

PASTOR H. A. PREUS' BEGRAVELSE [FUNERAL]

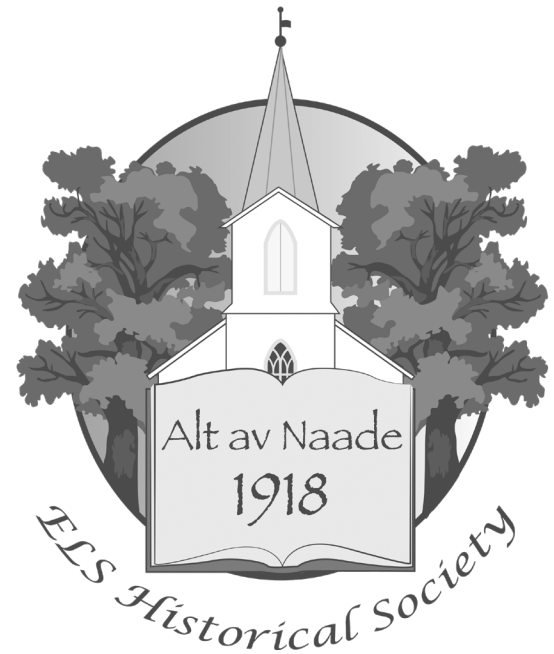
EVANGELISK LUTHERSK KIRKETIDENDE, JULY 14 1894,

VOL 21, NO. 28, PAGE 437 F.

In a previous issue *Kirketidende's* readers were brought the shocking news that the Synod's old beloved President had been called away from us by death. While we hope to give a more detailed description of his life and activities later, we will here first take the opportunity to explain a misunderstanding about his death given in the short notice in the previous issue. It said there that he died suddenly Monday morning. In a way that is true. Sunday evening, he went to bed not feeling very well and at 5:00 Monday morning he died. But if, by those words, the impression is that death occurred immediately and without warning, it is not true; his last sickness lasted five hours, and in all this time he had his full consciousness, so that he could speak with his children, who were with him, and prepared himself for death. And it was, even if difficult, yet a beautiful time these last hours in the world.

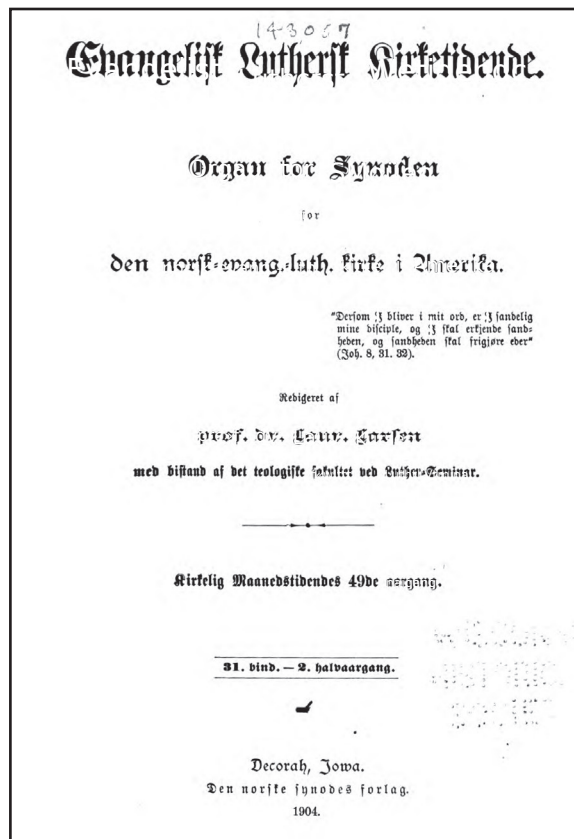
He made a fine confession of his faith, prayed earnestly to God, and sent warm greetings to the many he had been connected to here in the world.

However, at this time we chiefly want to report on the funeral. On Thursday, a memorial service was held in Lee [Illinois, forty miles south of Rockford, Illinois]; Pastor Koren spoke a few words at the house, and in the church, which the women of the congregation had



appropriately decorated, the sermon was delivered by Pastor Bjørge [probably Knut Bjørge, at the time President of the Minnesota District]. There were also a few words from Pastor Koren and Cantor Eide. Both of those mentioned as well as the third District President, Pastor [Halvor] Halvorson, hurried to Lee immediately after learning of the president's death. On Wednesday, the body of the deceased was brought to his home at Spring Prairie, accompanied not only by his son and son-in-law and their families, but also by seven representatives from the Lee congregation. On Friday, the funeral took place. Present were his only brother living in America together with all his children and grandchildren except Pastor

J. W. Preus's wife, who was sick and her three children and foster daughter's little child. He was carried from



continued on page 4

FROM THE EDITOR

George M. Orvick
1929–2018

Former President George M. Orvick passed away on September 27, 2018. Funeral services were conducted at Holy Cross Lutheran Church, Madison, Wisconsin on October 8. Born in Hanlontown, Iowa January 9, 1929, Orvick attended Bethany Lutheran College, Northwestern College in Watertown, Wisconsin and Bethany Lutheran Seminary. He served as President of the ELS from 1970 to 1976 and 1980-2002. During his presidency, he led the establishment of the Evangelical Lutheran Synod Historical Society and developed the Synod's Museum. This issue of *Oak Leaves* contains a tribute to Pastor Orvick by ELS Secretary Craig Ferkenstad. The article calls attention to President Orvick's tireless efforts to promote interest in the history of the Norwegian Synod of 1853 and the Reorganized Norwegian Synod of 1918.

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**Editor:** Erling T. Teigen, [eteigen@charter.net](mailto:eteigen@charter.net)

**Design and layout:** Lyla LaMay

**Board of Directors:** Marie Aaberg, Craig Ferkenstad, Theodore Gullixson, Lois Jaeger, (Secretary), Michael Lilienthal (President), Marge Lillo, John Moldstad, Andrew Soule, 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.

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Check out the Historical Society website


<http://www.els-history.org/>

More from Kirketidende

Recently, a Norwegian friend alerted me to an internet site (Hathitrust Digital Library) containing the church papers of the old Norwegian Synod, *Kirkelig Maanedstidende* (Monthly Church Times, 1855-1873) and its successor *Evangelisk Luthersk Kirketidende*, (Evangelical Lutheran Church Times, 1874-1917). As I browsed the site, I noticed an account of the death and funeral J. A. Ottesen in 1904. After reading it, I went to the appropriate volumes, to see if there were similar accounts of H. A. Preus' death in 1894, and U. V. Koren's death in 1910. There were, and they were interesting reading.

In our various anniversary celebrations involving the history of our ELS, we have gotten a good dose of papers and articles on the lives and work of the three much-loved leaders of the Norwegian Synod. But absent was reference to their deaths and funerals. After reading these accounts, I was struck by the way their deaths were described. In death, they continued to give a strong testimony to the gospel which had so enlivened their work as pioneer pastors.

I am happy to make these translations of the *Kirketidende* articles available to our readers. Not only did these fathers of our church devote their lives to the gospel, but they also proclaimed it in their deaths. No longer are we likely to find such accounts of the dying hours of the Christian so sensitively, yet vividly described for the public. I hope you will find them as edifying as I did. 🍁



Proclaim His Wonders
A Pictorial History of the Evangelical Lutheran Synod

A pictorial history has been published in commemoration of the 100th anniversary of the reorganization of the Evangelical Lutheran Synod.

This 312 page volume includes more than 400 photographs from the history of the synod. This is who we are. This is what we look like. Here are the wonders which God has done.

A sample of the book may be viewed on the synod's website at: els.org/els-100

PASTORS AT 1927 CONVENTION

Christmas Open House 2018



THE
NORWEGIANS
BECOME
AMERICANS.

Adopting the English Language
and American customs in
Norwegian-American
Homes and Churches

Tuesday, December 11, 2018

2:30 - 5:30 p.m.

ELS Ottesen Museum
4 Browns Court
Mankato, MN



BACK: G.A. Gullixson, J.E. Thoen, --?--, J. A. Moldstad, I. Blakken, J.B. Unseth, M. F. Mommsen. A.J. Torgerson, G. O. Lillegard, G.E. Møller, S.C. Ylvisaker, N.A. Madson, Holden Olsen, C. A. Moldstad, P.A. Widvey, C. U. Faye, Bjug Harstad, L. P. Jensen, Emil Hansen, O. M. Gullerud, H. M. Tjernagel.

MIDDLE: Mrs. J. A. Petersen, Mrs. M. F. Mommsen, Mrs. O. M. Gullerud, Mrs. E. Hansen, --?--, Mrs. H. Ingebritson, Mrs. S. Ylviaker, Mrs. C. Anderson, Christian Anderson, Mrs. C. A. Moldstad, Mrs. G. Gullixson, --?--.

FRONT: Justin A. Petersen, G. Guldberg, K. L. Guttebo, E. J. Onstad, John Hendriks, H. A. Preus, Tom Haugen, Oliver Harstad, C. J. Quill, Adolph Harstad, Henry Ingebritson.

Members of Clergy missing: (from 1927 *Beretning*, p. 87): O. H. Aaberg H. Aanestad Em., P. C. Forseth, L. S. Guttebo, B. Hovde Em., S. Lee, G. P.Nesseth, C.N. Peterson, J. R. Runholt, Stephen Sande, O.A. Sauer Em., M. F. Wiese Em., E. Ylvisaker. Teachers: F. Bale, O. Levorson, O. B. Overn

MORE CHANGES AT THE OTTESSEN MUSEUM

A few recent donations to the Ottesen Museum have led to some changes in a few of our displays.

Several years ago the original pump organ from Manchester Lutheran Church in Manchester, Minnesota was offered to the museum. Logistical problems prevented the delivery of the organ, which had been purchased by a former member, at that time. This summer Kathleen Hanson, who had purchased the organ, was able to deliver it to museum.

Although pump organs are small compared to many other styles of organs, an article of this size meant moving several of the large display cases to make it fit into the collection comfortably.

At about the same time, a committee hoping to create a monument on the Bethany College campus to honor

the Synod's war veterans, approached the museum about the possibility of a display there. Bringing in the organ made it possible to set up displays about the organ and veterans at the same time.

The organ display has grown into a church music display which now includes Chaplain Don Moldstad's original drawing for the logo on the Evangelical Lutheran Hymnary.



The veterans' display is a work in progress. Pastor Craig Ferkenstad has donated military memorabilia from his uncles Merle and Lloyd Aasen who served in Korea and World War II respectively. For now, these articles will form the core of this new display.

You are welcome to the Ottesen Museum to see these new displays as well as the rest of the collection.

the home by his brother and his children after a short talk by Prof. Laur. Larsen on John 14:18: "I will not leave you orphans; I will come to you."

His casket was carried into the solemnly adorned church by pastors. The funeral sermon, which we will print in the next issue, was delivered by Pastor Koren. After that, one after another came forward and testified and gave thanks for what the deceased had been for the Synod and its various institutions and departments. First Prof. Larsen on behalf of the brethren in the ministry and as representative of the teachers at Luther College brought special greetings and thanks and laid a wreath from them on the casket. Prof. [J. B.] Frich spoke for Luther Seminary, and Prof. Mikkelsen for the School-teachers Seminary (Lutheran Normal School, Sioux Falls, South Dakota, later Augustana College]. The latter recalled the deceased's zeal for Christian education and in his own name and his colleagues laid a cross of flowers on the casket. Then came the director of the children's home, Dr. Solheim, with a spray of flowers from his institution and some words of hearty thanks for everything that the deceased had done for it. On behalf of the synod and its congregations, especially the Eastern District, the district's president, Pastor Halvorson spoke. For the Iowa District, Pastor T. A. Torgerson, who has now become its president, and for the Minnesota District, its president, Pastor Bjørgo, recalled how the

now-departed synod president had a few days ago with life and vigor participated in the synod meeting of this district. One of the Missouri Synod's districts meeting just then in Minneapolis had, upon hearing the news of Pastor Preus's death, sent one of its members, Pastor Sievers, to represent the Missouri Synod at the funer-

al. In the Norwegian language, he spoke of his synod's sympathy and appreciation of what Pastor Preus had been for the Lutheran Church. Pastor Bjørgo also brought greetings from the German Minnesota Synod. Finally, Pastor Bredesen spoke on behalf of the congregations which Pastor Preus had served as pastor for these forty-three years, and which naturally had been closer to his heart than anything else. From these congregations he also laid a wreath on the casket.

In between and after these various messages of thanks and gratitude both for the departed and to God the giver of all good gifts, the choir of the Stoughton congregation sang.

This choir had traveled by carriage the morning of the same day, the long way from Stoughton in order to show the dear deceased this last honor.


After Pastor Bredesen had spoken a few words in English to the Americans present, all were given the opportunity to see and pay their last respects to the departed one, while the organist, Prof. Kadberg from Stoughton played beautiful funeral music. During the singing of the verse "Naar jeg herfra skal vige" he was carried out

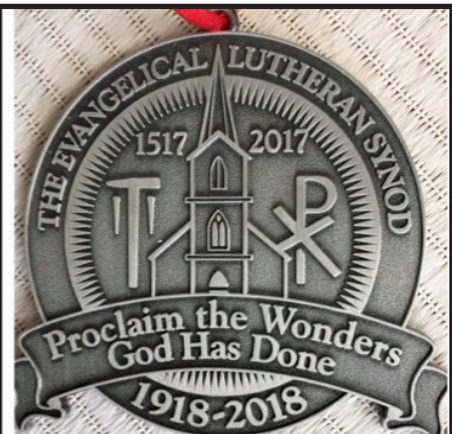


H.A. Preus

PROCLAIM THE WONDERS GOD HAS DONE

In commemoration of the centennial of the Evangelical Lutheran Synod, the ELS Historical Society has produced the medallion pictured to the right.

Order it from the ELS Ottesen Museum for \$15 (or \$10 dollars for members of the ELS Historical Society) plus \$2.50 shipping (6 Browns Court, Mankato MN 56001). 



to the grave by the elders of his congregation, where Pastor Juul spoke a few comforting words about the resurrection of the dead, and the casting of earth was performed by Pastor C. K. Preus, whereupon a hymn verse was sung and Professor Ylvisaker concluded the entire solemn occasion with a prayer.

Except for those already mentioned, the following pastors of our synod were present: A. R. Sagen, W. M. H. Petersen, Rosenquist, Bleken, Wiese, Klevjord, O. E. Brandt, and Alfred Johnson. In addition Pastors Petri and Rech of the German Wisconsin Synod and church council members, C. N. Børrelsen and G. Edwards were present.

Congregation members from both Pastor Preus's own and from other congregations were present in such great numbers that it was thus unfortunate that many could not find a place in the church. Many telegrams and letters, of which a couple were read in the church by Pastor Halvorson, were sent from individuals as well as congregations. Our Saviors congregation in Chicago would on the day of the funeral drape its church and Pastor Bjøgo traveled there to preach the following Sunday and hold a memorial service for the deceased. That his casket was so richly decorated with flowers need not be said; those nearby and far away had sent wreaths and bouquets, even as far away as Lee, Illinois.

“A LITTLE ABOUT PASTOR J. A. OTTESEN'S LAST DAYS”

EVANGELISK LUTHERSK KIRKETIDENDE, NOVEMBER 9, 1904,
VOL. 31, NO. 45 PAGE 1235 F.

It has certainly been generally known that old Pastor Ottesen in Decorah had recently grown more and more physically weak, so that at any moment one might expect that it should be the Lord's time to call him home to himself. It was especially difficult for him to walk so that toward the last it became almost impossible for him to come out from his bedroom into the parlor, and when he had come to the parlor, he laid on the sofa and only with much difficulty could he later go to his desk and write a letter. One of the last letters he wrote was one he sent to Dr. Ylvisaker for his (anniversary)

On Friday, October 8, he was in his living room for the last time. After that, he stayed in his bed where he spent

some time sitting dressed, but with a chair behind him until the time finally came that he had to lie in bed in the usual way.

But during all this he remained clear-headed. He enjoyed talking about what was going on in the world and in the church, and always showed a lively interest for friends and acquaintance. He was happy to receive visitors and always took a lively part in the conversation. But always it was seasoned with the salt of God's word, and what belongs to the soul's salvation was always the most important thing to him.

The writer of these lines who has had an intimate friendship with him for 46 years [Prof. Laur. Larsen arrived in 1857, and was editor of *Kirketidende* most closely fits this description], visited him the last time on Friday afternoon, October 29. I was with him about half an hour, and he was the one who did the most talking. We talked about what a treasure we have in the gospel, and how it is certainly everything, if we only keep it; without it nothing else has any worth. And we were amazed how God should have given us just this priceless treasure, since we are so completely unworthy of it. At the

end, he recited the entire explanation of the third article and spoke a few words about how important it was to believe this. Later in the evening his pastor visited, who in his talk at the funeral which we, hope to be able to reproduce later as well as the other addresses) spoke of the edifying conversations he had had with him. Later,



J.A. Ottesen

Prof. [C. K.] Preus visited him, and Ottesen also confessed to him his confident faith in the Savior.

At ten o'clock, he asked his daughter to read the evening prayer for him, and also the hymn he so often read: "Thanks be to thee Lord for this day." After she had done this, he prayed himself his usual evening prayers, in which among many others, he also included congregations and neighbors. And he laid himself to sleep and woke no more, but drew his last breath sometime after midnight.

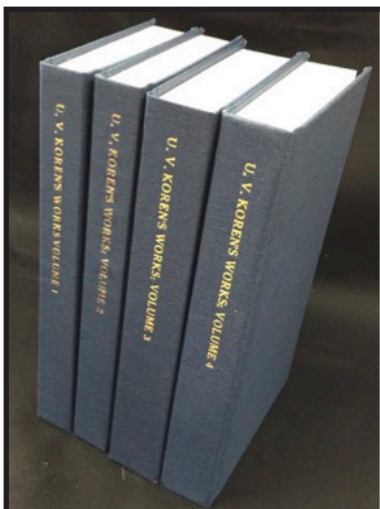
He was buried on Wednesday November 2. At 10:30 a.m. his family, the college faculty and some friends from Koshkonong together with some pastors there for the funeral, gathered at the house. A couple of hymn verses were sung and Dr. Laur. Larsen spoke briefly on Psalm 27:10. After that, they again sang a couple of hymn verses and then the college faculty carried the casket out to the hearse, which then carried it to the church. There it was taken into the church by the students of the college's upper class, who formed an honor guard by the coffin for the hours from 11:00 a.m. until 2:00 p.m. Then all who wished had the opportunity to view the deceased.

The church was beautifully decorated and many beautiful flowers were brought into the church for this occasion and were arranged outside the altar ring. At 2:00 the divine service began, during which Dr. Koren, Dr. Larsen, Pastor Torrison (in English), pastor Wiese, Prof. Preus, Dr. Ylvisaker, Pastor Torgerson, and Dr. Stub spoke. In addition, choral works were sung by the church and the college choirs.

The service concluded at 4:00 and then moved to the cemetery. The faculty and students together with professors Ylvisaker and Brandt from the seminary went in a procession before the hearse and stood at the entrance to the cemetery with bared heads while the hearse drove between them. The coffin, which had been carried out of the church by the pastors, was at the cemetery carried to the grave by congregation members from Koshkonong and Decorah. The committal service was conducted by Pastor [M. E.] Wiese [at the time pastor at Western Koshkonong congregation]. In addition, a hymn verse was sung by the college students, and Prof. Brandt concluded with prayer and the Benediction. At 5:00 the solemnities ended.

Present at the funeral were the son of the deceased, Pastor Otto C. Ottesen, and son-in-law, J. A. O. Stub, with their wives. Out-of-town pastors, besides those already mentioned, were pastors Askevold, Borge, J. W. Preus, Kvaase, Nordby, Chr. Andersen, H. Wein, Ottersen and P. Koren, together with three old pastors who are no longer in the ministry, H. A. Stub, N. Brandt, and M. P. Ruh. For the service, the church was packed, and a large crowd followed along to the grave. The solemn occasion was also favored by the most beautiful weather.

DR. KOREN STILL SPEAKS



U. V. Koren's Works

Mark DeGarmeaux editor

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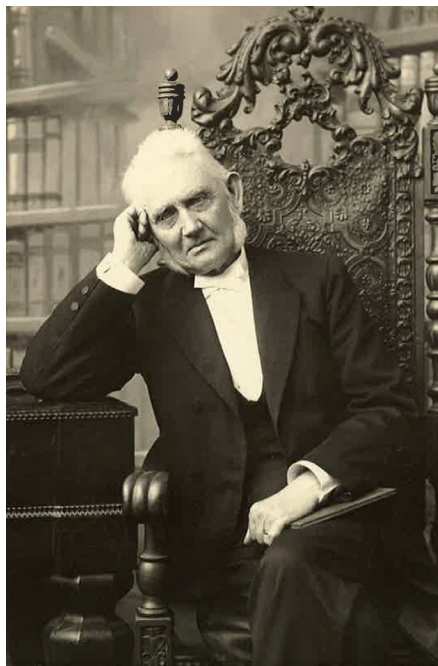
ELS Historical Society
6 Browns Ct
Mankato, MN 56001

“PASTOR DOCTOR THEOLOGIAE U. KOREN”

EVANGELISK LUTHERSK KIRKETIDENDE, DECEMBER 28, 1910,
VOL 37, NO. 52, PAGE 1425

Pastor Doctor theologiae U. Koren passed away, and, as it appeared, without great pain Monday evening at 10:00 p.m., December 19 [1910]. He had, as was generally known, been very weak during the last half year, and, it had been expected all this time by those around him and by Pastor Koren himself, that he could very soon be called away, and that it could come quickly. And so it was. Up to the last day, he read his mail and was occupied in his usual way. He sat up in bed and spoke with his son without, as it seemed, having any thought that the end was near, when he suddenly sank back and was dead. He would, had he lived three days longer to December 22, have completed 84 years. He had lived for fifty-seven of these at Washington Prairie, and been pastor in the same place. He had been ordained in Norway on the call to this place, and arrived Christmas eve 1853, the same year in which the Norwegian Synod had been founded. The following day, Christmas day, he preached his first sermon in one of the plain, newly-built houses which were all that were possible at that time. Since then, until two years ago, he preached in the same congregation every year on Christmas Day.

His original call is now divided into many parishes. When he arrived he immediately he began an extensive missionary activity outside of Washington Prairie. Soon, the newly established synod laid claim to his time. He became a member of the church council, and was ever since then also its secretary. When the synod in 1876 was divid-



U. Koren



Pastor Koren at the Pulpit

ed into districts, he became president of the Iowa district, and then when H. A. Preus died in 1894, he became his successor as president of the entire synod.

Wednesday morning, December 20th, the Luther College community learned of Dr. Koren's death. It was the next-to-last school day before Christmas vacation, and it was announced that this day's last school hours would be devoted to a little memorial service.

They assembled in the chapel where the rostrum was bedecked with black and adorned with a portrait of the deceased and white flowers. The assembly sang: "Til fryd og glædeminde for mig de falder us, naar jeg maa mig befinde taet ved dit Kors, min Gud," (vers. 7 & 8 of hymn 209—Salmebog 1903, "O Sacred head "ELH 334) The former director of the school, Dr. Laur. Larsen, then sought in a short talk to give the younger generation some understanding of what Pastor Koren had meant for the school, and especially how great a part he had had in its founding. Thereupon the college choir sang "Bedre kan jeg ikke fare end at fare til min Gud" (nr 455). The president director of the college, Prof. C. K. Preus, gave a vivid picture of the gifted personality of the deceased and the great work, the influence and significance of which, in the long career that was honored could not be overestimated. He ended with Lord's Prayer and the Benediction. ❁

GEORGE M. ORVICK HISTORIAN

1929-2018

By Craig Ferkenstad

At the age of seventy-three years, George Orvick quipped: “What do you do with a retired president?” His own answer: “You put him in the museum!”

George Orvick was ordained in 1953 during the centennial year of the organization of the former Norwegian Synod. He entered the church triumphant in 2018 during the centennial year of the reorganization of the Synod. He once wrote:



An anniversary can be dangerous you know. Yes, it could lead us to be self-satisfied that we have reached such a milestone. The Bible says, “When thou hast eaten and art full then beware lest thou forget the Lord” (Deuteronomy 6:11–12). Rather ... ask yourselves, “What can we do to show our faith and gratitude? How can we serve the gracious Lord in the next 100 years?” Paul writes, “Therefore beloved brethren be ye steadfast and unmovable always abounding in the work of the Lord, foreasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord” (1 Corinthians 15:58).

This brief article in *Oak Leaves* is intended to remember George Orvick’s deep appreciation for the history of the Evangelical Lutheran Synod.

George Orvick’s interest in synodical history was evident as he served as the pastor of Holy Cross Lutheran Church (Madison, Wisconsin) for thirty-two years. While there the congregation observed the fiftieth anniversary of its organization and he also was privileged to preach at both the seventieth and seventy-fifth anniversaries. During his years at Holy Cross, he became acquainted with Mrs. Julia (Lee) Reque, a charter member of Holy Cross, who died in 1972 at the age of 102

years. Her grandfather was a significant figure in the early years of the Koshkonong settlement. George often quoted her reminiscences and his love for Koshkonong and the history of the Norwegian Synod continued to grow.

The appreciation for that history did not diminish when George became the president of the Evangelical Lutheran Synod in 1970. Can anyone remember a President’s Message during those twenty-eight years when he did not refer to “the Oaks” at Koshkonong or to the forefathers who gathered at Lime Creek Lutheran Church in 1918 to reorganize the synod? These were a mere handful of people, a “plucked chicken.” Yet he realized that in this way the Lord preserved the truth of God’s word and passed it on to future generations. He did not want that history to be lost and for God’s people to forget the rock from whence they were hewn or the Savior who had redeemed them.

On the occasion of the synod’s fiftieth anniversary, George prepared a popular history of the Evangelical Lutheran Synod under the title *Our Great Heritage* for use within his own congregation and throughout the synod. Twenty-five years later, in anticipation of the synod’s seventy-fifth anniversary, he was the author of



A Brief History of the Evangelical Lutheran Synod from 1918–1927 which appears in the June and September 1990 issues of the *Lutheran Synod Quarterly*. In that same year, he was called upon to present *A History of the Christian Day School in the Evangelical Lutheran Synod* to the synod’s General Pastoral Conference.

In 1997, the ELS Historical Society was organized.

Along with BLC President Emeritus Norman Holte, ELS President George Orvick was instrumental in the vision and plans leading to the society's organization. The ELS Historical Society owes a debt of gratitude to these men whose vision led to the formation of this society.

Upon his retirement in 2002, George was given the title of "Director of Museum and Archives" and was provided with an office in a house located next to the synod-seminary building in Mankato. The house was in the process of being remodeled to provide space for the museum and additional synod offices. When the seminary was constructed, the synod archives received



its first permanent home, although various museum pieces remained scattered. Now, the Ottesen Museum also received its first permanent home. George was instrumental in the layout and design of the museum and composed all of the descriptions on the story boards. The museum was dedicated on Synod Sunday 2003. Shortly thereafter, he undertook the task of enlarging the museum's display space with the addition of the "log cabin" in the building's lower level which he intended to be reminiscent of the Egge cabin where Pastor U.V. Koren first lived when he arrived in Iowa in 1853. He continued in this position for nine years.

In 2003 George was one of three lecturers at the annual Reformation Lectures delivered in Mankato, Minnesota. Upon the occasion of the 150th anniversary of the organization of the former Norwegian Synod, he ably set forth "*The Legacy of Ulrich Vilhelm Koren*" who is considered one of the three fathers of the Norwegian Synod of 1853. Four years later, he published a book entitled, *Forget Not All His Benefits: sermons and messages marking historic events in the life of the Evangelical Lutheran Synod 1970-2002*.

At this year's centennial synod convention, the president-emeritus sent a greeting to the synod saying, "This 100th anniversary is a celebration of God's love and the blessings He has bestowed on our synod and its members. Let us never forget God's benefits." George knew that the synod's history was only a vehicle carrying the gospel of his Savior Jesus Christ. In the 1999 convention message, he said:



The Orvick Family

We find that our synod can no longer be called the "Norwegian Synod." Oh yes, we still like to talk about our Norwegian forefathers and our Scandinavian roots, and we by no means want to forget the precious heritage that they handed down to us.... We therefore want to be careful not to overemphasize our ethnic background lest others feel that they really don't fit in. Such is not the case. The truth is that we are an American synod, a melting pot of people of every land and nation. And all are more than welcome.

And so, in our Evangelical Lutheran Synod of every background and nationality, we joyfully sing:

O happy day when we shall stand

Amid the heavenly throng

And sing with hosts from every land

The new celestial song.

God, may Thy bounteous grace inspire

Our hearts so that we may

All join the heavenly white-robed choir

Upon that glorious day. (ELH 590, vs. 1,4) 🍁



ACORNS FROM THE ELS ARCHIVES

Theodore G. Gullixson Archivist



(The following appeared in "The Chicago Lutheran Herald," Vol. 1, No. 1, May 1919, page 1. The editor was Rev. Geo. A. Gullixson and the Business Manager was Rev. Herman A. Preus, both of Chicago)

EDITORIALS

Our purpose in publishing this joint parish paper is to meet the special needs of our churches at this time.

Great changes are taking place in the church in such rapid succession that it is almost bewildering. And while we hope and feel assured that our heavenly Father will guide events in His church so that they will be to the greatest good for His kingdom at large in the end, we can feel safe only when we in the fear of God cling closely to the old truths and to the tried paths to which He in His word leads us and to which He in His grace and wisdom urges us to be faithful.

While we pray God to help us to "beware of false prophets" we pray Him to do this by making us more intensely progressive with the Christian means He has placed in the hands of His disciples.

To be a conservative Bible Christian never means to be a "fossil." It means that he in this life and death struggle in which the Christian always is engaged uses only the keen damask blade of God's revealed Word.

It means that He uses the sword of the Spirit so that it may be felt against the powers of darkness within and without. It means that in all our Christian warfare we are only satisfied when we strike with the power of God as it is given in His word against the enemies of our salvation.

Our purpose will then be to help draw men to the powerful standard of the cross of Christ and to keep them faithful and strong as its defenders, to make them more patient and enduring in the trials to be met and more meek and obedient to the will of Him who by sacrifice has led and will lead "captivity captive."

But to the armament of God belongs eternal vigilance, a clear eye to discern the deceit and whiles of the enemy. For this we must pray and think and study.

May this publication become a humble means in the hand of God to help us to become true Christian he-

roes through faith in Him who has conquered sin and hell and death.

(The following appeared in the same issue, pages 1-2.)

REASONS WHY OUR CONGREGATIONS CANNOT JOIN THE LUTHERAN "MERGER"

Our churches have professed their adherence to:

- a) The Canonical books of the Old and New Testaments as the word of God and the only rule of faith and life;
- b) all the Symbolical Books of the Evangelical Lutheran Church, because these give a pure and unfalsified presentation of the doctrine contained in the Word of God. These symbolical books are:
 - 1) the three ancient symbols, The Apostolic, The Nicene, and the Athanasian,
 - 2) the unaltered Augsburg confession,
 - 3) Luther's Large and Small Catechisms, the Apology of the Augsburg Confession, the Smalcald Articles and the Formula of Concord.Upon this doctrinal basis our congregations have been founded and to this the pastors of these churches are pledged and bound.

The "Opgjör" or "agreement" upon which doctrinal basis the "merger" was formed, has unreservedly accepted the doctrine of the so called Second Form of the doctrine of Election. This doctrine as it is stated in paragraph (1) and defined in paragraph (3) leaves faith as the antecedent or cause of election, while the Bible and the Book of Concord leaves faith as a part and result of the election of grace. It is plain that faith cannot be both a cause of election and a result or part of election. Not a single Bible passage proves that this second form of the doctrine of election is correct. It is wrong, therefore, to accept without reservation a doctrine or form of doctrine which is not founded upon

Scripture, and hopelessly wrong to cast ones lot with church bodies which by overwhelming majorities adhere to the second form in preference to the doctrines of the symbolical books which are founded upon the word of God.

The doctrine of the fourth paragraph of the “agreement,” speaking of the feeling of responsibility (of the unregenerate man) over against the acceptance of God’s grace, is unscriptural. The Bible teaches that the unregenerate man is “dead in trespasses and sins”; he is an unbeliever and the unbeliever has **no feeling** of responsibility with respect to the acceptance or God’s grace in Christ. This statement weakens the force of our confession in the explanation of the third article of the creed in Luther’s small catechism:— “I believe that I cannot by my own reason or strength believe in Jesus Christ my Lord or come to Him.”

It gives room for synergism, and is a trace of that doctrine which seeks to explain God’s election of grace by pointing to the good conduct of the unconverted sinner. This no true Bible Christian will tolerate.

The total disregard shown for **doctrinal unity** in the organization of the National Lutheran Council, in which leaders of the Norwegian Lutheran Church of America took a leading part, shows that this body which does not protest, has abandoned entirely the field of doctrine and Christian practice formerly occupied by the Norwegian Synod. This makes it imperative for those who have conviction to stand fast in the old paths and to protest in the most effective manner against the indifferentism and unionism thus inaugurated under the guise of “a war necessity.”

The false doctrine concerning creation which appeared in a book review in “The Lutheran Herald,” received a mild criticism by the editor, to say the most: while the false doctrine of the **Millenium** which appeared in the *Lutheraneren* in a sermon and in a book review was practically supported by the editor.

Hiding behind great numbers or great majorities does not relieve the individual Christian or congregation from the terrible responsibility in these grave errors. Therefore we must protest by our complete separation from the organization that tolerates and spreads these errors, no matter what the outward cost may be.

Besides these most valid reasons for not joining the “merger,” or for leaving it, must be added that the congregations have the right and duty to see to [it] **that no usurpation of authority** be made by the general body.

The clause in the Constitution of the former Norwegian Synod declaring the relation of the general body to the individual congregation as being only advisory and not mandatory was studiously omitted in the constitution of the merger.


This is plainly contrary to the practice of the apostolic church and the principles laid down in the Bible concerning divine authority in the church. The congregation is the only divinely authorized unit in the church.

The general body is permitted as a practical necessity but is not a divinely authoritative body. It can **ask** for the support of the congregations for the various interests in the church at large but has no right to **demand** it.

It can advise congregations which have built up schools to abandon them if it sees fit but has no right to demand that these communities undo what they have done upon pain of losing all their rights to other institutions to which they have contributed.

The Norwegian Synod enjoyed fraternal relations with the **Synodical Conference** for more than fifty years. This Conference is the most faithful and consistent Lutheran body in matters of biblical doctrines and practices, that exists in the world today.

By the acceptance of the “Opgjør,” this relation was broken off, and since the organization of the Norwegian union church the breach has grown broader by an attempt at a complete surrender of the Norwegians to the opponents and false accusers of the brethren in the Synodical Conference.

This tearing asunder of what God has united must be denounced and rebuked. And therefore, we cannot stand with the “merger” but remain in the Norwegian Synod and will seek by the grace and help of God, to continue the old paths and to battle for the maintenance of pure doctrine and true Christian practices as in the past. 

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