

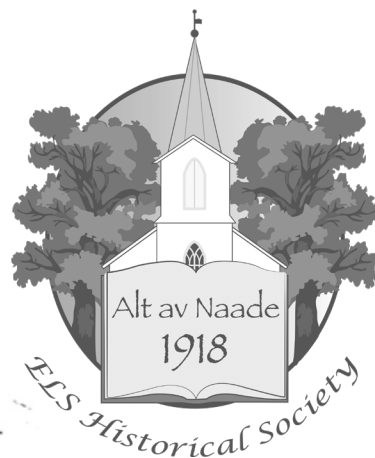
Oak Leaves

Newsletter of the ELS Historical Society

Volume 22

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Speical Edition



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A. S. BURLESON, Postmaster

Amerika.

34te aarg.

Madison, Wis., fredag den 5. juli 1918

No. 27

The Norwegian-American newspaper Amerika was published weekly in Madison, Wisconsin. From 1889-1922, Rasmus B. Anderson served as the editor. This newspaper had been sympathetic to the minority within the Norwegian Synod and opened its pages to them.

Following the reorganization of the Norwegian Synod, at Lime Creek, Iowa in 1918, the newspaper published a two-part report of the convention. It is printed here in translated form.

THE NORWEGIAN SYNOD'S ANNUAL MEETING

By Amerika's Reporter

The Norwegian Synod assembled for its annual meeting in Lime Creek congregation in Winnebago County, Iowa, Pastor H. Ingebritson's charge, the of June 14–18, 1918. The members of Lime Creek congregation live partially in Iowa, partially in Minnesota. Under these circumstances, it was especially fortunate that the meeting was held at this place. Gov. Harding's proclamation, which forbids the use of a foreign language in public places and during public meetings in the State of Iowa, was issued just a short time before the meeting. The basic preparations were made for the discussions, especially of doctrine, in Norwegian and it would have been a grave disappointment for many, especially of the older people, if that could not happen. They wanted to speak Norwegian during the meeting. But the participants also wanted to be good citizens and comply with the governor's proclamation. As a result the congregation rented a large



tent for the occasion, 60 feet square, which they set up in Minnesota one mile north of the church. Here no language prohibition hindered the use of Norwegian and the Norwegian language could be used without appearance of disloyalty. Most of the sessions were held here. The congregation's fine spacious church is located one mile south of the state border. Here the congregation also has a fine school house with two classrooms and a basement. The Lime Creek congregation is one of the few Norwegian congregations that have worked seriously to actually comply with the admonition of Jesus: "Feed my lambs!" For several years it has maintained a Norwegian-English school—a Christian

school for children of the congregation – where God's word is the foundation and the parents actually get help to nourish their children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. May society take an example from this congregation, and let

continued on page 4

FROM THE EDITOR

Oak Leaves is published by the Evangelical Lutheran Synod Historical Society, and appears four times each year. This special edition is provided by the Centennial Committee of the Evangelical Lutheran Synod as a part of the synod's centennial.

The focus of the anniversary celebration is the founding convention of the synod at Lime Creek Lutheran church near Lake Mills, Iowa the third week of June, 1918. The featured article in this anniversary issue is a translation of a news report which appeared in the Norwegian language newspaper, *Amerika* (see the article in this issue by Craig Ferkenstad). As far as we know, this article has never before appeared in English and gives a detailed account of the Lime Creek meeting. Pastor Ferkenstad secured a copy of the article and had it translated.

Some of the back-story is told in the 1944 article by Norman A. Madson, who at the time was President of the Norwegian Synod. It was written for the periodical of the Slovak Synod, at the time also a member of the Synodical Conference.

Other background material has appeared in *Oak Leaves* during the past year. In 1917, after the Norwegian Synod had voted to merge with two other Norwegian immigrant church bodies, a minority who could not go into the merger met at the Aberdeen Hotel and discussed their future. Their leader was Pastor Bjug Harstad, and in 1917, he and some other pastors began to publish a small church paper called *Luthersk Tidende*, (Lutheran Tidings). In their paper, the pastors and a few laymen discussed their predicament, sorted out their intentions, and confessed their faith.

The Evangelical Lutheran Synod Historical Society

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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.



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 web site at: els.org/els-100

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Editor, continued

Some of those articles, no longer accessible to most of our pastors and lay-people were translated and published in *Oak Leaves* during the past year. The articles help us understand the struggle which led to the momentous meeting at Lime Creek in June 1918.

The identity of “*Amerika’s Reporter*” is unknown. Combing through the list of guests at the meeting, we don’t get any clues as to who might have written it. We see no evidence that the editor of *Amerika* was present or who “*Amerka’s reporter*” was. The writer displays a firm grasp of the theological issues and the pastors at the meeting. We can speculate that it was one

of the pastors among the thirteen who are counted as the organizers of the synod, with the two most likely suspects being Pastors C. N. Petersen (who had been asked by Anderson to be Religion editor) and John A. Moldstad (who was listed as an assistant editor). But that remains speculation.

-Erling T. Teigen 

ABOUT THE ELS HISTORICAL SOCIETY

I haven’t watched slides from a slide projector in decades, but I can still remember the sound as it cycled through one picture after another. The pictures seemed so old to me at the time, though the history on display was probably just a few decades past. What registers as “old” in your mind? A classic car from the 1950s? A black and white photo from the early 1900s? A gravestone marking a death before the Civil War?

Everything in the past is now history. That makes for a lot of history! Even if everything could be preserved, not all of it needs to be. I have heard of an effort to capture each moment of the internet’s changing content, so the information from years past can be accessed for years to come. Some of the things preserved would be useful, but much of it would not.

The ELS Historical Society was organized in 1997. The purpose of its members is not to try to preserve every tiny detail of our synod’s history, or simply to reminisce about “the good ol’ days.” Nor is its primary purpose to emphasize the national origins of the synod’s founders. The Historical Society’s purpose is to keep track of the major church discussions, activities, and people which have brought us from the origin of our church body in 1853 to today.

The more history our synod puts behind it, the more

likely important historical details will be lost. This is why the Historical Society produces a quarterly periodical called *Oak Leaves* (back issues can be accessed at <http://www.els-history.org/oak-leaves.html>). The Society also hosts an annual program each June highlighting some aspect of our history through presentations, theatrical reenactments, or tours of historic places.

The Historical Society works in close connection with the ELS Ottesen Museum (check out this page on Facebook) and the Synod Archives to help gather and share the unique items in their collections. We are always happy to field your questions and take a look at personal or congregational items that have historical significance for the synod.

The ELS Historical Society is not just for those who love history or for those who know what words like *Opgjør* mean. It is for everyone who believes that the historical and doctrinal heritage of the ELS is worth preserving. To learn more about the activities of the Historical Society, go to <http://www.els-history.org>. We hope you will consider becoming a member, so that you can more fully appreciate our synod’s history of which you are a part.

-Peter Faugstad
ELS Historical Society Chairman 

it become the aim of the Norwegian Synod from now on to care better for the Christian education of the children.

A half-mile north of the church and the school house a beautiful, impressive parsonage is being built this summer. During the erection of the house, the pastor is living in the barn building. Here he entertained guests during the Synod meeting. Members of the congregation, as a rule, have large and comfortable homes with corresponding hospitality—and genuine, old Norwegian hospitality. Here the Synod people enjoyed themselves during the meeting and had it good.



Henry Ingebritson

The meeting was opened Friday forenoon with a worship service. Chairman Harstad preached on Genesis 12:1–3. Pastor Ingebritson officiated at the altar service. It was later decided that the sermon be printed in the synodical report. After the service the chairman appointed a temporary Credentials Committee, wished all a sincere

welcome, and prayed for God's blessing on the meeting and its business dealings.

The noon meal was served in the school house by the church. For this meal 25¢ was paid and the income was given to the mission treasury. This occurred every day during the meeting and proved to be a fortunate arrangement. It gave a good opportunity to renew old acquaintances and created new ones; it was relatively easy to look for those with whom one wished to talk—and it provided income for the mission treasury.

Friday afternoon the meeting was continued in the tent. The session was opened with devotions by Pastor E. Hansen. The time for the sessions was decided: 10:00 a.m. –12:30 p.m. and 2:00–4:30 p.m. Chairman Harstad read his report. Some committees were set up. Then they proceeded to a doctrinal discussion, led by Pastor L. P. Jensen. The theme was "Man's Spiritual Condition before Quickening or Regeneration." The discussions were lively and powerful and



L.P. Jensen

were listened to with great interest by the growing assembly. Many had come from long distances. There were visitors from the states of Washington, North Dakota, Minnesota, Illinois, and Iowa. Many who could not be present sent greetings, some in the form of contributions of money, and wished God's rich blessing upon the meeting.

Saturday forenoon a meeting was held in the church. Since the church is located in Iowa, the English language was used. Rev. H. Steger, from Fairbanks, Iowa, led the devotions. The program committee reported and the session was used for consideration of its recommendation. The noon meal was served by the Ladies' Aid from Lake Mills, Iowa.

The afternoon session in the tent was divided between business matters and continued doctrinal discussion on the topic already begun.

A worship service was held Sunday in the tent at 10:30 with Norwegian sermon by Pastor Holden M. Olsen, from Madison, Wisconsin, and English sermon by Pastor H. Steger, Fairbanks, Iowa. A large gathering had shown up in spite of threatening rain from the morning on. An offering was taken for Home Missions, amounting to \$203.61. Through additional donations which were contributed later, this was increased to \$433.61. The ladies from the Silver Lake and Lime Creek congregations served the noon meal. All were well fed, and satisfaction, enjoyment and happiness characterized the gathering.



Holden Olson

At 3 o'clock Sunday afternoon there was rehearsal in the church of a rather large mixed choir from the surrounding congregations—the last joint rehearsal and preparation for the concert Sunday evening. Pastor H. Ingebritson directed. Since 1907, a choral union convention has been held every year in the Albert Lea Circuit of the Norwegian Synod—in which the choirs of the congregations have taken an eager and willing part. Prof. J. Dahle has as a rule swung the baton during these concerts. After the "tornado" which passed over the church the last year—which also hit Albert Lea Circuit—there are not many singers who remain. Many were pulled up and carried away by the storm. Thus also the tent [organization] which belonged to the Society. But the remaining members did not give up meeting. Under Pastor Ingebritson's energetic and capable leadership they sang for a full house of attentive and interested listeners both in the afternoon during the dress rehearsal and in the evening during the concert. Mrs. Mabel Braaten Leusmann, Albert Lea, Minnesota, and Pastor Holden M. Olsen, Madison, Wisconsin, served as soloists. During the concert Sunday evening Pastor George O. Lillegard gave a lecture about "Religions of China." As the Norwegian Synod's first



George O. Lillegard

China missionary, who has spent several years in the mission work in China, he could speak from experience and first-hand knowledge. The assembly also listened with attention even if the lightning and thunder in the distance was promising rain. The rain also came before the concert was over, but those who had driven far came in "Ford touring cars" and harbored no anxieties for the trip home in rain, mud and darkness. All arrived home safely.

The program for the concert:

1. Jeg løfter mine øine op. [I lift my eyes / Psalm 121]
2. Psalm 126.
3. Incline Thine ear.
4. Solo: Turn ye even to me with all your heart. Mrs. Leusmann.
5. a) Kirken den er et gammelt hus. [Built on the Rock the Church doth stand*]
b) Hvo ikkun lader Herren raade. [If Thou but Suffer God to Guide Thee].
6. Seek ye the Lord.
7. Ønsker Jerusalem lykke [Pray for the Peace of Jerusalem, Psalm 122:6]
8. Synger for Herren en ny sang. [Sing to the Lord a New Song, Psalm 96*]

***Editor's note: Some of these musical numbers were likely selected from Jubilate: kirkelige sange for blandet kor, John Dahle, ed., Decorah, Iowa: Lutheran Publishing House, 1908.*

After Sunday's refreshing evangelical breeze in speeches and song, they assembled again with new spiritual powers



1917 pastors *Some of the pastors present at Lime Creek:*
Rear: L. S. Guttebo, A. J. Torgerson, Christian Anderson
(standing) J. E. Thoen, H. Steger (visiting Missouri Synod
pastor), Holden Olson, Bjug Harstad.
Front: C. N. Petersen, H. Ingebritson, J. A. Moldstad,
L. P. Jensen, G. P. Nesseth.
Not pictured: Emil Hansen and George Lillegard.

for continued work Monday morning. The session was held in the tent and was opened as usual with devotions. Reports were heard and committees set up. Then the following committee recommendation was dealt with point by point and unanimously approved:

We, members present of the Synod for the Norwegian Evangelical Lutheran Church of America, ministers, delegates of congregations and members of congregations, join together for the purpose of continuing the work of the Synod on the old basis and according to the old principles. We therefore recommend for consideration of congregations and acceptance:

1. The name of this organization shall be the "Norwegian Synod of the American Evangelical Lutheran Church," [The report gives the name in both English and Norwegian].
2. The only source and rule of doctrine is the Word of God as revealed in the canonical books of the Old and New Testaments.
3. The Synod adopts as its confession the Symbolical Books, or confessional writings, of the Lutheran Church, because these give a pure and unaltered presentation of the doctrine contained in God's Word.
4. We elect a committee of three to propose the necessary changes in the old constitution of the Synod. The committees report shall be published as soon as possible, in order that the congregations so wishing may consider and adopt it, the committee's report to be presented for final adoption at the next annual meeting of the Synod.

Amerika.

Friday, July 11 [sic], 1918

The Norwegian Synod's Annual Meeting

(By *Amerika's* Reporter)

Part II (Continued from the previous issue)

5. We elect the following officers for one year: Chairman, vice-chairman, secretary, treasurer, two auditors, a missions committee and a credentials committee, each with three members.
6. Next year a synod meeting is to be held, to which delegates from congregations that wish to join, pastors, and individual persons who want to be along to promote the work of the old Norwegian Synod are invited.

With hearts full of joy and thanks to God for the mutual love and unity of the spirit which so clearly was evident during the session's proceedings, the session was concluded with

singing of a hymn, Scripture reading, and prayer.

The noon meal was by women from Pastor E. Hansen's call [Scarville and Center] and an especially enjoyable noon-time was spent on the lawn by the church in the shade of the mighty oak trees, which adorn the church yard. There was a little distraction when Pastor Malmin showed up. He came to gather news for *Lutheraneren*, the Norwegian Lutheran Church's official organ, of which he is one of the editors. Currently he is living in Scarville and serves that part of Pastor Hansen's congregation, which under President H. C. Holm's leadership dismissed Pastor E. Hansen. That this dismissal, or removal from office, happened without scriptural basis, does not seem to disturb Pastor Malmin. By serving them with the Word and the Sacraments he is approving their action and has equal guilt with them. "They proceed from evil to evil, and they know not me, saith the Lord." Jer. 9:3.

Monday afternoon was continued (in the tent) with a discussion of a doctrine paper by Pastor L. P. Jensen. The tent was almost full of devout listeners, and several took part in the discussions. The discussions will be printed in the Synodical Report, which can be ordered from Pastor C. N. Peterson, 1111 25th Ave. N. Minneapolis, Minn., or from one of the Synod's pastors. At the beginning of the session it was stated by the chairman and vice-chairman that during the noontime they had received quite large contributions to the Synod's treasury from thankful, truth-loving members of the Synod, who in this way wanted to evidence their thanks to God for the results reached at the forenoon meeting. J. A. Førde and wife had given \$50.00, and Pastor Moldstad promised to contribute \$50.00; N. O. Roalkvam \$25.00; H. S. Hanson \$25.00; A. O. Stalheim \$50.00. Several gave \$10.00 and still others \$5.00. Since Pastor Steger had to leave the meeting,

he expressed thanks for good companionship and wished God's blessing over the reorganized Norwegian Synod.

Monday evening there again was a concert held in the church, which again was full of listeners. It was Lime Creek congregation's two church choirs, one from the country and one from Lake Mills, which jointly sang, "The Holy City." Rev. H. A. Koenig from Webster City, Ia., and Mrs. Mabel Braaten Leushman [sic] from Albert Lea, Minn., served as soloists. Both the choir and soloists carried out their parts

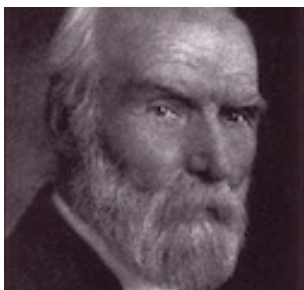
especially well, and it was a true joy and soul-refreshing comfort to listen to the beautiful harmony. Pastor Ingebritson deserves appreciation of the Synod for the splendid musical entertainment during the meeting, as well as also the members of the choirs.

Tuesday forenoon the meeting was continued in the church building. It had rained during the night, so the roads were muddy and heavy. The consequence was that some came late to the meeting, but they came and filled the church. The Order of the Day was business matters and the discussions were carried on in the English language. A recommendation from the Credentials Committee was acted upon. There was a fairly lively discussion about the position of editor for *Tidende*. One group thought it was best to have just one editor; others thought that they ought to choose two or three with the one as editor-in-chief. The outcome was one editor, who also shall be business manager for the coming year. It was decided that *Luthersk Tidende* be published weekly and that the word "Evangelical" be added to the name, so it is called *Evangelisk Luthersk Tidende*.

Tuesday afternoon the meeting was continued in the church. After approval of a "loyalty resolution" [loyalitäts-resolu-



Officers elected at 1918 Convention:



Bjug Harstad
President



J.A. Moldstad
Vice-President



C.N. Petersen
Secretary



A.J. Torgerson
Treasurer

tion], they proceeded to election of officers for the coming year. The following were elected: chairman, Pastor B. Harstad; vice-chairman, Pastor J. A. Moldstad; secretary, Pastor C. N. Peterson; treasurer, Pastor A. J. Torgerson; auditors: E. K. Tyssen and Pastor Chr. Anderson and L. G. Mellem; subcommittee for the West Coast: Pastor B. Harstad, T. C. Saetra and E. B. Ellingson; Credentials Committee: Prof. J. E. Thoen, Pastor Holden M. Olsen and E. B. Ellingson; Editor, Pastor C. N. Peterson; rail road secretary, Pastor Chr. Anderson; delegate to the Synodical Conference meeting, Pastor Holden M. Olsen, alternate, Pastor J. A. Moldstad; Constitution Committee: Pastors A. J. Torgerson, E. Hansen and M. K. Bleken. They agreed to conclude this Synod meeting Wednesday evening at 4:30. Tuesday evening there was a worship service in the church with Communion. Chairman Harstad gave the sermon. Prof. J. E. Thoen spoke in English about "Christian Education." It was decided that his lecture be printed in the synodical report.

Wednesday morning the meeting was continued in the tent. The Resolutions committee reported. The recommendation was approved by unanimous standing vote. It reads: "During the previous year it has pleased God in His gracious wisdom to call away from this life our faithful brothers, Pastors O. T. Lee, F. A. Møller and S. Svennungson. We miss them deeply and share sincerely with their survivors in their great sorrow, but bow before God's will, thank Him for His great goodness and grace toward these servants of His and for all He has accomplished through them as His instruments, and we ask Him to comfort and strengthen the dear survivors and bless the memory and work of these brothers for them and us." The meeting then continued with doctrinal discussion, "The Teaching of Scripture concerning the Unity of the Spirit and the Warning against Unionism," which was led by Pastor B. Harstad.

Wednesday afternoon the meeting was held in the church. The following resolution was approved unanimously: "Pastors of the Synod are encouraged, if possible, to come together in larger and smaller pastoral conferences in order by mutual instruction and admonition to strengthen one another in purity of doctrine and unity, promote the development of Christian life and in general to enable each other for the office." It was also resolved that; "The Synod holds the Credentials Committee responsible for publishing of our publications, and authorizes them to arrange for incomes and expenses according to their best judgment—such that there is no debt incurred." The rest of the session was used for discussions of doctrine.

At the conclusion of the session Chairman Harstad thanked the pastor and congregation for hospitality shown and the entertainment. Pastor Ingebritson for himself and on the congregation's behalf expressed thanks for the visit, and expressed the hope that they could again get to experience the joy of having the Synod gathered in the midst of the congregation. The closing devotion was led by Pastor J. A. Moldstad. The meeting was truly enjoyable, rich in doctrine and edifying. The great gathering of knowledge-rich laymen, young as well as old, shows that the seed of biblical truths of faith sown and cared for by the old leaders of faith in the Synod is still sprouting and producing a fruitful growth in spite of the newer seed of unionism's fruitful weeds. The seriousness and determination which characterized the meeting bodes well for the future, and it shall indeed show that the remnant, which holds fast to the Evangelical truths and free-church principles preserved by the Norwegian Synod, have viability and courage of faith and strength to safeguard and preserve for the coming generations the inheritance from the fathers. Let us with diligence and watchfulness scatter the seed and water it, and God shall give growth. 🍁

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). 🍁





AMERIKA AND ITS EDITOR

By Craig Ferkenstand

The editor of the Norwegian-language weekly newspaper *Amerika*, Ramus B. Anderson (1846-1933), was a controversial figure among Norwegian-Americans. He was born in Dane County, Wisconsin to parents who were Quaker emigrants from Norway in 1836.

Following the death of his father, Rasmus was baptized and later confirmed by Pastor A.C. Preus at Koshkonong. Upon the urging of Pastor J.A. Ottesen, he was enrolled among the first students at Luther College but expelled four years later for leading a student mutiny. He was later given a degree and listed among those in the first graduating class. Becoming an instructor at the University of Wisconsin, he was instrumental in establishing the Department of Scandinavian Studies. During these years he published more than a dozen books. He served as ambassador to Denmark (1885-89).

From 1898-1922 he was the editor and publisher of *Amerika* which was a weekly Norwegian-language newspaper issued from Madison, Wisconsin. Here he made violent charges against Norwegian-American churchmen, teachers, newspapers, and fraternal organizations. Because of these conservative views in both politics and religion, he was spurned by many.

He maintained close ties to the Norwegian Synod. His sister, Dina, married the Rev. T. A. Torgerson of Somber, Iowa and if he had not been expelled from Luther College would have entered the seminary to become a pastor in the Norwegian Synod. Upon his return from Denmark, he joined Our Saviour's Lutheran Church in Madison, Wisconsin (although he didn't attend any church after 1903). Among the assistant editors of *Amerika* were both John A. Moldstad and the eldest daughter of Prof. Laur. Larsen.

Before the time of the proposed merger of Norwegian Lutheran synods, the newspaper *Amerika* welcomed articles from the minority. He wrote, "If this smaller minority can make use of *Amerika*, I shall be glad. I do not understand why the paper is not used more than it is since all the other papers have been closed." The Rev. C.N. Petersen declined his request to serve as the religious editor, but the newspaper continued to publish articles supporting the minority. This created such a loss of subscriptions that the editor hoped the minority could promote the distribution of the paper. R. B. Anderson even said, "I would have it clearly understood that I cannot compromise with *Opgjør*.... The minority must stand firm as a rock, however small it may become." In 1918, he sent a reporter to the Norwegian Synod's reorganization convention at Lime Creek, Iowa. The account is translated and reprinted in this issue of *Oak Leaves*. 🍁

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A. S. BURLINSON, Postmaster

Amerika.

34te aarg. Madison, Wis., fredag den 5. juli 1918 No. 27

Den norske synodes aarsmøde.

(Ved "Amerika's" referent.)

Den norske synode samledes til aarsmøde i Lime Creek menighed i Winnebago county, Ia., past. H. Ingebritson kaldt den 14de til 20de juni 1918. Medlemmerne af Lime Creek menighed borte tildels i Iowa, tildels i Minnesota. Under omstændighederne var det særdeles heldigt at mødet var beramt af holdt paa dette sted. Guv. Hardings proklamation, der forbyr brugen af fremmede sprog paa offentlige steder og under offentlige møder i staten Iowa, blev udstedt blot en kort tid før mødet afholdtes, saa der var ikke tid til at forandre stedet for mødet. Grundige forberedelser var gjort til at alle år lærerforhandlingerne paa norsk, og det vilde ha været en saar skuffelse for mange, især af de ældre, om saa ikke kunde ske. Norsk vilde man tale under mødet. Men deltagerne vilde ogsaa være gode borgere og holde sig til synodens proklamation efterretteligt. Derfor leiede menigheden for anledningen et stort telt, 60 fod i tværmål, som de satte op i Minnesota, en mil nord fra kirken. Her var man paa grund, hvor intet sprogforbud hindrede brugen af norsk, byer og landsaale kunde bruges uden skio af flyvealtet. Her holdtes de fleste sessioner. En mil syd fra statsgrænsen ligger klippa menighedsens pens, rummelige kirke. Her fra menigheden ogsaa et prægtigt skolehus, med to klasseværelser og basement. Lime Creek menighed er en af de faa norske menigheder, som har gjort alvor af virkelig at efterkomme Jæu formaning: "Bøgt mine lam!" Den har nu i flere år vedligeholdt en norsk-englisk menigheds-skole - en kristelig skole for menigheds børn - hvor lærde ord er grundvolden for formlidne

opførelse bor presten i ladebygningen. Her underholdt han gjæster under synodemødet. Menigheds medlemmer har som en regel store og bekvemmelige vaaningshuse, med tilsvarende hjerteum - og søgte, gammel-norsk gjæstfrihed. Her byggede synodalerne sig under mødet og havde det godt.

Mødet aabnedes fredag middag med gudstjeneste. Formand Hæstad prædikede over 1 Mos. 12, 1-3. Past. Ingebritson forrettede altretjenesten. Prædiken blev senere besluttet trykt i synodalberetningen. Efter gudstjenesten udnævnte formanden en midlertidig fuldmagtakomite, ønskede alle hjertelig velkommen og nedbad Guds velsignelse over mødet og dets forhandlinger.

Middag serveredes i skolehuset ved kirken. For denne betalles der 25c og indtægterne tilfald missionsskassen. Søndagen hver dag under mødet. Dette viste sig at være en heldig ordning. Det gav god anledning til at fornye gamle bekjendtskaber og stifte nye, det var forholdsvis let at opspore dem, som man ønskede at tale med - og saa bragte det indtægter til missionsskassen.

Fredag eftermiddag fortsattes mødet i teltet. Sessionen aabnedes med sang og ved pastor E. Hansen. Tiden for sessionerne bestemtes: 10-12.30 a. m. - 2-4.30 p. m. Formand Hæstad oplyste sin indberetning. Endel komiteer blev nedsat. Saa gik man over til lærerforhandlingerne indledt ved past. L. P. Jensen. Tema: Menneskets saadanne tilstand før opvækkelsen eller jensejdsfølelsen. Forhandlingerne førtes med liv og kraft og paahørtes med stor interesse af den sgede forsamling. Mange var komne langvejsfra. Der saas tilreisende fra staterne: Wash. N. D., Minn., Ill., Ia. Mange som ikke kunde møde frem sendte hilsener, tildels i form af pengebidrag, og tildels i form af breve.

Eftermiddags-sessionen i teltet deltes mellem foretningsaaser og fortsatte lærerforhandling over det paa begyndte tema.

Søndag holdtes gudstjeneste i teltet kl. 10.30 med norsk prædiken af past. Holden M. Olsen, Madison, Wis., og engelsk prædiken af past. H. Stæger, Fairbank, Iowa. En talrig forsamling havde indfundet sig til trods for at det fra morgenen af truede med regn. Offer optoges til den indre mission - stort \$203.61. Ved tilling som ydede senere sagedes dette til \$433.61. Kvindene fra Silver Lake og Lime Creek kom ogsaa i fællesskab middag. Alle By ord og besigt og tilfredshed, hygge og glæde prægede forsamlingen.

Klokken 3 søndag eftermiddag var der sangveise i kirken af et større bilsandst kor fra de omlygende menigheder. - Den sidste fælles sang var forberedelse til koncerten søndag aften. Pastor H. Ingebritson dirigerede. Siden 1907 har man hvert år holdt et angæstnerne i Albert Lea kreden af den norske synode - i hvilket stævne menighedsmedlemmer angik bar til ivrig og villig del. Prof. J. Dahle har som en regel svinget taktstokken under disse sangstevner. Efter den "torndag" som gik over kirken det sidste år - som ogsaa rammede Albert Lea kreden - er der ikke nu saa mange angæstnerne. Mange blev rykket op og revet med af stormen. Saaledes ogsaa teltet, som hørte forbundet til. Men de gjenværende sangere tabte ikke modet. Under pastor Ingebritsons energiske og dygtige ledelse gjorde de sine sager godt og sang for fuldt hus! af opmærksomme og interesserede tilhørere bandede eftermiddag under generalpræsen og om aftenen under koncerten. Som solister tjente mrs. Mabel Bransen, Lausman, Albert Lea, Minn., og past. Holden M. Olsen, Madison, Wis. Under koncerten søndag aften holdt past.

over, men de som havde langt at kjøre kom i "Ford touring cars" og nærede ingen bekymringer for hjemreisen i regn, søle og mørke. Alle kom vel hjem.

Program for koncerten:

1. Jeg løfter mine sine op.
2. 126de salme.
3. Incline thine ear.
4. Solo. Turn ye even to me with all your heart. - Mrs. Leusman.
5. a) Virken den er et gammelt bus. b) Hvo likken leder Herren ræde.
6. Seek ye the Lord.
7. Ønsker Jerusalem lykke.
8. Synger for Herren en ny sang.

Efter søndagens forfriskende evangeliske luftning i taler og sang samledes man igjen med nye sandelige kræfter til fortsat arbejde mandag morgen. Sessionen holdtes i teltet og aabnedes som sædvanlig med Andægt. Rapporter hørtes og komiteer nedsat. Saa blev følgende komiteindstilling behandlet punktvis og endestemt antat: Vi tilstedeværende medlemmer af synoden for den norsk-ewan-luth. kirke i Amerika, prester, repræsentanter for menigheder, og menighedsmedlemmer, slutter os herred sammen for at fortsætte den gamle norske synodes gjerning paa den gamle grundvold og ifølge de gamle principer. Vi henstiller derfor til menighedsmedlemmerne overveelse og antagelse:

1. Denne organisations navn skal være: Den norske synode af den amerikanske evangelisk lutherske kirke.
2. Den eneste kilde og regel for synodens tro og lære er Guds hellige ord, saebenbart i det gamle og nye testaments kanoniske bøger.
3. Synoden bekjænder sig til samtlige den lutherske kirkes symboliske bøger eller bekjendelseskrifter, fordi disse giv en ren og uforfalsket fremstilling af den i Guds ord indeholdte lære.



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GOD HAS BEEN KIND

A Historical Sketch of the Norwegian synod

By Norman A. Madson, Sr.

This article was written by Pastor Madson in 1944 to describe to the Slovak Ev. Lutheran Church the history and culture of the little Norwegian Synod. The Slovak Synod and Norwegian Synod were in fellowship together in the Synodical Conference. In 1944, our synod was then known as the Norwegian Synod, but in 1953 the name was changed to the current Evangelical Lutheran Synod.

At the Synodical Conference in Cleveland, Ohio, August 1–4, [1944], we had the pleasure of meeting THE LUTHERAN BEACON'S Editor, the Rev. S. Mazak, and we promised him that we would write a brief article for the official organ of the Slovak Evangelical Lutheran Church to acquaint its readers with that body with which they are in fellowship in the Synodical Conference. In short, we are to give answer to the question: "What is the Norwegian Synod?"

It is not a large body, being comprised of approximately fifty pastors and professors. There are sixty-eight congregations comprising the Synod, scattered all the way from Boston, Mass., to Tacoma, Wash.

But its main strength is centered in the Middle West—Illinois, Michigan, Wisconsin, Iowa, North Dakota, and South Dakota. It maintains its own institution of higher learning (Bethany Lutheran College, Mankato, Minn.), which, remarkably enough, now has the highest enrollment in its history—145 students—many of whom are preparing for the ministry. Bethany is a co-educational institution, at which also students from the Slovak Ev. Lutheran Church have been enrolled. Here is also found the Lutheran Synod Book Company. The Synod publishes a biweekly church paper in the English language, *The Lutheran Sentinel*, and another biweekly in the Norwegian language, *Evangelisk Luthersk Tidende*.



While it is commonly known as the Norwegian Synod, its official name is "The Norwegian Synod of the American Evangelical Lutheran Church." But how did it come into being? That is rather a long story, and as this is to be but a brief sketch, we shall merely recount facts in its 91-year history.

From the Land of the Vikings. There had been immigration from the land of the Vikings in considerable numbers as early as 1825. But it was not until the middle of the last century that well-ordered church work was begun among the immigrated Norwegians in America. Practically all of them came from the Norwegian State Church in their homeland, and that was, of course, Lu-

theran. While some work had been done in the so-called Fox River Settlement in Northern Illinois in the later forties, it was not until 1853 that the Norwegian Synod was organized at Koshkonong, Wis., a short distance southeast of Madison. But divine services had been conducted there by one of our pastors just a century ago, under the mighty oaks, practically a stone's throw from our present West Koshkonong church. It was to commemorate that event that our Synod met this year in June at the latter church.

Pastors Must be Trained. So great was the influx of Norwegian immigrants at this time and in the two following decades, that it soon became apparent that their spiritual needs could not be cared for by the few pastors who had come

from Norway and that pastors would have to be trained in this country. It was therefore resolved at the synodical convention of 1853 to elect two men who were to visit the institutions of those Lutheran bodies which already had begun the training of pastors here with the view to making use of one of their seminaries for the time being. The men chosen for this task were the Rev. J.A. Ottesen and the Rev. N. Brandt. After having visited the institutions of the Missouri Synod (at St. Louis, Mo.), the Buffalo Synod (at Buffalo, N.Y.), and the Ohio Synod (at Springfield, Ohio), these men reported back to their own Synod at its 1857 convention, that they had found their true brethren in the faith among the Saxons under the leadership of Dr. Walther in St. Louis, and they recommended that their young men be sent to Concordia Seminary for their ministerial training. This report was enthusiastically adopted by a unanimous vote. And thus began our close relationship with the Missouri Synod and (in 1872) with the Synodical Conference.

Luther College Founded. For more than two decades the Norwegian Synod sent its theological students to St. Louis for their training. The Rev. Laur. Larsen was chosen to represent the Synod on the theological faculty at Saint Louis. But when in 1861, the Synod resolved to begin its own pre-theological school, the Rev. Laur. Larsen was chosen to head this institution, which later became known as Luther College. That college, havin its humble beginnings in a parsonage at Half Way Creek (near LaCrosse), Wis., was later removed to Decorah, Iowa. Here not only theological students were trained, but parochial school teachers as well. For the Norwegian Synod had learned to see the blessed influence of the proper indoctrination of its youth in congregational schools. And it is significant that while hundreds of congregations from this original Norwegian Synod went into the questionable merger known as the Norwegian Lutheran Church in America in 1917, not a single congregational school is any more to be found, our present Synod maintains a proportionately large number of them. It still believes in the sacredness of the divine command and promise: "And all thy children shall be taught of the Lord; and great shall be the

peace of thy children" Isa. 54:13.

"Our Answer Is: NO." When, in the seventies, the anti-Missourian controversy arose under the leadership of Prof. F.A. Schmidt, a man whom the Norwegians had gotten from the Missouri Synod, but who now accused the Missouri Synod of Calvinism and other serious errors, the Norwegian Synod was torn asunder by the strife, over a third of its membership going with Professor Schmidt when the "Anti-Missourian Brotherhood" was organized in 1887. Professor Schmidt had contended that "salvation in a certain sense does not depend on God alone." To this error the Rev. Vilhelm Koren of the Norwegian Synod, in his essay before that body in 1887, had given an answer: "Does the Confession of the Lutheran Church Teach That Any Man Before His Conversion Has the Ability to Decide in Favor of Grace? Our Answer is 'NO.'" And that is still the chief point of difference separating the Norwegian Synod from the Norwegian Lutheran Church in America.

The Madison Settlement. In 1890 the Anti-Missourian Brotherhood merged with the Norwegian element of the Augustana Synod and the Norwegian element in the Norwegian-Danish Conference, forming the United Lutheran Church. For well-nigh three decades this merger body continued to accuse the Norwegian Synod and its Missourian brethren of Calvinism. But in 1917, after many preliminary negotiations, the greater part of the Norwegian Synod consented to the so-called "Madison Settlement," in which the synergistic leaven is contained when it speaks of "man's

feeling of responsibility over against the acceptance of grace." On the basis of that "Madison Settlement" the Norwegian Lutheran Church, the Hauge Synod (a more or less revivalistic group of Norwegians), and the great majority of the Norwegian Synod were merged into the present "Norwegian Lutheran Church in America." It was then that a small minority of pastors and congregations of the Norwegian Synod refused to accept this synergistic doctrine, but remained aloof, holding steadfast to the Scripture-true confession regarding God's Eternal Election as presented in the 11th Article of the Formula of Concord,



*Photo of the first main building of Luther College, dedicated on Oct. 14, 1865 thanks to the fundraising of H. A. Preus.
(photo from luthercollegethory.org)*

Thorough Declaration.

“Beware of Joining Hands.” On account of its refusal to join this large merger of Norwegians (for the Synod was re-organized in 1918 at Lime Creek, Iowa), it has had to bear the taunts of former friends as well as foes. “Separatistic,” “narrow-minded,” “bigoted,” and “hypercritical” are some of the opprobrious names heaped upon it. But it has not permitted these taunts to make it deviate from its firm confessional stand. With the Book of Concord it confesses: *“It is, in truth, no easy matter to undertake to separate from so many people and to teach a different doctrine; but there is God’s command instructing every one to beware of joining hands with those who teach error.”*

The Bible Above All Else. And what, after all, are the taunts of men as compared with the everlasting truth of God? The Norwegian Synod has never had occasion to regret its insistence on purity of doctrine. God has indeed been kind to the Norwegian Synod and has signally blessed its faithfulness. While our Synod cannot boast of any large congregations and awesome cathedrals, it does possess in all its purity God’s holy Word and Luther’s doctrine pure. On its banner stands the inscription GEGRAPTAI (it is written), and it will

not surrender an iota of that *“more sure word of prophecy,”* no matter what may be promised it by way of numbers and prestige if it but deviate therefrom.

The Norwegian Synod insists with Luther that the Bible is a *clear* book, which the average man, concerned about life’s greatest question (the salvation of his immortal soul), shall be able to understand. In the words of its now sainted president, Vilhelm Koren, it still confesses: *“According to God’s Word we have reason to be certain that many an unschooled and by the world despised man and woman is come farther in the knowledge of God and His will than have the vast majority of the most learned pastors and professors. To all of us Jesus has said: ‘Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven.’”*

Present Officers. The present officers of our Synod are: President, the Rev. Norman A. Madson, Princeton, Minn.; Vice-President, the Rev. Adolph M. Harstad, Madison, Wis.; Secretary, the Rev. George O. Lillegard, Boston, Mass.; and Treasurer, the Rev. Martin Galstad, Northwood, Iowa. 🍁

Dr. Koren Still Speaks



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