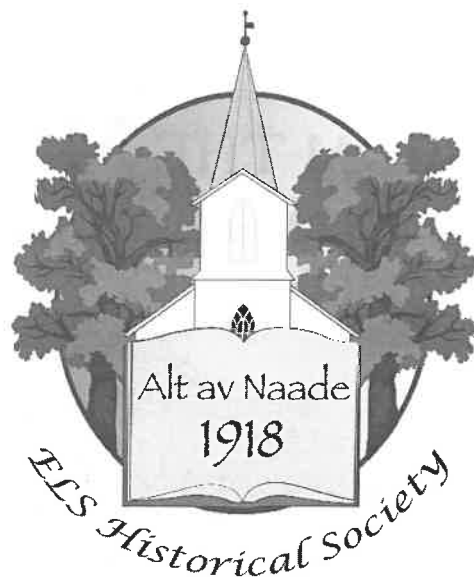


# Oak Leaves

Newsletter of the ELS Historical Society



Volume 27

Spring 2023

Issue 2

## ANNUAL MEETING OF HISTORICAL SOCIETY

SYNOD SUNDAY, JUNE 18

7:00 ELS Historical Society (Ylvisaker Fine Arts Center) \*

They Are Not Dead, but Sleeping

The Evangelical Lutheran Synod Historical Society will hold its meeting on Synod Sunday, June 18 at 7:00 p.m. The meeting will take place in the Ylvisaker Fine Arts Center on the campus of Bethany Lutheran College in Mankato, Minnesota.

Besides the business meeting of the society there will be three presentations on the theme: They Are Not Dead, but Sleeping.

This will be a survey of funeral and burial practices of our synod's history.

1. We will look back at early ELS and old Norwegian Synod practices
2. We will see highlights of some current and historical practices of our midwestern congregations.
3. and we will take a look at some current and historical practices from congregations on the West Coast.

The focus is on the reverence shown to the body God has created, in the hope of the resurrection.

Everyone is invited to attend, even if you are not a member of the historical society.



## AMENDMENT TO THE CONSTITUTION ELSHS

Important notice for the meeting of the Evangelical Lutheran Synod Historical Society in Mankato, Minnesota on June 18, 2023, Synod Sunday, at the Ylvisaker Fine Arts Center on the campus of Bethany Lutheran College.

After discussion and revision a motion was made, seconded and passed to bring the following amendment to the annual meeting in June 2023:

“The board recommends that Article II #4 of the constitution be amended to read, ‘to publish a newsletter, the purpose of which is to educate the members of the society by keeping them aware of the Synod’s history through articles and research and to promote the society.’”

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# FROM THE MUSEUM

## Visit the Museum During Synod Convention



*Museum Picture*

The ELS Synod Convention is always a busy week. There are meetings to attend, worship opportunities, and many special presentations. Since many of those attending the convention don't have other chances to come to Mankato, it's also a good time to visit the Ottesen Museum.

Once again we are inviting families to come to the museum where children can participate in the Koren's Kids and Koren's Little Kids activities. These are scavenger hunts that help our young church historians explore Synod history based on the artifacts on display. For more information, or to schedule a time to take part in this activity, please contact the museum at [museum@blc.edu](mailto:museum@blc.edu). We look forward to seeing you!

**EDITOR:** Timothy Erickson

**DESIGN & LAYOUT:** Benjamin Miklasz

**BOARD OF DIRECTORS:** Marie Aaberg, Craig Ferkenstad, Theodore Gullixson, Lois Jaeger, (Secretary), Michael Lilienthal (President), Marge Lillo, Andrew Soule, Erling Teigen

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

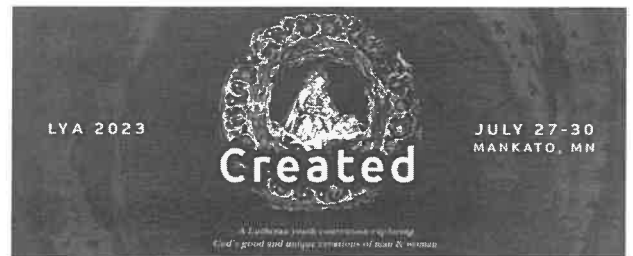
Oak Leaves welcomes articles of both Synodical and local significance for publication. Articles may be edited for style, clarity, or length to allow for publication. Each issue will be deposited in the archives of the Evangelical Lutheran Synod

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*Oak Leaves is published quarterly by the Evangelical Lutheran Synod Historical Society,  
6 Browns Court — Mankato, MN 56001*

This year we will also have a special display connected to the theme of the Lutheran Youth Association convention which will be on the Bethany campus this summer. Their theme is "Created" and focuses on the special blessings God gives us as men and women. One of those blessings is marriage and so we will have on display items from our collection connected to weddings. Although the LYA convention is in July, this display will be ready in time for Synod Convention visitors.

Please look for posters around Bethany campus for our special Convention hours. If you would like to visit the museum at other times please contact us at [Museum@blc.edu](mailto:Museum@blc.edu) or 507-514-2538.



*LYA Meeting Advertisement*



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# FROM THE EDITOR

In this issue you will find information about the annual meeting which takes place on Synod Sunday. I hope you can make it. The special topic for presentation may seem kind of macabre to some. We don't often like talking about death. But death is something that affects all of us. Every person in the world has to go through death. We experience the death of people we don't know, but the death of people we know and love affects us more. And our own death is coming.

In connection with that topic, I have included the first part of the 1933 Synod Convention Essay on Christian Burial written by Justin Petersen.

The Acorn deals with a trip that Rev. Paul Anderson made to Nigeria in 1975. Pastor Anderson had been a missionary in Nigeria from 1946 to 1952. He gives a report of this trip, which took place 23 years after he had left Africa.

Articles about Pastor Anderson's work have appeared previously in Oak Leaves. One is about his daughter, Gail, who was born in Africa in 1946. She was called "My Little Missionary." You can read that issue of Oak Leaves at the following web address:

<https://www.els-history.org/download/oak-leaves/oak-leaves-vol-15-no-1-2011.pdf>

A special edition of Oak Leaves was produced as a summary of the second annual meeting of the ELS Historical Society in 1998. That issue included an article about the work of Paul Anderson in Africa. It can be found at:

<https://www.els-history.org/download/oak-leaves/oak-leaves-2-special.pdf>

Another paper was written that includes the history of the Nigeria, Africa, mission. It was:

## A HALF-CENTURY OF MISSION INVOLVEMENT:

ELS Foreign Mission Work prior to 1968

Rev. Craig A. Ferkenstad

1968 was the year that the ELS began its own mission work in Peru. Pastor Ferkenstad's article can be found at:

<https://blts.edu/wp-content/uploads/2011/07/CAF-ELS-Mission-Work.pdf>

Pastor Anderson later served on the ELS Board for Foreign Missions, serving as Chairman of that board for over 10 years. I got to know him from my interactions with the Board and his visits to our mission field in Peru. He died in 2018.

His wife Vergie died this past year and is one of the persons being remembered at the memorial service at this coming Synod Convention.

I would like to thank those who contributed to this edition of Oak Leaves, Rev. Michael Lillienthal, president of the ELS Historical Society, for providing the information about the annual meeting, Rebecca De-Garmeaux, director of the Ottesen Museum, for the notice concerning the museum, Dr. Erling Teigen for providing what happened 100 years ago and for providing guidance and advice to me as I learn how to be editor of the Oak Leaves, Rev. Theodore Gullixson, Synod archivist, for finding the ACORN and providing me with a reason to learn more about the life of Rev. Paul Anderson.

May God bless your reading of this issue.

*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.

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# ONE HUNDRED YEARS AGO

## Church News from Sentinel and Tidende Sentinel, May 9, 1923

Rev. P. C. Forseth preached at the Western Koshkonong Lutheran Church, Sunday May 6th. Rev. L. S. Guttebo taking H. A. Preus' pulpit on that Sunday.

Our Savior's Lutheran Congregation, Madison, Weis., has purchased a valuable lot adjoining the church and will erect a new parsonage in the course of a few months.

The Western Koshkonong Lutheran Church is seriously planning for a Lutheran school. God give them courage and foresight to do this! Then this "Old Oak" of our Synod will shoot and grow from generation to generation.

St. Paul's Lutheran Ev. Luth. Congregation in Chicago, G. A. Gullixson's charge, will celebrate its 50th anniversary on Sunday, May 13. The congregation was organized by Rev. Krohn on May 11th, 1873. Pastor I. L. P. Dietrichson was its first permanent pastor.

Tidende, May 26

According to a letter from Reverend A. J. Torgerson, the Synod was also able to end the financial year with a cash surplus this year. But now money is needed for this new financial year.

The Synod meeting begins on Friday, June 15 and closes Thursday June 21. Register with Pastor O. M. Gullerud, Princeton, Minn.

Tidende, August 8

The Chairman of the Miscellaneous Committee draws attention to the fact that in the minutes from the synod meeting Reverend O. H. Aaberg, Parkland, Wash., was

admitted as a standing member of the society.

Miss Laura Ingebritson has been called as teacher at Western Koshkonong congregation's school which opens in September.

Pastor K. L. Guttebo has a few weeks ago returned to his call in Holton, Mich. His wife, who has been ill, is still with pastor Lauritz Guttebo, but is getting stronger day by day Semtel.

Sentinel, October 10

Rev. Geo. O. Lillegard's mission station in China has several times been fired upon by robber bands because it has not been recognized as an American station. A much needed American flag of wool, 4 feet by 6 feet, has been sent the station by the Viking Society which consists of twenty-five ladies of Our Savior's church at Madison. At the same time the society sent ten dollars cash to the mission.

## CHRISTIAN BURIAL

*Justin Petersen*

*1933 Synod Convention Essay*

*"Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth"*

The topic Christian Burial might on first thought appear to be a topic that rightfully belongs to the pastoral conference. It should not require so much thought to realize, however, that the right understanding of this important subject and, following upon the right understanding, the correct practice concerning Christian burial, is of vital importance to the members as well as to the pastor of the congregation, especially then in our day when the opinion is steadily gaining ground that Christian burial should be denied no one, regardless of what the deceased has confessed and how he has lived. At no time perhaps does the pastor need the enlightened understanding and sympathetic support of his flock more than when he is forced, on Scriptural grounds, to refuse to officiate at a funeral. The purpose of this paper is to further this understanding and support. May the Lord of the Church grant His blessing!

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## What Christian Burial Is

We must first inquire what a Christian burial is, and what meaning such a burial has. Though a burial in itself is a purely civil affair—everyone must be buried and anyone can bury—yet because of the mode of burial among Christians, accompanied as it is by hymn-singing, prayer, and preaching, it at once becomes a sacred, religious act, a part of our liturgy and public service. To the conservative Lutheran Church the real essence of a Christian burial consists in the words of committal: “Out of dust art thou come. Unto dust shalt thou return. From the dust shalt thou rise again. Amen.” In these words is expressed the hope of resurrection to life, life eternal, not a general hope, as some would have it, but a specific hope for the body being buried. This same specific hope of resurrection to life is also powerfully expressed in the grand words from St. Peter’s First Epistle General: “Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead.” 1 Peter 1:3. We repeat again, the words of committal and what they express are the essential part, the heart of a Christian burial. Everything else in our burial ritual could be left out, and still it would be a Christian burial, just as in the Sacrament of Baptism and the Lord’s Supper everything could in an emergency drop out but the words of institution.

Now since the hope of resurrection to life eternal can be expressed only with regard to Christians, it follows of itself, as night the day, that only Christians should be given a Christian burial. According to our Church a Christian burial is a privilege and honor for those only, concerning whom we in charity have reason to hope have died in the faith. “Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth.” Rev. 14:13.

A Christian burial is furthermore a testimony of fellowship. It expresses the hope that those who here in this world were united in faith, shall also be united hereafter in life eternal. As a testimony of fellowship, burial is also regarded by the secret societies or lodges, as statements from their authoritative writings clearly prove. As such burial is also often regarded by outspoken infidels, who have completely broken with the church and

all religion. As a dying wish they have often requested that the church have nothing to do with their burial. Since burial is undoubtedly an expression of fellowship, it clearly follows that those who would have nothing to do with our Christian faith and fellowship in life, surely should not be forced into such fellowship after death. So much for the meaning of Christian burial. We now consider the duty which the church has towards her dead.

The church has a duty toward her dead. We find that the Church of God has ever taken charge of her deceased members. In Deut. 34:8 we read: “And the children of Israel wept for Moses in the plains of Moab thirty days.” When John the Baptist was beheaded by Herod, we are told in Matt. 14:12: “And his disciples came and took up the body, and buried it, and went and told Jesus.” It is proper at the burial of a Christian that not only the relatives and friends participate, but also the deceased’s brothers and sisters in faith. In other words, that the congregation participate as a congregation.

In his Liturgical Essays, Kliefoth pertinently states: “That the Christian Church takes charge of the bodies of its dead members has its grounds in what we know about the body. God has created not only the soul, but also the body. The Lord has died not only for the soul, but also for the body as well. Not only the soul, but also the body is a member of Christ, a temple of the Holy Ghost. Not only the soul, but also the risen body of the believer shall eternally live and be with God. It isn’t only from a feeling of piety towards the dead body that the church is moved to take charge of the remains of the deceased, but the fact that the dead body was together with them in this life a member of the church and of the body of Christ, and in view of the resurrection still is such a member. It is for this reason that the church does not deal with the funeral of one of its members as a private matter, but as a congregational matter.” (Freely translated.)

### The Purpose of Christian Burial

It has a three-fold purpose. First, with regard to the deceased. By giving the deceased a Christian burial, the congregation testifies before the world: “This man was one of us; through faith he was a member of Christ’s holy body, a soldier in Christ’s army, a sheep of His

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flock. We are now laying our brother in faith to rest. He was a Christian, as a Christian lived, and as a Christian we believe he died. And though now we are committing his body to the dust, we believe it shall once rise again, be reunited with the soul, and live and reign with God in all eternity. And we believe that we shall once see our brother in that yonder blessed life, and there together with him sing the praises of our Savior, the Lamb of God who 'wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by his blood.'" Further, a Christian burial is a sincere thanksgiving to God for everything that He has done for the departed: that He through the means of grace brought him to faith, kept him in the true faith, and now at last has granted him a blessed end. From this we see that as a Christian death is the most glorious thing that can fall to a man's lot here on earth, we in like manner do not exaggerate when we assert that Christian burial is one of the grandest and most beautiful rites that the Christian Church has. It celebrates the joyful homecoming of a faithful soldier of the cross, after his struggle with and victory over all the enemies of his soul.

The second purpose or object of a Christian burial is with respect to the mourners. They are our brothers and sisters in faith. Their hearts have been wounded by the death of a dear one. In their sorrow they are tempted to regard their loss as an evidence of God's wrath. Or they are in danger of losing sight of their glorious Christian hope, and mourning as those who have no hope. Christians have true sympathy with one another in the hour of need. With the only true and abiding comfort, the Gospel, they say to their mourning brethren: "Weep not. It is well, eternally well, with your dear departed one. 'Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord.'"

The third purpose of a Christian burial is with respect to the congregation itself. Thereby the Christian congregation confesses its faith before the whole world. It also is a clarion call from yonder world to the congregation, to each member thereof, to think of his hour of departure, and to cling with ever tighter hold to his blessed Savior, in whom he is ever ready and prepared to depart this life.

But this duty of Christian burial the congregation does not owe all people, nor is it an honor that the Christian congregation can, without denying her Christian faith and hope, confer upon all.

May our consideration of this solemn subject "Christian Burial" serve to remind each and every one of us of our death's day, which also is to be our great day of entrance into life, so that we may be constrained to pray daily:

Who knows how near my life's expended?  
Time flies, and death is hasting on,  
How soon, my term of trial ended,  
Death may be here and life be gone,  
My God, for Jesus' sake I pray  
Thy peace may bless my dying day.

My many sins! O veil them over  
With merits of Thy dying Son!  
I here Thy richest grace discover,  
Here find I peace, and here alone;  
My God, for Jesus' sake, I pray  
Thy peace may bless my dying day.





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# ACORNS

## FROM THE ELS ARCHIVES



Theodore G. Gullixson - Archivist

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### NIGERIA LUTHERAN HISTORY BY REV. PAUL ANDERSON, WRITTEN IN 1975

1939

Forty years will soon have passed since Dr. and Mrs. Henry Nau of the Missouri Synod began work in Nigeria. They went in response to the invitation and request of the Theaikpo Clan in what was then the Nye District of the Calabar Province, British West African protectorate of Nigeria. The nucleus of the new mission was made up of former members of the Qua Ibo Mission who were disturbed when the Que Tho Mission would no longer baptize infants. Dr. Nau served a year. He baptized 410 children and 57 adults, and consecrated 42 marriages. (ELS Synod Report, 1937, p. 46)

Rev. and Mrs. William Schweppe (WELS), Rev. and Mrs. Vernon Koeper (LCMS) and Miss Helen Kluck arrived to carry on the work before Dr. Nau left.



*Henry Nau*

“Your board is following the principle to make the African Church a self-supporting and self-propagating church, that is, we support the missionaries we send out, while the church in Africa supports the native workers whom we train and is also responsible for buildings (church and school) as heretofore. We hope this policy may not be disturbed.” L.A. Wisler, Executive Secretary reporting in the ELS Synod Report, 1937, p. 46. In accordance with this principle, each congregation established its own treasury and a common treasury was established for cooperative work.

1938

Jonathan Udo Kong graduated from Immanuel College, Greensboro, N.C., and returned to Nigeria to become the first national pastor. He is now retired and almost blind.

1942

In Uyo, five miles north of the headquarters of the Lutheran Mission, an Ibo sawyer, David Azimaku, pursued his craft. He may have sawed lumber for the Lutheran Central School at Obot Idim and thus became acquainted with the Lutheran Mission. He, then, made trips back to his home village about 80 miles away to share his new-found faith with his relatives. They in turn organized a delegation to appeal to Rev. Schweppe to come and teach them. After meeting the villagers, the missionaries were convinced that Umuzeala Hsu must be served.

1943

At the next meeting of the organization of churches in Ibesikpo, the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Nigeria decided to send two of their most gifted teachers to be their missionaries to the Ibos. E.U. Bkanem, a teacher who had taken advanced study in theology privately under the American missionaries at Obot Idim, and Efiong Johnson Udch were sent. The delegates at that meeting (Aqua Esop) agreed to finance this at about \$12.00 per month. Rev. Schweppe supervised this first foreign mission of the Ibibio people of Ibesikpo and

spent a couple days every three months to prepare them for and serve Holy Communion, baptize old and young, consecrate marriages and advise in hard cases.

1948

The number of Ibo congregations grew in the vicinity of Umuzeala Nsu. Rev. Harold Buls was chosen to be the first resident missionary from America in Ibo land. David Azimaku gave land for a mission house in his village, Umuzeala Nsu. Other missionaries continued there until the Biafra Civil War in 1967. While some of the congregations from the earlier days have fallen away, those that remain are the backbone of the Independent Lutheran Churches of Nigeria. This is the origin of the Nsu District.

1960s

As the nation began to establish itself, Lutherans sought positions in state and national capitals. Both Tbibic and Ibo Lutherans moved into cities like Snugu, the capital of the newly-created East Central State. During the war, 1967-1970, most of these people had to scatter. Only a small group remains to continue the work of the congregation there. Their pastor, Rev. N.G.N. Inyama, is somewhere in the U.S. pursuing advanced studies, having left the Enugu church. Another Enugu man is in Nyack College (Christian Missionary Alliance school) in Nyack, New York. The work here is supervised by Pastor Mmadi who also is in charge of the Nsu District. Special problems here are: distance from their pastor, the temptation of unionism, and polygamy. If this group could be properly guided, they have the potential for great effectiveness. This is the northernmost church, small—but zealous and rich.

Also in the sixties, students from many areas enrolled at the Lutheran Normal School in Tbakachi, a teacher training college which I was chosen to establish in 1950. Among the students there, were people from southern Ibo land, too. Having become acquainted with Lutheranism at college, some started churches in their home villages. This is the origin of the churches in the Ukwn District. All of these are rather new and growing. Pastor E.O. Ohsegbu is in charge of these.

#### ITINERARY OF 1975 TRIP TO THE INDEPENDENT LUTHERAN CHURCH OF NIGERIA, BY REV. PAUL ANDERSON

NOTE: Rev. Paul and Emily Anderson were given a trip to Nigeria in 1975 by Pastor Paul Lehenbaur's mission organization. They were to explore how the ELS could do work in Nigeria. The following are excerpts from Rev. Anderson's report on this trip.

On the evening of July 9, 1975, we arrived at the airport at Lagos, Nigeria. We had no confirmed passage on to Enugu or hotel reservations. We were told by the Arline that there was not space available on the flight we had been seeking to get for over six months. However, there was a Nigerian travel agency, we purchased tickets and, for a tip of about \$17.00, were loaded on an earlier flight—a fine German-built Fokker F28—and later found that the flight we had sought before came through about half full.

The airport at Enunu was comfortable. We waited there for representatives of the churches to meet us. We were then escorted to the Presidential Hotel where we checked in, and then to the site of the abandoned radio studio at the top of a hill overlooking the city of Enugu. Having heard of their hopes of a return to the glory that was once theirs when the radio station was operating, we went on to the Holy Trinity Lutheran Church. We saw that it is restored to a good, usable condition. After the visit to the church, we attended the first cocktail party in our lives, as guests of the little congregation in Enugu, in the Presidential Hotel in Enugu. Other guests included the Resident (equivalent of Governor) of Enugu, minister of education, T.V. interviewer newspaper reporter, et. al.

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The next day we called on the Resident and the Secretary of the Military Government. We spoke about church and government relations, our purpose in having Christian Day Schools, and regulations regarding working visas. Regarding the LCR's difficulty in obtaining visas, the distant impression is given the the problem is with the individual applicants. Someone ruffled some feathers some way. We found other American workers there. In the evening we met with the congregation. We found dis-satisfaction with Pastor Nnadi chiefly because of his opposition to the unionistic services then want to have. We had a couple hours of discussion before they could see the "Why?" Of going our separate way. They wanted United Reformation Day services, for example. They are concerned about the impact of their church upon the community. ....

The next day was spent discussing doctrine and practical matters with the pastors. We had had occasion to observe their handling of the doctrine of fellowship in a practical situation in Enugu. We proceeded quickly over points of expected agreement: law, Gospel, Sacraments; a bit more carefully concerning the authority and perspicuity of Scripture, objective justification and the Call. As far as I was able to observe, they are one with us in doctrine and evangelical practice. Upon this observation, we partook of the Lord's Supper with them on the next day, Sunday, at Umuzeala Nsu, and two weeks later assisted Pastor Bnadi in the ordination of Pastor Ohaegbyu at Umuadienwe.

The organization of the ELCN is rather loose. Each congregation has elected a representative for the Board of Directors. The Board has elected a chairman, Chief A.A. Kanu; a vice-chairman, Mr. O.C. Williams; a general secretary, Mr. F.A. Nwosa; a treasurer, Mr. S.S.O. Nwanua; and financial secretary, Mr. B.K. Urebu; and superintendent, Rev. J.P. Nmadi. They meet quarterly; district boards meet monthly. The official welcome took place on Sunday, July 13, after the service. The address was read by Chief Kanu.

#### ITINERARY OF 1975 TRIP TO THE INDEPENDENT LUTHERAN CHURCH OF NIGERIA, BY REV. PAUL ANDERSON

NOTE: Rev. Paul and Emily Anderson were given a trip to Nigeria in 1975 by Pastor Paul Lehenbaur's mission organization. They were to explore how the ELS could do work in Nigeria. The following are excerpts from Rev. Anderson's report on this trip.

After the welcome to the Independent Lutheran Church of Nigeria, Rev. Anderson was asked a number of questions. "What does the Independent Lutheran Mission have with other Lutheran bodies?"

I answered that ILM co-operates with the ELS and WELS. I gave the example of the work in Nicaragua. I also mentioned the assistance given in other missions at home and in Peru.

"Does the Independent Lutheran Church hold the same doctrine as the Wisconsin Synod?" I answered, "Yes" — "Why, then, are they separate?" I, then explained how ILM came out of the LC/MS and serves as a way for conscientious individuals to participate in mission work while they protest the liberalism of their own church body.



*Paul Anderson*

"In Nigeria, there is what is known as 'The World Council of Churches.' Would it be right for us Lutherans

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to join that body or have anything to do with them?”

I answered that we might ride on a bus with them, but if they are going to have services, they go their way and we go ours. We have nothing to do with them in church work. For “how can two walk together except they be agreed?”

“How does the church grow? By great men or ‘Lords’ or by some other method?” The reference here is to the desire of the Enugu people to spend money on cocktail parties, etc. to attract those who are held in high honor by influential people. I answered that only the Gospel of Christ can win souls for eternity, although we may use whatever is not specifically forbidden to win friends. Perhaps that may give us an opportunity to share the Gospel later. We may try to get to know people in government so that they may understand that we wish to be law-abiding and have a good relationship with them, etc. But this is not church work.

Another asked, “Is it proper to register our congregation with the government so that we have government recognition?” I answered that we should do everything legally according to the laws of the land unless these are specifically contrary to God’s Law. They should study their own law.

Good fellowship, friendliness and joy prevailed at all our meetings. Each church had prepared a typed or carefully written “Programme” for our visits. After the general meeting at Umuzaela Nsu on Sunday, we visited the rest of the churches in the Nsu district during the week. At each place I extended greetings from Pastor Lehenbauer and ILM and received their greetings in return.

The Nsu district consists of Umuzaela Nsu, Ihitteafoukwu, Umiopera Ogboama, Abueke Nta, Agbaja and Enugu, although Enugu is quite by itself. The Ukwu district also has one congregation separated a considerable distance from the rest. We visited Akpoim on Sunday, July 20. That was another very long and persistently rainy day. We left for church at about 8:30 and got home about 5:00. From there we moved to Unusdienwe, near Port Harcourt.



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# HOW REV. J. A. THORSEN JOINED THE SYNOD

*Synod Report, 1929, page 128 (English edition)*

*Readers of Oak Leaves have met Rev. Jørgen A. Thorsen in an earlier issue. Born in Norway in 1838, he taught in various schools in Norway before emigrating in 1867. He attended Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, and graduated, in 1869. He served two Norwegian Synod congregations near Byron, Minnesota and served that parish for 47 years. He retired in 1916, and later moved to Minneapolis and became a member of Fairview Lutheran Church. He would have known Bjug Harstad well, since he served as vice-president of the Minnesota district for several years while Harstad was president of the same.*

Rev. J. A. Thorsen and his brother Rev. M. Thorsen, two of the pioneers in the church field, attended our convention. Rev. J. A. Thorsen addressed the Synod in the following words:

“A great many imagine that the true worth of the Church is measured by its numerical strength. But is this a correct view? Do great numbers in the Church prove beneficial, if indifference to the Word of God prevails? Not by any means. The essential thing is that the Lord is with us. Only when we respect His Word, honor and obey it, do we have assurance that He is with us. If we fail in this, nothing will help us. Our boasts about great numbers will only add to our guilt and make us more contemptible in His sight. Luther says: “I have a little place, the Word of God, there I stand. If anyone regret that he stands with me on this place, let him leave me. If anyone feels afraid, let him flee. My support, is secure—that I know.” “When our Lord and Savior arrived at the grave of Lazarus and was met by the doubts of Martha, He said to her: ‘Said I not unto thee, that if thou wouldest believe, that thou shouldest see the glory of God?’ That we believe the Word of God determines the matter.

“This all-important duty and privilege, also teaches us that we must bring up our children “in the nurture and admonition of the Lord.” If we neglect this, we are without hope. Our main fault in the Old Synod was that we did not establish parochial schools and comply with the Words of Christ: ‘Feed my lambs.’ Dr. F. Pieper said once to me, when I asked him to state the cause of the great success of the Missouri Synod: ‘Next to God, it is our Parochial schools.’ Concordia Seminary at St. Louis is the largest theological institution among the protestants in this country. Not long ago, a prominent man of the Reformed Church visited the Seminary and asked Dr. Pieper to give the reason for the great success of this institution. Dr. Pieper pointed at the parochial school buildings and said: ‘There you see the reason.’ The visitor exclaimed: ‘O, if we only had such schools.’

“Furthermore, it is a great joy to me to know that we are many enough to continue a true Lutheran Church. But let us not forget that we must be prepared to suffer persecution and be ever ready to battle for the truth. One of our most important duties is to defend the truth. We cannot lay down arms as long as our enemies assail our faith and endeavor to take away from us our clearest treasures.

“*The New Church body is based upon a falsehood. They tell us that they are agreed in doctrine and church practice, but they are not agreed.*” The president of the Synod [Rev. Bjug Harstad] thanked Rev. Thorsen for his kind words and asked him: “Do we part now with the understanding that you fully agree with us and accept what we in former years confessed, and do you wish that we shall remain on this foundation? To this question Rev. Thorsen answered: “*I do.*”

**ELS Historical Society Subscription-Membership Form**

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