

LUTHERAN SYNOD QUARTERLY



VOLUME 61 • NUMBER 1
MARCH 2021

A Few Notes On Professor Carl Paul Caspari

**Address Delivered at the Ordination
of Pastor O. C. Ottesen**

Seminary Education in the Norwegian Synod

Remember Them ...

**Greetings from The Norwegian
Synod to The Missouri Synod**

**The History and Impact of the Christian
Day Schools of Our Evangelical
Lutheran Synod in Iowa**

Martin Luther and the Visual Arts

Book Reviews

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The journal of Bethany Lutheran Theological Seminary

LUTHERAN SYNOD QUARTERLY

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Foreword

LSQ Vol. 61, No. 1 (March 2021)

THIS YEAR IS THE SEVENTY-FIFTH ANNIVERSARY of Bethany Lutheran Theological Seminary. When our synod was organized in 1918, it was without an institution to train its pastors for twenty-eight years. The seminary was opened in 1946 with Norman A. Madson as the first dean of the seminary. Throughout its history the seminary has been striving to train pastors who rightly divide the Word of truth (2 Timothy 2:15). The Law must be so preached that the most self-righteous individual is crushed by his sin. The Gospel must be so preached that the most burdened sinner knows the comfort of forgiveness in Christ and the joy of heaven. This is the Law/Gospel emphasis of both our synod and the seminary. We thank the Lord for all the great blessings that He has bestowed upon the seminary and that He has given us through this institution.

The *Lutheran Synod Quarterly* through the year 2021 will include articles highlighting the history of the seminary. There will be articles concerning important events and significant individuals in the history of the seminary.

The most important theologians in Norway during the nineteenth century were Gisle Johnson (1822–1894) and Carl Paul Caspari (1814–1892). Johnson and Caspari were a part of the Lutheran Renewal (*Erweckungsbewegung*) of the nineteenth century in Europe, which resulted in a renewed interest in Luther's writings and the Lutheran Confessions. This renewal ignited an appreciation for the inerrant,

life-giving Word of God. These two men were influential in the development of Norwegian Lutheranism in America. This quarterly contains a reprint of a short biography of Caspari by the Rev. Torald N. Teigen.

Included in this quarterly is a translation of a sermon based on 2 Timothy 2:3. It was prepared in 1884 for the ordination of O. C. Ottesen, the son of J. A. Ottesen, one of the founding fathers of the Norwegian Synod. H. A. Preus, who was the president of the Synod, preached the sermon at Immanuel Lutheran Church in Minneapolis, Minnesota. This ordination took place during the difficult times of the Election Controversy.

The Rev. Craig Ferkenstad, the secretary of the Evangelical Lutheran Synod, has written a very informative essay, entitled "Seminary Education in the Norwegian Synod." The essay contains important information concerning seminary education during the early years of the Norwegian Synod. Little-known facts are presented concerning Luther Seminary. The essay gives valuable material translated from the Norwegian language.

Markus Fredrik Wiese (1842–1934) was one of the pastors who became a member of our synod after its reorganization in 1918. He gathered a large personal library, which included many books from the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. After his death, most of these books found their way into the seminary library. A reprint of an article on Wiese by the Rev. Herbert Larson is included.

In 1938, as storm clouds were forming in the Lutheran Church–Missouri Synod (LCMS) over the adoption of the *Declaration*, alongside its own *Brief Statement* (1932), as a doctrinal basis for agreement with the American Lutheran Church (ALC), the LCMS celebrated the centennial of the Saxon immigration. Greetings from the ELS were brought by Norman A. Madson, the future dean of the seminary. These greetings indicated the gratitude of the ELS for the support of LCMS during its infant years.

Christian day schools are an important part of the education program of our synod today and have been throughout its history. In the essay, "The History and Impact of the Christian Day Schools of Our Evangelical Lutheran Synod in Iowa," the Rev. Joshua Skogen points out the great blessings of Christian education for our people and our church. "Train up a child in the way he should go, And when he is old he will not depart from it" (Proverbs 22:6). The Rev. Skogen is pastor of Scarville and Center Lutheran Churches in Scarville, Iowa.

Martin Luther did not share the iconoclastic tendencies of the Reformed and the Radicals. He had a high regard for the visual arts such as painting and sculpture. He said, “ Yes, would to God that I could persuade the rich and the mighty that they would permit the whole Bible to be painted in houses, on the inside and the outside, so that all can see it. That would be a Christian work” (LW 40:99). The essay, “Martin Luther and the Visual Arts,” is written by Dr. Timothy Schmeling, who is a professor at Bethany Lutheran Theological Seminary.

Also included in this issue of the quarterly are three book reviews.

– GRS

A Few Notes On Professor Carl Paul Caspari

Torald N. Teigen

LSQ Vol. 61, No. 1 (March 2021)

Editor's Note: This article is reprinted from the *Clergy Bulletin* (Vol. 15, No. 7, pp. 59–61). Torald N. Teigen provides a brief introduction on Professor Carl Paul Caspari from the University of Christiania.

TWO NAMES, CASPARI AND JOHNSON, ARE almost household words among us, and we have learned to esteem them highly as true Gospel theologians. It is possible, though, that we have not had much opportunity to know much detail about their work. It is hoped that the following notes, gathered from various notes over a number of years, may give the reader a better acquaintance with one of them, and stimulate interest in both.

Carl Paul Caspari was born in Dessau, Germany, on the 8th of February, 1814, and died in Christiania, Norway, on the 11th of April, 1892. One Encyclopedia of some repute calls him a “German Church Historian, thereby demonstrating that Encyclopedias, like some scientists, theologians, preachers, and even librarians, sometimes speak authoritatively without accurate information. Since Caspari was born in Germany, he wrote many things in German, and did a great deal of work in the field of Church History, we probably ought not quarrel too much about that—just as we wouldn’t quarrel so very much if one called him a Hebrew exegete, or an Arabic Grammarian, or an Oriental Researcher, or a Greek Scholar, or a specialist in ancient Latin documents, or a Norwegian Bible Translator, or a Christian Jewish Missionary to the

Jews, or a Norwegian National Historian, or a writer in Norwegian religious periodicals for popular consumption. All of those things are so. There is also ample evidence that he was quite a wit, an additional reason why his home was a sort of Mecca for university students, and also an additional reason why he was a popular figure in otherwise staid and somber meetings of scholars. Indeed, a many-sided man, and the more one reads him and about him, the more he is impressed that Caspari was thoroughly learned, and you appreciate the story about the time he was traveling incognito with some scholars who were conversing in Latin. When Caspari entered into the conversation in good Latin, they switched to Greek; and still trying to throw him off, they switched to Hebrew, and then to several other less known languages, Caspari speaking the others more fluently than they. Finally one of the travelers said: "Either you are the devil himself, or you are Professor Caspari of Christiania."

Caspari was born of Jewish parents, and had early training in Jewish schools in Dessau. In 1834 he went to the University of Leipzig. He early became interested in classical philology and Hebrew grammar, and made up his mind to make Oriental languages his field. But while he was at Leipzig a friend and fellow-student by the name of Graul introduced him for the first time to the New Testament, the continued study of which led to his conversion and baptism in 1838. Then he decided to study theology, which he did at Berlin with emphasis on Old Testament Exegesis under Ernst Wilhelm Hengstenberg. In 1842 he took his Doctor of Philosophy Degree at Leipzig, and in 1844 was created Licentiate in Theology, *honoris causa*, by the University of Königsberg. The next year he received a call to professorship in Königsberg, but turned it down. Reason: It would mean that he would have to join the Prussian Union Church (Lutheran and Calvinist), something he would not do (even though the respected Hengstenberg, conservative as he was, saw his way clear to be in that kind of fellowship). In the spring of 1847 he was visited by 25 year old Gisle Johnson, already appointed lecturer in theology in Christiania, and was persuaded by him to make himself available for a vacant lectureship in theology at the University of Christiania, to which he was called in due course, and entered upon his work there in that position in 1848. In 1857 he was made full professor.

Caspari's 44 years at the University of Christiania were filled with such an activity as would be hard to parallel. His main field was Old Testament exegesis, and it is for his expositions of the OT that his students, according to testimonies concerning him which we have read,

were most deeply impressed and grateful. But circumstances brought it about that he became most widely known for some specialized work, namely, research in the history of the Symbols of the ancient church, especially the Apostle's Creed. The impetus for that was the current Grundvigian notion that the Apostle's Creed had followed the Church unchanged from the Apostles, indeed, that the words of the Apostle's Creed, like those of the Lord's Prayer, had come from the mouth of Jesus. (That notion had further implications which we shan't speak of here). Caspari spent over twenty summers, largely at his own expense, in travels that took him to nearly all the countries of Europe, into libraries and cloisters in search of information on the history of the ancient church and its symbols. The results of his search are briefly summarized in his Introduction to the "Book of Concord," which Caspari together with Gisle Johnson, translated and published in Norwegian.

Caspari was a member of the committee that worked for years on a revision of the Norwegian Bible translation, he and Thistedahl working in the main on the Old Testament. He received many calls to posts in German Universities, returning them all (Rostock, 1850; Dorpat, 1856; Erlangen, 1867. When he returned the one to Erlangen, the Norwegian theological students sent him an address of thanks).

His writings are scattered about in a number of theological journals published in Germany, and mainly in three periodicals in Norway, "Theologisk Tidsskrift," of which he was co-editor with Gisle Johnson, "Norsk Kirketidende," and "Luthersk Ugeskrift." Following are a few of his works that were published separately (Titles given in English are of works that appeared in Norwegian): "Commentar Ueber Obadiah" (1844); "Arabic Grammar" (in Latin—1848—Later translated into German and widely distributed); "Beitraege Zur Einleitung In Das Buch Jesaia" (1849); "Ueber Den Syrisch-Ephraemitischen Krieg" (1851); "Ueber Micha Den Morasthiten;" "Commentary on Isaiah" (Chapters 1–12, 2 volumes, 1857–58); "The Call of Abraham" (1871); "The Trial of Abraham" (1871); "The Book of Daniel" (1877); "Ungedruckte, unbeachtete, und wenig beachtete Quellen zur Geschichte des Taufsymbols und Glaubensregel."

Andreas Brandrud has written a little sketch of Caspari. Brandrud was a successor of Gisle Johnson to the chair of Church History at Christiania, and was one of the number of men after Johnson and Caspari in the Theological School who were modernistically inclined. Brandrud had been a student of Caspari and writes gratefully, although he says critically: "Caspari's orthodox view of the Bible did not allow

him to investigate with complete freedom.” In characterizing Caspari, he compares him with Johnson, saying that “he wasn’t a pietist of the Johnsonian type,” speaks of his rich fund of wit and humor, something not noted in Johnson, also that more than Johnson, Caspari was a man “med aandelig elasticitet og et friskt og lyst syn paa livet.” Then he goes on to say: “But he possessed at the same time a deep and child-like piety, which especially lived and breathed in the Bible, not least in the Old Testament, in the piety of the Patriarchs, Prophets, and Psalms. And he understood how to give it impressive expression. None of his hearers could ever forget Caspari as he often stood on the podium expounding a Hebrew Psalm or a portion of the Prophets, and with closed eyes and in a scarcely audible voice, as in an ecstasy, breathed the holy words out over his hearers.” LSQ

Address Delivered at the Ordination of Pastor O. C. Ottesen

H. A. Preus

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Text: “*You therefore must endure hardship as a good soldier of Jesus Christ.*”
(2 Timothy 2:3)

IT IS TO HIS DISCIPLE TIMOTHY, WHO WAS BISHOP in Ephesus, that the apostle Paul directs this admonition. When Paul here lays it on Timothy’s heart to accommodate himself to suffering as a good soldier, he does not want however by holding forth this side of Timothy’s work, thereby to have this indicated as its substance. No, the apostle indicated his chief work as an instrument when in the Epistle to the Corinthians he places it alongside of the apostle’s when he says: “Let a man so consider us, as *servants of Christ and stewards* of the mysteries of God” (1 Corinthians 4:1). And the more exact explanation he gives himself in the word with which he takes the moving departure from the elders in Ephesus: “Therefore take heed to yourselves and to all the flock, among which the Holy Spirit has made you *overseers, to shepherd the church of God* which he purchased with his own blood!” (Acts 20:28).

Yes, as a *servant of Christ* who alone is subject to and obedient to the Word of Christ and answerable to him as the church’s Head and King, and as a steward of the mysteries of God, Timothy should serve the congregation and have care for it by guiding it onto the good pastures of the Gospel and leading it to the still flowing water of Siloah. As the Master is called “*Peacemaker*” and comes as the angels sang in order to bring “*peace on earth,*” so should his servants be *bearers of a message of peace* by proclaiming the blessed tidings of the Gospel to men lost and

condemned on account of sin, to consciences anxious on account of the judgment of the Law, that man's sin was atoned for through the blood of Jesus, that God is a reconciled God, and by exhorting sinners: "Be reconciled with God" (2 Corinthians 5:20).

However, precisely because this is the chief work of the servants of Christ and of the Word, precisely because above all else they are to proclaim the Gospel of Christ for the conversion of the sinner and translation from darkness to the light, from the power of Satan to God, precisely for this reason their position becomes a position of conflict. For this reason a servant of Christ, a bearer of the message of the Gospel, becomes a *soldier of Christ*. The Prince of Peace himself proclaims this when he says: "I came to send fire on the earth, and how I wish it were already kindled! Do you suppose that I came to give peace on earth? I tell you, not at all, but rather division" (Luke 12:49, 51). And how could it be otherwise?

He surely came to free us from Satan's power and should therefore "demolish the devil's fortifications," as "the stronger comes upon the strong and overcomes him, takes away his armor in which he trusted, and divides his spoils" (Luke 11:22).

How was it possible that the devil and his host should look peaceably upon this? On the contrary, he fumed out of bitterness and sought not merely to employ all his cunning and power in order to hinder the work of the Lord, but furthermore goes about as a roaring lion seeking whom he can devour, or he puts on the guise of an angel of light in order to deceive even the elect, if it was possible. When he can, he raises storms, so that the church's ship shall go under. And the world, his bride, is of the same sort. Therefore Jesus says: "The world hates you, because it hates me" (John 15:18). The servant is surely not above the master, but the servant ought to be as his master. Now, because it is also the chief work of the servants of Christ to demolish the devil's fortifications through the preaching of the Gospel, they must be exposed to his enmity and aggression. The enemies of *Christ* must be and remain *their* enemies. During constant battle they must win their spoil from them and preserve the flock of God in peace. Without battle, no victory. Without victory, no crown, no peace.

Thus do we see, a servant of the Word, a bearer of the Gospel, must also be a *soldier of Christ*. Furthermore, a servant of Christ constantly must be on watch, unceasingly be in battle, so that neither he himself nor anyone else be offended. If he runs from his post, flees the battle for the sake of good days or from a false love cries "peace, peace," where

there is no peace, and wants to reconcile the truth with lies, then he shows himself thereby not as a servant of Christ, but as a hireling, a belly server.

Surely every Christian is already enlisted as a soldier of Christ through Baptism and consecrated for battle under the banner of the cross against the enemies of Christ. There indeed we promised our God to forsake the devil and all his works and all his ways. In this battle array of the Lord the servants of the Word have the first, but also the most dangerous and the post most full of responsibility. They are to lead on into the battle under the chief command of the Lord's Christ.

To be such a servant of the Word and a soldier of Jesus Christ are also you, my young friend, placed here by the Holy Ghost through this congregation's call. I know how your pious mother, as previously Hannah, promised you to the Lord and his service already from the hour she bore you under her heart; likewise how your venerable father has not let there be a lack of admonition and discipline, so that you might become a willing instrument of the Lord to his service. And the Lord heard the many prayers which were offered up for you, and blessed mother's discipline and father's admonition, so that both they and we have the great joy of seeing you present yourself here today to be consecrated to the work of the holy ministry according to old apostolic practice under prayer and the laying on of hands, after you first, as we have just now heard, have acquired for yourself the necessary knowledge and are declared fit for the work. Here you are now by God's grace to awaken sinners who sleep, through the preaching of the Law, and bring the secure to tremble before the judgment of the Law. Here by the preaching of the Gospel you are to lead tired, sin-oppressed souls to Christ so that they can be saved in him. Always active, if you could tear some soul from Satan, you are to stand at your post as a good soldier of Jesus Christ in order to preserve the flock committed to you against the devil's attack, so that none of the souls won to Christ shall be ensnared by the enemy and again come into his power.

But with regard to how you shall conduct your Lord's combat as a good soldier of Jesus Christ, then I will only remind about how the apostle Paul describes the armor in which a soldier of Christ is to be arrayed: "Therefore put on the *whole armor of God*, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand. Stand therefore, having girded your waist with truth, having put on the breastplate of righteousness, and having your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace; above all, taking the shield of faith with which you

will be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked one. And take the helmet of salvation, the sword of the Spirit, which is the *word of God*; praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, being watchful to this end with all perseverance and supplication for all the saints” (Ephesians 6:13–18).

We see from this that a soldier of Jesus Christ must be arrayed in the *armor of God*. Even a Goliath’s armor is not appropriate and will not suffice for a David who wants to wage the Lord’s war. But to being arrayed in the armor of God, we see, belongs above all else to *faith*, justifying and saving faith. Through faith alone are you arrayed in the righteousness of Christ, and have peace and skill in the Gospel of peace. Through faith alone can you cover yourself with the shield which quenches the fiery darts of the wicked one, and properly use the sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God, with which alone the enemy can be slain.

But in the next place it finally also applies to a soldier of Jesus Christ, as Paul says to Timothy immediately after the words of our text, that he “strive *lawfully*,” that is, in the manner which the Lord has prescribed for his soldiers in his Word, so that you do not act according to your wisdom, liking, or thoughts or according to what you think appropriate and advantageous, but so that you set aside all worldly sorrows and cares in reliance on Jesus Christ and his Word, and direct yourself entirely according to the will of the Lord, revealed in the Word.

I surely know, my dear friend, how as a pious and obedient son you have often answered your father, “I will do what you want,” even where that which was requested could be contrary to your own liking and inclination. How much more will you not now strive to be obedient to your heavenly Father in everything, and say, “not as I will, but as you will” (Matthew 26:39).

However, we will not here survey extensively the armor of a soldier of Jesus Christ or his manner of combat in general, but rather dwell a little on the apostle’s special admonition about:

“Enduring hardship as a good soldier of Jesus Christ.”

This admonition, my friends, is very profitable and necessary. How many an inexperienced young man does not enter the ministry with the best intentions concerning leading the battle in the armor of God, with the best expectations of successful progress. He sees in his thoughts how greater and greater crowds will flock around his pulpit, how opponents will be convinced and fall at his feet, how the erring will let themselves

be straightened out, sinners turn about and forsake the broad way, the anxious let themselves be comforted, how the entire congregation will look up to him with confidence, love, and gratitude, willing and glad to let itself be led by him to true fear of God and be encouraged to outdo each other in every good work to the glory of God and the welfare of the church, in *one* word, he sees himself working in his congregation in peace and quiet, surrounded by small and great, as a father by pious, obedient, and happy children.

When he begins his work and his battle, and life's bitter experiences soon meet him, and he sees his beautiful expectations disappointed and so often must live to see the exact opposite of all that which he expected should be the steady fruit of his work, when added to this comes lack of due appreciation of his upright intention, slander, mockery, and persecution of all kinds, poverty and want, lo, if he is not prepared to endure this hardship, if he has not firmly impressed this in his heart, that it belongs with being a soldier of Christ "*to endure hardship*," that *the cross* is precisely his proper emblem—if he does not remember this, then even the most capable, the most zealous and the most stout-hearted will easily be tempted to grasp at carnal means and seek human ways out in order to conclude a false peace or become faint-hearted and despondent.

He begins to think: You are not the right man here, you have not attacked the matter in the right way, you have not used the proper weapon, not been arrayed in the right armor; otherwise it would not have gone like this, you would not have had such sorrowful experiences, not met such opposition. He begins to doubt his faith, his state of grace or the power of the Word and God's help, and ends perhaps with letting his hands drop, leaving his post, giving up and trying something which pays better; or—what is by no means better—he continues the work of the ministry disheartened and indifferent, works for his livelihood as a kind of machine which runs as long as it is greased; or he makes a disgraceful agreement with the enemy and betrays his Master and his cause.

Now if this is not to happen, then it is very necessary that a servant and soldier of God familiarize himself with the fact that as such he must "*endure hardship*," so that when the evil days come upon him unexpectedly he shall not be confused and offended at his cross and therewith at Christ himself.

Therefore it is so highly beneficial, this admonition of the apostle in our text, and highly necessary it is that we take it earnestly to heart. Let us note, the apostle does not say: "*If you must endure hardship, then ...*"

No, he assumes it as taken for granted that a soldier of Christ must endure hardship, but calls upon and admonished Timothy now to be prepared for it and not withdraw himself from suffering, but willingly take it upon himself and endure the hardship, but endure it as a *good* soldier of Jesus Christ.

When the soldier marches into war, then he knows that he must endure hardship, that it follows with his call to be exposed to hardship, to suffer cold and heat, thirst and hunger, wounds and mistreatment, imprisonment, sickness and death. And a soldier of Jesus Christ should expect good days in the Lord's war! No, also to his combat belongs enduring hardship.

We heard above that he is concerned with driving Satan out of his fortifications, that he does not have a struggle with flesh and blood, that is, with human wisdom and might, but with the spiritual army of wickedness under heaven, since it is the devil who shows himself active in the children of unbelief.

We heard also that these do not want to sit peacefully and wait for the attack. As our Lord Jesus Christ right away at his appearance was led into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil, so does he also try his hand against us in order to inflict on us all the hardship, all the suffering he can.

Soon he tempts us—especially in bodily and spiritual distress—to doubt concerning the divine truth, about God's faithfulness and gracious help, and in this way to *unbelief* and despair, or in unbelief, to make flesh our arm and in pride to rely upon our own knowledge, gifts, and ability; soon to despondency and faint-heartedness by hindering the work in the congregation, since in part he arouses lack of proper appreciation and discord, in part seduces to error and ungodliness. Soon he arouses the people's cry, the hatred of the powerful in order to frighten the Lord's servants and seduce them to unfaithfulness, to preach to the itching ears, and to seek the favor and support of the majority, the friendship of the powerful. Soon he tempts them with the riches, goods, and pleasures of this world and holds out the prospect of how much unpleasantness one can spare himself, how easily one can make himself the friend of everyone, when he does not take such careful concern with the proclamation of the truth, but cons the people, uses ambiguous expressions and accommodates a little here and there on the Word according to the wishes of the adversaries, yes, gives the appearance that in this way brotherly love occurs most fully.

But if these attempts of his are in vain, if the servants of Christ stand firm against his attack, then he lays all kinds of snares before them as before the Master, and pursues and torments with the world's hatred and contempt, the lack of proper appreciation and the backbiting of false brethren, and with the splitting of and defection from the flock, or with removal and expulsion from office.

We heard that it is the work of the Lord's servants to rebuke sin, to admonish sinners to abandon their false gods, forsake the devil and hold on to Christ. They are to be a salt of the earth; but this, we know, is sharp and hurts. The proud, self-willed and defiant heart of man will not tolerate the humbling testimony of the truth. The correction and the prick which the testimony leaves behind in the conscience and which often disturbs man's rest and happiness, irritates them, and they often pay them who bring them the most precious eternal treasures, but who like the surgeon is compelled to use the sharp knife before they can apply the salve or pour the healing oil into the wound, with mockery, hatred, and persecution.

The apostle Paul was an experienced soldier in all kinds of suffering. To the Corinthians he writes: "Even to the present hour we both hunger and thirst, and we are poorly clothed, and beaten, and homeless. And we labor, working with our own hands. Being reviled, we bless; being persecuted, we endure it; being defamed, we entreat. We have been made as the filth of the world, the offscouring of all things until now" (1 Corinthians 4:11-13).

The apostle knew what that meant, therefore this admonition to Timothy: "*Endure hardship as a good soldier of Jesus Christ!*" Also you, my friend, are really not yet entered into office, but you have however already been obliged to have the experience that is called "enduring hardship," when one will not yield, but holds firm to the Word of God and "*the form of sound doctrine*" (2 Timothy 1:13). But the more do you need both the admonition and the comfort which lie in the apostle's words: "Endure hardship as a good soldier of Jesus Christ!"

You are not to seek suffering, not call for it; it will come in its time. But when it comes, then you are not to get out of its way, but face it confidently, willingly and patiently bear it and as a good soldier of Jesus Christ hold out until God changes it. How badly would it appear for the soldier to flee because he saw the enemy coming close, or abandon the colors in the tumult of battle or run from his post because of cold or rough weather, or because there was danger for life! As a cowardly

wretch or nefarious traitor, as one who broke his oath, would he be treated.

But how much more disgraceful would it not be, if we who fight under the banner of *The Most High*, who have Jesus Christ himself for our Commander, who strive for the Gospel's cause, not for a corruptible crown, but for the incorruptible crown of life, if we, I say, would forsake the Lord's cause, leave our post and flee as hirelings! It would surely be the most shameful treachery against the Lord who redeemed us, and against his dearly bought flock.

No, endure hardship, as it becomes a good soldier of Jesus Christ. The apostle has himself given us an excellent example of this. "We are troubled on every side, yet *not distressed*; we are perplexed, but *not in despair*; persecuted, but *not forsaken*; cast down, but *not destroyed* ... but though our outward man perish, yet the inward man is renewed day by day" (2 Corinthians 4:8, 9, 16). Also it says about the Savior that he came to his own, but his own received him not (John 1:11); he had no place where he could lay his head (Matthew 8:20), and in his final conflict he had to suffer the fact that all forsook him (Mark 14:50); but he bore the suffering patiently, as a lamb which is led to the slaughter (Isaiah 53:7), held out and worked while it was day (John 9:4), and thus finally he trod the winepress alone (Isaiah 63:3).

You, follow this example!

You will perhaps now and then find that your work for the conversion of sinners is met with indifference and coldness, that your striving for the edification and progress of the congregation in the knowledge of God and the fear of God does not find the support which could be expected, yes, is counteracted perhaps especially by them in whom you had hoped to find faithful co-laborers. You see little or no fruit from your work, but that sin prevails, willfulness and self-conceit are spreading, and errors press in. You are tempted to think: They are not worth it, the ungrateful people; I will shake the dust from my feet and go my way! Or you come upon the thoughts: It is your fault. You do not have the necessary ability, the right gifts, etc. It is best that you give up your place to a more capable man. Or doubtful thoughts about the power of the Word arise in you and the temptation to seek *it* attained through other means which you think the Word is not able to do, for example, through fairs, societies, and lotteries to get people to make the contributions which the love of God and the preaching of his Word cannot bring them to do, or by means of Methodistic prayer meetings, anxious benches or so-called new measures of conduct through one's

own works to bring about the conversion which alone is the work of the Spirit through the means of grace, or finally, through the preaching of the Law to want to work the true fear of God which alone is the fruit of the faith which is worked through the Gospel, etc.

But brethren, instead of all this it says: "Endure afflictions, do the work of an evangelist, make full proof of your ministry!" (2 Timothy 4:5). Let the thought of your own frailty serve you to beneficial humility, so that the power of God can be made perfect in your weakness! But comfort yourself with this, that "the Gospel is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believes" (Romans 1:16), that the Word, however often it is still refused and despised, yet, never returns void, but as the rain and the snow water the earth and make it fruitful, says the Lord, "so shall my word be that goes forth out of my mouth: it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the things whereto I sent it" (Isaiah 55:10, 11). It is for us to plant and to water, but for God to give the growth.

Your honest intentions are perhaps misjudged, you are slandered and made fun of, and confidence in your honesty and integrity is undermined. It hurts deeply, but the Word which assures you of God's grace and friendship, holds you upright. You say with Paul: "But with me it is a very small thing that I should be judged by you or by a human court" (1 Corinthians 4:3), and thus you go calmly on your course further "by good report and evil report, by honor and dishonor" (2 Corinthians 6:8).

Yes, you may perhaps live to see that you are denounced because of your faith, because you are not willing to yield a tittle from the Word of God; you are ousted and exposed to poverty and need. There can then be sufficient temptation for you to bitterness, hatred, and revenge, or despondent, to give up everything. But in the Word you have found a solid rock to stand upon. It gives power to endure hardship and to hold out. It hurts you deeply to see such great blindness or wickedness among them who want to pass for children of God; because you know the Lord has said: "He who despises you despises me" (Luke 10:16). But you will not be ashamed of our Lord's testimony, but will endure hardship with the Gospel through the power of God. You comfort yourself knowing that the Lord says, "Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, For theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are you when they revile and persecute you, and say all kinds of evil against you falsely for my sake. Rejoice and be exceedingly glad, for great is your reward in heaven, for so they persecuted the prophets who were before you" (Matthew 5:10–12). So you walk your way cheerfully, glad that

people cannot however take your Jesus and the kingdom of heaven from you, and you sing with the poet:

Thy way and all thy sorrows, Give thou into His hand,
His gracious care unfailing, Who doth the heavens command;
Their course and path He giveth To clouds and air and wind:
A way thy feet may follow He, too, for thee will find.

The church's need oppresses you. You see that it has happened as the apostle predicts: "The time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine, but according to their own desires, because they have itching ears, they will heap up for themselves teachers; and they will turn their ears away from the truth, and be turned aside to fables" (2 Timothy 4:3, 4). You see errors increase, enemies press on from all sides, storms howl, and the waves pound sky-high around the ship of the church and threaten it with destruction, while the multitude of them who are in the ship stand as indifferent onlookers, or confused, run here and there. You will however, not be disheartened, not despair concerning *truth's* victory. You know Israel's Watchman does not sleep, that he is within the ship, and that one, "Lord, save us, we perish!" (Luke 8:24), awakens him who still commands the storm and the sea, and it is calm. And you say:

Well I know that God's church pursued shall be
And as if forsaken oft fear it must
Drowned by the waves' number;
Yet I rejoice and am glad in the faith
That Jesus Himself stepped into His church's boat.
Let water and wind have pow'r to crash 'gainst its sides
Yet it shall never perish!

Because it has the promise that the gates of hell shall not prevail against it (Matthew 16:18).

Satan rushes in upon you with severe temptations, whether you do after all possess the necessary ability for the difficult work, whether you have not misunderstood your call. You feel so unworthy of so holy a work. Yes, your state of grace is made doubtful for you on account of frequently returning weaknesses and mistakes and the depth of sin which you are more and more aware of in your heart. Your sins go over your head, they have become a heavy burden for you. But especially do you dread the future, how you shall remain constant in the great

falling away. The enemies' number increases, one after the other of your friends forsakes the colors, and what is your own strength and ability in comparison with the enemies' wisdom and cunning?

How shall *you* keep out the gnawing anxiety, withstand the growing power, avoid the threatening danger? "Do not fear, little flock," it says then, "for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom!" (Luke 12:32). He, the great God, has however redeemed you, and called you, that you shall become one with him in suffering, but then also in glory! He who has begun the good work in you shall complete it until the day of Jesus Christ (Philippians 1:6). Therefore, grasp again the shield of faith with which you can quench the fiery darts of the wicked one, and sing boldly:

Who wants to accuse me And drag me then to Sinai for judgment?
I confess my sin, And turning to Jesus, Therewith am I free.
Meet me then at Golgotha! Jesus shall then my Defense be.
Who will accuse me?

Who wants to condemn me? I sink myself in the stream of Jesus' blood;
Before all kingdoms God Himself judges, and says: This one, he is free,
He is washed in Jesus' blood; Satan, sin and death *must flee*;
Who will then condemn me?

Thus the suffering brings you comfort on account of the Gospel, so that you can the better comfort others with the comfort wherewith you yourself are comforted (2 Corinthians 1:4). Thus strengthened anew in faith you rely alone upon him and his powers, who sits in the highest at the right hand of majesty, but who has promised, "I will be with you always, even unto the end of the world" (Matthew 28:20). And you say confidently, "Whom shall I fear? If God is for me, who can be against me?" (Psalm 27:1; Romans 8:31). As you know that he will direct all things for the best and perform all things to a glorious end, so are you certain that "he is able to keep what I have committed to him until that day" (2 Timothy 1:12). Thus instead of letting yourself be frightened by afflictions, lose heart and give up, you learn by "enduring hardship as a good soldier of Jesus Christ" to "glory in tribulations," because you know that "tribulation works patience; and patience, experience; and experience, hope: and hope makes not ashamed; because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us!" (Romans 5:3-5).

Thus ever striving after being arrayed in the full armor of God, armed with the shield of faith, the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God, you will be able to hold your position against every enemy and beat back his attack. Yes, even when it can seem darkest, and as if errors should triumph and the truth succumb, then you however sing fearlessly:

Still must they leave God's word its might,
For which no thanks they merit;
Still is He with us in the fight.
With His good gifts and Spirit.
And should they, in the strife,
Take kindred, goods, and life,
We freely let them go.
They profit not the foe;
With us remains the kingdom.

And when you thus have fought the good fight, finished the course and kept the faith, thus you can also add cheerfully with the apostle, "Finally, there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will give to me on that day" (2 Timothy 4:7, 8). Therefore, my friend, "*endure hardship as a good soldier of Jesus Christ!*" To that end may God give you grace through Jesus Christ!

And herewith then have I also wished for you, dear congregation, in this young man you have called to be your pastor, the best gift from God. May he give you grace to receive him as such! May the Lord bless his coming in and his going out among you, so that he may save both himself and you! Amen. LSQ

Seminary Education in the Norwegian Synod

Craig A. Ferkenstad

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“THERE ARE NO SHEPHERDS AND A HUNDRED wolves.” Those are the words that pioneer pastor U. V. Koren wrote to Prof. Laur. Larsen in 1859. He continued, “Why don’t we move Heaven and earth to get ministers—Heaven with our prayers and earth with our deeds?”¹ At that time, the Norwegian Synod was in desperate need of pastors. When the Norwegian Synod was organized six years earlier, there were only six pastors and seventeen congregations. Only eleven of those congregations had erected church buildings. The thought of establishing a seminary was only a dream. Yet these resolute pioneers knew that a seminary was vital for the preservation of their newly founded church body.

The five pastors who were present at the Synod’s organizational meeting had been educated in Norway. Their ages spanned from 28–39 years, and with the exception of A. C. Preus who was elected president, none of them had served congregations for more than five years. This young group of men was soon joined by a few other pastors who came from Norway, but certainly not enough men to serve the fledgling church body which by 1876 had grown to 150 congregations with 36,000 members.

¹ Karen Larsen, *Laur. Larsen, Pioneer College President* (Northfield, Minnesota: Norwegian-American Historical Association, 1936), 115.

In Norway

The pastors whom the Lord raised up for the Norwegian church in America came from Norway and were educated at the Royal Frederick University in Christiania which after 1939 has been known as the University of Oslo. The University was established in 1811 and was named for King Frederick VI of Denmark and Norway. In the 1840s two significant professors arrived at the university who are largely responsible for bringing about a confessional revival in contrast to the prevalent rationalism of that time. The “Johnsonian Awakening” was led by Gisle Johnson (1822–94) who was a graduate of Royal Frederick University. He then studied in Germany before returning to teach systematic theology and church history at the university beginning in 1849. He developed a reputation as a preacher and is remembered for his somber piety which was evidenced among Norwegian immigrants in America.² A major effect of the Johnsonian Awakening was a return to the forms of historic Lutheranism.³

His colleague was Carl P. Caspari (1814–92) whom Johnson met while studying in Germany. Johnson urged Caspari to apply for a vacant position in theology at the university which he obtained in 1847 teaching Old Testament exegesis. Caspari was a close personal friend of Franz Delitzsch and also had a relationship with the men and movements that influenced the Missouri Synod in America. His most widely known research was the history of the Symbols of the ancient church.⁴ These theologians completed a Norwegian translation of the Book of Concord in 1862, assisted by Christian Thistedahl and J. Kaurin. It was published four years later with an introduction by Caspari which included a summary of his research on the ancient Symbols. This Norwegian edition also was printed in Madison, Wisconsin in 1866 and by the Norwegian Synod in Decorah, Iowa in 1892. These were professors who taught orthodoxy to the men who shaped the Norwegian Synod: H. A. Preus, J. A. Ottesen, U. V. Koren, B. J. Muus, Laur. Larsen, and others.

² Thomas E. Jacobson, “Hauge’s Norwegian Evangelical Lutheran Synod in America and the Continuation of the Haugean Spirit in Twentieth-Century American Lutheranism” (Thesis, Luther Seminary, 2018), 64, https://digitalcommons.luthersem.edu/phd_theses/24/.

³ Michael J. Langlais, “Gisle Johnson and the Johnsonian Awakening: 19th Century Norwegian Lutheranism and its Importance for America,” *Lutheran Synod Quarterly* 36, no. 2 (June 1996): 19.

⁴ T. N. Teigen, “A Few Notes on Professor Carl Paul Caspari,” *Clergy Bulletin* 15, no. 7 (March 1956): 60.

This confessional awakening was a part of the larger Confessional movement of the nineteenth century. It also would become an issue years later in America when some Norwegian immigrants would claim that the orthodoxy of the Norwegian Synod was learned from association with the Missouri Synod rather than from the mother Church of Norway.

Another influential man during the years of theological education in Norway was Ludvig Mathias Lindeman who began to teach liturgics in the theological department of the university in 1849. In addition to receiving instruction in classroom lectures, the theological students frequently attended services at the Church of Our Savior where Lindeman was organist and choirmaster.⁵ Lindeman was the romanticist of Norwegian hymnody and would have introduced his students to the folk tunes from the numerous valleys of Norway. As such, hymns sung to his tunes incorporate a distinctive Norwegian “lilt” with their more rapid tempos, isometric tunes, and dotted quarter notes.⁶ Together with Magnus Brostrup Landstad (1802–80), he shaped the Norwegian musical identity for generations to come.

The clergy in Norway did not in general encourage emigration to serve the daughter church in America, but several pastors urged young Norwegian pastors to emigrate. Among them was J. W. C. Dietrichson who went to Norway in 1845 and failing to find a pastor to replace him, returned to Wisconsin the following year; although it has been said this journey’s real fruits “were borne later when it brought over to America some of the most brilliant of the young Norwegian theologians.”⁷ In 1860, Laur. Larsen also journeyed to Norway seeking pastors to emigrate. He lectured at the university and spoke to the general public. At that time, there were three hundred unappointed clergy in Norway.⁸ Yet, his efforts only resulted in two suitable candidates: L. M. Biørn and O. J. Hjort.⁹ H. A. Preus visited Norway in 1867 where he delivered “Seven Lectures on the Religious Situation Among Norwegians in America,” hoping that a portrayal of the need would motivate others

⁵ Since 1950 this has been known as the Oslo Cathedral.

⁶ See Craig A. Ferkenstad “Ludvig Mathias Lindeman (1812–87): The Man Who Taught the Norwegian People to Sing,” *Lutheran Synod Quarterly* 53, no. 1 (March 2013): 113–117.

⁷ J. Magnus Rohne, *Norwegian American Lutheranism Up to 1872* (New York: MacMillan Company, 1926), 75.

⁸ Rohne, *Norwegian American Lutheranism Up to 1872*, 181.

⁹ Larsen, *Laur. Larsen, Pioneer College President*, 122.

to come and serve.¹⁰ In describing the desperate need, he specifically referred to B. J. Muus and Thomas Johnsen in southern Minnesota each of whom were serving “as many as thirteen to sixteen congregations.”¹¹ Muus served in area as large as Denmark which eventually became 150 congregations and Johnsen served as a missionary in seventeen counties with his field gradually being divided among fifty pastors.¹² Preus’s lectures were published in Norway by Gisle Johnson in *Luthersk Kirketidende* and also in a small book printed at that time.¹³ Today, these lectures are known as *Vivacious Daughter: Seven Lectures on the Religious Situation among Norwegians in America*. Additional recruitment journeys were made by U. V. Koren, B. J. Muus, and J. A. Ottesen.

Among the German Brethren

It was becoming apparent to the fledgling church in America that little assistance could be expected from the mother church of Norway, but the Lord would raise up young men in the United States to study for the ministry of His Church.

The discussion of a seminary education already was first considered in 1852 which was one year prior to the formal organization of the Norwegian Synod. At that time, the discussion was whether the Synod should arrange a professorship at Capital University in Columbus, Ohio. Three years later, Pastors J. A. Ottesen and Nils Brandt were asked to visit three seminaries that already had been established—Columbus, Ohio (Ohio Synod); Buffalo, New York (Buffalo Synod), and St. Louis, Missouri (Missouri Synod). The October 9–13, 1857 convention at the Little Iowa congregation received their report and unanimously resolved to make an arrangement to establish a professorship at St. Louis.¹⁴ This

¹⁰ Among those who heeded his call was N. T. Ylvisaker, elder brother of Johannes Ylvisaker, who emigrated in 1868.

¹¹ H. A. Preus, “Lecture I,” in *Vivacious Daughter: Seven Lectures on the Religious Situation among Norwegians in America*, ed. Todd Nichol (Northfield, Minnesota: The Norwegian-American Historical Association, 1990), 42.

¹² For the story of Pastor Thomas Johnsen, see “Farewell my Jonathan,” *Oak Leaves* 2, no. 2 (Summer 1998): 3–10. Norlie, O. M., *Who’s Who Among Pastors in All the Norwegian Lutheran Synods of America, 1843–1927* (Minneapolis, 1928), 394, 295.

¹³ Todd Nichol, “Notes on the Translation,” in *Vivacious Daughter: Seven Lectures on the Religious Situation among Norwegians in America*, ed. Todd Nichol (Northfield, Minnesota: The Norwegian-American Historical Association, 1990), xi.

¹⁴ The report made by Pastors Ottesen and Brandt on their visit, is printed in *Kirkelig Maanedstidende*, 2, no. 12 (October 1857), 476–489 and is translated in Carl Meyer, *Pioneers Find Friends* (Minneapolis: Sponsored by the Lutheran Brotherhood Insurance Co., 1963), 63–80.

action, however, was not without discussion. The seven clergy realized they had found a common bond with the teachings of the confessional awakening as they knew it from Norway, but there was less enthusiasm among the twenty-nine lay representatives who did not yet know the German brethren.¹⁵ These men could have been influenced more by national sentiments and recollections of the recent Schleswig War rather than the orthodoxy of the German brothers. However, the members of the Missouri Synod had taken notice of the Norwegian immigration already in 1846 having seen a report about the Norwegian settlers in Wisconsin. An appeal was printed in *Der Lutheraner*:

Ought not the German Lutheran Synod of Missouri actively befriend these abandoned confessionally related people in Wisconsin, finding the occasion thereto both in their close connection with the European mother church as well as in their geographical position?¹⁶

Pastors J. A. Ottesen and U. V. Koren carried the request to the 1857 convention of the Missouri Synod which began on October 14 in Fort Wayne, Indiana. They were well received and the “right hand of fellowship” was extended to them.¹⁷

The Norwegian Synod convention, adopted another significant resolution at the 1857 convention which was to establish a Norwegian Lutheran “university.” There are at least three reasons why they called their intent a “university.” First, the pastors of the Synod were trained at the university in Christiania, Norway and hoped to model their school after that institution. Second, the Norwegian Lutherans who helped to form the Northern Illinois Synod already had established a university. Third, it was the intent to have a school that would have preparatory, college, and normal departments in addition to a seminary.

The 1857 convention also adopted a plan to fund the lofty goals. It was decided to raise an endowment known as the “University Fund” with subscriptions of \$100. It also was expected that individuals would pay interest on their subscriptions until they could pay the principal. The interest was to be applied to the salary of the professor which they

¹⁵ Larsen, *Laur. Larsen, Pioneer College President*, 88.

¹⁶ R., “Die Norweger in Wisconsin,” *Der Lutheraner* 3 (December 1, 1846), 42, quoted in Carl S. Meyer, *Pioneers Find Friends*, 53–54. The writer called the Norwegians, “der verlassenen Confessions-Verwandten in Wisconsin.”

¹⁷ Meyer, *Pioneers Find Friends*, 20. Coincidentally, this date is recorded as October 14 which corresponds with the later “Founders’ Day” of the Norwegian Synod.

temporarily would have at St. Louis and if there was any surplus, to assist needy students.¹⁸ J. A. Ottesen writes:

We were as yet only twelve pastors and fifty congregations (seven pastors and representatives of twenty-nine congregations were present at the meeting). When we returned home from this convention and told the people that we were about to raise \$50,000 for a school which was to serve both as a college and as theological seminary, many were tempted to consider it but an air castle which the pastors and delegates in a moment of enthusiasm had set their minds to build.¹⁹

Soon afterwards, the Church Council extended a call to Oluf Aabel who was a pastor within the mother church in Norway having graduated from the Royal Frederick University ten years earlier. His declination of the call postponed the professorship in St. Louis for an additional year, but three students enrolled in the preparatory course in St. Louis in 1858. Realizing the importance of filling the position of a professor, the Church Council then called the youngest pastor in the Synod to this position. His name was Peter Laurentius Larsen (1833–1915), yet his daughter explains:

From childhood he was called Lauritz, and he used that form of his name exclusively. He had a prejudice against superfluous names, and felt that the Latinized form Laurentius was stilted. He would have preferred, he said, the good old Norwegian form of the name, Lars, which had been used by his ancestors. During his university days, he began to sign himself Laur. Larsen, as he did throughout the rest of his life.²⁰

He graduated from the university in Christiania at the age of twenty-two years and for two years became a teacher of German, French, and Hebrew before accepting a call to America. He was only twenty-five years old. He had emigrated from Norway two years previously and from his home at Rush River, Wisconsin was serving congregations in Wisconsin and Minnesota. He was described as “a handsome, black-haired young man of distinguished appearance, beautiful figure, erect bearing, and elastic movements.” He has also been described as “the

¹⁸ Larsen, *Laur. Larsen, Pioneer College President*, 88.

¹⁹ J. A. Ottesen, quoted in George Lillegard, ed., *Grace for Grace: A Brief History of the Norwegian Synod* (Mankato, Minnesota: Lutheran Synod Book Company, 1943), 70.

²⁰ Larsen, *Laur. Larsen, Pioneer College President*, 2.

foremost educator among the Scandinavian” and the “Nestor of our schoolmen.”²¹ Laur. Larsen was hesitant in making this difficult decision to accept the call but was hard pressed by his fellow clergy. Before going to St. Louis, he attended the 1859 Norwegian Synod convention at Coon Prairie, Wisconsin beginning on October 14. It is from this time that Larsen dates the start of his professorship.²²

His arrival in St. Louis was eagerly awaited by the Norwegian students who, coming from farms in the upper Midwest, likely came to the city via steamboat and set foot in the largest city they had ever seen. None of them were yet enrolled in seminary classes. When the young professor along with his wife and three children arrived, they were greeted by five faculty members.²³ Eighty-eight students were enrolled in the institution. Only fourteen of the eighty-eight students were enrolled in the seminary division and ten of them passed their examinations and were graduated the following spring. Laur. Larsen began his actual work at the school on November 14.

Concordia College was located on Jefferson Avenue in downtown St. Louis, only a few blocks from the Mississippi River. A second addition to the college building was completed during the previous year. It now consisted of a central structure with wings on either side. Three professors and their families lived in the south wing and the other two professors lived in the north wing. The center portion of the building housed both classrooms and provided dormitory space. The first floor contained a hall which served as a chapel, auditorium, music room, and library. College students lived on the second floor. Seminary students lived on the second floor of the north wing.

Yet for Laur. Larsen and his family, there were no provisions. Again, Karen Larsen explains:

It was a pathetically isolated little flock that he had under his care. Coming from one immigrant group which had scarcely begun to feel at home in the county of its adoption, these boys had been sent into a far-away city to live in the midst of another immigrant group which was maintaining its own traditions and language much more jealously than were the Norwegians. The mode of living was extremely frugal, to put it mildly, and even the most ardent

²¹ Rohne, *Norwegian American Lutheranism Up to 1872*, 195.

²² This date of October also became the date of the dedication of the first building at Luther College and subsequently became the dedication date for many other school and church buildings throughout the synod. It was popularly known as “Founders’ Day.”

²³ Meyer, *Pioneers Find Friends*, 22.

“Missourian” among the Norwegian expressed the opinion that perhaps the dear brethren of the German synod were not “quite as particular as we are” about the niceties of life. Even in later years when the Norwegian students were more numerous, more mature, and more fully permeated with admiration for the Concordia professors, they still felt that they were “a people within a people.” How much more that must have been the case with the eight young boys who were there when their own Norwegian professor arrived! The first difficulty confronting him was that of finding a place to live. The situation seemed so desperate that he even suggested that the church might perhaps build a residence. He found, however, a rather large old house which could accommodate his family and the Norwegian students as well. ...

If the whole venture were to succeed, the contact between this little flock and their church in the North had to be maintained. To this end Larsen exerted himself to the utmost. He sent detailed accounts to the church paper about the school and particularly about the few representatives of the Norwegian Synod. He tried to make the people of the church feel that these students belonged to them and were their responsibility. His letters are full of the affairs of the students and their need for money, supplies, and books. Though his appeals were by no means in vain, they did not bring the results he had hoped. ...

Some sketchy little household accounts kept by Larsen and his wife tell a tale of stringent economy, even poverty. The sums paid out for the bare necessities of decent living were pitifully small. Aside from financial worries, living conditions were not nearly so pleasant as they had been in the parsonage in the North ...

Through the church paper he kept the cause constantly before the people, and through his letters he tried to spur the clergy to persistent efforts. As time went on and his difficulties increased, his letters became sharp and impatient. Finally he demanded that a definite arrangement be made about the payment of his salary, adding “I neither can nor will put up with the present irregularities.” Hand-written circulars were sent out to all the clergy and congregations, stating that there was danger that Larsen might be forced to abandon his post and return to his former congregation: “Should Professor Larsen find it necessary to take this step, we cannot but

feel that it would be the worst calamity that could strike our church body at this time.”²⁴

The school was modeled after a German gymnasium school with a six-year preparatory course and an additional theological seminary with a three-year course. The Norwegian students were granted free tuition by the German brethren. In exchange the Norwegian professor was expected to give lectures in the theological department using the German language. Larsen's classes included Isagogics and Archaeology.²⁵ He undertook the task of teaching Norwegian to the other professors.²⁶ The young professor also needed to teach the Norwegians students the German language in order that they could understand the lectures. He conducted some classes specifically for these students since it was considered important that they should have religious instruction in the language of their heart.

A sample daily schedule from *Der Lutheraner* in 1853 is cited as an example of student life:

The day's work is regulated by a new clock in the new wing and a bell in the court, which resounds a great distance. It rings at five o'clock in the morning to signify to those not yet at work that it is time to get up. Fifteen minutes later joint morning devotion is held in the large lecture room under the direction of an instructor. Breakfast is served at 5:30 and then work begins. At 8:45 the bell rings as a warning to get ready for the morning lessons, which last from 9:00 to 12:00. After 12:00 dinner is eaten and the students are free until 2:00. Five minutes before that the bell rings, and afternoon lessons, which last until 5:00, begin. Then there is free time until 7:30 with supper at 6:30. At 7:30 the bell summons to work again, and at 8:45 the bell summons to vespers, which again is conducted under the supervision of an instructor; then the younger students retire. During study period the students of the *Gymnasium* are under constant supervision of a seminary student.

During free time the students may be seen as they engage in all kinds of games on the playground or use the athletic equipment there, take care of a garden of which each one has a small

²⁴ Larsen, *Laur. Larsen, Pioneer College President*, 100–103.

²⁵ Carl S. Meyer, *Moving Frontiers* (Saint Louis, Missouri: Concordia Publishing House, 1964), 218.

²⁶ Larsen, *Laur. Larsen, Pioneer College President*, 99.

one, beautify the grounds, or in summer go to the Mississippi River, about a mile away for a bath (under supervision of an instructor).²⁷

By the end of the 1859–60 school year, there were eight Norwegian students enrolled for classes including the three students who had entered the preparatory department the year before. The first students entered the seminary department in 1860. The first Norwegian student to be graduated was Ove J. Hjort in 1862 who had studied in Norway and immigrated the previous year. The first Norwegian class was graduated the following year and consisted of Amund Mikkelson, Ole Hagestad, Thomas Johnsen, and Jens Krohn.

Towards Independence

The War Between the States (Civil War) brought many changes for the students at Concordia. Yet the Lord held His hand over His church and its members.

The students may have been oblivious to the first shots of the American Civil War which were fired on April 12, 1861 in South Carolina. But soon, the first aggressive act against the Union government took place in Missouri. There were concerns for the safety of the students since a military arsenal with five hundred troops and 30,000 weapons was located less than a mile from the school. On Friday, April 26, 1861 the school was closed and the students were sent home early. Prof. Larsen, along with his wife and two children, also left St. Louis leaving behind a daughter, Liv, who was buried “in a strange church yard.”²⁸

These events had lasting repercussions in both the Missouri and Norwegian synods. In addition to the school in St. Louis, the Missouri Synod also operated a school in Fort Wayne, Indiana. This school also provided both preparatory and practical seminary instruction. Although it did not require a knowledge of the Biblical languages of Hebrew and Greek, it offered enough theological training to qualify graduates to serve in congregations. Even though these students attended the seminary, the state of Indiana did not grant them exemption from the military draft. In an effort to provide pastors for the church and protect these students from the draft, they were sent to St. Louis where the two seminaries were conducted side-by-side with the Rev. C. F. W. Walther serving as the president of both institutions. Because of the threat of

²⁷ Meyer, *Moving Frontiers*, 219–20.

²⁸ Larsen, *Laur. Larsen, Pioneer College President*, 102.

violence in St. Louis, there also was concern about the safety of the pre-seminary students living there and these students were transferred to Fort Wayne. The school year opened in September.

Meanwhile, the Norwegian Synod convention was held in June of the same year. In the president's report, the Rev. A. C. Preus recommended that the Synod no longer be dependent upon another church body but establish its own educational institution as soon as possible. Both nationalism and the issue of slavery entered into the discussion and it was determined to establish a Norwegian educational institution at once. The Rev. Laur. Larsen was to be in charge. The Rev. F. A. Schmidt, who was serving as the pastor of a Missouri Synod congregation in Baltimore, Maryland, was recommended by C. F. W. Walther as a second teacher. This new school was to be located in Decorah, Iowa.²⁹ Thus the "university" known as Luther College began on October 14, 1861 with sixteen students during the first year.

Larsen then wrote to the more advanced preparatory students that they must continue their studies at St. Louis and instructed the others to come to La Crosse in September. Seven students continued their studies in St. Louis. Seminarian O. J. Hjort's daughter remarks about that year:

One thing that contributed a lot to our feeling at home was the socializing with the four other Norwegian students that attended the seminary that year. They were (Amund) Mikkelsen, (Ole Johan Knutsen) Hagestad, Thomas Johnson, and (Jens Ivarsen) Krohn. They all came to our house often and felt at home there, since we were the only Norwegians they had occasion to visit.³⁰

²⁹ Karen Larsen writes: "[U. V.] Koren, to whom had been assigned the task of looking for quarters in Decorah, wrote that while he believed that he could secure some kind of houses, it would be impossible to find one building that could accommodate the whole institution. He warned Larsen that if Decorah were selected, he would have to come there with 'diminutive expectations.' His wife, he added, thought anything found in Decorah would be inadequate, and was quite offended on Mrs. Larsen's behalf at the mere suggestion that she should live in discomfort for an indefinite time. 'My wife is always right,' Koren concluded." Classes for Luther College were conducted during its first year at the vacant Halfway Creek parsonage near La Crosse, Wisconsin. Karen Larsen, *Laur. Larsen, Pioneer College President*, 136.

³⁰ Robin Ouren, "The Lives and Legacy of the Hjorts: Pioneer Pastor's Family," *Oak Leaves* 16, no. 4 (February 2013): 6.

The Lord continued to bless His church and by 1865, eleven of the thirty-one pastors in the Norwegian Synod had been educated in the seminaries of the Missouri Synod.³¹

In Madison, Wisconsin

The Lord blessed the work in St. Louis and the number of seminary students continued to grow. In 1872, having failed to obtain a theologian from Norway to replace Larsen in St. Louis, Prof. F. A. Schmidt (1837–1928) was called from Luther College to serve in this position. Since 1866, the Norwegian Synod provided a subsidy of \$1,000 per year for Concordia Seminary.³²

By the 1873–74 school year, nearly one-quarter of the 168 students in the Concordia Seminary were from the Norwegian Synod. But there also were sixteen students from the Wisconsin Synod and the Minnesota Synod. A proposal was made to the 1876 convention of the Evangelical Lutheran Synodical Conference of North America for the establishment of a joint seminary. The proposal was that a single English and German seminary be established in Chicago, Illinois under the control of the Synodical Conference. The Norwegian Synod would be invited to create their own theological seminary on the same campus and make use of the facilities and instruction of the joint seminary. The Ohio and Illinois synods accepted the proposal. Four districts of the Missouri Synod also accepted the proposal. The Wisconsin Synod rejected the idea. Meanwhile the Norwegian Synod embarked on its own course.

There are several reasons why the Norwegian Synod sought to establish a seminary for its own students. First, it is important to remember that one of the goals of the Norwegian Synod since 1857 was to establish a “university” which would include a theological department. That goal was coming to fruition. Due to growing enrollment in St. Louis, the Missouri Synod transferred its pre-seminary program to Springfield, Illinois in 1874. This action already had necessitated the calling of the Rev. Ole Asperheim (1846–1891), who recently arrived from Norway, as a professor to serve the Norwegian students there. In addition, sentiments of Norwegian nationalism were strong and the ambivalence from 1857 had not faded among the laity of the Synod. The discussions about slavery, which continued in the Norwegian Synod

³¹ Mark Ganquist, *A History of Luther Seminary* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2019), 50.

³² Meyer, *Log Cabin to Luther Tower*, 60

following the Civil War, caused even greater distrust of the school in St. Louis. Finally, there was an element of jealousy. Augsburg Seminary in Minneapolis was established in 1869 by the Conference for the Norwegian Danish Evangelical Lutheran Church. The members of the Norwegian Synod now felt it was the proper time to establish their own seminary.

But an even greater consideration was the Norwegian language and our students' interests in that regard. It was unfortunate that our theological students did not have a good opportunity to preserve their mother tongue during their studies. At the same time the conditions of the German and Norwegian churches were very different. However, with recognition of all the good that had been received from the German institutions, the demand for a distinctive Norwegian seminary was deemed important and consideration was given to it.³³

The matter was assigned to the Church Council of the Norwegian Synod. This was the situation when the Synod's 1876 convention took place in Minneapolis, Minnesota where it was resolved that the theoretical seminary would remain at St. Louis until the current students completed their studies and a practical seminary be established in Madison, Wisconsin as soon as possible.³⁴ The two Norwegian professors, Larsen and Asperheim, were called to the serve at the new seminary.

Norwegian Synod President, H. A. Preus, relates what happened next in an April 1876 issue of *Evangelisk Luthersk Kirketidende*:

Most of the readers have probably already heard about the purchase of Solders Orphans Home in Madison. However, many would like to know more about this. It was immediately after the last synod convention that I heard that there was talk of disposing of the said property. The synod had just directed the establishment of its own practical seminary, albeit in a different place; likewise, further investigation should take place with regard to one or both of the theological seminary facilities in our midst; finally, a few years ago, there already was a definite desire to see an academy in this vicinity for the

³³ H. Halvorsen, *Festskrift til den Norske Synodes Jubilaeum. 1853–1903* (Decorah, Iowa: Den Norske synodes forlag, 1903), 145. Unless otherwise noted, all translations from *Festskrift* are by the author.

³⁴ Halvorsen, *Festskrift*, 145.

eastern district. With all this in mind, I considered it a great success at this time to acquire the above property at a somewhat cheap price. However, as the property had only conditionally been handed over to the university [of Wisconsin] by the state, only preliminary negotiations with the appropriate agencies could take place, while the legislature's action had to be awaited. However, I used the time in part to have the buildings examined more closely by individuals who are knowledgeable about buildings and to inquire about sentiments regarding a possible purchase. I also presented the case both to the Church Council and the pastoral conferences.

Even though there was no one who had the authority to act on behalf of the Synod, they all agreed that we should not miss such an opportunity for our school's beginning. If God has placed this into our hands, it must not be lost.

When the legislature met, it turned over the entire property to the university [of Wisconsin], with the unrestricted right to dispose of it in the best possible way. After several preliminary negotiations with the committee, a deal was concluded on behalf of the Synod. We were to pay \$18,000 for the property as it stands with all furnishings and accessories, of which \$1,000 was to be paid immediately, \$4,000 on July 1 and the rest, with installments for 13 years at 7% interest beginning July 1, 1876. I do not think we can thank God sufficiently for how He has directed this transaction....³⁵

The city of Madison, with a population of roughly 9,500 residents stood in stark contrast to St. Louis with its population of 351,000 people. The seminary was to be housed in a 9,000 square foot, three-story octagonal building constructed in 1854. It stood one mile east of the state capitol on an entire block which today is bounded by Brearly Street, Spaight Street, and Lake Monona. In its few short years, it had served as a private residence, Civil War soldier's hospital, and Soldiers Orphans Home. It now belonged to the state of Wisconsin and in 1876, the Regents of the University of Wisconsin deeded the property to H. A. Preus, J. A. Ottesen, and Hallie Steensland on behalf of the Norwegian Synod.

³⁵ H. A. Preus, "Soldiers Orphans Home i Madison," *Evangelisk Luthersk Kirketidende* 3, no. 17 (28 April 1876): 268–269. Unless otherwise noted, all translations from *Evangelisk Luthersk Kirketidende* are by the author.

President Preus continues:

The property is located on Lake Monona or Third Lake, in the vicinity of North Western R. R. and Milw. & St. Paul R. R. Depots, containing an area of 3 acres of land. There are 2 large buildings built on it, in addition to all the necessary outbuildings. The main building, an octagonal 3 story building of hewn stone, was erected by Governor Farwell. After him it belonged to the state, which first used it as a hospital for the soldiers, then as a home for orphaned soldiers' children. At this time, two large 2-story additions were constructed to provide the necessary amenities for the kitchen, bedrooms and study rooms for the more than 300 children who at one time made their home here. Six years ago a large 2 story school building was erected of hewn stone; it cost \$13,000, is in excellent condition, and contains 3 large and a smaller reading room in addition to a very large assembly hall which seats approximately 300 listeners. All school rooms are equipped with the items needed for children: desks, benches, wall maps, etc. In the building there are gas and water pipes and the necessary furnaces. In addition, the main building is provided with miscellaneous furniture, ovens and beds with some bedding. All these contents are included in the purchase, in addition to 1 wagon, 2 buggies, etc. Likewise, there is a steam engine to drive the water into the building's water pipes and the very large water tank, which is located in the main building's upper floor. We have estimated that there is room for 200 students and at least 3 teachers. How this information can now be used in the best way will, of course, be the subject of consideration at the next synod [convention]. I have thought however, if it were to be found desirable, that one could well place both the normal school [*Skolelærerseminarie*] and the practical seminary there, and also establish an academy for young people if the district around there should think that the time had come for the establishment of such, and the congregations were willing to provide the necessary support for it. It would be well if pastors would present this matter to their respective congregations and inform me of the outcome of their deliberations before the synod convention.³⁶

While the families of Professors Schmidt and Asperheim lived in the two lower floors of the octagon building, the students were housed in the upper floor and in the two-story wooden additions. Classes were

³⁶ H. A. Preus, "Soldiers Orphans Home i Madison," 269-270.

conducted in the stone school building which had a lecture room on the first floor.³⁷ This building also housed Monona Academy which began classes on September 20, 1876.³⁸

Seminary classes began on September 26, 1876 for twenty students including seven students who were transferred from the seminary in Springfield. On October 1, 4 the Norwegian Synod's seminary was dedicated by H. A. Preus, the Synod's president. Now the students were able to receive lectures in their own language and attend church services in a Norwegian Synod congregation. In addition, there were fourteen students who remained in Saint Louis in the theoretical seminary. Among the first graduates from the seminary in Madison were O. Aaberg, K. Guttebø, and A. Overn.

In 1878, the consideration of a joint seminary was still being discussed by the Synodical Conference with the hope that the Norwegian Synod would yet participate.³⁹ During the same year at the Norwegian Synod's convention at West Koshkonong Lutheran Church, the Church Council made a favorable recommendation for the establishment of a joint seminary "provided that such a seminary is not located south or east of Chicago."⁴⁰ The discussion of "The Establishment of a Joint Theological Seminary" covers thirteen pages of the 1878 synod report including both majority and minority reports. However, the final decision was that "The Synod respectfully requests the esteemed sister synods, which will be part of the establishment of a joint theological seminary, to wait at least a couple of years to take the decisive step in regard to this matter."⁴¹ The Synodical Conference discontinued discussions of a joint seminary.

It is then reported:

As can be seen from the foregoing account, during the negotiations on the establishment of the joint theological seminary, the matter

³⁷ Halvorsen, *Festskrift*, 144.

³⁸ During its years of operation, the academy had an average attendance of 41–79 pupils. [Olaf Morgan Norlie, *History of the Norwegian People in America* (Minneapolis, Minnesota: Augsburg Publishing House, 1925): 276–77.

³⁹ Armin W. Schuetz, *The Synodical Conference: Ecumenical Endeavor* (Milwaukee, Wisconsin: Northwestern Publishing House, 2000), 89.

⁴⁰ "Kirekeraadets Indstilling om vor Læreanstalters Ordning," *Beretning, Synoden for den norske ev.-luth kirke i America*, 1878 (Decorah, Iowa: Den Norske Synodes Bogtrykkeri, 1878): 50.

⁴¹ "Oprettelsen af et fælles theologisk Seminar," *Beretning* 1878, 64.

of the relocation of our theoretical seminary to Madison was frequently discussed. This was a proper treatment of the matter.⁴²

The unanimous recommendation of the Church Council was then accepted by the synod:

The theoretical seminary be moved at the beginning of the school year this year from St. Louis to Madison with the understanding that a third theological teaching position be established. The students who have begun in St. Louis complete their course work there.⁴³

As the school year began on September 25, 1878, there were twenty-four students of whom nine were in the theoretical and fifteen in the practical departments. Seven students remained in St. Louis. After 1880, there were no longer any students in St. Louis. By the time the Norwegian Synod established its own seminary in 1876, a total of 127 men had been graduated as candidates of theology.⁴⁴

Whereas the Synod had intended to call one professor in 1878, it was necessary to call two teachers since Prof. Aspherheim was no longer serving on the faculty. One year earlier, C. F. W. Walther presented a series of six theses on the doctrine of eternal election by grace. At the Synod's Eastern District pastoral conference in February 1878, Prof. Asperheim criticized the Missouri Synod for several things, including its doctrine of predestination [*Udvælgelsen*]. Prof. Schmidt responded sharply, "declaring that he would not teach for an hour longer if such criticism should be allowed." As a result, Prof. Asperheim resigned as a professor, and Schmidt was left as the only teacher.⁴⁵

Calls now were extended to Pastor H. G. Stub (1849–1931) of the Norwegian Synod and Prof. Frederick Stellhorn of the Missouri Synod who was teaching at the Missouri Synod seminary at Fort Wayne, Indiana. Stellhorn declined but Stub accepted the call and the school year began with two professors. H. G. Stub served as the president. The following summer, Johannes Ylvisaker (1845–1917) also began to serve. Prof. Stub taught systematic theology and Old Testament while Prof. Ylvisaker taught New Testament courses.⁴⁶ Things were now

⁴² "Oprettelsen af et fælles theologisk Seminar," *Beretning* 1878, 65.

⁴³ "Oprettelsen af et fælles theologisk Seminar," *Beretning* 1878, 65.

⁴⁴ S. C. Ylvisaker quoted in W. H. T. Dau, *Ebenezer* (St. Louis, Missouri: Concordia Publishing House, 1922), 266.

⁴⁵ Halvorsen, *Festskrift*, 146.

⁴⁶ Mark Ganquist, *A History*, 53.

“meget godt” for the seminary in Madison with the school reaching its largest enrollment in 1880 with forty-five students enrolled.

Only five years after the seminary had been fully established with both practical and theoretical departments, the students faced the most difficult times in the history of the seminary. The enrollment had declined to only seven students.⁴⁷ For several years, Prof. Schmidt had been making the same criticisms of C. F. W. Walther and the Missouri Synod which earlier had been voiced by Prof. Aspherhem [see Appendix 1]. The Rev. Christian Anderson, who was a student at the seminary 1896–98, writes, “What took place in the soul and mind of Prof. Schmidt during the last half of 1878 we have no means of determining with any certainty.”⁴⁸ It does not appear that Schmidt intended his criticisms to be divisive either within the seminary or the Norwegian Synod. Nearly five years earlier, Schmidt began to publish the periodical *Altes und Neues* in the German language to promote an academic discussion aimed particularly at the Missouri Synod [see Appendix 2]. But since most of the Norwegian Synod pastors read the German publications, the issue quickly spread. The students could read articles about eternal election in the Synod’s publication *Evangelisk Luthersk Kirketidende*, but they also could read contradictory articles in *Lutherske Vidnesbyrd*.⁴⁹

There was immense tension among the seminary faculty with Prof. Schmidt trying to impose his thinking upon the students and Professors Stub and Ylvisaker defending the teachings of the Synod. President Stub accused Schmidt of being negligent of his duties at the seminary because he was spending so much time on this controversy.⁵⁰ In an effort to promote peace within the seminary in 1883, the Church Council issued a temporary call to Pastor M. O. Bøchman, who supported Schmidt’s position. He declined the call.⁵¹ The following year, Prof. Schmidt refused to sign the diplomas of four students who did not agree with his teachings, however, the Church Council authorized Stub

⁴⁷ Eight students had transferred to Concordia Seminary (St. Louis), two students to the Wisconsin Synod seminary (Milwaukee), and eight students to the Ohio Synod’s seminary (Columbus, Ohio).

⁴⁸ Christian Anderson, “Biographical Essay on F. A. Schmidt,” *Lutheran Synod Quarterly* 55, no. 1 (March 2015): 94.

⁴⁹ The publication of *Lutherske Vidnesbyrd* [Lutheran Witness] began in 1882 and was regarded as the official organ of the Anti-Missouri Brotherhood.

⁵⁰ See E. Clifford Nelson and Eugene L. Fevold, *The Lutheran Church among Norwegian-Americans* (Minneapolis, Minnesota: Augsburg Publishing House, 1960), 1:265.

⁵¹ Nelson, *The Lutheran Church Among Norwegian-Americans*, 1:265.

and Ylvisaker (the other two professors) to sign the diplomas. By the spring of 1885, Schmidt reported that he was exhausted in body and soul and did not give examinations in the spring.⁵²

Neither were the students free from the controversy in the local Norwegian Synod congregation which was served by President H. A. Preus. In 1881, Prof. Schmidt delivered lectures on the doctrine of election in this congregation, and since Prof. Stub and Prof. Ylvisaker felt compelled to answer, they also lectured there. A motion was made approving the doctrine as set forth by Schmidt and the following year a different pastor was called by this congregation. In November 1886, this congregation severed connections with the Norwegian Synod.⁵³

The 1885–86 school year has been described as the darkest year in the history of the seminary.⁵⁴ Prof. Schmidt now raised charges of false doctrine against his fellow faculty members. He wrote, “As long as these gentlemen, despite all this demonstration of false teaching, will not even speak with me in negotiations, I do not consider it right to participate in cooperation with them at a so-called orthodox Lutheran institution.”⁵⁵ As a result, Professors Ylvisaker and Stub divided the classes between themselves.

On September 22 and the following days, the Church Council held a meeting in Madison, to which Professors Stub and Ylvisaker were summoned as accused by Prof. Schmidt. On the accusation that we did not want to negotiate with them, the Church Council unanimously resolved that Prof. Schmidt’s accusation could not be supported by evidence. On the accusation of false doctrine, the Church Council also resolved that it did not find this accusation substantiated. ...

On November 2, the students were surprised to find a notice posted in their classroom that Prof. Schmidt would conduct lectures 6 hours per week. Only one student signed up for his class. Since there was no class, Prof. Schmidt no longer taught at Luther Seminary.⁵⁶

⁵² Halvorsen, *Festskrift*, 148.

⁵³ A new congregation affiliated with the Norwegian Synod, Our Savior’s, was organized in March 1887 with the Rev. H. G. Stub serving as the pastor. *Fiftieth Anniversary of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Our Saviour, 1887–1937*. Services were conducted at the seminary for the first ten years of its existence. Our Saviour Lutheran Church, *100 Years From a Gracious God, 1887–1987*, 2.

⁵⁴ Halvorsen, *Festskrift*, 148.

⁵⁵ Halvorsen, *Festskrift*, 149.

⁵⁶ Halvorsen, *Festskrift*, 149.

By the time classes resumed in the fall of 1886, there were twenty-one students enrolled in the seminary. Pastors A. Bredesen and J. A. Ottesen, who were serving local congregations, assisted Stub and Ylvisaker with the instruction.

To Minnesota

Although Satan raged, the Lord did not let His work be thwarted and did not leave His sheep without shepherds. At this time, a discussion was taking place that affected all future students. Already in 1882 it was reported that an inquiry had been made about the sale of the seminary buildings in Madison.⁵⁷ Several years later, Synod President H. A. Preus reported that although he had been a member of the committee that had purchased the buildings, he, like others, had overestimated the value of the property.⁵⁸ By now, one of the building's wings needed to be demolished and rebuilt. Teachers' quarters needed to be constructed and the main building, which was used only for sleeping and reading rooms for the students, needed to be divided and made warmer. Monona Academy, which shared the facilities, was closed in 1881 because of a lack of suitable quarters. There also was talk of rebuilding the stone building after the roof was struck by lightning, so that it could provide housing for two teachers.⁵⁹

The matter was discussed at the 1884 convention and again at the 1887 convention when the Synod decided to sell the property in Madison. At this meeting, a proposal was made to relocate the seminary to La Crosse, Wisconsin, where a ten-acre parcel of land was available. A gift of half of the property would be given by the St. Paul Land Company and an additional \$3,000 already had been subscribed for the project.⁶⁰ In spite of this gift, it was felt that the seminary should be relocated to either Minneapolis or St. Paul, Minnesota, even though this would be at a greater cost. This thinking prevailed because of railroad accessibility, a greater opportunity for students to pursue mission activity, and for cultural reasons including proximity to a state university, museums, and a classical library.⁶¹ Although the Church Council had

⁵⁷ The 1882 Minnesota District convention "unanimously expressed its opinion that this opportunity should not be missed" and referred the matter to the Church Council (*Beretning*, 1882, 90). The Eastern District passed a similar resolution the following year (*Beretning*, 1884, 23). This was discussed at the 1884 convention.

⁵⁸ "Salg af Seminarbygningerne i Madison," *Beretning* 1887, 123.

⁵⁹ "Formands Synodaltatle og Indberetning," *Beretning* 1884, 23.

⁶⁰ "Salg af Seminarbygningerne i Madison," *Beretning* 1887, 122.

⁶¹ "Salg af Seminarbygningerne i Madison," *Beretning* 1887, 125.

not received a suitable offer for the Madison property, it was decided to build the seminary near Twin and Crystal Lakes, five miles northwest of Minneapolis on ten acres of land donated by Andrew Robbins and Brimball Parker.⁶²

In the fall of 1889, no students returned to the hewn stone buildings on Spaight Street. The faculty packed their bags and belongings and the railroad train took them to Minneapolis. The Synod opened the Martin Luther Orphanage on the site in Madison and it operated there until 1894. At that time, the Synod sold part of the property for \$23,000. The octagon building was razed the following year to make room for a subdivision. The remaining property was gradually sold piece-by-piece.⁶³

While the new building was under construction in Minnesota, the seminary students encountered much more crowded conditions than they experienced in Madison. Arrangements had been made at Our Savior's Lutheran Church in Minneapolis where Prof. H. G. Stub had served as pastor prior to beginning to teach at the seminary. This 1,000 member Norwegian Synod congregation had a school building and it was here, in September 1888, that thirty-five students crowded into a single classroom. The students also welcomed a third professor, Pastor J. B. Frich (1862–1908). At that time, he was the Eastern District president who said, "I have not dared to reject this call even though I am unfit for the task, and am well aware the learning and the gifts which might well be needed for it."⁶⁴ Prof. Frich also served as the president of the institution.

Finally the seminary building was completed at the corner of 40th Avenue North and Regent Avenue North in Robbinsdale, Minnesota. This was a grand day for the Norwegian Synod. The dream of a "university" was achieved because simultaneously with the construction of the seminary in Robbinsdale, the Lutheran Normal School was under construction in Sioux Falls, South Dakota. The dedication of the normal school, which began classes on October 1, occurred on October 13, 1889. This conflicted with having a "Founders' Day" dedication for the seminary. Now, rather than having a single university, the Synod operated three institutions: Luther Seminary, Luther College, and Lutheran Normal School.

⁶² "The Luther Theological Seminary," Robbinsdale Historical Society, accessed 28 September 2020, <https://www.robbinsdale.org/535/>.

⁶³ Also see "The Legend of a Stone," in Craig A. Ferkenstad, *Proclaim His Wonders* (Mankato, Minnesota: Evangelical Lutheran Synod, 2017), 243.

⁶⁴ "Formandens Indberetning," *Beretning* 1888, Østlilge Distrikt, 12.

Luther Seminary in Robbinsdale was dedicated with grand ceremonies on Sunday, September 8, 1889 in the presence of approximately 5,000 people. The day began with a procession from Parker Station which was one-quarter mile away. President Frich welcomed the guests and opened the Service with prayer. Pastor U. V. Koren gave an address and Prof. Stub spoke in English. Then Synod President H. A. Preus preached the dedication sermon and performed the Rite of Dedication. The service ended with Prof. Ylvisaker giving a short address and prayer. A dinner was prepared by the women of the congregations in the city and the *Evangelisk Luthersk Kirketidende* reports, “It was not an easy task to feed a few thousand, but in the end hardly anyone was forgotten.” In the afternoon the Luther College band played and the choir of Our Savior’s Lutheran Church sang. Greetings were given by President Laur. Larsen from Luther College and President A. Mikkelson from Lutheran Normal School. Additional greetings were given by guests in English, German, and Swedish.⁶⁵ Also in attendance were Minnesota Governor William R. Merriam, Senator Knute Nelson, and the University of Minnesota President, Cyrus Northrup.⁶⁶

In the opening address, U. V. Koren said,

Where shall we get the right point of view so that we can ponder the dedication for which we are assembled here, so that we grasp the significance of this celebration?

What we see is so little and we so easily hold on to the narrow group we have before our eyes. We belong to a small nation [Norway], and we ourselves are only a small church body in this one [the United States]. Now if we look no farther than to this circle in which we interact, the result is: a narrow view, then a false view, and all too often narrow-mindedness.

Let us therefore remember that although we are only a small church body, we still belong to a large kingdom; that we are members of the great, eternal spiritual kingdom whose King is Christ. Within this kingdom, our task is set for us. Just as in a large army a small troop is often positioned in an important place and has a very important task, so also with us. . . .

Therefore—just as it is right to say to someone who wants to know the prospects for a family or a congregation: Look at the training and the schools—so, when it’s a question of a church’s

⁶⁵ “Indvielsen af vort nye Luther-Seminar,” *Kirketidende* 1889, 601.

⁶⁶ “The Luther Theological Seminary,” Robbinsdale Historical Society, accessed 28 September 2020, <https://www.robbinsdale.org/535/>.

future, the answer must be: Look to the educational institutions! That's where the leaders come from, those who are teachers in the congregations. ...

We want to have pastors, we pray for pastors, who are fair, honest, competent, faithful workers in the congregations, pastors who know in whose service they stand, and who, even if they walk humbly in fear and trembling and struggling also still know that He who is with them is strong enough to sustain them and gracious enough to bless them, despite their weakness, in the work to which He Himself has called them. ...

Do we have a right to hope for this? Yes, God be praised, we know for whom we have built this building. In love you have sent your gifts for its construction, and there are certainly many of you who have not forgotten to send your prayers as well. Continue with that! As many of you as believe that he who asks shall receive, bring forth your prayers for the work that shall be carried on here! Pray, and do not become weary! Pray for God's church among us, that it may be supported and led forth by the service of the men who shall be educated here!⁶⁷

The modern Gothic seminary cost approximately \$35,000.⁶⁸ It was 132 feet long, 66 feet wide and was dominated by a central ninety-foot high tower. A large assembly room and the library were located on the first floor where the families of Professors Frich and Ylvisaker also made their homes. The second floor contained the classrooms and reading rooms while the student quarters were in the attic.⁶⁹ While attending seminary classes in Robbinsdale, most students likely would have attended the nearest Norwegian Synod congregation which was Zion Lutheran located at a four mile distance from the seminary at 24th Avenue and 6th Street. The Zion congregation had recently constructed a church building having been organized in 1884.⁷⁰

⁶⁷ U. V. Koren, "Festival Address at the Dedication of Luther Seminary," *U. V. Koren's Works*, trans. Mark DeGarmeaux (Mankato, Minnesota: Lutheran Synod Book Company, 2013–17), 2:398–412.

⁶⁸ In his 1890 report to the Synod, President H. A. Preus gives the cost as \$29,839.47 but he also writes that he has repeatedly asked the building committee to prepare a report for the seminary, but it has not been received. "Synodtale og Indberetning," *Beretning* 1890, 16.

⁶⁹ Halvorsen, *Festskrift*, 151.

⁷⁰ This congregation was later served by Pastor Christian Anderson. It was divided in 1916 with Fairview Lutheran Church being organized (today King of

Once again, the seminary was housed in its own building as the 1889 school year began. From this time onward, the name of “Luther Seminary” was consistently used. There were thirty-nine students enrolled in the seminary—seventeen in the theoretical department and twenty-two in the practical department. During the previous year, Prof. Stub taught Old Testament Exegesis and Isagogics, Dogmatics, and Encyclopedia. Prof. Ylvisaker taught New Testament Exegesis, Synoptics, and Hermeneutics. Prof. Frich taught Pastoral Theology, Homiletics, Catechetics, and Church History. However, during this year, Prof. Stub was unable to teach because of ill health. Pastor Bjug Harstad took over most of his lessons along with Pastor Wilhelm Petersen who was serving the Norwegian Synod’s congregation in St. Paul. Five years later, Pastor Petersen accepted a call that had been extended as a fourth professor in the seminary.

Since the students experienced a classical form of instruction, it is a fair assessment that the instruction was given in a manner similar to that which was described as a typical class in St. Louis twenty years earlier.

In the instruction of these years there were very few assignments calling for supplementary reading and research, irrespective of the course. The diction method was still used, that is, a summary paragraph of paragraphs were dictated by the professor, who would then lecture on these paragraphs, regularly supporting his views with quotations from Lutheran writers. Discussion and cross-questioning was not encouraged. If there were questions, there were generally put answers, especially in pastoral theology. Students wrote sermons and some theological essays and formulated propositions for debate.⁷¹

Students transcribed the oral lectures. This method of instruction, as previously experienced in St. Louis, did not encourage the use of the library.

On the blustery morning of January 11, 1895 the students were awakened to the smell of smoke and the cry of “fire!” inside the five-year-old building. A fire had originated in one of the small rooms in the attic. The fire quickly spread and in less than ten minutes, the entire

Grace Lutheran Church) which hosted the June 10, 1917 gathering of the minority of members remaining after the merger of the various Norwegian synods.

⁷¹ Meyer, *Log Cabin to Luther Tower*, 51.

structure was in flames.⁷² There is no doubt that the strong winter winds fanned the flames and added to the tragedy. On that day, a newspaper reported,

This has been the worst day of the season here. The temperature fell from 22 deg. above to 22 deg. below in six hours. The wind is blowing a gale and the mercury falling. There is no snow.⁷³ “In less than an hour only a smoldering ruin remained. The loss of the building and its contents, valued at \$30,000 was total. No insurance was carried. Professor Stub’s large library and elegant piano were lost as well as nearly all the possessions of the students. Many were injured by burns and others had frozen hands or feet. Arrangements were made to house the students in private homes and at the Hotel Georgia for the rest of the year.⁷⁴

The school soon resumed classes in a vacant hotel building in Robbinsdale. For the next several years, the Hotel Georgia, located one-half mile east of the former seminary (on the corner of West Broadway Avenue and 40½ Avenue), became the fourth location of Luther Seminary. This three story wooden building was constructed in 1890. On the first floor was a large room that was used as a lecture room for the students. Next to it was another room that was partially used for a lecture room and dining room. There also were twenty-three bedrooms. Seminary President J. B. Frich writes,

On January 22, we had progressed far enough that teaching could begin again in the rented hotel and since then it has continued as before. All the previous week, 2 carpenters had been in the process of making tables and bookshelves, and so on. There was much to do. Then it took time to borrow or rent many stoves and set them up, put in the necessary beds, etc. Now everything is in pretty good order, and the students have found everything better than expected. Since some students have been given free rooms outside the hotel by benevolent neighbors, there is reasonably good space. The large dining room is also used for a classroom and a common reading room. A student watches every night, walks around and looks after the stoves. Almost all stoves are coal furnaces and thus

⁷² “Seminary Burned,” *St. Paul Daily Globe*, January 12, 1895.

⁷³ “Frigid Minnesota,” *St. Paul Daily Globe*, January 12, 1895.

⁷⁴ Robbinsdale Historical Society, accessed: 23 July 2018, <https://www.robbinsdale.org/the-smoking-seminary/>.

are less dangerous and difficult to care for. Despite the extremely severe cold, the students have been fine and warm. There have been enough bed linens and also the other necessary clothes. The only great expense to them is in procuring necessary books. In addition, they will now receive additional help. It has already been decided in a faculty meeting yesterday (February 7) that every student, in addition to what he has already received, can receive a third of the amount lost. The 43 students who are here all submitted assessments of their own personal loss. These total \$4,833.18. The 44th student, Stensrud, who has been ill for a long time and is now at home, has also had losses but has not yet submitted any assessment of it. ... Then there is also a common loss for all students in the Boarding Club and Reading Room. The first is already for the most part covered by gifts in goods (dishes, etc). The rest has been purchased. Through gifts, they will receive compensation for the most of the food that was destroyed. As far as furniture in the reading room, such as books and magazines, replacement is something that preferably should await until we have a new seminary. It turns out that the students' losses in total amount to a little over \$5,000. At the inquiry of various people, I would like to announce that we have enough bed linen and any books that one may wish to donate preferably should be sent to the faculty in order to either be placed in the seminary's library or distributed to students, and finally that monetary gifts are most welcome, as we can thereby get exactly what is most needed.

We cannot thank enough our church people, who quickly and abundantly have sent us help in our need. God bless them and bless their gifts for our students!⁷⁵

To Saint Paul

The Lord did not abandon His church. He continued to raise up pastors to serve His people. During the eight years in Robbinsdale, there were 104 graduates from the seminary.⁷⁶ After three and one-half years of occupying the Hotel Georgia, the seminary was rebuilt in the Hamline area of St. Paul.

Immediately after the fire, invitations were extended by the Norwegian Synod's Willmar Academy and also from "the

⁷⁵ "Fra Luther-Seminar," *Evangelisk Luthersk Kirketidende* 1895, 106–107.

⁷⁶ "Nu maa Luther-Seminar gjenopbygges," *Evangelisk Luthersk Kirketidende* 1897, 829.

German-Lutheran School between St. Paul and Minneapolis” to make temporary use of their facilities. The Church Council met a few days later to care for the victims of the fire and make arrangement for the continuation of the seminary.⁷⁷ That summer, Minnesota District president, M. Bjørgo wrote:

Another misfortune for our flesh and blood, which God has caused us to suffer this year, is the fire at our theological seminary which occurred on the 11th of January. It seemed a heavy loss for us right now, as we have so much to do and expenses are large. But also in this we will try to see the goodness of the Lord instead of his ire towards us. Whether we regard this as a trial or a discipline, we know that it is to our advantage if we love the Lord. And we know that He who took, will also give, and that His hand is mighty enough for it.⁷⁸

The question now became the location of the new seminary. Robbinsdale? LaCrosse? Red Wing? Chicago? Decorah? Albert Lea? In the summer of 1895, all four district conventions, approved the appointment of a building committee which met for the first time in January 1896 and reported that summer that a location had not been determined. It was decided that Robbinsdale was no longer considered to be a convenient location for the seminary. The thinking may well have been expressed the previous summer in the *Evangelisk Luthersk Kirketidende*. When the seminary was constructed in Robbinsdale, it was five miles from Minneapolis with the anticipation that the city would continue to grow and eventually this would be a location central of the city. That did not happen and it was now felt that Minneapolis and St. Paul would become the Norwegian’s home city (*bertillands*). “If the seminary is a candle and the building [is] a candlestick, then it should be built in a place where people can see it and not in a corner.”⁷⁹ The 1897 convention authorized the committee to determine the location for the seminary, purchase land, and begin construction if funds are in hand.⁸⁰ Finally, in November 1897, it was announced that the seminary would be built midway between the cities of St. Paul and

⁷⁷ “Stedet for det vordende Luther-Seminar,” *Evangelisk Luthersk Kirketidende* 1895, 87.

⁷⁸ “Distriktsformandens Synodaltale og Indberetning,” *Beretning* 1895, Minnesota Distrikt 21–22.

⁷⁹ “Luther-Seminars Gjenopbyggelse,” *Evangelisk Lutherske Kirketidende* 1895, 196.

⁸⁰ “Fællesformandens Indberetning,” *Beretning* 1897, Anden Del, 34.

Minneapolis on four acres of land located close to Hamline University on Snelling Avenue. Railroad executive James J. Hill had donated a plot of nearly four acres of land in Hamline, just off the Great Northern Railroad Line. But instead, the Synod purchased a different plot about the same size “at the most beautiful point in Hamline, a good distance away from the railway line.”⁸¹ This site was at the corner of Hamline Avenue & Capitol Avenue.⁸²

In 1898, the Norwegian Synod convention was held June 15–22 in Spring Grove, Minnesota. The following day one hundred individuals traveled to Hamline to join a large crowd as the cornerstone was laid for the new seminary. The seminary president, J. B. Frich, delivered the welcoming address in which he thanked J. J. Hill and others for their generosity.⁸³ The Synod’s vice president, Pastor H. Halvorsen, preached the sermon based on Luke 6:47–48. Also speaking were Prof. Laur. Larsen, Prof. A. Mikkelsen, President Gausewitz of the Minnesota Synod, and Prof. Bünger of Concordia College.⁸⁴

Four months later, the forty-eight students enrolled in the seminary gathered for the building’s Dedication Service with 4,000 other guests.⁸⁵ The October Festival (*Oktoberfesten*) began on Saturday, October 14 at 7:30 p.m. with the singing of the hymn, “Thee, God, We Praise, Thy Name We Bless.”⁸⁶ The speakers, the choir, and the Luther College band assembled on the porch of the new building. Pastor O. P. Vangness welcomed the assembly after which Luther College President Laur. Larsen spoke about the significance of the date of October 14 in the history of the Norwegian Synod. Attorney O. M. Torrison of Chicago spoke about “Christian Schools and our Land” after which the building was illuminated and the Luther College band played several selections. President J. B. Frich records, “It was fortunate that tonight’s program was no longer; for the weather was then quite windy and cold.” Later in the evening, there was heavy rain and violent weather. Sunday morning began as a dark and cloudy day, but when the Dedication Service was

⁸¹ Halvorsen, *Festskrift*, 152.

⁸² In 1940, the name of Capitol Avenue was changed to Engelwood Avenue. It is likely that Seminary Avenue approached the main entrance to the building.

⁸³ “To Stand Forever,” *The St. Paul Globe*, June 24, 1899.

⁸⁴ Halvorsen, *Festskrift*, 153.

⁸⁵ “Indberetning til Synoden fra Bestyreren for Luther-Seminar,” *Beretning* 1900, Anden Del, 4 (48 students: Øverste = 9 theoretical, 3 practical / Anden = 9 theoretical, 10 practical / Nederste = 9 theoretical, 8 practical).

⁸⁶ This hymn (“O store Gud, vi love dig!”) was the first hymn in the Norwegian Synod’s hymnbook and is a versification of the *Te Deum*.

held, "the sun began to shine and we had a mild and fine weather all Sunday, as if it had been ordered for this festival day."⁸⁷

The Dedication Service began at 11:00 a.m. with the singing of the hymn, "Ye Lands, to the Lord Make a Jubilant Noise." Prof. Stub served as the officiant. The seminary president extended a greeting and following the singing of the hymn, "Heavenly Spirit, All Others Transcending," the Synod's president, Pastor V. Koren preached the dedication sermon based upon Mark 13:1-2, "As Jesus was leaving the temple courts, one of his disciples said to him, 'Teacher, look what impressive stones these are, and what impressive buildings!' Jesus said to him, 'Do you see these large buildings? There will not be one stone here left on top of another. They will all be thrown down.'"⁸⁸ The entire assembly then sang Luther's great hymn: "A Mighty Fortress is our God." Prof. Brandt spoke in English about the "Great Importance of Christian Schools for the Building of the Church." Prof. Mikkelsen ended with a speech in Norwegian. The morning service ended with the singing of the hymn, "God's Word is Our Great Heritage."

The noon dinner was served by the Ladies' Aids of the Twin Cities at a cost of 25¢ with the income being given to the seminary.⁸⁹ The speakers and their wives, architects, city mayor, and building committee were served in the dining room. Others were served in other rooms and in a large tent.

The afternoon festivities were opened with prayer by Pastor O. Juul, after which Professor Ylvisaker spoke about the work of the seminary. The Luther College choir sang the 150th psalm of David. The first address was given by Prof. A. Graebner from St. Louis. A second address was given by Pastor Johannes Halvorson who said, "It is a well known fact that it is the country churches that build and support our educational institutions, and the contributions from the cities have been but a small mite in comparison. And still our Synod has not chosen a country congregation for the location of its Seminary." He continued to explain that it is in the teeming city where students can better observe the many conditions of human life. It is also in the city where the seminary can be a lighthouse of "uncompromising truth and honesty and of moral power." In conclusion, he said,

⁸⁷ "Luther-Seminars Indvielse i Hamline," *Evangelisk Luthersk Kirketidende*, 1899, 1011.

⁸⁸ The sermon is printed in *Evangelisk Luthersk Kirketidende*, 1033-41.

⁸⁹ "Luther Seminars Indvielses-Fest," Norwegian American Historical Association, Northfield, Minnesota.

And we city people who are gathered here today in greater numbers than usual, rejoicing in the progress God has given his church, may we not only be hearers but doers of the word; not only as they who receive benefits, but as they who appreciate them and show their gratitude in word and deed.

For to us, Luther Seminary will be of the greatest benefit; to us it is nearest and should be dearest, to us it will be a blessing if we accept the riches of knowledge and truth which are here preserved and imparted to us and our descendants.

May the Lord bless the association of Seminary and congregations for Christ's sake. Amen.⁹⁰

The "Hallelujah Chorus" was performed by the choir and orchestra. Personal greetings also were brought in German by Missouri Synod president, Franz Pieper. Congratulatory telegrams also were read.⁹¹

In 1903, H. G. Stub described the building:

Luther Seminary in Hamline is a solid and neatly designed building in every way. It is built of the best brick with sandstone inlays and sandstone tiles in the facade. In addition to the basement with music room, gymnastics room, smoking room and a large laundry room with rows of tubs and showers, heating plant rooms, laundry and a cellar, the building has 3 stairways and a high attic. On the first floor are all the reading rooms, the library, teachers' rooms and a very stylish chapel with seating for 250 people. The dining room and kitchen are in the center. On the second floor are study rooms and bed rooms for students. In the middle there is a large reading room. On the third floor there also are study rooms and bed rooms for students. The corridors are wide and bright, and all rooms receive good light. With the furniture for all the rooms and grounds, the building cost close to \$80,000, a beautiful testimony to the sacrificial spirit and love of our people for the cause of the church.⁹²

Faculty

During the years prior to the construction of the seminary in Hamline, there were a number of changes in the faculty. Pastor Johannes

⁹⁰ Johannes Halvorson, "English Address at Seminary Dedication," Norwegian American Historical Association, Northfield, Minnesota, Item no. P1354.

⁹¹ "Luther-Seminars Indvielse i Hamline," *Evangelisk Luthersk Kirketidende* 1899, 1011-14.

⁹² Halvorsen, *Festskrift*, 154.

Halvorson, who was serving the nearby Zion Lutheran Church, taught English homiletics and symbolics, 1890–94. With the desire for a fourth full-time professor at the seminary, the 1893 convention called C. Naeseth who declined the call.⁹³ Pastor Wilhelm M. H. Petersen (1854–99) was then called to serve as a professor in 1894. This situation only continued for two years until Prof. Stub accepted a call to the congregation in Decorah, Iowa.

The 1896 convention faced the difficulties at the seminary when it was recommended that a better building for seminary be rented in the St. Anthony Park area of St. Paul. The recommendation was not adopted and instead the faculty and students were asked to be patient with the inconveniences associated with a continued stay in Robbinsdale for another year.⁹⁴ Following that decision, Prof. Frich announced that, since the Synod decided that the seminary should remain in Robbinsdale and also because Prof. Stub had accepted a call, he did not wish to continue to serve as president because he felt the seminary had suffered a detrimental blow and he did not feel equal to the task as president but would continue to teach.⁹⁵ In reply, the convention gave him a rising vote of confidence and earnestly asked him to remain as president. He continued to serve in this position until his retirement in 1902 when the bylaws of the seminary were amended to rotate the presidency between the professors for one year at a time.⁹⁶ Pastor Olaf E. Brandt (1862–1940) then was called to fill the position previously held by H. G. Stub. Another heavy blow came to the seminary six months before the dedication of the new seminary building when Professor Wilhelm M. H. Petersen died at the age of forty-five years. His funeral was conducted at Norwegian Lutheran Church in St. Paul where he previously had served.

Included in Prof. Petersen's duties were hermenutics and English homiletics. It appears that the notes from his lectures in hermenutics continued to be used in the seminary because the Archives of the Evangelical Lutheran Synod contains a 1904 mimeographed copy of his lectures. In it he wrote:

The thought of God concerning us, His inmost nature, the unity in the Trinity and Trinity in unity, the doctrine of the Son of God

⁹³ "Indberetning til Synoden om Luther-Seminar," *Beretning* 1894, Bilag, VII.

⁹⁴ "Indstilling fra Komiteen for Læreanskalterne," *Beretning* 1896, 82–83.

⁹⁵ "Prof. Frichs Resignation som Bestyrer ved Luther-Seminar," *Beretning* 1896, 112.

⁹⁶ Halvorsen, *Festskrift*, 155.

and His mission and work; the reconciliation of the world unto God by the blood of His Son, etc.: concerning all these things and doctrines the light of nature gives us no evidence. Nature teaches us theology but not Christology. It does not show us a way beyond God's justice to His mercy. The heathen world knows nothing about God's inmost nature, His thoughts concerning us, His Son, or about the Trinity in one. Cicero: "No one can convince me that the spirit is mortal." But he knew nothing about the resurrection of the flesh. The things that the light of nature does not teach us, are the most important. What is more important than to know how to please God? why [sic] He has placed us here? what [sic] we must do to be saved? Natural theology gives no answer to the great questions of eternity and salvation. Scripture alone gives this information; therefore the Bible is the only complete rule of faith and morals. It is the surest source of knowledge, as it is the inspired word of God; it is the most complete, as it teaches all that is necessary unto salvation.⁹⁷

Professor Johannes Ylvisaker taught New Testament courses and by resolution of the Norwegian Synod his class lectures were published as *The Gospels* in 1905. He writes in the Forward:

In presenting this book to the public, I beg leave to preface a few remarks as to its origin. . . . Frequently I was perplexed also in my efforts to harmonize one evangelist or one Gospel with the others. These difficulties grew more formidable when I began to instruct in a course of exegesis at our seminary, since the various commentaries did not always afford the needed assistance. Many of the more recent expositors passed lightly over the difficult points and were premature in claiming the prevalence of important divergences which I knew could not possibly exist, because, according to the testimony of the Holy Ghost, who is the Spirit of Truth, and of whom Jesus also had said to the apostles that He would lead them into all truth (John 16:13). . . .

The personal conviction which I thus attained—I dare say through painstaking research and investigation—it became my pleasure and privilege to impart to my students. My great desire was to portray to my classes the Lord Jesus in all His love and majestic glory, so that they might go forth as living witnesses of Him who

⁹⁷ W. M. H. Petersen, *Hermeneutics: The Lectures as Given in Class*. Noted, Abridged, and Mimeographed by J. U. Xavier (St. Paul: Luther Seminary, 1896), 3–4, Evangelical Lutheran Synod Archives, Mankato, Minnesota, 3–4.

had become their life and the foundation of their salvation. After returning from my sojourn abroad, I tried to bring to fruition the plan I had harbored. I began to give lectures of the four Gospels, synoptically arranged. My efforts seemed well received. I was requested repeatedly to mimeograph the lectures in order to render them more complete than they could be made by notes from an oral presentation.⁹⁸

In 1900, following the death of Prof. Petersen, Pastor H. G. Stub accepted a call to return to the seminary. The following year, Pastor Elling Hove (1887–1927) also was called in anticipation of the retirement of President Frich. “At the time when he was called to the theological professorship, he was widely known among our people as a preacher and lecturer of unusual power.”⁹⁹ “In his new environment not many months elapsed before he had gained recognition for scholastic ability and for the zest with which he explored the glorious land of theology. But of still greater moment to himself was the deepening assurance that his Redeemer-Lord, Jesus Christ, was calling him to be His friend and initiating him into partnership in His great saving enterprise.”¹⁰⁰

In 1903, the teaching duties were divided as:

E. Hove – Church History and Dogmatics (practical department);
 O. E. Brandt – Old Testament Exegesis and English Homiletics;
 Joh. Ylvisaker – New Testament Exegesis, Synopsis, Catechetics;
 H. G. Stub – Dogmatics (theoretical department), Norwegian Homiletics, Pastoral Theology.

Since the time when the seminary relocated to Hamline, Mr. John Dahle also was salaried to teach liturgics, hymnody, and choir. This man, who strongly influenced twentieth-century Norwegian-American Lutheranism, is an enigma for the Norwegian Synod. After emigrating from Norway, he taught intermittently at schools of the Anti-Missouri Brotherhood, United Norwegian Lutheran Church, and the Norwegian Synod. He brought a familiarity with the “New Liturgy” of Norway that was readily adopted by the United Norwegian Lutheran Church.¹⁰¹

⁹⁸ Joh. Ylvisaker, *The Gospels* (Minneapolis, Minnesota: Augsburg Publishing House, 1932, repr., 1977), v–vi.

⁹⁹ O. E. Brandt, “An Appreciation,” in *Christian Doctrine*, by Elling Hove (Minneapolis, Minnesota: Augsburg Publishing House, 1930): n.p. [iii].

¹⁰⁰ O. E. Brandt, *Christian Doctrine*, n.p. [ii].

¹⁰¹ See Olaf Morgan Norlie, ed., *School Calendar 1824–1924: A Who’s Who among Teachers in the Norwegian Lutheran Synods of America* (Minneapolis, Minnesota: Augsburg Publishing House, 1924), 136–37.

Prof. Hove taught dogmatics and in 1930 his *Christian Doctrine* was published posthumously by his son. Since he was educated in the Norwegian Synod and became the dogmatics teacher at the seminary, this work could be considered the definitive exposition of the doctrine of the Norwegian Synod. He wrote:

Theology is a certain knowledge of God and divine things, but it is *divine* knowledge, which deal with truths which lie beyond the range of the natural knowledge of man, and which therefore God has revealed in His Word. While our ordinary, natural knowledge is attained by the use of our natural senses, powers, and faculties, by observations, investigations, and logical inferences from known facts, theology attains its knowledge through faith, through trusting fully in God. The true theologian knows a truth simply because the Lord has spoken it, even though he does not fully understand or comprehend it. The truths of the Gospel are therefore called mysteries, that is, they are hidden from man, and would forever have remained unknown to man, unless God had made them known. . . .

When we speak of theology, we mean *Christian* theology, i.e., *Revealed Theology*, revealed in a *supernatural* way through Christ in the Holy Scriptures, as distinguished from *Natural Theology*, a knowledge of God that may be attained by the natural man without supernatural means, inasmuch as God makes Himself known to man through nature and through conscience.¹⁰²

Conclusion

Luther Seminary had both a glorious and a storied history. With Martin Luther we confess to the Lord: “If I had lacked Your help, I could have ruined everything long ago.” But the Lord preserved His people and prospered their work.

During its forty-one years of existence (1876–1917), Luther Seminary was located in five different sites with eight teachers: O. Aspherheim 1876–78; F. A. Schmidt 1876–86; H. G. Stub 1878–96, 1900–17; Joh. Ylvisaker 1879–1917; J. B. Frich 1888–1902; W. M. H. Petersen 1894–1899; O. E. Brandt 1897–1917; and E. Hove 1901–17. During these years, there were 475 graduates.¹⁰³

¹⁰² Elling Hove, *Christian Doctrine* (Minneapolis: Augsburg Publishing House), 3–4. Emphasis in original.

¹⁰³ Granquist, *A History*, 55.

In anticipation of the merger of three Norwegian synods, the property of the seminary was transferred to the new church body in 1916. Following the merger, the seminaries also were combined and the twenty-one students who would have returned to Luther Seminary instead went to the campus of the United Norwegian Lutheran Church on Como Avenue in the St. Anthony Park area of St. Paul. The name of the new institution became Luther Theological Seminary.

When classes resumed in the fall of 1917, the seminary building on Hamline Avenue stood empty. But the Lord did forget his little flock, and the story begins again... [LSQ](#)

Appendix 1

In 1878, there was a need for an additional professor at Concordia Seminary in St. Louis. An 1882 issue of the *Lutheran Witness* includes the following:

Among the names that were presented for nomination, was also that of Prof. F. A. Schmidt, but he was not nominated, because the Synod held it uncharitable to deprive the Norwegian Synod of his services. Prof. Schmidt had intimated that he would accept the call if he could be made the Synod's choice. That he felt rather disappointed when this did not come about, is natural. Now, someone among his friends or enemies informed Prof. Schmidt that Dr. Walther had prevented his nomination by putting on such a face and shrugging up his shoulder in such a manner, when Prof. Schmidt's name was mentioned, as to indicate he would not like Schmidt as a colleague. Though there is not a word of truth in this, Schmidt took it for granted and—now comes the worst feature—took it also as an affronting challenge of his (Schmidt's) orthodoxy, which he was bound to avenge. This is what we learned from his own lips at the next meeting of the Synodical Conference at Columbus, Ohio at Prof. Loy's house, Rev's [sic] Adelberg and H. Sauer being present. We reasoned with him there, and not knowing the facts, we begged him for the sake of the Church, even if Walther should have done something out of the way, not to act in a rancorous spirit, but to consider that God had given him more knowledge and talents than others, to employ these in the maintenance of harmony and peace in the Church, and not to destroy his own usefulness,

that our Professors should not make the whole Church suffer for the infirmities they find with the brethren. But he had his mind fixed.¹⁰⁴

In his defense, F. A. Schmidt acknowledged that there had been talk of calling him to St. Louis but that he could not accept such a call until the question of election had been settled.¹⁰⁵

Appendix 2

In the controversy Walther must share some blame with his opponents. In his approach to the question of election, he used tactics similar to those which he used in his approach to the question of slavery. In that controversy he maintained, to as great an extent was possible, silence. He relied on personal authority to quiet opposition. This method worked in the earlier controversy, especially in the year 1860 and 1861. It did not work 20 years later. His opponents were not ready to yield simply because he opposed them.

The controversy also had the effect of fixing a methodology within the Synod. Walther's methodology for proof of his position followed an established pattern in this controversy. He showed himself to a not inconsiderable extent a *Zitatentheolog*, a theologian who quoted authorities. In the debates at the pastoral conference in 1880 Walther did not, as a rule, explore the context of the Scriptural, confessional, and theological citations which he brought. This same methodology is very much evident in his edition of Baier's *Compendium*. The citation of authorities was the methodology which was followed. It shaped the thinking of the Missouri Synod clergy for two generations. Franz Pieper followed this methodology. With all of his irenic spirit, Pieper was more ready to listen to a summary than to engage in a dialogue. This methodology shaped the attitudes of the students at St. Louis. This strong reliance on authority outside of the Scriptures was carried over into the office of the ministry when the students entered their professional careers. This attitude pervaded to a considerable extent the Missouri Synod for a generation, an unpleasant outcome of the work done at Concordia Seminary.¹⁰⁶

¹⁰⁴ June 21, 1882; quoted in Carl C. Meyer, *Log Cabin to Luther Tower*, 79n25.

¹⁰⁵ E. Clifford Nelson, *The Lutheran Church Among Norwegian-Americans*, 260n63.

¹⁰⁶ Carl S. Meyer, *Log Cabin to Luther Tower*, 78.

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Remember Them ...

J. Herbert Larson

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Editor's Note: This article is reprinted from the *Lutheran Sentinel* (Vol. 67, No. 5, pp. 4–5). Rev. Herbert Larson recalls the life of Markus Fredrik Wiese.

THE YEAR WAS 1863. ABRAHAM LINCOLN WAS president of the United States of America. Jefferson Davis was president of the Confederate States of America. The Civil War was raging. Lincoln issued the Emancipation Proclamation on January 1. The Battle of Gettysburg was fought in early July.

On one of the ships arriving from Europe that year was a young man from Denmark by the name of Markus Fredrik Wiese (VEE-sah). Eventually he arrived in Madison, Wisconsin. Before long he met Pastors H. A. Preus and J. A. Ottesen whose congregations were nearby. Through them Wiese learned to know the glory and peace of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. They suggested that he think of becoming a minister. Persuaded in his heart that God wanted him to, Wiese went to St. Louis, Missouri, to study theology at the Missouri Synod's Concordia Seminary, because as yet the Norwegian Synod had not established its own seminary for the training of pastors. Thus, Wiese had the opportunity to study under C. F. W. Walther, from whom our Synod's "fathers" acknowledged that they learned so much of what it is to be truly Lutheran. Wiese graduated from Concordia in 1869.

His ministry took him to congregations in Indiana, Illinois, Iowa and Wisconsin. His longest service was to the Western Koshkonong congregation whose mailing address near Madison, Wisconsin, is Cottage Grove. He was its pastor from 1892 until he retired in 1918. Then he moved to nearby Cambridge, Wisconsin, where he died on December 27, 1933, over 91 years after his birth on May 11, 1842, and thousands of miles from his birthplace, Gjedesby, on the island of Falster in Denmark.

His ministry took Pastor Wiese through two of the most difficult and heart-rendering periods in the history of our church body. The first was the controversy concerning the doctrine of the Christian's election to eternal life with God. Is a Christian's faith and salvation due completely and only to the grace of God in Jesus Christ, or does a person cooperate with God in some way and in that way influence God to save him? That question was hotly debated among many Lutherans in this country in the 1880s. It resulted in about one-third of the old Norwegian Synod's pastors and congregations leaving it in favor of being with a church body which taught that man can and must cooperate with God in his salvation. Our "fathers" continued to believe, teach and confess according to Holy Scripture that Jesus is the sole Author and Finisher of our faith (Hebrews 12:2).

The second great controversy through which Pastor Wiese lived saw that same question erupt again. Like a tidal wave, pressure grew among Norwegian-American Lutherans in the early years of this century for forming one large Lutheran church body in which all persons of Norwegian heritage could find a home, regardless of what they wanted to believe or teach about whether man can cooperate in his coming to faith in Christ or whether his conversion is due entirely to the grace of God. Pastor Wiese wrote much, as others did, in an attempt to keep his beloved Synod on the scriptural path which such men before him as Preus, Ottesen and Koren had followed. No one, though, could stop the tide which resulted in an unscriptural union of several Lutheran churches in 1917. A minority fought against the merger. That minority reorganized under the name, "The Norwegian Synod of the American Evangelical Lutheran Church." Most people who knew of it simply called it the Norwegian Synod. As the years passed the synod's "Norwegianness" became less pronounced, and it searched for a name which would serve it well while also retaining historical and confessional significance. Its 1958 convention ratified the change to its new

name, the “Evangelical Lutheran Synod.” Pastor Wiese was with the minority for the remainder of his life.

As the apostle urges every pastor to do, he studied faithfully throughout his life to show himself “approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth. But shun profane and vain babblings” (2 Timothy 2:15–16, KJV). He gathered a large personal library, many of its books being what librarians of our day classify as rare books because they were published in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. After Wiese’s death most of his books were donated to our Synod’s Bethany Lutheran College in Mankato, Minnesota. When our Theological Seminary was founded, the books became the valued foundation of its library. This is how our seminary library came to possess an original first edition copy of the Book of Concord, which contains the confessional writings of the Lutheran Church. Some of Wiese’s books found their way into other hands, passing from older pastors to younger pastors. Some are on my study’s shelves. Each bears his small, carefully written signature.

It is only older people now who have personal memories of Pastor Wiese. More than one remembers sitting in his lap at Ladies Aid while mother was busy with the Aid’s business. Children sensed that he loved them and they loved him in return. Others still recall Wiese’s tender pastoral care of the young, the elderly, the troubled, the sick and dying. Pastors now retired remember the aged Wiese’s sound biblical knowledge, his knowledge of Luther and the Lutheran Confessions and of other orthodox theologians of that era. They remember his wise counsel which helped them in their earlier years in the ministry. They remember Wiese’s humble Christian spirit.

The report of his death and burial in our *Lutheran Sentinel* for January 3, 1934, states that Pastor Wiese had planned his own funeral ahead of time, asking that one of our pastors speak on Ephesians 2:5, 8–10: “Even when we were dead in sins, (God) hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace are ye saved); ... For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast. For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them.” It was a fitting text for one who according to Scripture had first been by nature a lost and condemned sinner, then by God’s grace a Christian, and by the will of God, also a pastor. “His death,” that issue of the *Sentinel* said those many years ago, “closes not only a long, but a very full and useful

life.... Rev. Wiese was a gifted poet, a diligent student, especially of the old theologians, a learned man, a prolific writer and a hymnologist of note. ... Rev. Wiese was throughout his life a very useful member of the Norwegian Synod, and his love for it was very great.” “Remember them ...” the Holy Ghost says in Hebrews 13:7. Remember them who have taught the Word of God in past generations. Follow the faith they professed.

Last month our synod held its 67th annual convention (1984). We heard preaching from the Bible. We heard an essay strengthening us in the Bible’s teaching that it is the Word of God. We heard reports about the work we do together in this country and in Peru in South America. We thanked God for his blessings upon our labors, his answers to our prayers. We prayed to him as we wrestled with decisions.

We strain toward the future, to work harder, to do more, to do it better. We look for new places to begin work and for ways to improve our past work in established schools and congregations. Ours is still the desire our “fathers” had: to be faithful to our Lord and to glorify him.

As we look forward with faith that we are doing his work and that he will continue to bless our work in his church here upon earth, we look back also. We look back to roots which go down into more than 100 years in this country, back to roots which go deep into Scripture. Not everything in the future can be new if we wish to be true to Scripture and true to the heritage the Lord has given us. “Thus saith the LORD, Stand ye in the ways, and see, and ask for the old paths where is the good way, and walk therein, and ye shall find rest for your souls” (Jeremiah 6:16). “Ask for the old paths” of doctrine that is true to the Bible teaching that glorifies God, teaching that leads people to His Son, our Savior. Back to the “fathers.” Back to Luther. Back to Scripture. And then onward into the future.

Separately, and all of us together, let us vow that with the gracious help of Almighty God, we shall be like our “fathers.” Then God will be honored by whatever service we may render to him as pastors, professors, teachers or just members of our congregations. Then the memories of these men will be blessed among us, as God the Holy Ghost, speaking through his apostle, would have them be. LSQ

Greetings from The Norwegian Synod to The Missouri Synod

Norman A. Madson

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Editor's Note: This article is reprinted from Norman A. Madson, *Preaching to Preachers* (Minneapolis: Augsburg Publishing House, 1952), 187–189.

PRESIDENT BEHNKEN, DEAR BRETHREN OF THE Missouri Synod:

“The wicked borroweth, and payeth not again,” saith the word of God. Were we of the Norwegian Synod of the American Evangelical Lutheran Church to remain silent these days when faithful Lutherans, not only throughout the length and breadth of our land, but in more or less scattered groups throughout the continents not American, are voicing their thanks to a gracious God for the miracle of mercy enacted in Perry County, Missouri, well-nigh a century ago, we should be guilty of base ingratitude, which in the eyes of God is a serious sin.

The history of our synod, though that of the younger and much smaller brother, parallels that of the Missouri Synod and has points of contact with it as intimate as are the bonds of a common faith.

The debt which we owe our dear brethren of the Missouri Synod, while it is both physical and spiritual, is nevertheless chiefly of a *doctrinal* nature. Had not our sainted fathers come into contact with the Missourians when they did (even in the fifties), God only knows what would have become of our Norwegian Synod.

'Tis true that under the benign influence of a Caspari, a Johnson, a Thistedal, the Lutheran church of Norway had, during the second

quarter of the nineteenth century, come out of the morass of a materialistic rationalism and had gained the refreshing heights of a confessional Lutheranism. But theirs was still a *state church*. What a blessing, therefore, that our pioneering fathers at the very beginning were brought into contact with, and placed under, the sheltering wing of a church which was not only confessional Lutheran, but a true *Freikirche* in every sense of the word.

While we have many things for which we must ever be grateful to our Missouri brethren (and I think I know your Walther), there is to my mind no greater contribution made to the cause of sound Lutheranism by your beloved Carl Ferdinand Wilhelm Walther than his clear-cut enunciation of the principles governing a truly free church.

It was this to which our own Dr. Koren referred in the letter written your esteemed Dr. Walther after having returned home from his first meeting with the Saxon leader at Fort Wayne: "We learned nothing new of you; but what we had learned by precept in Norway—the two great fundamental Lutheran principles—we here for the first time saw put into practice and exemplified in the life of an entire church body. With not a trace of pious pretense, but with a deep seriousness and a childlike joyousness true Lutheranism here came into its own in a way which would not have been possible under a state church, without a complete revolution of things existent."

Believe me, brethren of the Missouri Synod, (and when I say "brethren," I include therein also our sisters in faith, for I trust that there still are Frau Bartels among you now, even as there was in that Leipzig home which befriended your youthful Walther in his university days) believe me when I say that our Norwegian Synod is truly thankful for what Missouri meant to us in the early fifties, in the troubled days of the eighties, and in the no less darksome days of 1917. We are still mindful of that these days. With a fitting service of commemoration for the blessings which have come to us through the faithful Saxons and their spiritual descendants, our synod in convention assembled at Mankato, Minnesota, gave public testimony (last Sunday afternoon) to its gratefulness, when the Rev. Justin A. Petersen, in an address of appreciation and true evaluation of the Saxon fathers, voiced the heartfelt sentiments of all true members of our synod.

And when I today, as the official representative of our synod, am here in person to bring you our sincere thanks and blessing, I can do so in no better way than by closing my brief address with the very words which our Saxon Day speaker used as his peroration last Sunday: "God

bless the Missouri Synod! May she ever remain faithful to God's word and Luther's doctrine pure. May she, in the future as in the past, ever ask for the old paths, where is the good way, and walk therein. May she ever hold aloft the banner: The *Word* alone, *Grace* alone, *Faith* alone! May no strange fire ever burn upon her sacred altars!" LSQ

The History and Impact of the Christian Day Schools of Our Evangelical Lutheran Synod in Iowa

Joshua F. Skogen

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“ONE LEARNS IN THE SCHOOL TO WHICH HE goes.”¹ This very simple maxim Martin Galstad quoted in his contribution to the anniversary book, *A Blessing in the Midst of the Land*. In what school would we have our children learn?

Let's Start Schools ... Or Not

From early in the formation of the Norwegian Evangelical Lutheran Church in America in 1853, many of the pastors believed that Christian children should learn in a Christian school. And thus, the Synod promoted the idea that every parish should offer their children a Christian education. The 1865 Synod Convention appointed a committee for Christian Day Schools. The committee, consisting of Rev. Nils Brandt and Professors F. A. Schmidt and Laur. Larsen, presented a report strongly encouraging congregations to start their own parochial schools. They wrote,

Even as Christianity should penetrate and permeate the whole life, so should it also permeate the whole school and all instruction. The instruction should be animated by a Christian spirit and the instruction in every branch of knowledge should be given in the light of Christianity. Throughout the whole instruction it should always be borne in mind and impressed upon the children that

¹ Martin Galstad, “The Fear of the Lord,” in *A Blessing in the Midst of the Land*, ed. Paul Ylvisaker (n.p.: n.p., n.d.), 11.

they have been grafted into Christ through baptism and that they must abide in Him. The discipline in the school must therefore also be a Christian discipline.... The zeal of a congregation for a Christian School will, even as it flows from the zeal and earnestness of a congregation in its Christianity, also nourish, strengthen, and further the true Christian life in its midst. Especially will it exert such an influence in the coming days that the future existence of our congregations, as far as men can judge, can well be said to depend more upon such schools than upon anything else. May God give us grace to acknowledge this and to act accordingly.²

Besides the reasonable argument that a Christian child should receive a Christian education, the committee brought up another motivation for starting schools. It is the congregations' duty and desire to strengthen the Christian life among her members, including her children. The nourishment of the younger generations through the Christian day school would be absolutely pivotal for the health and survival of the congregations and the Synod.

One of the most vigorous proponents of the Christian day school was H. A. Preus, who served as the Synod president from 1862 to 1894. In his 1873 report to the Synod, he stressed each congregation's duty to provide her children a Christian education. Certainly, the education begins in the home, and the responsibility lies on the shoulders of the parents. But when a child is baptized and made a member of a congregation, the congregation has the responsibility to provide parents assistance in giving the children a Christian education. Preus said in that report,

When the church or congregation, at the request of the parents, administers baptism to the little ones, it is not alone the sponsors, but the congregation as a whole which pledges itself, through the establishing and maintaining of schools in its midst, to see to it that all its children which through baptism have been grafted into Christ may remain with Christ. The school is the forecourt of the church; the church is the mother of the school.³

With words as these and the exhortation of Scripture, the Synod encouraged the congregations to start schools. The Synod also encouraged the

² S. C. Ylvisaker, Chr. Anderson, and G. O. Lillegard, *Grace for Grace* (Mankato, MN: Lutheran Synod Book Company, 1943), 78.

³ From President H. A. Preus's report to the 1873 Synod Convention.

formation of schools with their money, too. In 1903, the jubilee year convention established a fund for Christian day schools in memory of the Rev. H. A. Preus.

Gradually, schools were cropping up in the Synod. During this era of the old Norwegian Synod, at least five Christian day schools materialized in Iowa.⁴ Two of these will be highlighted in this paper since they continued in the reorganized Norwegian Synod. These two are Somber which opened in 1905 and Lime Creek which opened in 1910. The other three schools that I discovered were established in Northeast Iowa. The “Little Iowa Congregation” established a school on March 16, 1854 in Washington Prairie under the leadership of Rev. U. V. Koren.⁵ Koren also had led the charge for the start of Washington Prairie’s congregational school. The Rovang Parochial School was conceived, and the schoolhouse was built approximately in 1879. It was established for religious instruction, and whether it was used for more than religious instruction for a few weeks in the spring and fall is hard to determine from sources. In 1888 Johan Hagen was called to be a permanent teacher and taught at the school until July 1918. The date of the school’s closure is not explicitly stated, but it is likely that if it was not 1918, it was soon thereafter, as will be explained later in the paper. A school was also established in Decorah at the present site of First Lutheran Church. The school consisted of two rooms in the church basement from 1876 until

⁴ Other educational institutions in Iowa (and Albert Lea) include an academy in Bode, Iowa. The school began operation in 1888 and ran by congregational support until 1895. The average attendance was 70 students. Other supporters conducted the school from 1895 until its closure in 1902. The inadequacy of the building and the lack of resources forced the school to close. B. H. Narveson, “The Norwegian Lutheran Academies,” *Norwegian-American Studies* 14 (1944): 184–226, www.naha.stolaf.edu/pubs/nas/volume14/vol14_9.htm. Of course, there was also Luther College which moved to Decorah, Iowa in 1862 after one year at Halfway Creek in Wisconsin. Also of interest to Circuit 7, the congregation in Albert Lea conducted an academy beginning in 1888. Originally called Albert Lea Lutheran High School, it became known as Luther Academy.

⁵ Steven L. Johnson and Donald Berg, *A Intensive Historical Site Survey of the Washington Prairie Settlement* (Decorah, IA: Winneshiek Historic Preservation Commission Courthouse, 1990), 26, www.winneshiekcounty.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/09/96-012-An-Intensive-Historical-Site-Survey-of-the-Washington-Prairie-Settlement.pdf. The survey quoted Koren’s proposal from the minutes: “School affairs will be conducted by the school council, consisting of the congregational council and trustees. The school council will decide the school term, districts, courses of learning, hire teachers, set their salaries, see that they carry out their duties, and dismiss them if they are unsatisfactory.... Each confirmed member must contribute either freely or by assessment to the school treasury, which will be administered by the congregational treasury.”

1881, and was revived again in 1898 until it closed in 1919.⁶ Evidence suggests that there may have been another school at Village Creek in Allamakee County, just east of Decorah, where O. J. Hjort served. There is a record of a request for a teacher from Hjort in 1864.⁷

These schools numbered among the very few that were established in the old Synod. The number was vastly incongruous to the emphasis placed on them in the Synod. Surely, the Election Controversy of the 1880s quieted the efforts of school startups. In the 1890s the conversation about opening schools escalated again. It was discussed at nearly every convention of the old Synod. However, in the year 1917, the 986-congregation church body had only fourteen Christian day schools.

What accounts for this abysmally low number of Christian day schools in comparison to the multitude of congregations? There are a few reasons for this. For one, though pastors generally were in favor of parochial schools, few were willing, or able, to put the extensive effort into establishing the schools and teaching in them.⁸

But the pastors who were willing to roll up their sleeves to establish and teach in the schools met an uphill battle in gaining the laity's favor for the Christian day school. To explain, it would be best to start by considering the educational situation from which these Norwegians came. In Norway, the state religion was Lutheran. The state schools were Lutheran. They were for all intents and purposes, parochial schools. "Church parishes usually constituted school districts.... Pastors served as supervisors of the schools and were members of the school boards, local as well as national."⁹ Therefore, parents could send their children to the state school, and they would (or should) learn the Lutheran faith. Furthermore, the schools were not supported by the offerings of the congregation members or by tuition, but rather by their taxes.

The Rev. Norman A. Madson, Sr. addressed the consequences of this,

[The Norwegian immigrants] did not come to the land of their adoption with hearts and minds prepared to cope with the new order of things in a country where the tax-supported public schools could not, in the very nature of the case, give instruction in the

⁶ First Lutheran Church, Decorah, www.firstlutherandecorah.org/about/history/.

⁷ Narveson, "The Norwegian Lutheran Academies."

⁸ Walter H. Beck, *Lutheran Elementary Schools in the United States: A History of the Development of Parochial Schools and Synodical Educational Policies and Programs* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1965), 140.

⁹ Beck, *Lutheran Elementary Schools*, 137.

Christian religion or in any other religion. That the founders of our Synod, for a time at least, labored under the delusion that the church might look to the state for aid in this work of Christian training we glean from the fact that, when a theological seminary was proposed, approaches were made to the University of Wisconsin to have it established in connection with that institution.¹⁰

The Norwegian immigrants entered into the new country expecting the state to teach not thinking through the significance that the state schools were secular schools. It was also a foreign idea that a school, such as a parochial school in the United States would require the support of their offerings. They were used to sending their children to a government school that was already supported by their taxes. More expenses were not appealing to them.

Furthermore, while the Norwegian immigrants did esteem God's Word and sought to preserve its purity among them, this striving for pure doctrine was not as pronounced as it was among the German laity in the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod and the Lutheran Church–Missouri Synod. The Lutheran immigrants from Norway had to deal with the rationalism of Schleiermacher and Grundtvig on the one hand and the pietism of Hans Nielson Hauge on the other. Yet, the Lutherans did not suffer persecution. They were free to worship and live as Lutherans since the Lutheranism was the religion of the state. The main reason for the Norwegian Lutheran emigration in the mid-1800s was not for religious freedom, but for the prospects of a better earthly life. While they deemed confirmation, Sunday School, and Norwegian school important, an education in a Christian day school was not widely viewed as an urgent need to preserve the Lutheran faith for the next generations.¹¹ The German Lutheran immigrants at the time, however, not only had to fend off rationalism and pietism, but also suffered the forced union with the Reformed Church. They did not have freedom to hold to their Lutheran theology and to worship in accord with their Lutheran faith. This compelled many of the German Lutherans to emigrate to the new land for religious freedom. Therefore, it was at the

¹⁰ Norman A. Madson, Sr., "The Norwegian Synod and The Christian Day School," in *Telling the Next Generation: The Evangelical Lutheran Synod's Vision for Christian Education, 1918–2011 and Beyond*, ed. Ryan C. MacPherson, Paul G. Madson, and Peter M. Anthony (Mankato, MN: Lutheran Synod Book Company, 2011), 76.

¹¹ Norwegian school took place over the summer for a few weeks or even a few months in which the children of the congregation were taught religion and their Norwegian language and heritage.

forefront of the minds of the Germans to preserve this Lutheran faith for generations to come. It was evident that the parochial school was fundamental to accomplishing this goal.

One more reason for the small number of Christian day schools, is that they thought that the Christian day schools were un-American. The Norwegians were more inclined to become “Americanized,” as opposed to their German counterparts. They wanted to be Americans, not foreigners. Thus they were more willing to adopt the English language. This is evident in the concerns that were expressed at the naming of the old Synod. According to Beck, the Norwegian Lutheran leaders were hesitant to put “Norwegian” in the Synod name. They did not want the name to give the impression that Norwegian was the official language spoken in the church, but rather that the members of the church were of Norwegian descent.¹² Since the settlers wanted to be considered Americans, they thought that a good way to do that was to send their children to the American public school system. In some areas the population was heavily concentrated with Norwegian immigrants, so they, in a way, had the public school to themselves. Parents also encouraged their older children to get licensed to teach so that their schools may have teachers that knew the Norwegian language and heritage.

School Will Go On In The Reorganization

The overwhelmingly large majority of the congregations of the Norwegian Synod compromised on the doctrine of God’s election of grace and entered into the merger with the United Norwegian Lutheran Church of America and the Hauge Synod in 1917. Only a few pastors and church members were unwilling to compromise. They refused to enter the merger, and those who were able gathered at Lime Creek in 1918, where they unanimously resolved, “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.”¹³ It behooves us to consider what happened to the Christian day schools during this sad and significant event.

What became of those fourteen Christian day schools that were in operation in 1917? Three of those schools remained with the Minority. Those three were the two mentioned before, Somber and Lime Creek,

¹² Beck, *Lutheran Elementary Schools*, 141.

¹³ Ylvisaker, *Grace for Grace*, 120.

and the third was Parkland in Tacoma, Washington. These three schools continued through the transition without interruption. Parkland was founded in 1894 by Rev. Bjug Harstad, who was elected the first president of the reorganized Norwegian Synod, and remains even today.

The Christian day schools that remained with the churches that entered into the Merger all closed soon thereafter. It is a peculiar thing that the interest for Christian day schools was immediately abandoned. *Grace for Grace* says, “as soon as the merger was accomplished, the voices of those who had advocated Christian schools were hushed.”¹⁴ Rev. Norman A. Madson testifies of this by his own experience in the Merger. He reported at an annual meeting at Our Savior’s in Princeton, Minnesota, dated November 24, 1925, “One of the reasons for my leaving the Norwegian Lutheran Church of America was its attitude toward the parochial school. As you all no doubt know, there is not to be found within this large church body a single Christian day school.”¹⁵ The Norwegian Lutheran Church in America admitted their abandonment of the Christian day school cause in their synodical publication, *The Lutheran Church Herald*, dated February 7, 1928. The Norwegian Synod’s *Jubilee Souvenir* quoted their statement, “It may be taken for granted that we have given up the idea of establishing full-time parochial schools to take the place of the public school. While this would be an ideal condition, it would be placing a great burden upon our people which they would hardly be able to bear.”¹⁶ If those who entered the Merger were already shaky in their support of Christian day schools, the other merging church bodies were of no help at all. Regarding the old Norwegian Synod’s repeated emphasis on the need for Christian day schools, Narveson writes, “More moderate spokesmen from the other synods opposed their views and could see little if any harm in the American public school. Yet others defended the public schools as a positive good.”¹⁷

It may also be the case that those who saw no harm in the influence of synergism present in the United Church, would have the tendency

¹⁴ Ylvisaker, *Grace for Grace*, 81.

¹⁵ N. A. Madson, “Our Christian Day School,” in *Jubilee Souvenir: 1853–1928* (Mankato, MN: n.p., 1928), 15. The *Jubilee Souvenir* was a booklet published in 1928 for occasion the 75th Anniversary of the formation of the Norwegian Synod. The subject of the booklet is Christian day schools. In the foreword, the purpose is stated, “That this anniversary souvenir may serve to strengthen the hands of our young Synod in caring for the lambs entrusted to her is our hope and prayer. – Committee.”

¹⁶ *Jubilee Souvenir*, 32.

¹⁷ Narveson, “Norwegian Lutheran Academies.”

to see no harm in the influence of secularism present in the public schools. Fast forward to today. Now that mainline denominations have so merged with the secular culture presently, could we say that, with the exception of faithful Christian public school teachers and conservative school districts, that the public school is the “parochial school” of the liberal church bodies such as the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America? Is there any reason for them to promote a Christian day school as an option against the American public school?

In contrast to the merged church, the reorganized Norwegian Synod did not lose a step in the support of the parochial school. From the very year of the reorganization of the synod in 1918 a session of the annual conventions was dedicated to the Christian day school. Each year churches of the synod were encouraged to take an offering during the Christmas program that would go to a synod fund to assist Christian day schools. This was a custom carried over from the old Synod.

Pastors continued to emphasize the importance of giving the youth of our congregations a Christian education. We must consider the situation of the world in which we and our children live. The devil literally takes aim at our children. The ungodly world literally takes aim at our children. They value our children for the purposes of evil. They wish to kidnap our children and steal them away from the Lord. The children need a Christian education where they are immersed in God’s Word, by which their loving God who values them as His redeemed, baptized children, takes aim at them, scoops them up in His mighty hand, and preserves them in the true saving faith. Martin Galstad, in his 1936 convention essay, said,

Nor are our churches alone in their estimation of the importance of youth. The frowning brows that rule with hard hands in Germany and Italy today have built up their systems upon the young. The ascendancy of both Hitler and Mussolini was definitely the result of a youth movement. The red hands of Russia are not a bit slow in making their system the textbook and teacher of the growing infants and children. In our own land the amount of effort expended upon the innocent children of the schools throughout our land by haters of God and things American can hardly be believed. Dare we as children of God be less wise than the children of this world in the matter of the value of Christ’s lambs in our midst?¹⁸

¹⁸ Martin Galstad, “The Value of the Child,” Convention Essay 1936, <https://els.org/resources/document-archive/convention-essays/essay1936-galstad/>

Galstad alludes to the parable of the shrewd manager, and suggests that it is our duty as children of light to be wise stewards of all God has given us for the spiritual upbringing of our children, because the devil and the world are very wise in their evil intentions.

The synod also stressed that there is no substitute to the Christian day school. Rev. A. J. Torgerson, whose name is associated with a few of the Christian day schools in Iowa, wrote in his convention essay in 1921,

Still the best that can be said about the Sunday school is that it is better than nothing. It is indeed very little that a child can learn in a Sunday school. What can you reasonably expect of such an institution? There the children are assembled *one* hour each Sunday. Of this hour one half at best is employed in class work. Now consider if you employ one half hour each week, (that will be 2 hours per month, 24 hours in one whole year) to teach arithmetic or any one of the secular branches of study, how much will you accomplish? What kind of instruction in the doctrines of Christianity can be given in these scattered half hour periods? What sort of a Christian education will the children get in these short periods, where the instruction as a rule is very superficial, given by inexperienced, incompetent teachers, often without any preparation? Oh no—in temporal, worldly matters you would not invest such a meager capital. But here, where spiritual and eternal values are involved, where the object is to learn the greatest of all the sciences, how to live and die a Christian,—here, where we have God’s plain command not only to “train up a child,” but to teach them to observe all things whatsoever He has commanded us in His Word, here we shall lull our conscience to sleep by giving half hour periods of instruction per week. And then consider that these same lambs, that we pretend to “feed” by half hour weekly periods of instruction in Christian doctrine, they spend 5 consecutive days each week in a school where God, His Word and the church is disregarded, at times even despised and mocked. What kind of “feed” and care does such a combination afford the “lambs?” Oh that our Christian congregations could be aroused to a full realization of their great responsibility for the “lambs” entrusted to their care!¹⁹

¹⁹ A. J. Torgerson, “Christian Day Schools,” Convention Essay 1921, <https://els.org/resources/document-archive/convention-essays/essay1921-torgerson/>.

Difficulties

With the encouragement mentioned above, eighteen schools were added to the original three in the first fifty years of the reorganized synod. This number of schools in the much smaller reorganized synod was definitely a higher proportion than what was seen in the old Synod; however, it still fell short of what many hoped. They hoped for more schools and for more of the synod's youth to attend Christian day schools. In 1957, only 10% of the school-aged children of the ELS attended Christian day schools in comparison to the WELS (37.7%) and the LCMS (32.6%).²⁰ Whether there was a lack of interest in the hard work and sacrifice of starting and operating the Christian day schools among some pastors or among some of the laity, or whether it was other factors, of which a few will be discussed later, schools are a challenging endeavor. This difficulty is further reflected in that at the end of the first fifty years of the synod, only nine schools remained in existence.

Rev. C. J. Quill, who served as a pastor in Albert Lea, wrote of the difficulty of starting a school in the *Jubilee Souvenir*,

A Christian day school does not spring into being in one day. Much antecedent work must be done 'to break ground.' And someone must take the initiative, precede and direct, shoulder the responsibility that goes with leadership, bear the brunt of opposition and criticism, rally and arouse the forces to concerted action and champion the cause to a successful issue.²¹

And of continuing the school, he artistically wrote,

It was not enough that the Lord created all things "very good." He must continue to preserve the things created, or they must cease to be. To *begin* is one thing and to *continue* is another. Even so to begin and establish parish schools is one thing and to continue them is another....

With old difficulties overcome and out of the way, new ones will spring up. Destructive, evil, forces are continually at work to undo every good and noble endeavor.

²⁰ C. J. Quill, "The Christian Day School," Convention Essay 1957, <https://els.org/resources/document-archive/convention-essays/essay1957-quill/>.

²¹ *Jubilee Souvenir*, 8.

It is like a garden where you have to keep fighting obnoxious weeds and worms and insects with unceasing persistence and perseverance.

The many unkind and thoughtless expressions, coupled with the unchristian attitude touching the school and its work, and that from sources often least expected, are so many veritable, inimical forces gnawing at the very vitals of the school and threatening its total annihilation.

But, as by the grace of God, they were called forth into blessed being, so by His grace they shall gloriously survive and accomplish their appointed service for good to His eternal praise and glory. For this let us ever pray and beg hard!²²

What were some of these difficulties?

At the outset, congregations in the reorganized synod were hurting from the splits they had suffered. For many of them, they were just a small portion of the original congregation. Thus they had fewer resources and less manpower to put into the effort of starting and maintaining a school. Besides that, many of the congregations were left without a church building to gather in, since the building, in most cases, went with the larger portion of the congregation as they entered the Merger.

Not long after rebuilding from the split in 1917, another blow to the parochial school efforts emerged, the Great Depression. This reduced the amount of resources congregations had to operate schools. Sombra was one school so affected. The congregation was able to support the school until 1932, but then were forced to close. By the grace of God and the effort of the congregation, they were able to reopen in 1938.

Another difficulty hit the rural schools particularly. Rev. George Orvick explained,

Throughout the years one of the reasons for the necessary closing of some of our schools has been due to the fact that there has been a demographic shift in population from some of the rural communities so that finally there were not enough children to make it feasible to conduct a school.²³

²² *Jubilee Souvenir*, 7–8.

²³ George M. Orvick, "A History of the Christian Day School in the Evangelical Lutheran Synod" (prepared for General Pastoral Conference, 1990), 40.

The small number of school-aged children coupled with the increasing cost of operating a school presented a great difficulty to some congregations, that some of them could not continue.

Dedication

Despite the difficulties and the necessary closings of a number of the schools, our Lord's Bride, the Church, purchased and cleansed by His shed blood, has been blessed by Him over the years with pastors, teachers, and congregations that have so dedicated themselves to ensure a Christian education was available to Christ's lambs. Norman A. Madson, Jr. appropriately responds to this blessing, "We should thank God for the pastors and teachers among us who are vitally concerned about establishing and maintaining these schools, which the sainted H. M. Tjernagel once described as being 'the dearest and most beautiful plants in our Synod's garden.'"²⁴ Certainly, congregational members who have diligently supported the Christian day school should be included with the pastors and teachers.

Furthermore, it is worth acknowledging the efforts and work of Christian homeschool parents. Instead of passing on the instruction to a congregation's called teacher, they assume the daily duties of teaching, striving to give their children a Christian education where the gospel of Christ is most prominent and God's Word permeates every subject of study and every aspect of training in the arts. Homeschoolers have not made the pages of synod history books, and until more recent years, they have not been mentioned in the *Synod Reports*. Yet, their homes are Christian day schools. The parents are Christian day school teachers, and their children are receiving a Christian education. Since the revival of homeschooling late in the last century, the ELS has been blessed with homeschooling families whose children have by now graduated Bethany Lutheran College. Perhaps there are other families in the synod that have had homeschools even earlier, but these are unknown to the author.

Homeschooling during the late 1800s was more organic and informal. At the time of the reorganization of the synod in 1918, the percentage of children receiving their education at home decreased rapidly. There is no record of which I am aware that expresses the thoughts of the early fathers of our synod on the training of children at home. What is known is that their chief concern was that the children

²⁴ Norman A. Madson, Sr., "Christian Day Schools," in *Telling the Next Generation*, 72.

receive a robust education built on the foundation of God's Word. A deliberately Christian homeschool satisfies this concern.

For the purpose of this paper, I will be focusing on the dedication of those who supported and worked in the "non-homeschool" Christian day schools.

The main producer of teachers in the old Synod was the Lutheran Normal School in Sioux Falls, South Dakota. When the school entered the Merger, the reorganized synod needed to find a new school to train her teachers. The synod turned to Dr. Martin Luther College (DMLC) in New Ulm, Minnesota, which had trained teachers for the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod since 1884. The college welcomed the Norwegian Synod students into their teacher training program. In fact, in 1923, "at the invitation of and in conjunction with the WELS, the Norwegian Synod called Professor Oscar Levorson to a teaching position at DMLC in which he was especially to assist in training the synod's prospective teachers in matters pertaining to the synod and their future service in it."²⁵ Oscar Levorson was from Lake Mills, Iowa, and was a son of the Somber congregation.

Some teachers in the synod also received their training at the LCMS institutions in River Forest, Illinois and Seward, Nebraska. Typically these were students who first received their Associate of Arts degree at Bethany. This arrangement ended at the breakup of the Synodical Conference.²⁶

Bethany also produced her own teachers when two-year degrees were sufficient to satisfy state standards for teaching. In addition to the two years of courses, some teachers were required to take a course each summer at Mankato State University. Iowa, which was a state that had higher requirements for its teachers, required this.

Once the teachers made it through their training, plenty of challenges lay before them that required great dedication. These days it is an observed fact that the compensation of Christian day school teachers is not equivalent to the work that they do. (For their willingness to put in so much effort for so little pecuniary gain, but to teach as a labor of love for their students and for the Lord, the Church is exceedingly grateful.) The meager pay has always been the norm in the synod. Sometimes the compensation was a little unusual, at least to modern ears.

²⁵ Herbert Larson and Juul B. Madson, *Built on the Rock: 1918-1993* (Mankato: Lutheran Synod Book Company, 1993), 108.

²⁶ Larson and Madson, *Built on the Rock*, 108.

One example comes from the Koshkonong parish in 1864. J. A. Ottesen requested someone to fill a position of a precentor and school-teacher. The teaching position was peripatetic in nature. That is, the teacher was responsible for the education at a few different locations requiring travel between them. In this case at Koshkonong, the teacher had four routes, each location was six to seven miles apart. The candidate would receive \$60 to \$70 a year for leading music in the congregation, and \$15 a month for teaching, plus free room and board during the school year.²⁷ A more interesting example came from Allamakee County that same year. O. J. Hjort of Village Creek requested a teacher offering “\$180 for a forty-week period of instruction, free house, and feed for one cow—or, as an alternative for the latter, rent of six acres of land.”²⁸

In 1962, the ELS for the first time proposed a salary scale for her teachers. The Subcommittee on Christian Schools in its 1976 report apprised the 1976 Synod Convention of the average salaries of the synod’s teachers. The average salary of male teachers was \$7893. This was up from the average of \$5956 two years earlier. In this same span, the average salary of the female teachers increased from \$4963 to \$5768. The report added, “The board’s published salary guidelines do not discriminate between male and female teachers.”²⁹

The teaching load for the Christian day school teacher is substantial. In Iowa, multiple-grade rooms and one-room schools were typical. A great deal of preparation is required to have teaching material for each subject and at appropriate levels for the range of the children’s ages. The books that the parochial schools used were sometimes the same that the public schools used. Sometimes they used books that the WELS or LCMS published. Whereas teachers and administrators today look through the catalogues and publisher websites at the plethora of curricula available to them, often teachers simply used what was already there at the school. Essential to every Christian day school were the Bible history classes, and the recitation of Bible passages and hymns the students were required to memorize.

So often teachers go above and beyond their teaching duties. For example, it was not out of the question that teachers would bus the children to and from school. Amanda Madson related a story about an adventure on a muddy country road one spring morning when the

²⁷ Narveson. “Norwegian Lutheran Academies.” As a matter of reference \$15 in 1864 is equivalent to about \$240 today.

²⁸ Ibid.

²⁹ Orvick, “A History of the Christian Day School,” 34.

teacher of the Lime Creek School, Luther Vangen, was bringing the students to school.³⁰ Seeing a large puddle in the middle of the road, the teacher thought that speeding over it was the best option. Unfortunately, the plan failed. After some help from a nearby farmer and some very muddy school boys, the car was freed, and made it to school using a different route. At least one teacher at Saude did the same. Rev. Armin Keibel, who taught at the Christian day school while he was a vicar, wrote about the experience, “Bessie the Bus was a converted Watkins van. I picked up many of the 24 children for school with it. We had two small pews against the side walls. The rear door was barred. A milk can with the day’s water supply was up front by the driver. There was lots of merry chatter. And we always sang the Iowa anthem. ‘Oh, What a Beautiful Morning.’”³¹

At some schools, room was offered the teachers. It often was not glamorous living for them. Scarville provided a humble teacherage until about ten years ago or so. In some places, the living quarters for the teacher was a room in the parsonage, or a member’s house. One story illustrates well the measures that the teachers—and also the families—joyfully took to provide for the Christian education of the children. The story is from an article about Otto Tjernagel. He, and his wife Amanda (nee Huso), after living in Story City and Jerico, settled their family in Lake Mills. He took a job there for repairing farm machinery for the Tom Shawhan Implement Company, earning \$35 weekly. With this income he was able to purchase a two bedroom stucco home near the public school where his three children were enrolled.

In January, 1942, a plan was hatched whereby three Lake Mills families would pool resources, buy a Model A Ford, and board the teacher in Lake Mills so he could drive these seven children to the Lime Creek Christian day school, five miles north of Lake Mills. Seminary graduate, Lyle Halvorson moved into the Tjernagel front room, slept on the sofa with a fabric screen for privacy, and happily served as a teacher and chauffeur during this wartime year when vicar placements for seminary students were scarce. Luther Vangen did the same in fall of 1942, followed by Paul Anderson for the

³⁰ Amanda Madson, “Stuck In the Mud,” *Oak Leaves* 11, no. 1 (May 2007): 7.

³¹ *Jerico and Saude Christian Day Schools’ First Alumni Reunion Commemorative Booklet*, August 6, 2005.

1943-44 school year. Luther Vangen returned in 1944 as teacher and pastor, boarding part time with another family....³²

God be praised for these dedicated teachers, who sought to give the children more than just a good education in the subjects of the common school, but also a solid knowledge of Christ their Savior and the Christian life.

Dedication was required also of congregations for the success of the Christian day schools. The previous story exemplifies this. More examples will be given in the histories of the individual schools, but a general overview will be covered here.

It was a common occurrence that schools would start out as a venture undertaken by the pastor and group of members in the church. These schools were not technically parish schools. The group would start the school, obtain a location for the school, gather the supplies, and call a teacher. It was the hope that once the school was up and running, the congregation would be willing to take the school under her wing as an important branch of her ministry.

The school needed money to operate, so the congregation members came through with the financial support. Teachers were paid, and materials were provided. The school needed a location, so members donated land, or sold their land for a generous price. The school needed a building, so members purchased the materials and built it. Other times they purchased houses and school buildings, and moved them to the site of the school, preparing the buildings, and chasing out the varmints living in them, so that they were suitable for the school. When distance to the school was a problem for some of the students, certain congregations provided a boarding house for the children to stay in during the school week. Individuals volunteer to help however they can.

Scarville Lutheran School was and is blessed by the dedication of so many. In the past, it was a practice that families would take turns, a week at a time, making lunches for the teacher. This was a memory that a couple of the teachers noted in their contribution to Scarville Lutheran Church's centennial booklet. Parents and other gracious individuals volunteer to help the children in their academics, to teach classes like art, and to take the lead in producing an occasional play that the students perform on a special night of entertainment. The Center Lutheran Church's Ladies' Aid purchases school supplies for

³² Amanda Madson, "Letters to Lake Mills, Iowa, From Alaska," *Oak Leaves* 13, no. 4 (February 2010): 5.

the students each year. The school board is active and works hard for the good of the school. The Scarville congregation financially supports the grade school, so that member children are able to attend without tuition.

The schools required not only the pastor's leadership, but also leadership among the congregation's laity to start the schools and encourage the congregations to continue with them. The Lime Creek school was a good example of this. The congregation started a school while an interim pastor was serving there!

These supporters were essential to the start and continuation of the institutions that filled the children's school day with good and worthy knowledge, and the saving wisdom of God's Word. God be praised for them!

Also, the dedication of the pastors needs to be noted. Pastors were leaders championing the cause of the Christian day schools. The effort of the pastors early in the reorganized synod is remarkable. For example, Rev. Emil Hanson was serving the Scarville and Center congregations. In 1919, he accepted a call to serve an additional congregation, the newly established Our Savior's Lutheran Church in Albert Lea. While serving the three congregations, he brought up the idea of a Christian day school for Albert Lea, and directed the efforts to make it a reality. "To him is given the credit of taking the initiative and of directing the cause and course with prudent, untiring zeal and unwavering determination to see it through to sure success."³³ With his leadership, the help and sacrifice of the congregational members, and the Lord's blessing a school was started in 1920.

Rev. A. J. Torgerson made room in the parsonage for the school at Somber that started with his four children. By the end of the year fifteen children were being taught in the parsonage. A basement was built under the parsonage to hold the classes. Torgerson's submission for the *Jubilee Souvenir* said, "The entrance to the basement was through the family kitchen. Thus the pastor's wife had a good opportunity to learn to know the children of the congregation."³⁴ He then goes on to say, "The location for the school is often an evident and great hindrance in the beginning. But this is easily overcome when the enrollment is small. The front room in the parsonage cannot be put to a better use. Where there

³³ Quill, "The Albert Lea School," in *Jubilee Souvenir*, 8.

³⁴ Orvick, "A History of the Christian Day School," 50. A. J. Torgerson's submission in the *Jubilee Souvenir* was in Norwegian. The English translation is found appended to the end of Orvick's essay.

is heart-room there is also house-room.”³⁵ With as often as Rev. A. J. Torgerson’s name comes up in the history of Christian day schools and the promotion of the same, Torgerson had a great deal of heart-room for the dear lambs of Christ’s flock.

One more example epitomizes the dedication of the Christian day school’s pastor. Juul Madson had the call to serve at Northwood and Somber congregations. He had just married Clarice.

In the first year of marriage, Clarice and Juul were very busy with church. She participated in Ladies Aid, choir, and teaching Sunday school. The two churches at Northwood and Somber had a school, but there was no teacher on staff. Even though it was his first year in the parish, with two congregations and no vicar experience, Juul undertook the responsibilities as teacher. He said, “I have to teach this year because if I don’t the school will close.” Every morning, Monday through Friday, Juul taught all eight grades. Clarice recalls Juul was so busy that the only times they saw each other were early in the mornings and late in the evenings. But Juul was determined. He saw the importance of Christian education. Juul’s perseverance and Clarice’s patience paid off; the next year a full time teacher arrived to relieve Juul.³⁶

Thanks be to God for the dedicated pastors!

School Histories

*Somber Lutheran School, Northwood, Iowa —
1905–1932, 1938–1964*

The earliest of the Iowa schools in the ELS was the school of the Somber congregation in Northwood, Iowa. The school is actually thirteen years older than the congregation. It was one of the three Christian day schools that survived the merger. It was established in 1905 when the church was called Silver Lake Congregation and was located where Sion Lutheran Church resides today.³⁷ Rev. T. A. Torgerson was the pastor of the congregation at the founding of the school and he served

³⁵ Orvick, “A History of the Christian Day School,” 50.

³⁶ David Reagles, “Interview with Clarice Madson,” *Oak Leaves* 16, no. 1 (May 2012): 5.

³⁷ Lake Mills Graphic, June 18, 1969, accessed, <http://iagenweb.org/worth/churches/Somber.html>.

until he died in 1906. His son, Rev. A. J. Torgerson then filled the office his father vacated.

As was mentioned previously, the school started in the parsonage with the four children of Rev. A. J. Torgerson. This was one of the schools that did not start as a congregational school. It was initiated by Rev. A. J. Torgerson. He lined up the teacher, Miss Helene Borsheim, and simply invited the families of the congregation to send their children to the school. Miss Borsheim was a first grade teacher at the public school, and conscience would not allow her to teach evolution as the textbooks taught. She left the public school to teach at Somber. Torgerson wrote of Miss Borsheim, "With her exceptional ability, faithfulness and willingness to sacrifice she won many friends and well-wishers for the school and rendered an invaluable service to the school matter."³⁸ By the end of the first school year, fifteen students were attending. With the help of the young people, a basement was built under the parsonage to serve as the school room.

The numbers quickly escalated. In the *Jubilee Souvenir*, Rev. A. J. Torgerson reported,

The second school year began with brighter prospects, though many families neglected to take part. In the meantime the school matter was set forth before God and the Congregation in prayer and speech, in a Scripture-based and courteous (evangelical) essay regarding a school for children. This helped many to see the matter in the right light. The student enrollment suddenly jumped to 52. The classes had to be divided and an assistant teacher had to be engaged.³⁹

In 1909, the fourth year of operation, the school had an enrollment of 70 students.

Besides the great number of students there were a couple other significant events this year. With the encouragement of a generous donation of \$300 toward the building of a new school room, the congregation was motivated to do two things. They agreed to put a basement under the church to serve as the school room. It was ready by the time the fourth year of classes began. Secondly, the congregation took over the operation of the school.

³⁸ This English translation is appended to Orvick, "A History of the Christian Day School."

³⁹ Ibid.

A boarding house was provided for the children who lived a distance away from the school. "Grandma" Dina Torgerson, the wife of T. A. Torgerson, and A. J. Torgerson's mother, was the house mother.

Just before the Christmas of 1916, a fire destroyed the church and the school room below it. The school continued in a nearby schoolhouse.

In 1917, the Silver Lake Congregation suffered a split. The majority desired to enter into the Merger. They were ready to close down the school. "Those who were faithful in their Confessions were ready to make great sacrifices in order that the school be continued."⁴⁰ These faithful confessors became the Somber congregation. Rev. A. J. Torgerson was their pastor. They were without a building, but they rented a place to house the school so that it would continue without interruption.

Soon after, the Somber congregation purchased a house, moved it to the current site of the church property, and put it in shape for a school. It also served as the place of worship until 1928, when a completely furnished church building was donated to the congregation by St. Petri Danish Lutheran Congregation in Latimer, Iowa.

The school was in operation until 1932, when the Great Depression made it too difficult to continue. By the grace of God, the school opened again in 1938. Rev. A. J. Torgerson was still pastor of the congregation at this time.

In 1953, some legacies, especially that of Peder Nelson allowed the Somber congregation to build a new home for the school, with a parish hall attached to it. The other building that previously served as the school was moved and now serves as a home in Lake Mills.

The Christian day school continued in the new schoolroom until the school closed in 1964. The final year had an enrollment of nine students.

Those who taught at the school are listed as they are seen on the fiftieth anniversary of the Christian day school booklet: Helene Borsheim (Mrs. Helene Anderson), Mina Levorson, Ida Pederson (Mrs. Walter Troutman), Tillie Stene (Mrs. Oscar Thompson), Inger Honsey (Mrs. Henry Ingebritson), Soren Loland, Emma Johnson, Anna Storre, Laura Ingebritson, Sarah Stene, Tina Lansrud, Professor Oscar Levorson, Pastor Emeritus P. C. Forseth, Dena Huso, Agnes Nygaard, Anna Kinden, Nora Levorson (Mrs. Ernest Renback), Sophus Stensrud, Ida Ingebritson, Edna Johnson, Pastor Stuart Dorr, Pastor Nils Oesleby, Pastor H. F. Schweigert, Pastor Roy Reede, June Hultberg (Mrs. Alf Merseth), Pastor Iver Johnson, Pastor Juul B. Madson, Ione

⁴⁰ Ibid.

Jordahl (Mrs. Howard Burgdorf), Ruth Hoel (Mrs. George Orvick), Pastor Donald Meier, Harold Krentz, LaVonone Jordahl (Mrs. Daniel Johnson), Elizabeth Preus (Mrs. Norman Werner).⁴¹ Those who taught in the final years of the Somber Christian day school were Lloyd Teigs, Adela Halverson (Mrs. Norman Faugstad), Jolene Cuklanz, and Helen Levorson.

Lime Creek Lutheran School, Lake Mills, Iowa — 1910–1960

As was mentioned earlier in this paper, the Lime Creek Christian day school was started while an interim pastor was serving the congregation. Rev. O. Otteson was installed at Lime Creek on August 4, 1907. He resigned January 11, 1909, and preached his farewell sermon August 8. The next month, the Lime Creek congregation called Rev. Henry Ingebritson to serve them. He accepted the call, but because of illness in his family, he was not installed until two years later. In the interim, Rev. J. E. Thoen, who was the president of Luther Academy in nearby Albert Lea, served the congregation. During this time, in the year of 1910, the congregation started a school. The first teachers were Sarah and Tillie Stene. When Rev. Ingebritson arrived, he proved to be a strong supporter of the school.⁴²

In the first years of the school, the congregation established a boarding house for children who lived a significant distance from the school. A house mother would stay with the children during the school week, providing for them food and the care they needed.

Unlike the other minority groups that refused to enter the merger, Lime Creek was able to keep the church building. Rev. Henry Ingebritson served the Lime Creek congregation as well as the Our Savior's congregation in Lake Mills. He lived in the Our Savior's parsonage from 1911 to 1917. The story goes,

When the majority of Our Savior's congregation was persuaded that the doctrine of predestination was not important and voted to join the Norwegian Lutheran Church in America (NLCA), Pastor Ingebritson was forced to move. The majority of the Lime Creek Lutheran Church (the other church in this parish) was also of the same opinion, but when Pastor Ingebritson refused to compromise on the doctrine, one after the other resigned from the congregation and stormed out of the church. Too late they realized

⁴¹ *50th Anniversary of Somber Christian Day School: 1905–1955.*

⁴² The English translation from the *Jubilee Souvenir* is appended to Orvick, "A History of the Christian Day School."

that they might have voted to have the congregation join the NLCA and take the property with them, but no longer being members they could not vote.⁴³

The minority became the majority vote. They retained the school, and through the tumult of the split they kept it in operation without interruption. In 1917, the school had 18 children enrolled. The following year saw an enrollment of 30 children.

The teachers who had taught at the Lime Creek Christian day school include Edna Johnson, Nora Levorson, Mrs. H. Ingebritson, Laura Ingebritson, Olina Jordahl, Valborg Radichel, Ardis Jordahl, Aneta Vogland, Esther (Petersen) Faugstad, Lyle Halvorson, Paul Anderson, Luther Vangen, Laila Vangen, Iver Johnson, Gudrun Annexstad, Kenneth Lorenz, Hazel (Johnson) Newgaard, Lloyd Teigs, Maren (Preus) Ring, and Patricia (Salomon) Meyer.

Albert Lea Lutheran School, Albert Lea, Minnesota — 1920–1948

The beginnings of the Albert Lea Christian day school have been recounted above. Briefly, the congregation was established in 1919 after a group of faithful confessors split from a church that entered the Merger. Emil Hanson was called as the first pastor. He was instrumental in the start of the new school in Albert Lea.

The movement of events that occurred in 1920, the year of the establishment of the school is something to behold. On January 13, 1920 a committee was created consisting of Olaf Smedal and Nels Spangelo. Their duty was to work on the “Christian Day School Question.” On April 13, 1920, Rev. Hanson was authorized to raise money for the school. In May, John Sime and Nels Spangelo found a location for the school. They paid for it out of their own pockets, and offered to sell it to the church for \$5000. The church was hesitant to purchase it at first, but after a couple months she agreed to purchase the building with the stipulation that if the school struggled to survive Spangelo would buy it back at the price they paid for it. The Ladies’ Aid played a large role in furnishing the school with equipment and supplies. On September 12, 1920, a festival service for the school was held, with Rev. J. A. Moldstad of Chicago, preaching the sermon on the importance, need, and blessing of a parish school. On September 13, 1920, the school opened with ten students, and with Miss Alice Opdahl as teacher. After, Rev. Hanson resigned from his call to the Albert Lea congregation and school in

⁴³ Paul G. Anderson, “Ingebritson’s Attic,” *Oak Leaves* 1, no. 3 (Autumn 1997): 4.

1921, Rev. A. J. Torgerson took the call to the Albert Lea congregation and school, and served there two years. "Rev. Torgerson is gratefully remembered by the congregation for his indefatigable service in behalf of the school."⁴⁴

The building also served as a boarding house for students who lived out of town. Mrs. Nels Spangelo was the first housemother.

In July 1924, the school was sold for \$5500, and they decided to continue the school in the existing church building until it closed in 1948. Here is a complete list of the teachers that taught at Albert Lea parish school: Alice Opdahl (1920–21), Emma Johnson (1921–24), Anna Kinden (1924–26), Emma Tyssen (1926–28), Nora Levorson, Edna Johnson (1932–33), Emma Johnson (1933–34), Rudolph Schultz (1934–45), Gladys Aasheim (1934–35), Martinn Einspar (1937–39), Henry Finster (1939–41), Kathryn Guldberg (1941–42), Emma Tyssen (1942–48).

Bethany Lutheran School, Story City, Iowa — 1926–1938

Little information is available for this school. It was started under A. J. Torgerson, when he served as pastor of the Bethany congregation from 1924 to 1926. He hoped that it would have been a school belonging to the congregation, but the congregation was unwilling to take the task. Therefore, Torgerson encouraged the families that were interested in a school for their children to go ahead and hire a teacher. They acquired Miss Dena Huso to serve as the teacher. The school was opened September 1926 with seven students. By the end of the school year, two more students were added. After Torgerson's time at Bethany, Rev. A. Harstad became the pastor and served the school well. N. Tjernagel spoke of the work there, "The school work has been fraught with blessed influences, the Word of God being brought to the hearts and minds of the children, providing the right foundation for the secular branches, and properly interweaving the two so as to make a worthy whole in view of material and spiritual welfare."⁴⁵ In 1938, the school in Story City closed.

Scarville Lutheran School, Scarville, Iowa — 1927–1942, 1958–Present

Prior to the start of the Christian day school, Scarville, like many other Norwegian Lutheran churches conducted Norwegian school. It

⁴⁴ *Jubilee Souvenir*, 9.

⁴⁵ *Jubilee Souvenir*, 17.

consisted primarily of religious instruction that took place during the summer. At Scarville it lasted for three months. But seeing the importance of providing children an education in all the subjects with Christ at the center, they worked towards starting a Christian day school.

Scarville Lutheran School opened while Rev. Justin Peterson was serving the Scarville congregation in 1927. In the *Jubilee Souvenir*, he writes about the marvelous work that God had done,

The sainted Formand Torgerson prayerfully planted the seed, the Reverends A. J. Torgerson and Emil Hanson faithfully watered, but the Lord gave the increase. I Cor. 3,7. And the present pastor was privileged to harvest. Verily, "this is the Lord's doing." Most forcibly was this truth impressed upon me as the preliminary steps towards the establishment of our school were taken. With what fear and trembling we approached the parents and other members of the congregation, and solicited both children and gifts for the school! Who was it that warmed and opened the hearts for this important and blessed cause? Surely, not our eloquence; for our tongue was well-nigh tied. There is but one answer: "This is the Lord's doing."

"It is marvelous in our eyes." The marvel of it increases when we consider the might of the many sworn enemies of the Christian day-school—for there is nothing that the devil and the world hates more than the Word of God—; when we think of the lukewarmness, aye downright indifference of our own hearts in the matter of daily feeding the souls of our children; when we further consider that this small congregation, consisting of fifteen families with a heavy debt on their hands, had the courage of Christian conviction at a representative congregation meeting to unanimously vote to establish a Christian day-school. Full of wonder we are moved to exclaim: "It is marvelous in our eyes."⁴⁶

Thirteen students benefited from the Lord's work the first year. Miss Laura Ingebritson was the first teacher.

The school was held in the basement of the church. While it was a bright basement and very suitable for a school, the space was shared with the church which used the basement for dinners and other functions. Former students often talk about how they always had to move the desks to the side of the room to make space for the church to use it. It was a lot of work.

⁴⁶ *Jubilee Souvenir*, 21.

The school has not run continually through the years. It closed in 1942 due to a lack of students. Thankfully, it was opened up in 1958 by the leadership of another ardent supporter of Christian education, Rev. Theodore Aaberg.

God blessed the school further when an addition was added to the church in 1998. This space is dedicated to the grade school, though the Sunday School also uses it. The students no longer have to move their desks.

Not as important as the memorization of Bible verses and hymns, Bible History, and the other subjects, yet still enjoyable are a number of the traditions. One is the jump rope contests that began during Ms. Bredeson's time at the school. The competition gets intense. Not only are the students competing against each other, but they are also striving to break school records. The parents who once competed in these competitions take it as seriously as the children now competing.

One tradition now lost was mentioned by Marie Aaberg from her submission to the Scarville Centennial booklet.

One year when preparing to play the Saude CDS in a sport, an annual tradition, we weren't sure what sport they would choose as hosts for the friendly competition. Guessing that it might be football, we prepared diligently quite a few weeks in advance, and Pastor Carl Wosje and I practiced along with the students to guide their preparation. We were quite excited when we learned from Saude that football was the choice for the competition. We had a lot of girls in the school at that time and they really became our secret weapons as excellent receivers and we won the game quite handily.⁴⁷

Another marvelous work of the Lord for the Scarville School is the addition of the high school grades. Currently, the school has ninth and tenth grades. In total, there are twenty-six students enrolled in kindergarten to tenth grade. The school strives to provide a classical education, with Christ crucified at the basis and center of all that is taught and done.

Those who have taught at Scarville Lutheran School are Laura Ingebritson (1927–32), Emma Tyssen (1932–2), La Vonne Johnson (1958–60), Helen Kuehl (1960–61), Adela Halverson (1961–64), Rosella Iverson (1964–65), Diane Natvig (1965–68), John Shep (1968–69), Carol Wassmann (1969–71), Anne Kroll (1971–75), Julie Bjelland

⁴⁷ *Scarville Synod Lutheran Church Centennial Celebration Booklet 1918–2018*, 107.

(1975–76), Janet Tollefson (1976–79), Marie Aaberg (1979–83), Jeanette Anthony (1983–84), Debra (Klessig) Andersland (1984–86), Kathy Stein (1986–88), Pamela Klessig (1988–90), Emily (Quist) Johnson (1990–92), Marilyn Bredeson (1990–95), Ellyn Wilkens (1992–96), Barbara Klukas (1996–97), Laurie Rygh (1997–99), Adela (Halverson) Faugstad (1997–2011), Nicole Kroening (1999–00), Tensie Kramer (2000–01), Laura Vettleson (2001–04), Bonnie Lierman (2004–05), Carrie (Barckholtz) Enderson (2005–13), Thalia Pollard (2013–16), Dawn Welke (2016–present).⁴⁸

Strandebarm School, Lawler, Iowa — 1928–1936

Saude Lutheran School, Lawler, Iowa — 1943–1979

The Strandebarm School was built by H. M. Tjernagel in 1928 in memory of his deceased wife. She died in 1924, several days after the birth of their stillborn child. The name *Strandebarm* comes from her family's original home in Hardanger, Norway. Tjernagel said at the building of the school, "It is five years since their mother left them. The cabin is a memorial to her and play house for her little girls. It is their father's ambition that they may follow after her in the paths of righteousness, and by the grace of God through Jesus Christ, be reunited with her at the right hand of God. A Christian day-school is therefore conducted for her girls, and others who wish to come, in the memorial cabin."⁴⁹ This school is another example of one that is not under the control of a congregation. It was operated by Tjernagel. Children from both the Saude and Jerico congregations attended. When attending the Jerico and Saude school reunion, the editor of the reunion booklet, Betsy (Otto) Hermanson, noticed that the school building is smaller than she remembered. She had to stoop down to get through the doorway and no more than half dozen could enter at a time. Yet in that little school building, the word of life filled the ears, minds, and hearts of the dear children there.

The Strandebarm school closed in 1936. The teachers that served the school were, Olivia Tjernagel (1928–29), Jeannette Jordahl (1929–30), Morris Dale, Nora Levorson (1930–31), C. O. Kirkpatrick (1931–32), Bjarne Teigen (1933–34), Torald Teigen (1934–35), Wilbur Dorn, Reinhold Dorhmann (1935–36). In 1947, Rev. Milton Otto wrote

⁴⁸ Ibid., 102.

⁴⁹ Quoted in Jerico Sesquicentennial booklet, prepared by Craig Ferkenstad, 18–19.

that Inez Skogen and Neelak Tjernagel also taught at the Strandebarn school. They likely taught in the 1932–33 school year.

After Rev. H. M. Tjernagel died in 1940, Rev. Neelak Tjernagel followed his father into the pastorate at Saude. The school did not belong to the congregation at the time. Tjernagel, with interested parties within the congregation, started the school in 1943. Candidate Raymond Wiechmann from the WELS seminary came to serve as the teacher. Tjernagel speaks of this beginning, “We opened our school last fall with every imaginable kind of worry about how things would go; but the Lord was kind to us and blessed us with every blessing in the whole undertaking.”⁵⁰ It was not until 1947 that the Saude congregation took over the school. Starting in 1968, the Saude school consisted of the students in grades five through eight and Jerico had grades one through four. The Saude Christian day school closed in 1979. At that time, the Saude children attended the Christian day school at Jerico until that closed in 1982.

One tradition that Saude participated in was the ELS Christian Day School Olympics. At least once Saude and Jerico hosted it. Other hosts have included Scarville, King of Grace in Golden Valley, Minnesota, Mt. Olive in Mankato, Minnesota, River Heights in East Grand Forks, Minnesota, and Holy Cross in Madison, Wisconsin. For the long trips, members of the host congregation would lodge travelers.

The inaugural year of the Olympics was the spring of 1969, when Mt. Olive hosted it. In the early years of the Olympics, competition went beyond athletics. The students participated in spelling bees and art shows and chess matches. Sometimes talent shows were part of the festivities. Awards were given to the winners and also to the “best girl athlete” and “best boy athlete.”⁵¹ Scarville Lutheran School still hosts the Olympics each year.

The teachers who taught at Saude were, Raymond L. Wiechmann (1943–44), Armin Keibel (1944–45), LaVine Hagen (1945–46), Theodore Aaberg (1946–47), Orla Anderson (1947–51), Glenn Reichwald (1951–52), Paul Madson (1952–55), Keith Olmanson (1955–57), Ernest Geistfeld (1957–58), Earl Brassow (1958–60), JoAnn Storlie (Lillo) (1960–61), Irwin Levorson (1961–62), Margaret Myrum (1962–63), Ruth Roberson (1963–65), Donald Johnson (1965–66), Norma Bell (Miller) (1966–69), Linda Thesenvitz (Marozick)

⁵⁰ Quoted in “Christian Day Schools at Saude and Jerico,” *Oak Leaves* 9, no. 3 (Fall 2005): 5.

⁵¹ Scarville Centennial Booklet, 113–114.

(1969–70), Kathleen Skaaland (Keats) (1970–72), Lael Bahn (1972–74), Alona Steffen (Knutson) (1974–75), Sarah Aaberg (Mehlberg) (1975–77), and Marie Aaberg (1977–79).⁵²

Jerico, New Hampton, Iowa — 1947–1982

Until Jerico started a school, children from the Jerico congregation would attend at the Saude school. The Jerico Christian day school opened its doors in 1947, one year after Rev. Milton H. Otto began serving there.

Like the situation at Albert Lea, things moved quickly to get the school going in Jerico. In July 1947, some members were eyeing a public school building near Elma, Iowa. They thought it would work well for their own school. A meeting was held July 11, 1947, and the thirty voters present unanimously voted in favor of purchasing the building and starting the school. The very next day, the building was purchased at the auction for \$600. In late August, the building was moved to the Jerico property, and soon thereafter school was in session.

There was one school year when Jerico did have a ninth grade class. It was the 1932–33 school year, and Rolf Tjernagel taught six students. He was remembered as teacher who really challenged the students. As was mentioned in the previous section, in 1968 Jerico and Saude split the grades. Jerico had the first through fourth graders.

In 1979, the Saude Christian day school closed, and the children from Saude attended at Jerico until Jerico closed in 1982. In 2005, there was a reunion for the alumni of the Saude and Jerico Christian day schools. They produced a great commemorative booklet for the occasion, and some of that will be taken for the last section of this paper.

The teachers who served the Jerico Christian day school are Theodore Aaberg (1947–48), Joan Gilbo (Krueger) (1948–51), Esther Petersen (Faugstad) (1951–52), Corrine Hoefker (Schoer) (1952–53), LaVonne Bodirius (Grauer) (1953–55), Irma Speerschneider (1955–57), Marshall Handberg (1957–58), Stanley Holt (1958–60), Ione Lillegard (1960–61), Alice Knutson (1961–62), Kenneth Fossen (1962–63), Diane Natvig (Skaaland) (1963–65), Pamela Scheidel (Davis) (1965–67), Judy Tostenson (Teigen) (1967–70), Camilla Dashcund (1970–72), Alona Steffen (Knutson) (1972–74), Carol Weber (Kraepel) (1974–75), LaRue Jans (Heyn) (1975–77), Sarah Aaberg (Mehlberg) (1977–78),

⁵² “Saude Lutheran Church,” <https://saudejerico.com/saude/>.

Karen McCreary (Huffman) (1978–79), Carol Graham (1979–81), and Alona Knutson (1981–82).⁵³

The Impact of the Christian Day School

The Christian day schools of our synod were established for a purpose, and it makes sense that the impact that the Christian day schools make would match their goals. The goals include passing to the children the firm confidence that for Christ's sake their sins are forgiven, and they have eternal life. A goal is that the children may find comfort in God's Word and in the hymnody of the church as they live in a world full of trouble. A goal is to give the children a firm knowledge of Scripture so that they will not be tossed about by every wind of doctrine or human cunning, but that they may capably give an answer for the hope that is in them. A goal is that by the working of the Holy Spirit through the Word, the students are shaped with good character and are good citizens, and competent in all their vocations.

Is this what we see? Imagine, the scene at the school reunion recounted in the Jerico and Saude alumni reunion booklet.

In a moving ceremony, members of the audience were asked to stand according to the pastor who had confirmed them as the congregation sang the hymn *Oh, For a Faith That Will Not Shrink*. During the first verse, those confirmed by Rev. H. M. Tjernagel stood; during the second verse, those confirmed by Rev. Neelak Tjernagel, etc., on through Rev. M. H. Otto, Rev. M. E. Tweit, Rev. G. A. R. Gullixson and Rev. Timothy Erickson. Then, after a spirited rendition of *Now Thank We All Our God*, the service was over.⁵⁴

There they gathered commemorating the one thing needful that was taught them in the Christian day school, and remembering the divine truths taught them by the pastors who confirmed them. This is the lasting treasure that sticks with them. Many memories are recorded in the booklet, but one thing that regularly appears and is treasured is the memory work, the hymns they sang, and the Christmas programs.

What a treasure these things are. An elderly woman whose hearing is not what it used to be, has in her heart her favorite hymn, "From God Shall Naught Divide Me," a hymn she learned in the Christian day school. What a benefit it is to not only have a familiarity with Bible history, but to know it well, and have the ability to connect Bible

⁵³ "Jerico Lutheran Church", <https://saudejerico.com/jerico/>.

⁵⁴ Saude, 3.

stories to the doctrines of Scripture and apply them to their lives. What a blessing to be able have the Luther's Small Catechism and a formidable arsenal of Bible passages at the ready as we live amongst spiritual dangers, and griefs and sorrows. Over a decade of experience teaching confirmation class has shown that there is quite consistently a difference between a child who went to Christian day school and the child who did not in their biblical and doctrinal knowledge. Parents of public school children must be very deliberate and diligent in teaching their children the faith.

A child, with a Christ-centered home and education, is better suited to withstand the fiery darts of the enemy knowing that it is Christ who is his strength, and his champion. The child is trained to be more discerning, knowing true doctrine from counterfeit. A Christian education has laid a good foundation for pastors in our synod. From our Iowa Christian day schools, we have currently on our clergy roster, Craig Ferkenstad, Peter Faugstad, Mark Faugstad, Dan Faugstad, and Wayne Halvorson. It has produced leaders, faithful confessors in the past, both among the clergy and the laity. Ferkenstad in his pictorial quotes, H. M. Tjernagel: "It is extremely doubtful that our present synod would ever have been organized if it had not been for the support of the members of those three congregations whose membership had been educated in the Christian Day School."⁵⁵

We have those in our lives, whom we hold dear, whose faith and life have been shaped by the Christian day school. Their faith is a beautiful shining jewel that the Lord has so masterfully shaped. They have a great knowledge of God's Word, yet have faith like a child. They lead a pious life, dedicated in following their Lord, yet, they know to make themselves low in repentance, that the Lord may exalt them with His forgiveness. Not everyone will come out of the Christian day school with such a beautiful faith and life, but think how would they have been without the Christian education!

The Christian day school teaches them how to die well. A secular education by nature focuses only on the material world, on the here and now. It trains children to set their minds on the treasures that a thief can steal and a moth can destroy. A Christian education studies every subject in light of the eternal God who has stored up for us a heavenly inheritance. A. J. Torgerson wrote,

⁵⁵ Craig Ferkenstad, *Proclaim His Wonders: A Pictorial History of the Evangelical Lutheran Synod* (Mankato, MN: Evangelical Lutheran Synod, 2017), 192.

Many do not understand the meaning for a Christian life given in a Christian School and do not understand how to value it highly enough. Its value cannot be counted in dollars and cents. One, who in his childhood attended this school, recently told on his death bed: "Now for the first time during my illness I have learned to set a proper value on the fact that I was able to attend a Christian School."⁵⁶

Of course some may argue that a Christian day school cannot guarantee these results. It cannot guarantee faith. And this is true. Rev. Alfred Fremder addressed this objection in his Christian Day School Address to the 1952 Synod Convention. He said that parents and teachers cannot believe in the place of the child. They cannot force the faith. But he says, every parent should say, "I want my child to have every opportunity to be a Christian. I want my child to know exactly what true Christianity is. I do not want my child to be confused concerning the issues of Christianity. God supplies the faith. I must teach the knowledge."⁵⁷

Furthermore, the Christian education is more apt to produce good and virtuous American citizens. The laws of the world merely compel and force certain behavior. The gospel which permeates the Christian day school has the sanctifying power of the Holy Spirit that moves the child's heart to live according to biblical morality they learn in the school. The early Norwegian immigrants were misguided in thinking that sending their children to the parochial school was un-American. Consider what S. C. Ylvisaker says in an address to the Winnebago Academy at Fond du Lac, Wisconsin. He addresses the Christian school, praising her for what she produces.

But we come to congratulate you today who have begun so nobly. Or do you doubt your service as Christian citizens toward the land you love? When your country cries out for men to stand in the gap, you send them the flower of your youth nourished in Christian homes and churches and schools, educated to know their God-given heritage, children of the Most High, free with the liberty whereby Christ has made them free, of the noble family of the saints of God trusting in the Word of God as their shield and sword, strong in His power and might. You send them men and women taught to love and obey their government, with the fear of God in their

⁵⁶ Orvick, "A History of the Christian Day School," 51.

⁵⁷ Alfred Fremder, "Christian Day Schools," Address to the 1952 Synod Convention.

hearts, bent on service of others rather than of themselves. When your country asks for homes where sturdy citizens may be bred, you send out men and women who have been taught the ideals of a Christian home, and fortunate the nation where Christian homes abound, where honest and pious fathers and mothers rear their children in those virtues by which a nation is blessed. When your country calls for leaders, you send them men who have learned what is right in the sight of God, and who have learned, too, that true leadership does not always mean parading before the public eye, but rather is to be found in sober counsel and sober doing, each in his own calling and where opportunities arise. When your country calls for help in the crusade against the enemy from within, the political grafter, the sycophant, the demagogue, the communist, the anarchist, the gangster and the mobster and the vicemonger, is it a small service you bring who send out men with the Christian view of life and an eye which clearly sees the ills and a heart and mind trained to know and bring the cure?⁵⁸

Conclusion

It is fitting to conclude this paper with the essential thing, the one thing needful, the message that Rev. Theodore Aaberg had for the students at the end of the first year at Jerico: “You will forget much of what you have learned this year. But don’t ever forget Jesus. Remember that He has died to save you. And when you are sad and troubled, then pray to Him. He has told you to do that. If we all believe in the Lord Jesus, then our school shall be together again—in heaven. May the Lord bless and keep all of you!”⁵⁹ LSQ

⁵⁸ S. C. Ylvisaker, “Christian Education as the Prerogative of a Christian Citizen and of a Christian Church,” ed. by Peter T. Harstad, (Mankato, MN: The Lutheran Synod Book Company, 1984), 157.

⁵⁹ Jerico and Saude Alumni Reunion Booklet.

Martin Luther and the Visual Arts

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MANY TODAY MIGHT STILL BE SURPRISED TO learn that Martin Luther (1483–1546) did not share the iconoclastic (Greek, “image breaker”) tendencies of the Reformed and Radicals.¹ Even if this myth has started to fade, does not Luther’s stress on the preached Word of God and his theology of the cross preclude a positive view of the visual arts (painting, sculpture, film, etc.), including any real theological aesthetics? Luther provides a preliminary response to this question in his 1525 *Against the Heavenly Prophets*.

I have myself seen and heard the iconoclasts read out of my German Bible.... Now there are a great many pictures in those books, both of God, the angels, men and animals, especially in the Revelation of John and in Moses and Joshua. So now we would kindly beg them to permit us to do what they themselves do. Pictures contained in these books we would paint on walls for the sake of remembrance and better understandings, since they do no more harm on walls than in books. It is to be sure better to paint pictures on walls of how God created the world, how Noah built the ark, and whatever other good stories there may be than to paint shameless worldly things. Yes, would to God that I could persuade the rich and the mighty that they would permit the whole Bible to be painted in

¹ A version of this essay was originally presented at the 2017 Gospel Outreach with Media Conference (www.gowm.org).

houses, on the inside and the outside, so that all can see it. That would be a Christian work.²

This essay maintains that Luther not only has more to say about the visual arts than was once surmised, but that he has some important thoughts about theological aesthetics as well.³

Luther's contributions to music and poetics are already well known. They are greater than his other artistic contributions because of his own deep familiarity with them. Since music was a part of the medieval educational system (*quadrivium*), Luther learned it early on and came to excel in it. In addition to singing in choirs and playing the lute, he penned famous tunes and settings for hymns and the Lutheran mass. At university, Luther was exposed to Renaissance humanism, a new educational approach and methodology, which further honed his philological, poetic, and historical skills. The fact that Luther would bring nothing into the friary except his Virgil and Plautus is a sign of its early impact on him. Luther's own poetic talents are evidenced in his hymns, translations, and edition of Aesop's *Fables*. But his true artistic masterpiece was the German Bible. It translated God's Word into eloquent and accessible German that endeared it to the people and fundamentally shaped the German language for generations to come.

Luther's criticisms of images and statues are generally found in his early polemics against the false doctrines and abuses of the late medieval Latin Church. The medieval church had fostered the notion that the veneration of images and the funding of their creation was a good work that merited a reduced stay in purgatory. Since Luther rejected the pagan notion that God's fallen creature (man) had anything to offer his perfect creator, Luther opposed the work-righteous use of images and statues, but not images and statues themselves. Reflecting on Romans 1:17, Luther eventually rediscovered that only the imputation of Christ's passive righteousness (i.e., the crediting of Christ's holiness to the believer in justification) could recreate man's lost relationship with God. Had not Christ stated that a bad tree cannot become a good tree by trying harder to bear good fruit? The true purpose of

² Martin Luther, *Luther's Works*, ed. Jaroslav Pelikan, Helmut Lehmann, and Christopher Brown (St. Louis and Philadelphia: Concordia Publishing House and Fortress Publishing House, 1955–), 40:99.

³ For a fuller discussion of this topic, see Mark Mattes, *Martin Luther's Theology of Beauty: A Reappraisal* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2017). This essay is especially indebted to the seminal work of Mark Mattes and the authors listed in the further reading section below.

active righteousness (i.e., good works), conversely, was to thank God by serving one's neighbor and caring for the creation through vocations in the home, church, and society/state. This new relationship with God, Luther further rediscovered, was only recreated through God's very same Word that once had the power to bring the universe into being and the same Word that assumes oral, written, and sacramental forms today.

However, the Radicals and Reformed did not think Luther went far enough. Appealing to the prohibition against making graven images (Exodus 20:4), they began to destroy icons and statues as idolatry. Eventually they would also assert the so-called regulative principle of worship, namely that anything not commanded in the Bible must be forbidden in worship. Recognizing that idolatry was really a matter of the heart, Luther would challenge these iconoclastic ideas on exegetical, hermeneutical, and incarnational grounds. Much like John of Damascus (ca. 675–ca. 750), Luther showed that God had at times actually commanded the making of religious images (e.g., Cherubim Mercy Seat of God on the Ark of the Covenant) as well as the making of images of God himself (e.g., Bronze Serpent that foreshowed Christ), albeit as God veiled himself in Scripture (e.g., Holy Spirit as a Dove). Drawing on the hermeneutics of St. Paul, Luther distinguished between proscription and description in the Bible. He then argued that where God does not proscribe, the Christian has freedom. In contradistinction to the Gnostic tendencies of the Radicals and Reformed, Luther reasserted the goodness of God's creation. His Ockhamist training prompted him not to view realist forms as more real or spiritual than the material. His Biblical studies prompted him to recover Genesis's creation theology. Thus, Luther pointed out that God often masks his ongoing-creation or providential care in the vocations of Christians and the civil righteousness of unbelievers. Luther insisted that God recreates and justifies mankind with passive righteousness through material signs like the letters on the page of a Bible, water, wine, and bread. He encouraged the use of religious art as a means of teaching the Word of God as indicated above. That said, images always remained adiaphoron for Luther (i.e., they were neither forbidden nor required).⁴

It is certainly true that Protestantism as a whole changed the Divine Service from a multi-sensory encounter with God's grace to a strictly auditory event. But this is not true of Lutheranism despite Luther's

⁴ Luther, "Eight Sermons at Wittenberg, (1522)," in *LW*, 51:81–86 especially; Luther, "Against the Heavenly Prophets, (1525)," in *LW*, 40:146–47.

stress on the church being a “mouth house.”⁵ Luther not only cherished the sacraments, but he recognized the power of iconography and sculpture for conveying the faith. Furthermore, Luther’s focus on the preached Word of God was not so much a marginalization of iconography, as a call to fully recognize the power of the manifold images evoked by God’s performative Word. God cannot be “seen” apart from the Word. Thus, Luther recognized that language is embodied in images which the mind and heart in turn process. After all, what else is a letter, but an image? Luther writes,

But it is impossible for me to hear and bear [the works of God] in mind without forming mental images of it in my heart. For whether I will to or not, when I hear of Christ, an image of a man hanging on a cross takes form in my heart, just as the reflection of my face naturally appears in the water when I look into it. If it is not a sin but good to have the image of Christ on my heart, why should it be a sin to have it in my eyes?⁶

On the other hand, Luther did not approve of some of the pronouncements of the VII Ecumenical Council (787) that laid out the medieval theology of icons. He had little time for the Platonism that undergirded the theology of icons. The council’s attempt to distinguish the veneration (or honor) given heroes of the faith from the adoration (or worship) offered only to God was sadly so often blurred in practice. Still Luther insisted with the council that anyone who denies that Christ can be depicted is *de facto* denying the incarnation itself. What is more, God’s Word does not just take oral, written, and sacramental forms for Luther but even mental and visual forms as well. He even suggests that a crucifix could convey God’s grace insofar as it is a visual form of God’s Word.

Thus I believe that our dear Lord preserved many of our forefathers in the gross darkness of the Papacy. In that blindness and darkness so much still remained that a crucifix was held before the eyes of the dying and that some laymen would urge them: “Behold Jesus, who died for you on the Cross!” This induced many a dying man to

⁵ Martin Luther, “First Sunday in Advent, Math. 21:1–9,” in *The Sermons of Martin Luther*, ed. and trans. John N. Lenker (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1989), 1:44.

⁶ Luther, “Against the Heavenly Prophets, (1525),” in *LW*, 40:99–100.

turn again to Christ, though previously he, too, believed the lying wonders and was given to idolatry.⁷

In his *Martin Luther's Theology of Beauty: A Reappraisal*, Mark Mattes argues that Luther did not embrace the classical Neo-Platonic aesthetics of the medieval theologians. Luther did not determine beauty on the basis of proportion, light or color, integrity or perfection, or even a Kantian notion of the sublime. The medieval theologians tended to think about beauty in terms of metaphysical degrees of closeness to God. Instead Mattes shows that Luther articulates a Biblical conception of beauty grounded in the goodness of the created order and the grace of God. God's proper work (Gospel) is beautiful; beauty is a received beauty. In the *Heidelberg Disputation*, Luther writes, "The love of God does not find, but creates that which is pleasing to it.... Therefore, sinners are attractive because they are loved; they are not loved because they are attractive."⁸ With this in mind, even the contorted, diseased, and crucified Christ, portrayed in the famous *Isenheim Altarpiece*, becomes a thing of beauty. The altarpiece, which originally hung in a monastery of a religious order focused on care of the sick, depicts a twisted Christ who quite literally takes on man's infirmities to heal him. Still the painting is beautiful because it reflects the unmerited grace of God to the human race in spite of man's loss of proportion, light, and integrity with God.

Luther's views on visual art were given concrete expression in the work of one of his closest friends, Lucas Cranach the Elder (1472–1553), the Electoral Saxon court painter and Wittenberg entrepreneur. The friendship proved mutually beneficial. Luther affirmed the value of visual art. Cranach used his political connections and visual art to advance the Lutheran Reformation. Cranach shaped the image of Luther in his portraits so effectively that his workshop could hardly keep up with the demand for pictures of the Reformer. He ensured that German Lutheranism and the German Renaissance would be anything but visually stunted. Cranach illuminated and explicated Luther's pamphlets, prayer books, Bible, and catechisms with striking pictures.

⁷ Luther, St. L., XIII:2575, quoted in Franz Pieper, *Christian Dogmatics*, trans. John Theodore Mueller (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1950–57), 3:106n9. Pieper adds, "Furthermore, the Gospel is such a means of grace in every form in which it reaches men, whether it be preached (Mark 16:15–16; Luke 24:47), or printed (John 20:31; I John 1:3–4), or pictured in symbols or types (John 3:14–15), or pondered in the heart (Rom. 10:8), and so forth."

⁸ Luther, "Heidelberg Disputation, (1518)," in *LW*, 31:57.

Above all else, he captured the theology of the Reformation in visual form. His *Law and the Gospel* (1529) concretized the fundamental Lutheran hermeneutic of the Bible. The goodness of creation, vocations, and human sexuality are affirmed in his domestic themes and nudes. Long before Lutherans attempted to confess the Augsburg Confession in visual art, the *Wittenberg Altarpiece* (1547) confessed in a much more aesthetically pleasing fashion the centrality of Christ Crucified as well as the sole recreative power of God's Word in all its forms.

To be sure, a few incidents of iconoclasm did occur among some poorly informed Lutherans. Pietism tended to downplay the visual arts as well. Truth be told, Lutherans preserved much of the medieval and renaissance visual art of Northern Europe. They even created a new Lutheran iconography and continued to cultivate the visual arts in their lands. Sad to say, some of that visual art was destroyed in wars, but much of it still remains to be experienced.

Clearly the old myth that Luther had little positive to say about the visual arts has been sufficiently put to rest. Hopefully, this essay has also sparked the reader's interest in further exploring Luther's theological aesthetics, which largely remains unexplored. With that, Luther himself will have the last word, "Nor am I of the opinion that the gospel should destroy and blight all the arts, as some of the pseudo-religious claim. But I would like all the arts, especially music in the service of Him who gave and made them."⁹ [LSQ](#)

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Book Reviews

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Book Review: The Fire and the Staff

The Fire and the Staff: Lutheran Theology in Practice. By Klemet I. Preus. St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 2005. 480 pp. \$33.99. ISBN 978-07586-0404-0.

Klemet Preus's book, *The Fire and the Staff*, is a thorough analysis of the current condition of many of our Lutheran churches, as they struggle with what it means to have an authentic Lutheran identity—and one that is not merely cultural. Preus does an excellent job of providing practical and Biblical answers that clearly go against the many suggested alternatives to what Lutherans historically practice. Preus also candidly, and even sharply at times, demonstrates why this should not be allowed to happen. *The Fire and the Staff* should be placed into the hands of as many laymen (and pastors) as possible. Its size may

be daunting at first, but Preus's style is very readable and engaging. It is also a helpful way to prepare congregational lay-leadership for that pressure to change with the times, which is bound to come. Preus conveniently provides questions at the end of each chapter, making it suitable and ready as a study source. The answers to these are at the end of the book.

Preus's book offers to his readers what its subtitle states: *Lutheran Theology in Practice*. His is a truly Lutheran alternative to the many other books out there that would instead attempt to lead away from what it means to be Lutheran. This is not at all a book like David Luecke's *Evangelical Style and Lutheran Substance*. Preus thoroughly counters, in fact, what Luecke suggests, as well as the many other movements that have come along claiming new and exciting ways for proper Christian living. Preus does this by simply reestablishing who Lutherans are,

and explains why Lutherans do what Lutherans do (and to some extent have always done) both in church and out in the world.

Preus tells us that, yes, Lutheran theology *is* practical, but it has not always been presented or thought to be so. Preus, with many stories out of his own long ministry, as well as plenty from his personal and family life, shows just how true this is. He points out that this is something Lutherans already have, which is surprising to far too many. He reiterates this again and again without taking one brick out of the historical foundation of the Confessional Lutheran church, nor from its longstanding “formal” liturgical and Sacramental practice. He offers nothing new, but rather points out what Lutherans have had all along, and that this is in fact all that is needed for a rich life in the church. He shows that it is no less useful than it has been in the past, no matter what is going on in the world, at work, or at home.

Preus begins by telling us, from the book’s title, that “Doctrine is like fire. It lights our way and warms us...”; and the “staff” is our church practice of this doctrine—“... regularly accepted actions of a church body, a congregation, or an individual ... that points to our doctrine and reinforces it” (14). Preus explains how these are always interconnected. Too many will not see—will not acknowledge, or admit, that you cannot separate your doctrine from your practice. Yet, one of them will dominate the other eventually. This idea is age old. The Latin phrase “*Lex Orandi, Lex Credendi, Lex Vivendi*”—that is, *As we*

Worship, So we Believe, So we Live” has been around a long time—since at least the fourth century. With this maxim in mind, the “fire” and “staff” are never without influence upon the other. If they are separated, or one takes over without the other, then the “fire” can be snuffed out, or at least just left a mere dimly glowing ember. In Luther’s day, the Gospel was buried under all manner of human religious endeavor—and if it were not but for the grace of God, the fire that blazed in the Reformation might have been stifled. The “staff” also can be bent, and eventually broken, if the doctrine we believe, teach and confess is not practiced. Preus explains how, and why this—a dimming of the fire or a broken staff—has happened in American Christianity, and in the Lutheran church in particular. He presents excellent concrete examples as to why Luecke’s idea of conflicting practices that differ with what is said to be believed, just cannot work.

Of course any “Christian” bookstore has hundreds of these types of books, much like *The Fire and the Staff*, yet Lutherans, for the most part, seem to be late at producing these kinds of books. Those that some would say speak better to the people. There are a few exceptions, to be sure. Bishop Bo Giertz’s *Hammer of God* is one of the best. There are others. *The Defense Never Rests* by Lawyer Craig Parton comes to mind. Northwestern had also launched its *Impact Series* a few years ago to fill this gap and need. It had been a long time in coming, however. Concerning though is just how many Lutherans have and still buy these other, non-Lutheran

“practical” books just because they are written in this supposedly more easily accessible style. How many church libraries sadly still hold too many of these volumes that ought to be weeded out? Preus would say this is one reason the fire is burning so low and the staff nearly broken. Instead, we should be more active in getting better Lutheran materials into our people’s hands, like *The Fire and the Staff*, as well as teaching from them in Bible classes.

One of the best things Preus brings to focus is the distinction between *passive* and *active* faith. This in truth is the very essence of the problem with much of what is called practical theology. It is also the best way to show the great distinction between what it means to be Lutheran and anything else in that multiplicity of what is offered in the denominational, or spiritual, landscape we live in. Preus suggests that it should always be asked who does what? Who, is the actor, doing what action where? Is it a human endeavor, or is it the work of God? Because this is so often confused, justification is confused with sanctification. Law and Gospel are also mixed to the point where there is little good news left and so the Law no longer can do its job. This is the very point where the “fire” is dimmed or put out, as well as where the “staff” is bent to the point of breaking. Each alternative to this proper distinction basically has us back to Rome in the end. And it is a Rome of law, requiring outer works (merits), or a Rome that seeks after the inner light of mysticism—the inner works of enlightenment. They

are all just variations on the same theme. It does not matter if this comes from the Pentecostals or the Eastern Orthodox, Lutherans seemingly want to try it all.

This struggle to see through false promises and shiny wrappers, Preus works out for the reader as he engages various examples of this with people he has encountered, those who would wish to bring some of this teaching in among Lutherans. He also pulls from his knowledge of church history, as many of these supposed new ideas are just old heresies in new clothes. Preus answers each in turn, showing that there is no other alternative other than confessional Lutheran doctrine and practice. If it is not this in our midst, then it has no place among those of the Lutheran Reformation. It has to be by grace through faith—passive faith—or it once again leaves us to merit a God-pleasing life, and this by either our outer or inner works.

Then Preus readily demonstrates how this gift of passive faith produces (has to produce) an active faith in the good works toward the neighbor. He talks about how God does not need our works, but our neighbor does, as Luther already has said. Preus is using here Luther’s teaching on vocation. Passive faith frees a Christian to actually do real good works, without having to worry if we are pleasing to God. The Gospel message is that Christ has pleased God enough for everyone. This Preus outlines as another concept, and distinction, that is lost in many churches today—even in Lutheran congregations. This perhaps is due to the amount

of non-Lutheran theology that has been absorbed—and as mentioned, unfortunately, right from our own Lutheran church libraries.

Another thing that Preus does very well is to demonstrate that Lutheran *doctrine* is not dead, boring or un-exciting. People have been led to believe that this is what *has* put out the fire, and bent the staff in Lutheranism. Preus would argue however, that when it is properly connected to worship, and understood, it blazes with the true light of the Gospel, resulting in proper good works and proper Christian living. If it is practiced as intended, it would not then seem to be some bygone dead ritual, void of God's Spirit. The true spirit of worship is right in there. But Preus asks, who would not get bored, even at an exciting football game, if a spectator did not know the rules of the game? He is saying that this is a Lutheran problem today—and actually his own growing up. Too few know why, and few teach why Lutherans do what they do on Sunday morning. Yet in truth, as Preus shows, there is an ageless depth to it all, which was meant to span the entire life of the church until Christ returns.

Preus is adamant that there is (and there must be) actual reasons for all of it—in all of what is done in God's house. The depth of meaning, for what is done there, ends up being very practical, in fact, and applicable to people living in any age. But Preus tells us that this has to be explained regularly—and also why it must always be different from what the world does. He denies any claim that

our practice is a dead relic from the past, and its supposed cure, that is “when people are moved physically, emotionally or intellectually by the worship experience and when they encounter God and have an undeniable sense of his presence” is a cure at all. This “cure,” in fact, goes against the very foundation of Lutheran (Biblical) doctrine of forensic objective justification. Not only that, but Preus points out why these and other church growth methods of marketing the “gospel” are a shallow substitute that never lasts. Preus counters that it is the Word of God that is powerful to change, not dynamic preachers preaching dynamically. It is not having moving mood music either, playing in the background, that will provide the lasting power to keep people in the faith—let alone bring them there in the first place. That sort of thing he warns is dishonest and nothing more than a “bait and switch” (340).

Preus's other main point, and one that may be difficult for Americans to accept is that size, numbers, success and popularity, are not what makes a church, or Christians, what God wants them to be. He begins his first chapter with a narrative of when he was a young pastor. He tells us that he shame-facedly admitted, within a pastors conference, his own supposed failure as a pastor. So much so was his discouragement that he was thinking about asking his District President for another call. And this after just hearing their key-note speaker paint grand success stories, with many testimonials, of the great things God was doing—that God would do—if

they would only apply certain techniques and principals for growth. Yet, the unexpected happened. “The pastors applauded” him! (21). Preus was thanked for speaking up because even the older and more experienced pastors were seeing the same meager results in their own ministry—and it was not at all what their speaker was claiming should be the case. Preus’s point is that Christians and congregations live under the theology of the cross, not the theology of glory. This is the valley of the shadow of death, and not yet heaven, that we live and work in. The crowds left Jesus when He taught. Preus weaves this theme throughout his book. He ends up concluding his last chapter with a plea for Lutherans to be authentic Lutherans, in both doctrine and practice. Preus would have every Lutheran ask, “What exactly are you?” (443). Be Lutheran, he is saying, if it is really right and true to be so, and do not change it still claiming it to be Lutheran. If it is not right and true, then we all ought to be on about something else. We all should then just pack up and return to Rome.

– David Emmons

LSQ

Book Review: Starlight, Time and the New Physics

Starlight, Time and the New Physics: How We Can See Starlight in Our Young Universe. By John Harnett. Atlanta: Creation Book Publishers, 2010. 231 pp. \$14.99. ISBN 9780949906687.

Doctor Harnett’s book is an apologetic concerning the Distant Starlight Problem, also called the Starlight Problem. The late Carl Sagan, famous for his book and television series, *Cosmos*, employed the Distant Starlight Problem against Christianity saying:

If you add up all the *begats* in the book of Genesis, for example, you get an age of the earth: 6,000 years old.... The universe is said to be as old as the earth. This is still the standard of Jewish, Christian, and Muslim fundamentalists. And it’s clearly reflected in the Jewish calendar. But so young a universe raises an awkward question: How is it that there are astronomical objects more than 6000 light years away? ... When we look at the center of the Milkyway Galaxy the light we see left its source more than 30,000 years ago. ... [H]ow could we reconcile the data? The only really plausible conclusion, I think, is that God recently made all the photons of light arriving on the earth in such a coherent format as to mislead generations of astronomers into the misapprehension that there are such

things as galaxies and quasars and intentionally driving them to the spurious conclusion that the universe is vast and old. This is such a malevolent theology that I still have difficulty believing that anyone, no matter how devoted to the divine inspiration of any religious book, could seriously entertain it (<https://youtu.be/Ls5vHPUGa8M>).

Even at the time Doctor Sagan made this argument he was cherry picking theories that fit his agenda. There were other mathematical models that addressed this very issue.

Doctor Harnett's book directly addresses this issue building the reader up by explaining the various theoretical foundations needed to understand the main issue. He also provides the reader some insight into the other competing theoretical frameworks. He focuses particularly on addressing the foundations and assumptions of the evolutionary theories and making available those studies and arguments which do not contradict Scripture.

I picked up my copy at the dinosaur museum in Glendive Montana in July 2020 during the pandemic. I consider that \$14 very well spent. Confessional Lutheranism is much more particular about the kinds of arguments a person can make in defense of the Scripture. Lutherans emphasize the need to distinguish between the magisterial and the ministerial use of reason. Scripture is not true because it is reasonable. Faith is not validated by reason. And God is not proven by reason or evidence.

It is as we confess in the creed:

I believe that I cannot by my own reason or strength believe in Jesus Christ my Lord or come to Him, but the Holy Ghost has called me by the gospel and enlightened me with his gifts.

It is refreshing therefore to find a book in apologetics that does so well in making the distinction between what is divinely revealed and what is construed by mere human reason.

Dr. Harnett is a long established physicist from the University of Western Australia where he holds the rank of research professor, the same as full professor in the United States. He has more than 100 peer reviewed papers in scientific journals, holds two patents, and is the author of several books.

His book *Starlight, Time and the New Physics: How We Can See Starlight in Our Young Universe* directly addresses Carl Sagan's challenge. The chapters of the book are written for the layman. However, a reader would greatly benefit from a physical science background. As a non-physicist there are many times in his work that I have to simply take the author's word for granted. I have no way of verifying the claims that he makes with his mathematics, and without further research, I have no way of knowing if he is using correct definitions and categories.

The book is laid out in seven chapters followed by six technical appendices followed by a glossary of terms. The first chapter serves as an overview and introduction of the topic. The second chapter focuses

on the nature of starlight in time. The third chapter focuses on how physicists have used fudge factors to clean up their math and make their theories work— fudge factors include things like dark matter and dark energy. The fourth chapter deals with Einstein and the advancements over Einstein's relativity by physicist Moses Carmeli. Chapter 6 deals with uniformitarianism and whether or not we can view ourselves as the center of the universe. Here Harnett also covers how the universe might be structured and why the assumptions of universalism make a big difference in how a person chooses a model for the mathematics of the universe. The sixth chapter presents a mathematical hypothesis for how God stretched out the heavens on the fourth day. Chapter 7 explores the reasoning for why we see starlight from billions of years ago in such a young universe.

Each of the chapters come with references for the more technical arguments that are made, including references to many standard physical and astronomical papers in the field. Six appendices follow in which Dr. Harnett provides the mathematical and physical research on these particular topics. The reader does need a background in physics to use these appendices.

I do believe that Dr. Harnett adequately addresses the issues raised in the opening quotation by Carl Sagan and others. At least for someone like me who is not trained in this field.

A rough summary of Dr. Harnett's argument is that there was no Big Bang. God created light (and

whatever other kinds of energy that went with it) on the first day just after He created the earth. On the fourth day God created the sun, moon, and stars with light reaching the earth and stretched out the heavens. While time was flowing normally on this fourth day on earth, the fact that God stretched out the heavens means that the initial light of creation and the starlight of the new Sun and stars became attenuated over the vast distances through which He moved them. This caused the red-shift of stars in all directions of visible space as well as the cosmic microwave background radiation. It also explains why the more distant stars appear as if they are now expanding more rapidly into the void. Everything visible beyond 6,000 or so light years distant from earth is from the fourth day of creation and the effects of God's stretching out the heavens.

For those of you who are physicists, of course, you realize the weaknesses and gaps in my summary. And it is particularly this which I wish to address.

I am not a physicist. As I mentioned above, I have no way personally to evaluate this work for validity in the fields of astronomy, cosmology, astrophysics or even advanced math. I did learn calculus, but that was back in the 1980s and I have never studied any of the mathematics specific to cosmology.

So what does this mean with respect to this book? Well, the first thing consumers of apologetics writings should realize is that if you are not trained in the field that the work is addressing, then you are a consumer

only. You are not a contributor to the discussion.

I really would like to partake in the discussion which Dr. Harnett introduces in this work. But I just do not have the background knowledge necessary to do more than listen and ask questions. And very often they will be just plain stupid questions. Why? Because I am ignorant on this topic. I am not a physicist and I have no experience to evaluate any of the claims in this work.

Too often Christians will read an apologetics book and automatically think they become experts. After all, the apologetics book we are reading has all the answers, it's just so clear and removes any doubt or problem ... so we think. We figure that if we know this book well, then we can deal with all the questions on this topic. And so we start to talk to others about this work, some of us even take this to the point of stating that the arguments and conclusions in a work like Harnett's are irrefutable.

But, in truth, in most fields we do not have enough training even to know if a book like this is anything other than a convincingly arranged string of fanciful and elaborate flights of imagination. For this we need Christians who we know that actually are trained in particular fields of knowledge. And we need to admit and to respect our own personal limitations.

Books like this from Harnett are directed at two audiences at once. He addresses Christians of two sorts, those who are not competent in the physics necessary (chapters 1-7) and those who are (the chapters plus the

six appendices). Many apologetics books address just the first group, Christians who are not competent in a field. And, unfortunately, many are written also by Christians who are not competent in the field about which they are writing. In this last category, there may be some works of value, but a great many of them end up with conclusions about their topic which are at once undeniably certain and at the same time so ridiculous that those trained in the profession can do nothing but show the faults the work contains.

I do recommend this particular book for the introduction it gives to the issues surrounding the Starlight Problem. And I appreciate Harnett's explanation of how the current physical measurements of distant starlight could have come about through God's work on the fourth day of creation. I have watched Harnett in debates with other scientists, and I have what I think is a reasonable confidence that he is not merely a good scientist with a few crackpot notions. Neither is he a fraud. I do think that those who are curious about or bothered by these questions can benefit from this work. As I mentioned at the beginning, Harnett does appear to understand the proper role of reason in faith. Our confidence in Christ and Scripture does not really derive from works like these. Works like these help us to frame discussions with friends and family who may also have similar questions about the ideas in the world and how they might relate to Scriptural truth. But if his science turns out to be bad or eventually changes, that will not undermine

the Word of God. It just means that science has changed, yet one more time. But God's Word endures forever.

– Joseph Abrahamson

LSQ

Book Review: A History of Luther Seminary

A History of Luther Seminary: 1869–2019. By Mark Granquist. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2019. 291 pp. \$20.00. ISBN 9781506456621.

A History of Luther Seminary: 1869–2019 has special significance to members of the Evangelical Lutheran Synod because the origins of Luther Seminary include a shared history with the ELS. In 1876, after sending her students to the seminaries of the Missouri Synod, the Norwegian Synod established her own seminary in Madison, Wisconsin. In 1888, the seminary was relocated to Robbinsdale, Minnesota, and two years later, following the destruction of the building by fire, it was again relocated to Hamline (St. Paul), Minnesota. In time, this Norwegian Synod institution had become known as Luther Seminary. Following the merger of three Norwegian synods in 1917, the seminaries of these synods also were merged. The campus of the United Norwegian Lutheran church gave physical housing to the merged seminary while the name of the Norwegian Synod's seminary (Luther Seminary) became the name of this new institution. Granquist notes, "A

smaller group from the Norwegian Synod, objecting to the merger, formed their own new denomination, the Evangelical Lutheran Synod, with a college and seminary in Mankato, Minnesota." At that point, the shared history of the synod and the seminary draws to a close.

Mark Granquist begins by sketching the development of New Testament theological education commencing with the time of the Apostle Paul and continuing through the time of the Reformation to the present day. He then delves into the specific history of Luther Seminary. Of special interest to the Evangelical Lutheran Synod is the second and third chapters of this book which address theological education among Norwegian-Americans and especially within the Norwegian Synod. In the fourth chapter, the author then continues to trace the history of this institution until 1963 when "the tradition of a singular and ethnic Norwegian American Lutheranism came to an end."

The present-day Luther Seminary comes from a broad heritage. Chapter 5 tells about the formation and history of Augsburg Seminary by Norwegians within the Scandinavian Augustana Synod in 1869. This seminary was first located in Marshfield, Wisconsin. It is from this organization that Granquist dates the 150th anniversary of Luther Seminary. This is in spite of previous histories which date the seminary's organization from the 1876 establishment of the Norwegian Synod seminary in Madison, Wisconsin. This change is likely because Augsburg Seminary

did not become a part of Luther until 1963. Chapter 6 then tells about Northwestern Lutheran Theological Seminary which was formed, without any ethnic identity, by the General Council's Synod of the Northwest in 1920. Two years later, this seminary relocated to Minneapolis and in 1967 a new campus was established adjacent to Luther Seminary. Granquist explains that this seminary "created its own distinctive cultural and approach to theological education" including a strong commitment to traditional liturgical worship. He remarks that this institution and people had the distinctive quality of being "churchmen." He then describes this now out of fashion term as meaning "that they were personally connected with the work of the church at all levels, not just at the congregation level." Following the formation of the Lutheran Church in America (LCA) in 1962, many Swedish American Lutheran students chose to attend Northwestern Seminary. In 1982, Northwestern and Luther completed a difficult merger. The seminary was known as Luther-Northwestern Theological Seminary until 1994 when the name again became Luther Seminary.

Finally, in the last two chapters, Granquist describes the changes and turmoil that have come to the seminary and its approach to education. In the 1960s, there was tension as some felt the seminary was changing too fast and some felt it was not changing fast enough. The faculty was "hard-pressed" to maintain the primacy of the classical seminary courses while students demanded

"new courses in modern theology and the arts of ministry." Ultimately, the social issues of the day, dictated many of the changes. The author concludes by speaking of controversies within the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) which operates the seminary. The formation of the Lutheran Congregations in Mission for Christ (LCMC) and the North American Lutheran Church (NALC) have had an effect on Luther Seminary in terms of both enrollment and finances.

In reviewing the theological perspective of the Norwegian Synod, the author does not fully endorse the often perpetuated view that the Norwegian Synod learned its theology from the Missouri Synod, but he does write, "Historically, the Norwegian Synod had a close relationship with the conservative and confessional German Americans in the Missouri Synod, but this was a point of dispute within the Norwegian-American community." He then advances an especially interesting argument that even the election controversy of the 1880s was in large part due to the lack of settlement of the slavery issue. That debate continued in the Norwegian Synod even after the conclusion of the Civil War. Many Norwegian immigrants had settled in the North and young Norwegian men fought and died in the Union armies. Granquist writes, "This controversy created in many areas of the Norwegian Synod lingering suspicions about Walther and the Missouri Synod, which would surface again later." The author later continues, "The tensions over the slavery issue, ironically, continued

among the Norwegian Americans ... with a lingering resentment over the position of Walther on this and other issues.” One of the results of this tension was the formation of the Norwegian Synod seminary in 1876.

Granquist describes the Madison Agreement¹ (Opgjør) as “a carefully negotiated ambiguity” and “a thinly padded peace treaty that did not address the still-existing tensions of the doctrine of election.” The author then explained how the Opgjør controversy simmered in Luther Seminary and especially between two professors: Geroge Aus and Herman A. Preus (who was the 1978 BLC Reformation lecturer). In 1945, while Thaddeus F. Gullixson was the seminary president, the president of the Norwegian Evangelical Lutheran Church (NELC) appointed a committee to settle the matter. The committee ruled, in a manner similar to Opgjør, that there was “no essential difference” between the men or their doctrine. This decision resulted in J. A. O. Preus and Robert Preus leaving the NELC and attending Bethany Lutheran Theological Seminary. This did not, however, settle matters

within the seminary. “By the early 1960s there were no longer separate Norwegian American Lutheran denominations, outside of the smaller dissident groups. The era of such ethnic Lutheranism was over, but many of the theological and religious currents of the Norwegian American Lutheran traditions, currents that were submerged but often not too far beneath the surface, lived on.”

Mark Granquist is the capable author of this anniversary history as he has been a faculty member of Luther Seminary since 2007. He also has authored *Lutherans in America: A New History* and numerous scholarly articles. With this very readable book, he makes the history of the seminary accessible to all readers. One could wish that the author had more fully addressed the years during which the Norwegian Synod seminary was located at Robbinsdale and Hamline. Information about curriculum, buildings, and student life could have shed more light on those pivotal years. Yet, such information is limited and it is important to maintain a balance between the ten seminaries that eventually led to today’s Luther Seminary.

This book can find its place on many bookshelves. It is broader than a mere history of Norwegian-American Lutheranism. While telling the story of the various seminaries, it presents the larger context of the development of Lutheran theological education along with the theological distinction between the divergent synods and the seminaries they established. This book also strikes a cord for today and for anyone who learns from past history. In speaking about the Hauge Synod’s

¹ Granquist uses the term “Madison Agreement” for Opgjør as does E. Clifford Nelson, who also taught church history at Luther Seminary, in *The Lutheran Church among Norwegian Americans: a history of the Evangelical Lutheran Church*. Bethany Lutheran Theological Seminary President, Theodore Aaberg who wrote *A City Set On A Hill*, taught seminarians that Opgjør should never be called an “agreement” because there was no agreement of doctrine between the parties but only a negotiated settlement that would allow a future merger.

Red Wing Seminary, the author gives the self-searching reminder that when the school was closed, the Haugean movement lost its last distinctive identity and exists only in parachurch organizations.

A History of Lutheran Seminary: 1869–2019 aptly analyzes the formation of Luther Seminary and its development to the present day. It is a wonderful addition both to the library of a historian and also the shelves of a dogmatician.

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