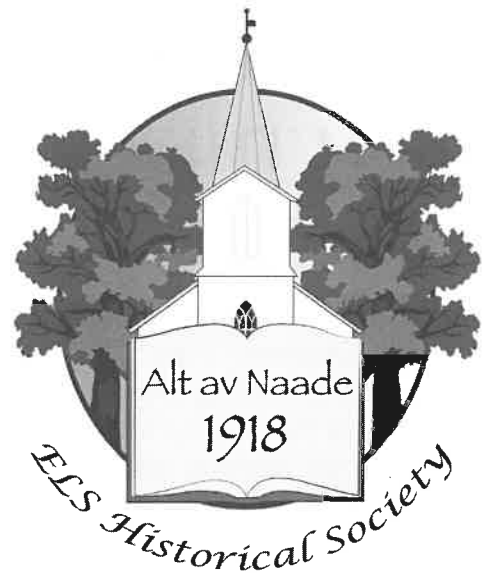


Oak Leaves

Newsletter of the ELS Historical Society



Volume 24

Spring 2020

Issue 2

THE THIRD ANNUAL CONVENTION OF THE NORWEGIAN SYNOD

The Lutheran Sentinel

III, 52, June 23, 1920, 835 ff.

Reverend G. Gullixson

The Synod opened its annual meeting at Fairview Lutheran Church, Minneapolis, Friday morning June 4th, with an impressive sermon preached by Rev. M. K. Bleken on Math. 11:28-30. All were surprised to find so large a number of representatives and visitors from congregations without the city. We have often attended meetings of one of the districts of the Synod in former years when the opening service was not by far so well attended. The sturdy men and women from our old synod assembled here gave, by their intense interest and loyalty, the impression that the Synod today is very much alive. The report of our venerable president Rev. B. Harstad was followed with marked interest and brought before the convention the many issues and trials before the synod. A committee consisting of Rev. M. K. Bleken, Rev. E. Hanson, and Peter Tjernagel was elected to consider the message and to prepare the several points for the meeting. Rev. Holden M. Olson of Madison, Wis., read a paper on the "Differences and Harmony Between the Law and the Gospel." The reading of the first part of this able treatise and discussion by Rev. B. Harstad, Rev. M. K. Bleken, Rev. J. A. Thorson, Rev. G. A. Gullixson occupied the

afternoon sessions. A chorus of seventy voices composed of the Fairview Lutheran choir and members of choirs from the several churches represented, rehearsed on Friday evening, the program to be given in a song service on Sunday evening. Among the oldest members attending the meeting were O. K. Teisberg of the West Koshkonong congregation, near Deerfield, Wis. He was present when the first Synod congregation was organized 76 years ago. Another old pioneer, Mr. Thron Moen from Our Saviors Church, Brush River, Wis., is an attentive visitor. Despite his 82 years, he is intensely interested in the welfare of the Synod. Other visitors were H. L. Kvammen, Mt. Sterling, Wis., O. P. Tveden, Buxton, Minn.

Rev. J. J. Strand will preach the Norwegian Sermon at Fairview Church Sunday morning, June 6th.

The report of the committee on credentials, Saturday morning, June 5th included the recommendation that the following congregations be accepted into the Synod. Our Savior's Lutheran Congregation, Madison, Wis., Chester Luth Congregation, Oklee Minn., Hartland Luth. Cong. Hartland, Minn., Evanger Luth. Congregation, Fertile, Minn., Bethany Luth. Cong., near Story City, Iowa, West Koshkonong Luth. Cong., Dane county Wis. The latter congregation was organized in 1844 and is the mother church of the old Norwegian

continued on page 4

FROM THE MUSEUM

The Ottesen Museum needs your help!

We want to include more biographies of pastors on the Museum's Facebook page. These biographies have become a great learning experience for members and friends of the ELS. They are also a wonderful way to publicize the Museum and ELS Historical Society when posts are shared. Unfortunately, we don't have the biographical information of many of the pastors who served in the early years of the Synod, or pastors in the old Norwegian Synod. We are especially interested in sharing the stories of those who have served

as officers of the Synod or taught at Bethany Lutheran College or Seminary.

We're hoping that some of you will be willing to share biographical information, including pictures, of these early pastors with us. If you are, please contact the Rebecca DeGarmeaux, the Museum's Director of Programming, at museum@blc.edu.



*Back: O. Gullerud, S. Yvisaker, L. S. Guttebo, E. Hansen, O.T. Torgerson, -?-, -?-, -?-, N. Madson, -?-, C. Petersen, A. Harstad, G. Guldborg
Middle: A. J. Torgerson, E. Onstad, C. Quill, -?-, H. Preus, I. Blaekkan, H. Ingebritson, G. Møller, J. Moldstad
Seated: J. Thoen, J. Unseth, H. Tjernagel, P. Widvey, L. Jensen, G. Gullixson, B. Harstad, C. Anderson, J. Hendricks*

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Check out the Historical Society website - <http://www.els-history.org/>

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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6 Browns Court — Mankato, MN 56001*

FROM THE EDITOR

In mid-April, President John Moldstad reported to the Synod that the Board of Trustees of the Synod resolved to cancel the one hundred second annual convention of the ELS due to the Covid-19 pandemic and danger of gathering a large group into a crowded auditorium. Consequently, the ELS Historical Society board of directors followed suit and cancelled the annual meeting which is held in conjunction with the annual convention of the ELS.

The program which was planned for the historical society's meeting was entitled "When the Christian is Called to Arms: A Brief History of How the ELS Has Prepared and Supported Her Members in Military Service." This program will be presented at the 2021 convention.

When the minority of the 1917 merger met in 1918 to form a new church body, the great Influenza pandemic was beginning and would go on to cause over 600,000 deaths in the U.S. But that did not stop the little band of Norwegian Lutherans from carrying out their resolve. For the next hundred years, they were able to carry out their work with no interruption – not World War II, the polio epidemic nor anything else forced them to take anything like the unprecedented action like the shut-down of this year.

Certainly, many of our members will miss this annual migration to Mankato. Your editor has attended every convention for fifty-four years. That's a habit hard to break! So we offer our readers a re-visit of the 1920 convention, which was held at Fairview Lutheran Church in Minneapolis. That convention was the first and last for which the Synod Report was printed in two editions—one in Norwegian and one in English. That experiment was not repeated—perhaps because the layman who had offered to pay the printing costs for the English edition did not repeat his offer the next year.

Announcing the ELS Historical Society Annual Meeting

When the Christian is Called to Arms:

A Brief History of How the ELS Has Prepared
and Supported Her Members in Military Service

Sunday, June 21, 2020 at 7 p.m.

Lee Theater of the Ylvisaker Fine Arts Center

*A brief business meeting and refreshments
will follow the program.*

Everyone is welcome to attend.



*The ELS Historical Society depends
on the membership/subscription fee
to fund our projects and produce
Oak Leaves. Even without the annual
meeting our work still goes on. If
you pay your membership annually,
you may send your check to*

ELS Historical Society
6 Browns Ct.
Mankato, MN 56001.

Synod. The acceptance of these congregations and their representatives was one of the happy surprises of the convention and came to the convention as God's benediction and promise for the future. The discussion of Rev. Holden M. Olsen's paper on the Difference and Harmony of the Law and the Gospel occupied the time allotted for doctrinal discussions during the day.

On Sunday the Synod was gathered with the Fairview Lutheran Congregation in its beautiful house of worship for a double service.

The English service began at 10 o'clock. The sermon was preached by Rev. Paul Lindemann of St. Paul, Minn. His inspiring sermon was preached on the words of Christ, "There shall be one fold and one shepherd." This sermon will be published in the English report of the convention. At the close of the English service an offering was taken for the Home Missions. The whole congregation remained for the Norwegian service at which Rev. J. J. Strand preached a very able sermon on the epistle of the day. He emphasized the importance of the Christian's constant battle against sin and daily renewal in Christian life in the fear and love of God.

In the evening the Choral Union gave a song service in the large auditorium of the Swedish Mission Church on 20th and Aldrich Avenues N., Minneapolis. The program was excellent from the first number to the last and the attendance left nothing to be desired. In the choice of choral numbers and the choice of soloists the committee was very happy. Rev. J. A. Moldstad of Chicago preached a short sermon on "Why the Christian Should Praise God in Song." Rev. G. A. Gullixson opened with prayer and presided at the service.

Monday morning found a large gathering in the church besides the representatives and the pastors as usual, and after the regular order of business of the convention was ended Dr. Sigurd C. Ylvisaker gave a paper on the "National Lutheran Council and Why We Cannot Join this Movement." His paper was marked by fairness to the National Council, quoting at length from the publications of this organization and thus seeking to avoid injustice to anyone. On the basis of this he proceeded to show the mischief which this movement has done and must necessarily do in the future toward true

confessional Lutheranism. Rev. J. Hendricks gave an able paper on the doctrinal objections to the National Lutheran Council.

On Monday evening a pastoral sermon by Rev. J. Johansen of Fresno, Cal., who was hindered from attending by illness was read by Rev. B. Harstad.

The last days of the convention were occupied largely with the reports of the several committees appointed by the convention. Among the more important resolutions passed may be mentioned, the acceptance of the report of the Committee on Foreign Missions: that the Synod take up mission work with the Missouri Synod in India and China, and that upon the invitation of the Board of Missions of the Missouri Synod the Norwegian Synod elect a man to serve on that board. Dr. S. C. Ylvisaker was elected by our Synod.

A resolution was passed that the Synod continue to collect funds for helping the needy in the war-stricken countries of Europe, and that these funds be sent through the committee of the Missouri Synod. Rev. G. A. Gullixson was elected to take charge of this work.

The Synod was incorporated on Thursday, June 10. The articles of Incorporation were unanimously adopted, and the signatures attested by attorney K. Dahlen of Minneapolis.

An invitation to attend the commencement exercises at Concordia College, St. Paul, Minn., brought joy to every member attending the Synod, and the invitation was unanimously accepted, and the Synod attended this pleasant and inspiring event on Wednesday evening, June 9th. Besides several excellent musical numbers an English oration was given by W. Eifert and a German oration by T. Harms. The baccalaureate address was delivered by Rev. P. Walther. President Buenger presented the diplomas.

One of the features of this convention which will long be remembered by everyone in attendance was the earnest Christian plea for the instruction of the children of the church in our own parochial schools. This plea was made by Rev. Emil Hansen of Scarville, Ia., who preached on this theme on Tuesday evening. We trust

that this exceptional, appealing sermon will be printed in full in the report of the synod.

The ladies of the Fairview congregation deserve the sincerest thanks of the convention of their untiring efforts in providing the meals for all who desired these in the parlors of the church. The fact that the members could spend the recess hours together at and about this beautiful church added very much to the pleasure and comfort of all in attendance.



Fairview Lutheran Church

Those who were afraid that the expense of printing the report of the Synod in English might hinder us from having this done, were jubilant when Mr. Nils Larsen of Deerfield, Wis., very modestly told a member of the committee on publications that he would be glad to defray the expense connected with that enterprise.

A complete report will therefore be coming in English and should be purchased and read by all our young people.

This meeting of the Synod was a source of joy to all in attendance and no member could leave for home without taking with him a thousand reasons for being thankful to our gracious father in heaven who has done far more than we could expect toward establishing our old Synod again. Let us glorify His name by unswerving fidelity to His Word and in our Christian calling.

In addition to resolutions mentioned by Gullixson, the convention established the Lutheran Synod Book Company, which later merged with the Bethany College Book Store. The merged book the store retained the name of the synod's bookstore. Under the subject of missions, the synod resolved that the salary for home mission pastors be increased to \$1,200 per year. The synod also established a Church Extension fund to assist needy congregations in to erect church buildings and a fund for parochial schools was established. Resolutions were also passed encouraging the use of Missouri Synod and Wisconsin Synod schools.

100 YEARS

The Lutheran Sentinel

At the 1919 convention of the Norwegian Synod, held in Albert Lea, the synod accepted the proposal that the weekly *Evangelisk Luthersk Tidende* be doubled in size and that it be published alternately in English and Norwegian and that it be edited by an editorial board of three members. The editorial committee elected consisted of pastors G. A. Gullixson, J. A. Moldstad, and Herman A. Preus. Not by accident, all three were pastors in Chicago. Preus was the managing editor, and as things worked themselves out Gullixson seemed to be in charge of the *Sentinel* and Moldstad guided the *Tidende*.

The editorial committee spent the fall planning the new assignment and by January the *Sentinel* made its appearance. Now, the *synode-folk* had a church paper in their mailboxes each week. The two papers were published under the banner *Evangelisk Luthersk Tidende* and *The Lutheran Sentinel*. The combined price was \$1.00 per year.



J. A. Moldstad

The first issue of the *Sentinel* in 1920 featured a message by editor G. A. Gullixson, writing on behalf of both papers, and describing the material that the readers could expect to find in them—it would not be fluff, but would be about the “declared doctrines of the conservative Lutheran Church and for the principles which the Norwegian Synod has always maintained.”



TO THE READERS OF THE SENTINEL AND TIDENDE
Evangelisk Luthersk Tidende, 3, 28, January 7, 1920

We wish our dear readers a happy and blessed New Year!

The relation between our readers and the editors has been congenial and happy, more so than we ever could have expected; for this we are profoundly grateful. This fact inspires us with the sincere desire to improve in every way possible each issue of our paper in the new year. We have endeavored to give expression to the spirit of our Synod.

We do not feel satisfied with merely editing a paper and dealing with generalities. Our Synod stands for the specific and declared doctrines of the conservative Lutheran Church and for the principles which the Norwegian Synod has always maintained.

We have burned all bridges as far as this stand is concerned. We have made sacrifices, great sacrifices, in order to do this. And the conviction of our being free to use all our endeavors for this sacred cause gives us joy and the greatest satisfaction in our work.

In this new year we look forward to much joy in our labor because of this. The oft repeated accusations made

by our opponents that “the Minority does not know what it wants and is not in unity with itself,” have, by God’s grace been proven to be false and have fallen flat. The Norwegian Synod for more than sixty years stood firm upon the Lutheran foundation of the pure doctrine of the Bible and the true biblical principles in our relations to our fellow men and in the government of the church.

When the majority of the Synod merged with the two other bodies on the basis of the *Opgjør*, it changed its course and abandoned the field which it had occupied for so long a time. We could not follow it in this but remained on the old foundation though we were thereby stripped of every synodical institution which we formerly were part owners of and in many ways suffered the loss of friends and great temporal advantages. We were derided as *minoritetens minimum*, and some of our former brethren have indulged in not a little merriment at our expense. This would wound but for the firm conviction that our cause is just and that it is the cause of God.



Tidende Sentinel Mast

The developments within the Norwegian Lutheran Church of America have already proved so clearly that our position was correct and our fears fully justified, that we cannot be moved by any power of eloquence or preponderance of numbers to change our position of protest.

What have we been witness to? We have seen the leaders of that Church and the majority leaders of the “Old Synod” assume, almost immediately, a hostile relation

to the brethren in the Synodical Conference. We have seen that body through its Foreign Mission Board enter into fraternizing relations with the reformed churches in the China Mission fields by providing a professor, Dr. L. H. Braafladt, for the School of Medicine of the Shantung Christian University, the aim of which is "To maintain in every way the essential missionary character and control of the institution, both in the appointment of teachers, religious care of the students, and the development of aggressive evangelical work," and by using this institution for preparing missionaries. This institution is supported by five Missions: The American Presbyterian, English Baptist, American Southern Presbyterian, Church of England, and Canadian Presbyterian Mission.



Herman A. Preus

We have seen during the past two years how the president of The Norwegian Lutheran Church, together with the presidents of several other Lutheran bodies not formerly accepted into fraternal relations with the Norwegian Synod, has been instrumental in the formation of the National Lutheran

Council—And as a member

and president of the Council has issued a call for hundreds of thousands of dollars to be used, according to the report, in missionary work, here and in foreign countries, besides for other things.

We have been witness to the fact that the president, without the consent of the congregations, accepted a doctrinal basis for the Council, and entered upon a rough shod campaign of coercion in seeking to ram this down the throats of his constituency and really succeeded in having the work done, endorsed with gratitude to God by the several districts of the church body, although many protested. We have witnessed the entrance into active fraternal relations with the former General Synod, General Council and Synod of the South by pastors and congregations individually and collectively. The

majority leaders of the Old Synod have thus succeeded in bringing the larger number of their followers in the former Norwegian Synod, into an entirely different Lutheran camp than that in which they stood during the existence of the Synod prior to the acceptance of *Opgjør*. They have abandoned the old field and the old friends and brethren and have begun to drift in the broad stream of compromise and externalism. We feared that this would be the result. We regret that these fruits ripened so rapidly. We hope that many within that body will continue to protest and continue to fight against it lest all be lost for conservative Lutheranism. We have continued the Old Synod and are thankful to God that there are some who have had the courage and wisdom to do this. We are thankful to our friends in the Norwegian Lutheran Church who have given expression to their good will toward us and we hope that they may soon enjoy with us the freedom of protesting against these sins and mistakes without being responsible for them as partners to them. After noting the developments of these few months since the merger was effected we do not see how a Lutheran who loves the pure doctrine of the Bible and the principles laid down there can be satisfied to live and sacrifice his time, his money, his Christian calling in building up a body that he feels should not prosper because it is not faithful to the charge God has given it to keep.

Confronted by these conditions among the great majority of Norwegian Lutherans in this country how

important for us members of the Norwegian Synod to watch and labor and pray that we may stand firm and be what God has called us to be faithful and loyal to His Word, whatever the cost may be.

—G. A. G.



G. A. Gullixson

DR. YLVISAKER ACCEPTS CALL Tidende June 16, 1919

Sigurd Christian Ylvisaker was the son of a prominent old Norwegian Synod family. His father, Johannes, was a key professor at the synod's seminary, and several brothers were in the ministry. Johannes Ylvisaker had opposed Opgjør, and accepted the merger; he died soon after the merger took place. Remaining in the merger in his position at Luther College, Ylvisaker, with several other young men spoke against the merger, and also the new church's intention to join the National Lutheran Council which gathered together most of the Lutheran churches in the United States without regard to doctrinal unity. When the Iowa district of the new church, in the summer of 1919 voted in favor of joining, Ylvisaker, with another professor, Oswald Overn (see "Church News" resigned. Ylvisaker officially joined the little synod in 1920.

Among the many important matters dealt with at the last synod meeting [Albert Lea] included the question about higher education for the young men who wish to study to be pastors and teachers. The Nominating committee's plan was accepted, and it was resolved to use The Missouri Synod's Concordia College as our college and to place a professor there to take care of our students as well as instruct them in the Norwegian language and other subjects.

Elected to this committee were pastors A. J. Torgerson, H. Ingebritson and Christian Anderson. The committee found in the Missouri Synod's board the same eagerness and unfailing willingness to help us that they have shown before, and a plan was adopted. Now our committee in cooperation with the college's board called Dr. Sigurd C. Ylvisaker, who for several years has taught at Luther College, Decorah, Iowa, to this our first professorship. Professor Ylvisaker has always considered himself a member of The Norwegian Lutheran Church in America," [the Norwegian Synod of 1853]. During the district meeting [of the merged church] in June he resigned from that church and resigned his position at Luther College.

Now we have the pleasure of announcing that Dr. Ylvisaker has accepted the call and during these days is moving to St. Paul.

Thus the Lord holds his hand over our little synod, insignificant as it is in the eyes of the world. By this arrangement the faithful and merciful God helps and blesses us again. In doing so, the Synod enters once again into practical association with the old, upright and faithful Lutheran Missouri Synod, which has always stood so firmly by our side. Thus Dr. Ylvisaker comes as a well-equipped Lutheran theologian and teacher to our community, where with all his learning and youthful power, with good conscience and a good spirit can work for the edification of the kingdom of God. We thank God for His grace and mercy and welcome Dr. Ylvisaker among us.

God bless Dr. Ylvisaker and his ministry and our synod in this new and yet old connection!



S. C. Ylvisaker

CHURCH NEWS from *Tidende-Sentinel*

March 10, 1920 *Tidende*

On Friday, February 27, Pastor B. Harstad's home in Parkland burned down. Only the walls and foundation remain standing. Nothing on the second floor was saved. Books, papers, clothing were all destroyed. The library consisted of the best and rarest works in each discipline. It had for more than 45 years, as a true and always helpful friend served him well, and its destruction was an irreplaceable loss. Harstad writes: "That the Lord gave and that the Lord took, we see. With Job, we try to humbly surrender in God's will to say: God be praised." The Lord Himself comfort, strengthen, and sustain them, and replace their loss. Pastor Harstad and family are for the present living in the church basement in Parkland. (tr)

March 17, 1920 *Sentinel*

The annual convention of The Norwegian Synod of the American Evangelical Lutheran Church will be held at Fairview Ev. Luth Church, Minneapolis, Minn., Rev. Christian Anderson, pastor, from Friday June 4th to Thursday June 10th, 1920. L. P. Jensen, Sec'y

The destruction by fire of the home and library of our venerable president Rev. B. Harstad was a shock to us all. While we extend our sympathy, we would suggest that a committee be appointed by the Vice President Rev. Moldstad to start a subscription at once of funds to enable him to supply himself with a library and to help as far as possible to rebuild the parsonage. The opinion of our readers in this matter is hereby solicited. Address letters to Rev. G. A. Gullixson, 2219 North Ave., Chicago



Westaterrn Koshkonong

April 28, 1920, *Sentinel*

The good news that the West Koshkonong Lutheran Congregation, Dane Co. Wis., has formally joined the Norwegian Synod will gladden the hearts of thousands of the friends and members of our Synod. The first and oldest congregation of the Norwegian Synod has decided to continue in the "old paths." This will be an inspiration to all the congregations within the Synod and a good example to many other churches.

May 20, 1920 *Sentinel*



Oswald B. Overn

All members of the choirs of our Synod who can attend the convention of the Synod June 4-10, should prepare to take part in the concert which will be given during the session of the Synod at Minneapolis. A list of the music that will be sung is given elsewhere in this number.

July 16, 1920 *Tidende*

Prof. Oswald B. Overn, who during the last year has been teaching at Luther Institute and at the same time studied at the University of Chicago, has accepted a call as professor at Concordia College St. Paul, Minn. He traveled Friday to his home in Albert Lea, where on Wednesday he was married of Maybell Jensen. The newlyweds left immediately for Minneapolis in order to spend the summer at the University of Minnesota. (tr)

May 26, 1920 *Sentinel*

The Hartland Lutheran congregation, Hartland, Minn., has decided to apply for membership in the Norwegian Synod, and has called Rev. J. Hendricks to serve it temporarily.

A small congregation nine miles from Fertile, Minn.,



Hartland Lutheran Church, Hartland, MN

with its church built upon the farm of Mr. Rindahl, has declared its purpose of remaining with our Synod.

A congregation near Story City, Iowa, has been organized and is served by visiting pastors of the Norwegian Synod.



*Bethany Lutheran Church
Story City, Iowa*



ACORNS

FROM THE ELS ARCHIVES



Theodore G. Gullixson - Archivist

A STORY OF GOD'S GRACE

The ELS Archives recently received letters from the files of the late Rev. Paul Ylvisaker, former pastor of Hartland and Manchester Lutheran Churches, Hartland, Minnesota. The essay referred to in the letter is printed in the 1967 Synod Report, which can be located on the internet at <https://els.org/resources/document-archive/convention-essays/essay-1967-ylvisaker/>

Harvard Street Lutheran Church

323 Harvard Street

Cambridge, Mass. 02138

Paul G. Madson-Pastor

1-29-1968 Arlington, Mass.

Dear Paul of "Heart"land,

Sometimes we don't know what a word spoken (or written) in due season will accomplish. And little does one sometimes value the Synod Report, perhaps due to the difficulty with selling it to members of our congregations. What I can't sell I give away, hoping that somebody will reap some benefit from them in some way.

Recently someone in Boston did reap some benefit, in a rather unusual way. I'll try to make the story brief. I visit at a home where a man takes care of his sick wife (she is not always in bed, but is not able to move around much). He is technically a member, she is not. However, she seems to appreciate spiritual nourishment from the Word when I see her from time to time. Neither of them (both over 65) have been in church,

mainly because they don't have a car. They have a son who (at 42) has experienced a nervous breakdown, cataract operation, and loss of employment. I had met him once, but he was rather a recluse and stayed in his room much of the time when I was there to visit them. Recently he has become somewhat better and has had some employment, having received some of his sight back again. During his illness he was influenced by Christian Science and became quite involved with it.

A few weeks ago he told me his story in a well written letter. It seems that though he was not present when I made my visits to his mother that he nevertheless heard some of these from his room. The last time I was there I left a copy of the Synod Report. He reads a lot now, and has been grappling with a lot of questions since his bout with Christian Science. It seems that your essay in the Synod Report ["The Abiding Worth of our Reformation Heritage"] did a lot for him, and that is why I am writing to you. Let me quote a pertinent part from his letter: "Today's essay which you left has finally cleared up for me for all time many of the contradictory dogmas and theories that have puzzled me for so long. It goes without saying that Luther's statements were always there for me." Later he says, "I am not 3/4 of the way there after reading that essay. Perhaps you can take me the rest of the way."

The upshot of this is the he is now taking a rather informal type of instruction (he was confirmed in the Episcopal church, though baptized Lutheran). He is quite musical, and is playing our organ for us since we needed some help in that department. I hope that he will continue to show the interest he has expressed so far.

So you see, your essay did some good even out here in Boston. Thought you ought to know the story, for I remember the poet's words (Edward Sill in "The Fool's Prayer"): "The word we had not sense to say—Who knows how grandly it had rung?"

All for now.

Gud vaeret med dig. Hilsen til Bergitte.

[God be with you, Greetings to Bergitte]

Paul Madson

PIONEER HOME by Rev. Paul Ylvisaker

Looking back to the days of the early American settlers, the poem "Saeterjenten's Sondag" [Saeter girl's Sunday] gives us a vivid picture of how the pioneers felt in regard to their church services and Christian home life. God and His word were very close to them. The hardships caused by the lack of water on the prairies or the difficulty in getting staples in food seemed rather to make the people braver. Saeterjenten was also forced to take along the bare necessities of life each summer or else live on the cheese "prim" or milk from the goats upon the mountains.

As Sunday morning dawned, these "saeterjenter" [i.e., girls who watched goats in the high mountains] saw by the rising of the sun that the time of church was drawing near. In their mind the ringing of the "kirke klokken" [church bell] was to them a reality and seeing the different individuals like "Odd kom i sasinde trav, stanser litt far at tale til folen og saa gaar ind og satter sin i stolen far at bede sin bon" [Odd—a male, Norwegian name— comes running, pauses to talk to the foal, and then goes in and sits down in the chair (pew) to pray.]

Thus our pioneers sought God in their church and His Word. God was to them an unseen guest. In order to attend church service the pioneers often used open wagons with plain boards across for seats. Rubber tired wagon wheels were to them unheard of. Still they would travel many miles to attend church or get their pastor who served many congregations. It was to them a privilege to do these acts, instead of [finding a] reason to keep them away from God's House.

"Aa den som idag fik blande sin rost med hans og de avriges stemmel!" [O, those who today join their voices with him and the voices of others—tr. C. Ferkenstad]



Dr. Koren Still Speaks



U. V. Koren's Works

Mark DeGarmeaux editor

Lutheran Synod Book Co. &
ELS Historical Society

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\$25/volume + \$2.50 shipping and \$100/set + \$5 shipping for non-members if ordered by mail from the ELSHS (6 Browns Ct.)

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6 Browns Ct
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Send to ELS Historical Society, 6 Browns Ct., Mankato MN 56001

Voting Membership:
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\$25 - individual or organization

Voting Members must belong to an ELS congregation or a congregation in fellowship with the ELS. Associate Members are any others interested in the work of the ELS Historical Society.