

The Years of Our Church

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FOREWORD

Lutherans of Norwegian descent in the United States are about to celebrate the one hundredth anniversary of organized church work in their midst. It was in the autumn of 1843 that a group of Norwegian immigrants in the Muskego settlement, near Milwaukee, Wisconsin, took the preliminary steps toward organizing a Lutheran congregation. This they did by calling a young layman to become their pastor, by having him ordained, and by authorizing the construction of a church building. By December the list of those who wished to be regarded as members of the congregation had grown to 270 names. Adoption of a constitution and other formalities had to await another year.

The selection of 1843 as the year of formal beginnings can, therefore, be justified; but it would be unfortunate if by choosing this date we relegated to obscurity the Christian work of the eighteen years which preceded the endeavors of the organized church and its pastors. The first shipload of Norwegian emigrants from Europe to America arrived aboard the "Restaurationen" in 1825. [5] By 1843 approximately five thousand Norwegians had found new homes in this country, chiefly in northeastern Illinois and southern Wisconsin.

During these eighteen years there had been no Norwegian Lutheran pastors in the settlements. The pastors of Norway at this time were strongly opposed to emigration and none of them had accompanied Norway's sons and daughters to their new homes in the West to minister to their spiritual needs. But into the breach which had thus been left stepped a number of gifted and consecrated immigrant lay preachers. It was they who preached the Gospel, doing the essential work of evangelists, pastors, and teachers during the first eighteen years of pioneer life among the Norwegians in America. The foundations of the Norwegian Lutheran church bodies in the United States were thus laid by Christian laymen, who ever since have had an important part in the spiritual work of our churches. While their early labors are not recognized by the centennial dates which have been chosen, their contribution was a very significant one, coming as it did and when it did, and should not be forgotten.

The Lutheran Free Church took preliminary steps at its Annual Conference in 1938 to observe the centennial in 1943, as the Norwegian Lutheran Church of America had previously decided to do. Our roots, too, go back to the pioneer days. [6] Most of the people who founded the Lutheran Free Church in

1897 were of Norwegian ancestry. Moreover, a number of the congregations affiliated with the Lutheran Free Church are historic congregations. Several of them have already passed their eightieth milestone.

In connection with the educational phase of our observance the Centennial Commission of the Lutheran Free Church requested the writer to prepare a book which would set forth in simple language the history, the principles, and the work of our church. The volume which is herewith presented contains not a little history, but it is not a history of the Lutheran Free Church. It is intended rather as a guide to a more complete understanding of our spiritual and churchly viewpoint and of the work we are attempting to do.

The Commission had in mind several groups of people when asking for a book of this kind. It thought of our own young people, who because of the language transition have been cut off from the past more quickly and more completely than might otherwise have been the case. It thought also of the people of non-Norwegian background who have in recent years in increasing numbers united with our congregations and who are to a large extent unacquainted with our history. And it had in mind the people of other churches and of no church who make inquiry concerning the Lutheran Free Church, its position and its program. [7]

Though the time afforded for writing these chapters was altogether too short and the work connected therewith was done without release from the duties of an active pastorate, the author sends it forth in the hope that it may contribute in some measure toward a greater appreciation of our Christian heritage.

I am grateful to all upon whose books or articles I have drawn in the preparation of this little volume. In particular am I indebted to Professor Andreas Helland in helping me avoid as many historical inaccuracies as possible and to Mrs. Gracia Christensen for her assistance in preparing the manuscript for the press.

CLARENCE J. CARLSEN.

August 1, 1942.

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[NOTE: In The Years of Our Church, the page numbers were placed at the bottom of the page. In an attempt to make these files more “readable” and, at the same time “reliable” as a reference work, I have placed the page numbers in bold brackets, i.e. [7]. Thus, all of the material located between [6] and [7] was found on page 7 of the original work. I hope that this arrangement will be acceptable to you. You are free to make copies of this disk and give to your friends provided that you copy the disk in its entirety - including this message - and that you do not charge them anything beyond the actual cost of the computer disk. Other books are in the process of being scanned. For an up-to-date list of such books, please send a self-addressed and stamped envelope to Pastor Lynn Kinneberg / PO Box 442 / McVile, ND 58254 or e-mail at lkinnbrg@stellamet.com.

- Pastor Lynn Kinneberg]
CHAPTER ONE

Background and Beginning

THE LUTHERAN FREE CHURCH IS AN ASSOCIATION of Lutheran congregations in the United States and Canada, with congregations also in Madagascar and China. It is part of a spiritual movement in the Lutheran church which strongly stresses personal Christianity and which earnestly seeks the fuller realization of the New Testament ideal of the Christian congregation.

The Lutheran Free Church dates from the year 1897. However, the movement with which it is associated goes back much farther, in fact, nearly a hundred years. It becomes necessary for us therefore to review briefly nearly a century of church history, including-in our rapid survey not only events which have taken place in our own country, but also certain developments within the Christian church of Norway. [11]

The people who comprised the Lutheran Free Church when it came into being were nearly all of Norwegian descent. There were a few Danish and Swedish people scattered among them, but most of them either had come directly from Norway or were the sons and daughters of Norwegian immigrants. As such they brought with them to the land of their adoption their nationalistic heritage, which included also religious elements.

To ascertain the nature of their spiritual heritage we must glance briefly at the religious situation which prevailed in their homeland at the time of their migration.

The first exodus from Norway to America began in 1825 and came to a close at the outbreak of the Civil War. During this period, church life in Norway was characterized by two distinct trends. On the one hand was the State Church, which was Lutheran by confession. It was a department of the national government. Churches, parsonages, and other buildings used for religious purposes were built and maintained at government expense. The government provided for the religious instruction of the youth of the land through the public schools and confirmation classes. The salaries of the theological professors, pastors, and other church functionaries were paid by the government. Pastors were appointed to their parishes by the Minister of Church and Education, who was responsible to the king. [12] The pastors were therefore government officials and as such were a part of the Norwegian official Class, which was in many respects very aristocratic and independent of the people whom the pastors were called upon to serve. Moral and spiritual conditions were generally bad. We are informed that the government-appointed pastors sought by means of some rather outward reform movements to improve conditions, but with little success.

On the other side of the religious situation of that day we have what is known as the Haugean spiritual awakening. This movement derives its name from a renowned character in Norwegian history, a peasant by the name of Hans Nielsen Hauge. His lifework dates from 1796. It was a work which created a new epoch in Norway's religious life and which, through the emigrants to America, has profoundly influenced the church history of Lutherans of Norwegian descent in America. He had a conviction that he was called of God to be a witness for Christ among his people, even though he was only a farmer's son and comparatively uneducated. Accordingly, he began to preach and to write devotional books and tracts. The first meeting at which he preached was held in his father's house and it created a distinct sensation. "A farmer's son was preaching like a minister!" Soon the young layman was preaching in other houses in the parish also. [13] Within six years Hauge had covered nearly all of Norway, mostly on foot, conducting devotional services wherever he went, usually in the homes of the people. During this brief period he traveled over 10,000 miles, often preached several times a day, wrote a large number of pamphlets and devotional books, and even helped provide for the economic needs of many of his followers by starting new industries and enterprises of various kinds.

The response was immediate and far reaching. Little groups which came to be known as "the awakened," "readers," or "Haugeans" sprang up everywhere. In each of these groups one or more leaders arose, who, like Hauge, began to conduct evangelistic meetings in the same quiet, earnest, zealous manner as Hauge himself. With few exceptions these new leaders were farmer folk, resembling Hauge also in this respect. In a comparatively short time Norway had experienced its first nationwide spiritual regeneration.

This movement did not at all meet with the approval of the

State Church pastors of Norway. One of the bishops dispatched a complaint to the Royal Chancellery in which he described the “damage” that Hauge and his followers were doing and appealed to the authorities to use whatever means they deemed advisable to put an end to the evil. Indirectly this document led to Hauge’s arrest and imprisonment. [14]

After his apprehension, and while he was still languishing in a prison cell, a governmental order was issued that information concerning the prisoner and his work be forwarded to the authorities. The whole ecclesiastical and legal machinery of Norway was now put into motion for the twofold purpose of gathering data concerning the activities of the imprisoned layman and of receiving proposals as to how his work might most effectively be stopped. More than six hundred answers were received from the pastors of Norway. One bishop and a few pastors returned replies favorable to Hauge, but these “brighter aspects of the awakening were completely eclipsed by the universal blackness” of the remaining replies, all of which endeavored as far as possible to discredit Hauge and his work. The attitude which the clergymen of that day took toward the spiritual awakening and toward the layman whom God had used to bring it about did much to establish the long-existent cleavage between pastors and lay people in Norway and in Norwegian settlements in the United States.

The Haugean gatherings were very informal. As a rule they took place in homes. One of the group, usually one of the older men, acted as leader. Hymns would be sung, followed by the reading of the Scriptures and prayer. Thereupon the leader or some other member of the group would explain some passage of the Bible and exhort his hearers to take the message to heart. [15] The prevailing theme was always that of repentance from sin and faith in Jesus Christ. After the leader had spoken, others would take part in the meeting, either by an exhortation, an admonition, a prayer, or a song. Deep solemnity prevailed at all times.

Unlike Methodism in England, Haugeanism was not organized. It is correct to speak of a Haugean organism in Norway, but not of a Haugean organization. The movement operated within the State Church; it was not separatistic. Hauge himself would never conduct a meeting of this kind at an hour which would conflict with the worship services of the established church. Not until long after his death did the Haugeans begin to depart from this practice.

In America the Haugean movement was projected into an entirely different situation. Here there was no State Church performing all the functions and discharging all the administrative duties of such an institution. To successfully transplant the Norwegian spiritual movement to America would therefore necessitate the founding of a church. It is difficult to see how the movement could have been perpetuated otherwise. But for such a task the Haugeans were not prepared. They had had no previous experience or training in the administration of ecclesiastical affairs. Nevertheless the problem had to be met. [16]

The attempt to solve it constitutes one of the most interesting phases of church life among the immigrants. In this attempt the future leaders of the Lutheran Free Church were destined to make a notable contribution.

Closely associated with the Haugean movement, which reached mainly the peasant and working classes of Norway, was the Johnsonian spiritual awakening, which reached the official classes, especially a number of pastors and theological students. It derived its name from a professor of theology at the Royal University in Oslo, Gisle Johnson (1822-1894), who became the theologian of the revival movement, but who never particularly favored preaching by laymen, as the Haugeans generally did. Closely linked with Johnson’s name is that of the Old Testament scholar, C. F. Caspari (1814-1892). Many of the future ministers who studied under these men found their lifework in America.

During the first three decades of immigrant history in this country, 1840, 1870, the Norwegian, Americans were divided, broadly speaking, into the same two groups that had existed in Norway: those who favored the State Church pattern for the emerging church in their new homeland and those who favored a church which would perpetuate the ideals and methods of the revival movement. The former organized themselves in 1853 into a church body known popularly as the Norwegian Synod. [17] The latter were gathered in 1847 into what came to be commonly known as the Eielsen Synod.

The leaders of the Norwegian Synod were pastors who had been trained at the University in Norway. Their aim was the establishment of a church in this country which would follow as closely as possible the lines of the State Church of Norway, with its emphasis upon organization, ritual, and pastoral authority.

The leader of the Eielsen Synod was the famed Elling Eielsen. He had been a lay preacher for many years and continued to be one in spirit as long as he lived. For practical purposes he found it necessary to be ordained and in so doing became the first Norwegian Lutheran pastor to be ordained in America. He and his followers endeavored principally to transplant the revival movement known as Haugeanism to American soil. They paid little attention to congregational or synodical organization, matters with which they had had nothing to do in Norway and with which they were not willing to concern themselves any more than absolutely necessary in this country.

Thus the Norwegian Synod represented one extreme and the Eielsen Synod the other. [18]

Many immigrants did not feel at home in either of these two organizations. Accordingly, in 1870, a third church body appeared among the Norwegian Lutherans in this country. In fact, a fourth one appeared almost simultaneously. The third was the Norwegian-Danish Lutheran Conference and the fourth the Norwegian Lutheran Augustana Synod. Both of these groups took a mediating position between the extremes of the first two groups. In 1890 these two bodies and a group known as the Anti-Missourians, who had seceded from the Norwegian Synod as a result of the controversy concerning predestination, merged to form the United Norwegian Lutheran Church.

The largest of the three uniting groups was the Conference, with which Augsburg Seminary was associated. Even before the union there had been two divergent tendencies in the Conference. The “old tendency” veered toward the State Church views held by the Norwegian Synod. The “new ten-

dency” was more in sympathy with the revival movement.

After the union, the “old tendency” was greatly augmented in strength by the accession of the group which had formerly been a part of the Norwegian Synod itself.

In 1893 these two viewpoints dashed openly in the newly-formed United Norwegian Lutheran Church. The issue was Augsburg Seminary with all its departments. [19] (As a result of the union the institution had become linked with the recently-formed church body.) Shortly after the union the leaders at Augsburg began to fear that when the institution became the property of the United Church the ideas and ideals of the “old tendency,” which would then constitute a strong majority, would be substituted for those of the “new tendency” which had been espoused for years by such leaders as Professor Georg Sverdrup and Professor Sven Oftedal.

The articles of union of 1890 provided that Augsburg Seminary was to be deeded to the new church body, thus becoming the official institution for the training of pastors in the United Church. However, in connection with this transfer, a number of difficulties arose. The leaders at Augsburg looked upon it as a breach of the articles of union when the new church body promptly made another college the official college of the church. This did not augur well for the future of Augsburg. Moreover, legal difficulties developed in connection with the transfer of title.

It was held by the court that Augsburg Seminary, whose board of trustees had previously held the institution in trust for the Conference, could not deed away its property to another corporation under the circumstances brought out during the hearing.

When it became evident that the United Church would not accept Augsburg as its educational institution unless the property were deeded to it, but would abandon the school to its fate, [20] a group of Augsburg sympathizers, headed by Professors Sverdrup and Oftedal, met in the chapel of Old Main to consider what could be done to save the institution and have it continue to function as before, either within the United Church or, if necessary, outside. Thus the “Friends of Augsburg” came into being. It was a loosely-knit organization of pastors and lay people within the United Church intent upon safe-guarding the interests of the institution. It functioned during the years 1893-1897.

When the United Church adopted a resolution which in effect withheld home or foreign mission subsidies from congregations, pastors, and missionaries in the United Church who were sympathetic with the position taken by Augsburg, these “Friends” accepted responsibility also for setting up the necessary committees and securing the needed funds to provide for the individuals and organizations affected by the resolution. No formal break between the “Friends of Augsburg” and the United Church had as yet taken place and there were still hopes of effecting agreement between the contending parties. However, the prospects of reconciliation grew more and more remote as time passed.

In 1895 Professors Sverdrup and Oftedal, who were delegates from the Lutheran Trinity Congregation of Minneapolis, were denied seats in the deliberative convention of the United

Church. [21] For refusing to retract resolutions of sympathy with the position taken by these professors twelve congregations were dropped from the roster of the United Church. Several theological graduates, who likewise agreed with the position taken by the leaders at Augsburg, were denied ordination. And pastors who assisted in such ordinations were dropped from the roster of the church.

With all hopes of reconciliation thus ended, steps were now taken toward a further consolidation of the “Friends of Augsburg,” who were already supporting the school as well as a number of home and foreign missionaries. When the “Friends” met in 1896 a committee was chosen to formulate a set of principles and rules to be followed by the group in its future work. The following year, at the meeting held in Old Trinity Church in Minneapolis, this committee presented the results of its deliberations under the following heading: “Rules for a Lutheran Free Church. A. Fundamental Principles. B. Rules for Work.” On June 12, 1897, the committee’s recommendations were tentatively adopted. This has since been considered the formal beginning of the Lutheran Free Church.

The years preceding this action had been years of intensely bitter strife. Strong charges and counter-charges were made by the contending parties. [22] The controversy raged for several years, in church periodicals, in the secular press, and by word of mouth in numerous congregations and communities. It even came to the attention of the general public when the United Church took the matter into court, where it dragged on for several years, going through at least three hearings. There was much strong criticism of individuals, but perhaps no one was attacked more relentlessly and no one suffered more intensely than did Professors Sverdrup and Oftedal. There was much ill will also among the church public in general. Many years were required to heal the deep wounds which had been inflicted and to effect some measure of rapprochement between the contending parties.

Fortunately the medallion had another and brighter side. Incongruous as it may seem, the period was one of widespread spiritual awakening. Elderly folk still speak of the revival which took place in the 90’s. At the celebration of the twenty-fifth anniversary of the founding of Augsburg, Professor Sverdrup said: “We have already seen a beautiful harvest. The new spring-time which has now come does not promise anything less, by the mercy of the Lord.”

The revival could not be traced to the work of any particular person or persons. Here and there throughout the congregations in the Middle West souls became troubled on account of their sins and sought and found peace with God through Jesus Christ. [23] There was something remarkably spontaneous about it all. The movement bore none of the marks of modern professional evangelism. There was no application of pressure to secure “results.” Individuals would speak to other individuals about being reconciled to God. At the special meetings which were held there was singing of the old hymns and Gospel songs and simple preaching of the Word of God. The messages sought to bring the hearers to a realization of their sinfulness and their need of salvation and to invite all penitent souls to accept the grace of God in Christ. One observer has pointed

out that a large number of the pastors were particularly active in this work, and that awakened church members as a rule came to their pastors for spiritual help and guidance. A number of laymen were also very active. In most instances these laymen were farmers who devoted whatever time they could spare to evangelistic work in nearby congregations. They sought no remuneration and as a rule received none. Their purpose was to win people for Christ and to build up the spiritual life of the Christians. As a rule these lay preachers knew the Bible well, were doctrinally sound, and worked with and for the congregations rather than against them

Added impetus was given to the spiritual awakening by the visit of Missionary Lars Olsen Skrefsrud in 1894-95. [24] He was a native of Norway, a brilliant linguist, famed as co-founder with Missionary Hans P. Borresen of the Santal Mission in India, and a powerful preacher of the Gospel. His primary purpose in coming to America was to gain friends and financial support for his missionary labors, but he soon found himself engaged in evangelism among the Norwegian immigrants in America. His visit was richly blessed; many were led into fellowship with Christ as a result of his preaching and personal work. The Santal Mission also gained many friends in the United States.

The figure most closely identified with the awakening in the 90's was undoubtedly that of Pastor Peter Nilsen. When Augsburg Seminary no longer could look for financial help from The United Church, "The Friends of Augsburg" decided to call Pastor Nilsen to travel in the interests of the school and particularly to solicit funds for the institution. He did both, but only incidentally. He was soon led to devote his efforts largely to the preaching of the Word. There was a strong desire in many places to hear the message of the Cross. In a sense he became the leader of the awakening in Minnesota and the Dakotas, although he was not primarily gifted as an evangelist, as the term is usually understood. His strength lay in leading Christian believers into the Word of God and particularly in relating the individual Christian to the Christian congregation. [25] No one in the field could expound the mystery of the kingdom in regard to the body of Christ as could Peter Nilsen. That of which Professor Sverdrup had caught such a clear vision as a result of his penetrating study of the Scriptures, Pastor Nilsen transmitted directly to the congregations throughout the area.

There is also another aspect of the medallion's brighter side to which we might well give attention. The prolonged and bitter controversy was not due, as some have intimated, simply to personal differences between the leaders. Nor can it be ascribed merely to the Norsemen's reputedly strong inclination to pugnacity. There were fundamental principles involved in the struggle, principles which were directly concerned with the emerging church of Christ in our midst.

Undoubtedly the controversy helped greatly to clarify the thoughts and convictions of many in regard to the Christian life and the nature of the Christian church. It is perhaps not too much to say that most Lutheran congregations founded by Norwegians in America enjoy greater liberty and autonomy today than would have been theirs had it not been for the struggle in the 90's and the impact which it made upon subsequent devel-

opments. Evangelism and witnessing by the laity is more widely recognized than would otherwise have been probable. Congregations in the United States of Norwegian descent are perhaps more low-churchly and their pastors more democratic as a result of the clash of ideas. [26] The Christian faith as set forth in all the simplicity of our catechetical books has now prevailed over hair-splitting theological propositions and discussions. It is more than likely correct to say that all the Norwegian Lutheran congregations in America are today closer to the New Testament ideal of the Christian congregation than they were while they were still under the sway of some of the State Church ideas which the immigrants brought with them from Europe.

The struggle was therefore not in vain. Though much could no doubt have been said and done differently in the heat of battle, the results have been decidedly constructive. It is perhaps not far from the truth to say that all the groups concerned have derived benefit from the spiritual struggles of the pioneers. [27]

CHAPTER TWO

Doctrines and Principles

DOCTRINES

THE Lutheran Free Church is today, as it has always been, strictly Lutheran in doctrine. The congregations comprising it all accept both the Old Testament and the New Testament as the revealed Word of God, inspired by the Holy Spirit, and as the ultimate source of all truth pertaining to Christian faith, doctrine, and life. Its pastors are not modernistic in their beliefs or teachings, and modernism has found few if any adherents among its laity.

The Lutheran Free Church accepts as setting forth the teachings of the Scriptures the ancient creeds, such as the Apostolic, the Athanasian, and the Nicene. It subscribes unreservedly to the unaltered Augsburg Confession and to Luther's Small Catechism. Nothing contrary to the historic Christian truths set forth in these documents is taught in the congregations.

We believe that God is the Creator and Ruler of the universe. [28] We believe that man is sinful and cannot save himself. He can be saved only by grace through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. We believe that Jesus Christ is the unique Son of God and Son of Man; that He was born of the Virgin Mary; that His life was lived as a perfect fulfillment of the law in our stead; that He died on the cross of Calvary to make full atonement for the sins of the world; that He arose again bodily on Easter morn; and that He is coming again to judge the living and the dead. We also believe that it is the work of the Holy Spirit to bring men into fellowship with Jesus Christ. We believe, furthermore, that God has established His church in the world through the Holy Spirit and by His Word and that the church is the body of Christ of which He Himself is the Head.

In the instruction of its youth the congregations of the Lutheran Free Church follow a distinct tradition. The course of instruction which is given is basically the same as that which their ancestors received in the old countries. The textbooks

used are the Bible, Luther's Small Catechism, an Explanation of the Catechism, a condensed Bible History, and the hymnal. Adults who are received into the church upon profession of faith in Jesus Christ either by baptism or by confirmation are required to have a knowledge of Christian truth equivalent to that of a confirmed young person. [29]

Throughout its history the Lutheran Free Church has placed a great deal of emphasis upon this course of instruction. It has consistently held that the Christian faith as confessed by Lutherans is adequately set forth in these catechetical books. The leaders of the Lutheran Free Church have been steadfastly opposed to the formulation and discussion of theological propositions as a means of instructing or edifying the congregations or of effecting a union of Lutherans. They have always been of the conviction that they should emphasize a personal, vital, dynamic appropriation of the fundamental truths unto salvation rather than an intellectualistic reformulation and redefinition of theological doctrines and the attempt to secure assent thereto in the most minute details. The Lutheran Free Church has always recognized as Lutherans those who subscribe to the historic confessions of Lutheranism. Its leaders have always acted upon the premise that further theological deductions and agreement thereto were not necessary. In turn The Lutheran Free Church has taken the position that its members should be considered Lutherans by others on the same basis.

PRINCIPLES

The Lutheran Free Church has always been committed to certain definite principles in connection with Christian church work. [30] These principles are the result of intense study of the Scriptures on the part of pioneer church leaders in this country as they struggled to build the church of Christ as they thought it ought to be built.

In the early days there were many who desired to transplant the State Church system of Norway to American soil, with only such modifications as were necessary because of the separation of church and state in this country. Some of the immigrants who did not favor this offered as an alternative the virtually unorganized lay revival movement of Norway. In time it became increasingly clear to others that neither the State Church nor the Haugean movement offered the right pattern for the church of the future in America. These people were therefore impelled to make a fresh study of the New Testament in an endeavor to find the solution to the problem at hand. Before very long a group of highly trained and courageous men appeared on the scene who had the conviction that the New Testament indicates clearly what the Christian church is and how it should function. They were convinced that they had found the great underlying principles which should be followed in doing Christian church work.

The distinctive contribution which Augsburg Seminary and the Lutheran Free Church have made to Christian church work in America has been along these lines. Perhaps this contribution is greater than many realize. [31]

When it became clear to the "Friends of Augsburg" that reconciliation with the United Norwegian Lutheran Church was no longer possible, the "Friends" decided in 1896 to elect a

committee to draft a set of principles and rules for carrying on the work which was devolving upon them. Named to this committee were Professors Sverdrup and Oftedal, Engineer Olaf Hoff, and Pastors Paul Winthet and E. E. Gynild. Their report, entitled "Rules for a Lutheran Free Church. A. Fundamental Principles. B. Rules for Work," was presented to the annual meeting of "The Friends" in June, 1897, and was adopted, with a few slight modifications. By this action the "Friends of Augsburg" became the Lutheran Free Church.

The most influential members of the committee which formulated these principles and rules were Professors Sverdrup and Oftedal. It may well be assumed that the draft presented by the committee was the crystallization of years of research, reflection, and experience on their part. Fortunately, it is possible to trace from their writings the development of the ideas which were now presented in somewhat complete form. In doing so we are simultaneously afforded an insight into the church conditions which prevailed during those formative years. We also catch a glimpse of what our church might have been like had not these men and others contended against certain tendencies. [32]

We might begin our review by considering briefly one of the most highly controversial documents ever to appear in Norwegian Lutheran church circles. It was the "Open Declaration," issued by Oftedal and Weenaas in 1874, Oftedal's first statement concerning religious conditions among the Norwegian immigrants in America. It was a sharply-pointed, scathing denunciation of tendencies toward Catholicism which Oftedal discerned. He noted in this country an intellectualistic orthodoxy which limited theology to dogmatics and reduced faith to a dead knowledge. He pointed out that there was a spirit of spiritual exclusivism, which put obstacles in the way of vital spiritual instruction and free spiritual development. In this connection he said that some pastors were forbidding their church members even to listen to preachers of other church bodies. They were not even to accord the hospitality of their homes to members of other churches. And in death they were not permitted to share the same cemetery. Oftedal also charged that world-justification was being taught in such a way that personal responsibility was obliterated.

There were also a number of more practical tendencies toward Romanization. He charged that absolution was being practiced in such a way that it became virtually a sacrament attached to the office of the pastor. [33] He noted that a system had been established by which the pastor and the congregation were practically married to each other, an arrangement which in actual practice, however, was binding only upon the congregation. He assailed the unchristian doctrine concerning lay preaching which was being taught in certain quarters. According to this doctrine it was a sin for a layman to preach or to offer prayer in public except when no pastor could be secured or when the pastor who could be secured was not a member of the right church body.

Oftedal further deprecated the filling of official positions without giving the congregations a voice in the matter. He opposed the holding of secret doctrinal conferences from which the laity were excluded. He noticed that some of the church

leaders were hostile to all education which was not under ecclesiastical control. And he denounced those church leaders who were maintaining that slavery had divine sanction. This, Oftedal declared, was to make mockery of such things as individuality, personality, human freedom, and human rights.

Instead of tendencies such as these he appealed in his "Open Declaration" for individual and congregational liberty, for a powerful reawakening of Christian life, for freedom of inquiry, and for emphasis upon the Word of God and the Lutheran confessions rather than upon the discussion of dogmatic propositions. [34]

We might turn next to the "Program" of Augsburg Seminary which was worked out in 1874, shortly after Professor Sverdrup's arrival in this country. In this document are presented the ideas of the leaders at Augsburg in regard to the education of Christian ministers. It emphasized that pastors should not be trained simply to become members of a certain professional class, with the privileges of the pastoral office as they were enjoyed in Norway. Rather they should be trained to become zealous, Christ-minded servants of the congregations. Ministers were not to be aristocratic scholars; they were to be servants of the people, under God, thoroughly versed in the Scriptures and steeped in the spirit of true Christianity.

In an address at Augsburg Seminary in the same year, 1874, Sverdrup said that the congregations should be liberated from the domination of the ecclesiastical leaders. "Shall Christianity be a living, emancipating power," he asked, "or shall it be changed by the cunning of men into a letter which killeth?"

In 1877 the question of organizing a congregation at the Seminary, distinct from the nearby Trinity Congregation, was brought up by certain professors who advocated such a move. [35] Sverdrup and Oftedal opposed the formation of such a congregation, pointing out the importance of having the ministers of the future connected with regular congregations, composed of people from the ordinary walks of life, with both its dangers and its possibilities, rather than with an isolated, monastery-like congregation dominated by church leaders, such as the proposed organization might easily become. Once again the emphasis was upon democracy in church life rather than upon ecclesiastical authority.

The twenty-fifth anniversary of the founding of Augsburg Seminary was celebrated in 1894. On this occasion Professor Sverdrup delivered an address on "Augsburg's Principles" which affords us much background for a study of the principles of the Lutheran Free Church.

He began by saying that the task of making the transition from State Church to free church, which confronted the immigrants in America, was a great and a difficult one. God had sent Norway many spiritual awakenings, he said, but real Christian congregations had not resulted because the pastors preferred to retain their status as royal officials rather than become servants of the church. This attitude on the part of the clergy had contributed to the spread of atheism in the old country; many people became unbelievers when they saw what selfish attitudes the pastors adopted. They were led to believe that Christianity was only a deception practiced by the clergy, an invention for helping pastors to gain personal power and ad-

vantage. [36] One of Augsburg's principles, continued Sverdrup, is to proclaim the truth that the Gospel of Jesus Christ is an emancipating power, not one to be used for the enslavement of people. The motto of the school, "The Word Became Flesh," signifies that the mediator between God and man is not a priestly caste above the people, with temples made with human hands and ceremonies fashioned by human artifice, but the divine Word and Gospel which became incarnate, even Jesus Christ.

The church, Sverdrup went on to say, is not an assembly of people which men may compel by the exercise of worldly or superstitious power to maintain a priestly caste; nor is a church a gathering of ignorant, perhaps even immoral, people among whom the clergymen are to be teachers or masters, for the purpose of restraining them and thus strengthening civil order or the power of rulers. Nay, a Christian congregation is an assembly of volunteer men and women, brought together and united by the Spirit of God through the Word of the Lord and the Sacraments, one body with the Lord, Who lives in them and in Whom they live, the household of God and the dwelling-place of the Spirit. This assembly of believers should all be workers in the vineyard of the Lord; they should all show forth the excellencies of Him Who called them out of darkness into His [37] own marvelous light; they should all be priests of God, and there should be no "gracious sir" among them, nor should any even be referred to as such.

Finally, we might examine the "Minority Program" which the "Friends of Augsburg" adopted in 1894. This eight-point program was also very largely the work of Sverdrup and Oftedal. It sets forth the conviction that a church body should be a fellowship of congregations, organized in such a way as to afford the freedom of the congregations its greatest possible opportunity for development. It insists upon the right of pastors and congregations to have free and independent convictions. It states that congregations should have the right to call their own pastors and deprecates the practice of delegating this right to the president of the synod or to some committee. Christian activity on the part of lay people is strongly recommended. One paragraph takes issue with any church body which attempts to bind the consciences of men. The last point of the "Program" maintains that a church body should not be an ecclesiastical authority over the congregations, with the right to demand obedience and submission, but only an organ by means of which the congregations may carry on certain larger tasks which they are unable to carry on alone. Such tasks include the maintenance of a seminary and the promotion of home and foreign mission work. [38]

In 1897, as we have already noted, the trend of thought indicated in the documents to which we have referred was formulated as the "Principles and Rules" of the Lutheran Free Church. They reflect very clearly the views of the two leaders at Augsburg Seminary in regard to the nature of the Christian congregation, its manner of functioning, and its relation to other congregations.

We turn now to a brief consideration of these principles.

The first one reads thus: According to the Word of God, the congregation (local church) is the right form, of the kingdom of God on earth.

It will be noted that by this principle the Bible is accepted as authoritative also in matters pertaining to the way in which the church should be organized. By taking this position the Lutheran Free Church said in effect that we need not accept any form of the church simply because it has come down to us in history. The Word of God, not history, is the criterion of what the church should be. The form which the church assumes from age to age is not simply a matter of expediency. There is a standard also for the form which the church may take. This norm is the Word of God, particularly the New Testament.

The first principle accepts the congregation, the local church, as the divinely instituted form of the kingdom of God. [39] This does not in any way constitute a denial of that great object of our faith which we know as the holy Christian church. Every Christian is a member of the universal church; and every Christian among us should rejoice that the content of our faith also includes the church, in which we have daily forgiveness of sins and communion with the whole church of the living Christ. Our emphasis upon the local congregation stems from the fact that in practical Christian living the universal church manifests itself in the local congregation. This we believe is clearly indicated in the New Testament writings where, according to many scholars, the word "church" refers in the majority of instances to the local congregation. While Christians have membership and fellowship in the universal church, yet this membership and fellowship are based purely on faith. Actually, membership and fellowship are exercised in local congregations. Christians share the limitations of human beings generally: they cannot be in more than one place at one time. There is therefore a large measure of truth in the statement that the church is, practically speaking, the local congregation. This principle implies that synods or other organized groups of congregations are not divinely instituted in the same sense that the congregation is, and are therefore secondary to the congregations. [40] When such denominational bodies serve the congregations there need be no objection to them. But they may never be permitted to displace the congregations or deprive them of their sovereignty or liberty.

This principle implies further that organizations within a congregation or societies made up of people belonging to a number of congregations are also secondary in importance to the congregation itself and should not in any way usurp the place of the congregation or adversely affect it. Such organizations are permissible only in so far as they serve the congregations.

The second principle states: The congregation consists of believers who, by using the means of grace (the Word of God and the Sacraments) and the gifts of grace (spiritual gifts) as directed by the Word of God, seek salvation and eternal blessedness for themselves and their fellow men.

According to this principle the Christian congregation does not simply consist of the people who live within a certain prescribed geographical area, as was the case in the State Church of Europe. Nor does the congregation consist, without further qualification, of those whose names are on the membership rolls of the congregation. A Christian congregation is a body of believers in Christ. Only those who live in true fellowship

with Christ are real members of the body of Christ. [41]

The second principle states further that the great objective of the Christian congregation is salvation from sin and eternal blessedness for all men. That men might be forever saved is the reason for the existence of the church in the world. The church fails essentially when any other objective is allowed to take precedence over this one.

In order that it might attain its great objective God has given the church, first, the means of grace and, secondly, the gifts of grace. The means of grace are the Word and the Sacraments, through which God by His Spirit imparts to human hearts the grace which brings salvation. The gifts of grace, or spiritual gifts, are those spiritual talents with which the Spirit of God has endowed Christian church members for the purpose of building up the spiritual life of the congregation and winning others for the kingdom of God.

We believe that God's grace and Spirit come to us through certain means. We are not of those who think that God's Spirit comes to men by other means or by no means at all. God comes to us in Word and Sacrament. If we would meet Him, we must meet Him there.

We also believe that God has given His people spiritual endowments or gifts by which to serve Him in and through His church. These gifts are enumerated in the twelfth chapter of Romans, the twelfth chapter of First Corinthians, and the fourth chapter of Ephesians. [42] Among them are the gifts of preaching, teaching, exhorting, ruling, giving, showing mercy, healing, and having faith to undertake things for God. By the exercise of these gifts the spiritual life of the church is to be sustained and its work in this world accomplished.

The third principle: According to the New Testament, an external organization of the congregation is necessary, with membership roll, election of officers, stated times and places for assembly, and so forth.

This principle was very evidently written with those people in mind who in the name of freedom would abolish the outward organization of the congregation. Here the Lutheran Free Church placed itself in opposition to certain super-spiritual people who had no use for the Christian congregation. These people considered themselves so free that they would not even be bound by the Word of God. They turned liberty into license. With these the founders of the Lutheran Free Church were not at all in agreement. In fact, they considered these ultra "free" people as worse foes of the Christian congregation than those who favored synodical dominion over the congregations. The leaders at Augsburg fought for freedom from ecclesiastical tyranny, but not for freedom from the teachings and the examples set forth in the Word of God. [43] They reacted strongly against those who seemed to make church constitutions and by-laws the all-important things in connection with church work, pointing out that organizational forms do not produce spiritual life and cannot take the place of such life; but they also recognized clearly that in this world life must have forms, and that this applies also to the life of the Christian congregation. They desired to point out that first comes life and then come forms, but they did not teach that forms had no place whatsoever.

The fourth principle: Members of the organized congrega-

tion are not, in every instance, believers, and such hypocrites often derive a false hope from their external connections with the congregation. It is therefore the sacred obligation of the congregation to purify itself by the quickening preaching of the Word, by earnest admonition and exhortation, and by expelling the openly sinful and perverse.

This principle reiterates the point that only true believers are true members of the Christian church. This does not mean, as some have inferred, that a congregation is not a congregation when it has a number of nominal Christians in its midst. The New Testament writings indicate very clearly that similar situations prevailed also in the apostolic congregations. But the Word of God does not state that they were not congregations. [44] On the contrary, the Apostle Paul addresses them again and again as such. However, it is equally clear from the Scriptures that the congregations were not to be content with this state of affairs; they were to seek to win the unbelieving church members to the new life in God.

The fourth principle also indicates the ways in which this is to be done. It mentions first “quicken preaching” of the Word of God. By this is meant live or vital preaching, preaching which seeks to awaken the listener to spiritual life. Such preaching must proclaim that sin condemns and that we are saved by grace through faith in Jesus Christ. The principle next mentions admonition and exhortation. And, finally, in the case of the openly ungodly and perverse, the principle states that expulsion should be resorted to in order to rid the congregation of offense.

The Lutheran Free Church has never accepted the viewpoint that the membership of a congregation necessarily consists of true Christians only. It has rather proceeded on the premise that unbelievers and hypocrites may have been accepted into the congregation and that there may be members who once were true believers but who have fallen away from God. For this reason, as well as in order to win the outsider, evangelistic meetings and evangelistic preaching are stressed in Lutheran Free Church congregations. [45]

The fifth principle: The congregation governs its own affairs, subject to the authority of the Word of God and of the Spirit, and recognizes no other ecclesiastical authority or government over itself.

This paragraph needs little elucidation. It lays claim to the sovereignty and autonomy of the local congregation. No ecclesiastical personage nor churchly super-organization can legislate for the local church and compel compliance. The Lutheran Free Church is congregational in polity.

This does not mean that our congregations recognize no law whatsoever and reject all authority. They are bound by the authority of the Scriptures and the Spirit of God. These constitute the highest authority of all. Concerning this Professor Sverdrup wrote: “So absolute is this authority that a congregation is no longer a congregation when it tears itself loose from it. And only so far is a congregation a true congregation as it subjects itself to this authority.”

The sixth principle: A free and independent congregation esteems and cherishes all the gifts of the Spirit which the Lord confers upon it for its own edification, and seeks to stimulate

and encourage their use.

The Lutheran Free Church has endeavored in a special way to point out that the Christian congregation is charismatically organized by the Spirit of God. [46] By this we mean that the Spirit of God has conferred some spiritual gift or gifts upon all true members of the church and that by the exercise of these gifts the church is to build up its own spiritual life and perform the mission assigned to it by the Lord.

This principle refers in particular to the Christian activity of lay people. The Christian congregation is looked upon as a fellowship of Christian people in which all believers have a task to do in the work of the kingdom of God, according to the gift which the Holy Spirit has given each one of them. The pastor is their voluntarily chosen leader; he is not their substitute. He works with them and they with him, each according to his or her spiritual endowments. He should not either intentionally or unintentionally supplant or ignore them or their talents, but seek to foster and encourage the use of every gift which the Lord has given His church. These talents vary, as the epistles of Paul clearly indicate; they include the gifts of witnessing by word of mouth and of rendering many other forms of Christian service.

The seventh principle: A free and independent congregation gladly accepts the mutual assistance which congregations can give one another in the work of furthering the kingdom of God.

The eighth principle: This mutual assistance consists both in the exchange of spiritual gifts between [47] congregations through conferences, exchange of visits, layman’s activities, and so forth, whereby congregations are mutually edified, as well as in the voluntary and Spirit-promoted cooperation of congregations for the purpose of accomplishing such tasks as would exceed the ability of the individual congregation.

The ninth principle: Among such tasks may be mentioned specifically a theological seminary, distribution of Bibles and other books and periodicals, home missions, foreign missions, Jewish missions, deaconess institutes, children’s homes, and other institutions of charity.

Because of the experiences through which the “Friends of Augsburg” passed in the early days, it was only natural that the freedom of the individual congregations should receive the greatest emphasis throughout the history of the Lutheran Free Church. The principles themselves, however, in these three last paragraphs stress the importance and the necessity of inter-congregational unity and fellowship. This emphasis has at times been missing in the congregations comprising the Lutheran Free Church. But in recent years not a little progress has been made in the direction of greater cooperation. More of the congregations have begun to realize that only by subjecting themselves one to another in love and by working together in this spirit can the common tasks of the Lutheran Free Church be accomplished. [48] The goal must always be congregational liberty coupled with congregational interdependence and unity.

The tenth principle: Free and independent congregations have no right to demand that other congregations shall submit to their opinion, will, judgment, or decision; therefore all domi-

nation of a majority of congregations over a minority shall not be tolerated.

The eleventh principle: Cooperating agencies that may be found desirable for the activities of congregations, such as larger and smaller conferences, committees, officers, and so forth, cannot, in a Lutheran Free Church, impose any obligations or restrictions, exert any compulsion, or lay any burden upon the individual congregations, but have the right only of making recommendations to, and requests of, congregations and individuals.

These paragraphs reiterate the provision that a majority of congregations or cooperating groups of any kind can only make recommendations to the congregations and cannot legislate for them.

The twelfth principle: Every free and independent congregation, as well as every individual believer, is prompted by the Spirit of God and has the right of love to do good and to work for the salvation of souls and for the quickening of spiritual life as far as its abilities and power permit. In such free spiritual activity it is limited neither by parish nor synodical bounds. [49]

In this principle the liberty of the individual Christian in particular is set forth. Neither his love of mankind in Jesus Christ nor his labors in their behalf should be restricted either by synodical or by congregational lines.

This principle very obviously pertains to purely spiritual solicitude and endeavor on the part of Christian members of one church for members of other churches or for the unchurched. The fact that people belong to other congregations does not excuse the Christian from having their spiritual welfare at heart. However, the sincere and conscientious Christian in exercising this right will be careful not to proselytize nor otherwise violate Christian pastoral and congregational ethics.

CHAPTER THREE

Down Through The Years

As we have already noted, the Lutheran Free Church was formed on June 10, 1897, when "Fundamental Principles" and "Rules for Work" were adopted.

The prospect for the immediate future was not a promising one. The court had not as yet decided whether the "Friends of Augsburg" were to retain the institution or not. There was a possibility that the Lutheran Free Church might find itself without the very institution which had brought it into being. Nevertheless, the group decided to proceed. If necessary, a new school would have to be built to advance the ideals and principles for which the leaders at Augsburg had contended so many years. But even if the court did award the institution to the Lutheran Free Church, where was the strong church body to maintain and develop it? [51] The new association of congregations was anything but strong. It consisted of a mere handful of congregations and a number of interested individuals. Those who were affiliating with the new church body could not look forward to an auspicious future. There was no material advantage of any kind to be gained. Nor was there any popularity to

be achieved. They were men and women who realized that they must be willing to make sacrifices and to suffer for their convictions. In no small measure they were called upon to do both.

Professor Georg Sverdrup gave the main report to the meeting at which the Lutheran Free Church was organized. In it he pointed out that the committee which had been chosen to formulate the principles and rules by which the group was to be guided in its future endeavors was given a threefold mandate: 1) that the freedom of the local congregations should be accorded full and complete recognition; 2) that co-operation between the congregations should be strengthened, not weakened; and 3) that another synod should not be formed.

Sverdrup contended that the synodical form of denominational organization was dangerous because of the temptation inherent in it to rule rather than serve the individual congregations comprising the synod. The emphasis, said he, must be shifted from the synod to the congregations. [52] A way must therefore be found by which congregations could work together without either surrendering their freedom or losing their sense of responsibility for the common tasks. This way Sverdrup and his committee were convinced they had found in "Principles" and "Rules."

The Lutheran Free Church is therefore not a synod in the usually-accepted sense of the term. It functions in many respects like a synod, but it neither possesses nor exercises any power to legislate for the local congregations. Moreover, it is so organized that neither a majority nor a minority of congregations can compel the other congregations to do their bidding. The form of church government adopted by the Lutheran Free Church enables the local congregations to retain the right of self-rule, subject to the Word of God and His Spirit. At the same time it provides a way for voluntary co-operation on the part of these sovereign congregations.

The Lutheran Free Church, continued Sverdrup in his report, should set itself the task of making the local congregations what they ought to be and could be, according to the Word of God. He urged that many conferences and other gatherings be held in order that new life and freedom might be brought to the congregations. He envisaged future annual meetings of the Lutheran Free Church exercising a marked influence upon the congregations in this respect. [53]

He noted that during the year which had passed many laymen as well as pastors had been actively engaged in evangelistic work and that there was much zeal for the spiritual awakening of the congregations. Notwithstanding many difficulties and trials, the work was progressing steadily. The twelve congregations which had been expelled had now been joined by a fairly large number of other congregations, which had withdrawn from the parent body in order to give their support to the work of the Lutheran Free Church.

It is difficult to give an accurate estimate of the number of congregations or the number of people associated with the Lutheran Free Church at the time of its organization. There were sixty-six pastors, six professors, and nearly 200 lay people present at the meeting in 1897. It would appear that there was representation from sixty-three parishes, consisting of approxi-

mately 125 congregations, most of them very small.

The Annual Conference of 1898 was also held in Minneapolis. Pastor E. P. Harbo reported as president, the first in the Lutheran Free Church to hold this position. At this time the office was largely that of a moderator. As yet there was no Board of Organization.

In his address to the convention Harbo set forth with characteristic clarity the aims and purposes of the Lutheran Free Church: that all Norwegian Lutheran congregations might become living and free congregations. [54] It is not a new work, said the president, but one that has been carried on among Norwegians since the days of Hans Nielsen Hauge. And now as then, he continued, work of this kind is opposed by many pastors, not only in Norway but also in the United States. Harbo cited the words of one Norwegian-American church leader who had said, with reference to a spiritual awakening in western Norway: "From this we would pray God graciously to deliver us." The president contended further that many other pastors in America were opposed both to revivals and to congregational liberty. The objective which the Lutheran Free Church had set itself was therefore, continued the report, not only justifiable but necessary.

The meeting was attended by fifty-seven pastors and professors and 140 voting lay members.

At the meeting in Dalton, Minnesota, in 1899, Harbo said that the situation looked brighter than it did the year before. The litigation involving Augsburg Seminary had finally been concluded, a court of equity having awarded the endowment and a part of the library of the institution to the United Norwegian Lutheran Church and the remaining properties to the board of trustees of the Seminary. [55]

Continuing his report the president said that many were being aroused from their spiritual slumbers by the awakenings which were taking place, though many still slept. A large number of evangelistic meetings had been conducted by both pastors and laymen. The missionary work of the Lutheran Free Church was growing.

The aim of the Lutheran Free Church, he went on to say, was to work for living and Spirit-filled congregations. The means to be employed in seeking to attain this objective were the Word of God and the Sacraments. Church customs and ceremonies were not the means. Nor would altering or abolishing church usages accomplish the desired result. President Harbo took particular pains to point out that great care should be exercised in changing the ritual and the customs of the churches. Such changes would not produce spiritual life, he warned. Only the diligent use of Word and Sacrament will bring spiritual life. This life will thereupon find its proper forms.

Eleven theological students were being graduated from the Seminary, a number which was insufficient to meet the needs of the congregations. Contributions to Augsburg, missions, and charities had exceeded all expectations.

The Organization Committee, which had been elected the year before, made its first report at this time. [56] Sixty-nine pastors and 204 lay delegates were present at this Conference.

Pastor E. E. Gynild presided at the meeting in Montevideo, Minnesota, in 1900. His report to the convention made men-

tion of the difficulties involved in establishing a free church in America after the immigrants had been wards of the State Church of Norway nearly all their life. He predicted that the road ahead would not be an easy one. He also said that the early collapse of the Lutheran Free Church movement had been prophesied by its opponents because of the youthfulness of the pastors and professors associated with it. But Gynild averred that these young men were gradually developing greater effectiveness. Gynild's report also concerned itself with the new generation. "We must begin with the children," he said, "otherwise we will not even have a church."

A Norwegian Sunday-school paper called *The Child's Friend* had appeared during the year. Augsburg had been attended by 201 students. Pastor Peter Nilsen was in his sixth year as evangelist. And giving was on the increase.

The fifth Annual Conference was held in Willmar, Minnesota. In his report the president emphasized the need of a greater sense of responsibility on the part of the congregations for the work of the church at large. [57] Drought conditions and crop failures notwithstanding, all the congregations should have a part in the missionary endeavors of the Lutheran Free Church. Traveling evangelists were reminded that they should proclaim the whole counsel of God unto salvation and not merely agitate for a reform with respect to ecclesiastical customs. The meeting was attended by sixty-eight pastors and 204 lay people.

The following year, at the meeting in Audubon, Minnesota, Harbo reported as president again. He said that many people were waking up and inquiring about living and free congregations. A new day was dawning. The way to work for the quickening and the liberation of the congregations, said he, was to return "to the Word and to the testimony." To attempt to organize "pure" congregations was not the way. (He referred to a movement in Norwegian Lutheran circles which aimed by a careful selection of church members to build up "pure" congregations. The Lutheran Free Church took issue very decidedly with the proponents of this movement, seeing in it a judging of the hearts of others which was foreign to the Scriptures.)

At this meeting Harbo also stressed elementary Christian education and the Lord's Supper. He reported further that it had been a banner year at Augsburg. The new administration and classroom building had been dedicated on January 1, 1902. [58] This was indeed no mean accomplishment at this early hour in the history of our church.

A committee on liturgy also reported to this meeting. It submitted a proposed order for morning services, one for Sunday afternoon devotional meetings to be conducted by the lay members of the church, and orders for Holy Communion and Baptism. There was also an order for the final examination preceding confirmation. It included the awarding of a certificate showing that the young person had satisfactorily completed the course of instruction which precedes confirmation. The appearance of this special order can be traced to the agitation then current for eliminating the vows from the confirmation rite. However, this special certificate was never used extensively. And the movement to abolish the vows in connection with confirmation was short-lived, failing to win the approval of the congregations.

At the next Annual Conference President Harbo again mentioned the importance of the Lord's Supper as a means of grace and asked that the pastors accord it full recognition as such in their practice, preaching, and teaching. He also noted that some pastors were uncertain as to when to organize congregations. They were being influenced by the agitation for "pure" congregations. A number of our ministers did pastoral work for some time in a place without doing any organizational work, [59] feeling that they did not as yet have the right kind of people out of which to form a congregation. They were decidedly averse to spiritually dead congregations, and had no desire to increase their number. It could not be said that they were afflicted with a mania for size or numbers. Nor were they desirous simply of building up a strong outward church body. They were interested in seeing the true church of Christ established.

In pursuing this attitude it is not unlikely that they erred on the side of expecting too much before they proceeded to establish formal congregations. As a result, many fields were lost to the Lutheran Free Church. Other synods came in and organized congregations where our pastors had labored for months and even years. This was very detrimental to the growth of the Lutheran Free Church, particularly at this time. As Harbo stated in his report of the same year, a great influx of settlers into northern Wisconsin, Minnesota, North Dakota, the West Coast, and Canada was under way. Many new congregations would be formed in these areas. Failure to make use of these opportunities would be costly. It was perhaps the greatest home mission opportunity in the history of our church. Fortunately, notwithstanding this hesitancy on the part of some of our pastors to organize, the president could report that many new congregations had been formed on our home mission fields. [60]

The first attempt to gather church statistics was made during the year 1902-03. Statistical blanks, usually referred to as parochial blanks, had been sent out to 110 pastors. This would indicate that the number of pastors in the Lutheran Free Church had almost doubled in six years. However, only thirty-six of them filled out the blanks, giving figures from ninety congregations. The results were not published. The secretary of the Organization Committee did volunteer the information, however, that there were approximately three times as many congregations as those reporting. This would indicate that nearly 270 congregations were now associated with the Lutheran Free Church.

Pastor Chr. Ytrehus reported as president in 1904. He gave special attention to the Christian instruction of youth and to the matter of pastors' salaries. At least twenty-four ministers had had a salary of less than \$300 during the past year. Forty had not had over \$400. The president urged that something be done about this. It was working a hardship on the pastors and was also beginning to affect the supply of ministerial candidates. Some families were paying as little as two dollars a year toward their pastor's stipend. Ytrehus informed the Annual Conference that twenty new congregations had been organized during the year as a result of home mission work. In his report he also suggested that the Organization Committee be enlarged to include the chairmen of the various boards in the Lutheran

Free Church. [61]

At the Annual Conference in 1905 a distinct change in procedure took place. The president of the Lutheran Free Church did not report to the meeting. Instead, the Organization Committee reported. This continued to be the practice for the next seventeen years, until the year 1922. Obviously the president's office was being shorn of whatever power it had ever possessed, which was very little indeed, the president up to this time having been little more than a moderator. This new step could not have been taken because past presidents had exceeded their authority.

It is more likely that many people in the Lutheran Free Church felt that synodical presidents in times past had exercised undue powers over the congregations and our people were desirous of avoiding this state of affairs. Some maintained that synodical presidents had dominated to such an extent that the congregations had been deprived of their liberties. It is clear that the accent at this time in the Lutheran Free Church was upon freedom rather than upon co-operation. In time the pendulum was to move slowly in the other direction, toward a greater emphasis upon united effort.

President Gynild presided at the next two Annual Conferences, and Pastor J. U. Pedersen, the chairman of the Organization Committee, gave the reports which had in former years been given by the president. [62] At the meeting in 1906 he admonished groups of individuals not to start new ventures in the name of the church at large. He stated also that a more co-operative spirit was needed, and that for the sake of greater unity and more effective co-operation the presidents of the various boards should confer at least annually. He commented also that there was a shortage of pastors.

In 1907 Pedersen remarked that statistics had been gathered again, but that they were only to be made available to the various boards and other interested persons. He mentioned, as does practically every annual report by the president or the Board of Organization, that spiritual awakenings had taken place during the year; but he warned at the same time that evangelistic preaching was not enough. "We must work together," he said with emphasis. Mention was made for the first time of young people's rallies in various parts of the Lutheran Free Church. Bilingual difficulties were beginning to be felt. It was recommended that an English Conference be formed. Pedersen also urged that the various boards confer with one another, especially in regard to financial matters. He mentioned that church union was in the air.

Two leaders had passed away during the year. Pastor Ole Paulson, Augsburg's "grandfather," had died on April 20. [63] And on May 3 Professor Georg Sverdrup, the founder, genius, and greatest leader of the Lutheran Free Church had been called. He was at his passing only fifty-seven years of age. Coming when it did, his departure seemed like a severe blow to our church, which only ten years previously had come into being under his strong leadership.

The Annual Report of 1907 contains the first summary of parochial statistics ever to be published by the Lutheran Free Church. They had been gathered and prepared for publication by Professor J. E. Fossum, secretary of the Organization Com-

mittee. The figures revealed that there were now 115 pastorates in our church. However, only the ministers of sixty-nine of these had reported. Their reports covered 198 congregations and 40 preaching places, with a total number of 16,669 souls, an average of 242 to each call. Applying this figure to the unreported calls, it would appear that the Lutheran Free Church in 1907 numbered 28,043 baptized persons. Pastors' salaries ranged from \$50 to \$900 per year, the average being \$406.80, not including home mission aid. Fossum's survey also brings out the fact that with few exceptions the Altar Book of the Church of Norway was being used in the congregations. Evidently the new liturgical forms which had been prepared several years previously had not met with the approval of the congregations. [64]

Pastor Harbo was in the moderator's seat again at the meeting in 1908. Pastor Johan Mattson reported for the Organization Committee. He noted that some pastors were stressing changes in ritual more than they should and were thus creating a wrong impression. Spiritual awakenings were again reported in a number of places. Many lay preachers had traveled and preached throughout the year. Church politics was at work here and there. And there was some agitation for church union. The English Conference made its first report at this time.

No less than 107 out of 115 parishes had reported their church statistics, representing 283 congregations and missions with a total of 26,442 souls. The average salary of the pastors had risen slightly, to \$551.40 per year.

Gynild presided at the meeting in Montevideo, Minnesota, in 1909, while Mattson gave the report on the activities of the year. Spiritual revivals had again occurred in a number of the congregations. The first volume of Sverdrup's writings had been published. Professor H.A. Urseth, greatly beloved teacher at Augsburg, had passed away. Twenty-four new congregations had been added to the Lutheran Free Church during the year. There were now 300 congregations, comprising 4,831 families, with an aggregate of 26,932 souls. Only nineteen of these congregations had formally adopted the "Principles" of the Lutheran Free Church, [65] according to the report of Pastor M. Rufsvold, secretary of the Organization Committee.

When Rufsvold again reported, in 1910 at Valley City, North Dakota, he said that there was not sufficient unity among us. He also warned against superficial evangelism. Twenty-six of our calls were vacant, and some of these fields were gradually being lost to our work. It was suggested that a pension society for pastors and their dependents be formed. Rufsvold also called for more adequate financial support for Augsburg, stating that the maintenance of this institution was the most important task of the Lutheran Free Church. He reported that young people's conventions had been held in several places and that young people's work was growing.

During this Annual Conference a telegram was received from the United Norwegian Lutheran Church proposing church union.

It is interesting to note that the English Conference decided at this convention that there was need for an English Sunday-school paper in the Lutheran Free Church.

Pastor Paul Winther presided at the Annual Conference in

1911, and Rufsvold reported again on the church. Once more he urged that the Lutheran Free Church strive for greater solidarity. He pointed out that no church-wide young people's conventions had as yet been held. [66] He suggested that the parochial statistics be published in the Annual Report. He deplored the frequent pastoral changes which were taking place. A meeting of the heads of the various boards together with the Organization Committee had been held during the year. The invitation to consider church union which had been received the year before had not met with a favorable response throughout our church. For this reason no meeting had been held with the United Church committee on union to consider the subject.

The English Conference recommended at this convention that an English church paper be started and that a liturgy for English services be prepared. The advice of a committee that the publication of an English Sunday-school paper be delayed was accepted by the convention. No further action was taken by the Annual Conference on these recommendations. Pastor Claus Morgan was prompted to urge that the English Conference meet independently of the Annual Conference and at a different time of the year. Very obviously the Lutheran Free Church had at this time little foresight concerning the use of the English language, notwithstanding the definite views on the subject, favorable to English, which had been expressed by the elder Professor Sverdrup many years previously. Out of 9,241 services conducted during the year, only 473 had been in the English language, less than six percent. [67] In only fifty-three out of 300 congregations had English been used at all.

The Annual Conference of 1911 mourned the demise of Professor Sven Oftedal, the senior Sverdrup's gifted colleague and spiritual twin. The two greatest pillars in the Lutheran Free Church had now been removed. Many of our people looked toward the future with grave misgivings. Would the Lutheran Free Church be able to continue without its giant leaders? With Sverdrup and Oftedal gone, and with a definite lack of vision with respect to the Americanization of the church, the future seemed tenuous, to say the least.

Pastor Johan Mattson gave the report on the state of the church at the meeting in Thief River Falls, Minnesota, in 1912. It showed another increase in the number of congregations. The Selected Writings of Georg Sverdrup had now been published in six volumes, edited by Professor A. Helland. Mattson recommended that the home mission board have three pastors-at-large. He also noted that there was some agitation again for church union.

It was to this Annual Conference that Professor George Sverdrup made his first report as president of Augsburg College and Theological Seminary, having been elected to the position the year before. He was a son of the elder Sverdrup and had almost the same name as his father. The former was Georg, and the latter George. [68] A Sverdrup was again president of Augsburg.

In 1913 the Annual Conference was informed that Dr. J. O. Evien had translated the "Principles" into English. He was a member of Olivet Lutheran Church in Minneapolis, our only all-English congregation at the time. However, requests were beginning to come in for model constitutions for such congregations.

gations.

Plans for a pension society for pastors were now being advanced. Spiritual awakenings were taking place. Augsburg was being hampered in its work because of insufficient funds. There was a great deal of agitation for church union among the various Norwegian Lutheran synods in the United States. Again the United Norwegian Lutheran Church had made overtures to the Lutheran Free Church regarding union. The Annual Conference of 1912 had responded by electing a committee of five to meet with a similar committee from the other church body. Sessions of the joint committee were held in St. Paul, Minnesota, December 11,12. An extended report of the deliberations is recorded in the Annual Report of 1913. Since the committee from the United Norwegian Lutheran Church maintained that it had a mandate to consider nothing but organic union, and the committee from the Lutheran Free Church insisted that it had a mandate only to consider further co-operation with the other church body, [69] no agreement of any kind as to a merger of the two bodies was reached. The Lutheran Free Church in this way declined to enter into the union of 1917, out of which the Norwegian Lutheran Church of America was formed. There was not very much sentiment throughout the congregations of the Lutheran Free Church for the proposed amalgamation.

Pastor Johan Mattson served as president the next three years and the reports during the same period were given by Pastor S. Rislov as chairman of the Board of Organization.

At the Annual Conference in Brainerd, Minnesota, in 1914 it was reported that the first church-wide young people's convention ever to be held in our church had taken place.

In 1915, at the meeting held in Marinette, Wisconsin, Rislov reported that there were indications that some of our pastors had lost heart for our work. In this connection he pointed out that the way of the Lutheran Free Church would be a difficult one. There could be no spiritual freedom without spiritual life; and to work for spiritual life is no easy task. His report went on to say that at Augsburg there was "outward tribulation and inward fear." A collection of sermons by a number of our pastors and professors had appeared under the title Seek the Lord.

Its publication had given rise to a great deal of acrimonious criticism and discussion in our official Norwegian church paper. [70] Tempers seemed to be on edge. The report further stated that the Book Concern was in financial straits and needed assistance.

In 1916 the reports showed that there were 138 pastors in active service. This was the first sign of parochial statistics which had appeared for some years. Rislov complained that no congregations were adopting the "Principles." The standing committee on co-operation had had nothing to do.

The Conference in 1916 decided that an English Sunday-school paper should be published, either separately or as a part of the Norwegian paper.

Pastor E. E. Gynild was president when the Annual Conference assembled in 1917 at Fargo, North Dakota. America was now at war. The report from the Organization Committee called attention to strong union movements among Lutherans in America. This was the year in which the Norwegian Lutheran Church of America was formed. The following year a merger

of three other groups resulted in the formation of the United Lutheran Church. For not uniting with others the Lutheran Free Church was accused of being foolishly one-sided and conceited. The report stated further, however, that greater unity was becoming apparent in the Lutheran Free Church. It also asserted that strong objections were being made to Professor J. O. Evjen's articles on the ordination of ministers. [71] The articles in question were accused of propagating a viewpoint which practically did away with local congregations.

At this meeting it was decided to merge *Waisenhus Tidende*, a Norwegian religious paper published on the Pacific Coast, with *Folkebladet*, our official Norwegian church paper. *Gasseren*, a Norwegian monthly mission periodical, had been merged the year before. It was also resolved to proceed with the publication of a separate English Sunday-school paper.

The president of the English Conference stated at this convention that seventy percent of all Sunday-school work and fifty percent of all young people's work was now being done in the English language. Thirty percent of all public worship services were being conducted in English. The English Conference now decided to start the publication of an English church paper, *The Lutheran Messenger*.

The next two Annual Conferences were held in Minneapolis. The reports in 1918 took cognizance of a charge made by a Lutheran periodical that the Lutheran Free Church was no longer certain of its course, a sentiment which was being re-echoed by several of the leading pastors of our church. It was also noted that during the nearly twenty-five years which had elapsed since the formation of the Lutheran Free Church a number of pastors had left us.

Only six young men were being graduated from the college department and eight from the seminary department at Augsburg. [72] This could be accounted for in large part by the fact that Augsburg was at this time a school for young men only and we were in the midst of the first World War. But other factors also entered in. There were internal difficulties at the school as well as in our church as a whole. It was perhaps the most critical time in all our history.

At this convention the English Conference urged that a pastor be delegated to travel and to organize English congregations, and that a church extension fund be established. It was evidently dear to some that our failure to solve the language problem was at least in some measure responsible for the discouraging outlook at the time. No doubt it was greatly responsible. Our work in the Norwegian language was becoming less effective because it did not reach our young people and others residing in the communities in which our congregations were located. And our work in the English language had scarcely been begun. Only the year before it had been seriously maintained on the floor of our annual convention that the Lutheran Free Church should keep to the Norwegian language and let others do the work in English.

Pastor Claus Morgan gave the report as secretary of the Organization Committee in 1919. He reminded us that the war was over, but not its consequences. [73] A League of Nations was in prospect. In Norwegian Lutheran circles the formation of the minority Norwegian Synod was noted. Influenza was

raging and hampering church work. As a whole, Morgan said, the work in the Lutheran Free Church had gone forward. People were showing much love for our common causes. He announced that we had become a part of the National Lutheran Council and that Augsburg was about to celebrate its fiftieth anniversary.

At the Seminary, differences of long standing between Professor Sverdrup and Professor Evjen had reached a climax in the resignation of the former as president of the institution. In dealing with the situation it was decided not to accept the resignation of Sverdrup and not to re-elect Evjen to his position at the school.

Morgan also gave the report in 1920 at the meeting in Thief River Falls. In it he stated that more students were attending Augsburg, that there was need for evangelistic work in the English language, that a church extension fund had now been started, and that a pension society had been organized. He asked if the time had not come in the Lutheran Free Church when the Organization Committee should call a pastor to devote all his time to the task of giving assistance to the congregations, especially those which were temporarily without a pastor. [74] The conviction had been growing for some time that a full-time, salaried president, or the equivalent thereof, was sorely needed to attend to the affairs of our church as a whole. We were now large enough to require the services of such a man. Many felt that the lack of such an official had been very costly. The traditional aversion to such an office was being modified by the force of practical considerations. - The answer to Morgan's question was not far away.

The Annual Report of 1920 published the results of a survey made by the English Conference in regard to the status of English work in the congregations. It showed that thirty percent of all church services, forty-eight percent of all Sunday-school work, and fifty-seven percent of all young people's work was being done in English. There were now nine all-English congregations.

Pastor O. H. Sletten presided at the meeting held in St. Petri Church in Minneapolis in 1921. He also gave the report of the Organization Committee, as its secretary. He stated that there was a dearth of properly qualified pastors in the Lutheran Free Church. He said that the language question was responsible for this very critical situation. There was also an insufficient supply of ministerial candidates. Spiritual awakenings had occurred in many congregations. A Young People's Federation had been organized in the fall of 1920. Pastors' salaries were too low. [75] The report turned to the school question in the Lutheran Free Church, stating that the situation in this respect was very acute. In an endeavor to effect an improvement, the Organization Committee made a motion that a board of education be established. The Committee also moved that funds for the Committee's treasury be secured by assessing the various existing treasuries in the Lutheran Free Church. At the same time it was moved that the president of our church henceforth report to the Annual Conference, and that a man be elected for a term of three years to serve the Lutheran Free Church as a whole. A majority of the Organization Committee also concurred in a motion that co-education be introduced into the

college at Augsburg.

At this meeting the president of the English Conference asserted that the time had come when English should be recognized as one of the official languages of our church, on par with the other.

The following year, for the first time in seventeen years, a president again reported to the Annual Conference. In so doing, President Sletten noted that most of the founding fathers were now gone. He averred that our church had an exceedingly important mission to perform among our people, but that this did not mean that we should be on a war-footing with other Lutheran bodies or be unbrotherly toward them. Old controversies should be buried; [76] the values which had been gained should be conserved. He reported further that the Book Concern would go into receivership unless it obtained financial assistance from the Lutheran Free Church. The various district chairmen had met during the year to consider the general situation in the church.

Pastor T. O. Burntvedt reported to the convention as secretary of the Organization Committee. After a lapse of many years, parochial statistics had again been assembled. One hundred and eleven pastors, representing 293 congregations, had filled out their blanks. Twenty-one pastors, serving sixty congregations, had not reported; nor were there any statistics from thirty vacant congregations. The 293 congregations reported 34,459 souls. The estimated number for 383 congregations was 44,989. In his report Burntvedt recommended that the English Conference be dissolved since most of the projects which the Conference had sponsored had either been finished or had been taken over by the Lutheran Free Church as such.

In his report in 1923 President Sletten stated that he and many others were of the opinion that the Lutheran Free Church had undergone a change and was no longer true to its original program. There was vacillation and wavering, he indicated. It was his opinion that a controversy which had been going on for some time regarding church polity was to blame. [77] However, his report went on to state that the financial support accorded our schools and missions had never been greater than during the year which had just passed. With respect to the school situation he then asked if the emphasis on a greater college at Augsburg meant the subordination of the seminary and a change of principle. A resolution adopted by the Annual Conference made reply that this was not the case. In connection with Oak Grove Seminary the president made the suggestion, among others, that coeducation be introduced.

The report touched upon a number of other items of interest. It pointed out that the Board of Home Missions of our church had confined itself chiefly to rural areas. It also said that many congregations begun by the Lutheran Free Church were now affiliated with other church bodies because they had not been bound closely enough to our work and had not been properly supervised. It announced further that the Book Concern had now been taken over by the Lutheran Free Church Publishing Company. It suggested in conclusion that a general budget for our church and a fair-share plan of raising funds be adopted.

President Sletten had received a communication from the

Norwegian Lutheran Church in which the Lutheran Free Church was invited to confer with regard to eventual union of the two bodies. [78] In dealing with the matter, the Annual Conference decided not to name a union committee, referring the matter instead to the standing committee on cooperation. The vote was 179 to 28.

Pastor Burntvedt gave the statistics for the year. One hundred and eighteen parishes, consisting of 300 congregations, reported a baptized membership of 38,058, a marked increase over the previous year. As usual, a number did not report.

Pastor Sletten had been elected president in 1920 with the understanding that he would eventually devote all his time to the office. However, this had never materialized, he indicated, because he had been reluctant to resign from the congregation which he had served many years. For two years he had given as much time as possible to the presidency without resigning his pastorate. He had now reached the decision to continue as pastor of St. Olaf Church and therefore declined re-election as president. He had served gratis during his incumbency of the office.

The first man to devote all his time to the presidency of the Lutheran Free Church was Pastor E. E. Gynild, who assumed the duties of the office in 1923 and continued until his death in 1928. At the Annual Conference at Northfield, Minnesota, in 1924 he commented in his presidential address that a number of the younger members of the Lutheran Free Church were manifesting a greater understanding and appreciation of our work. [79] He stressed the importance of right preaching, saying that Professor Ole Hallesby's visit to America had had a salutary effect in this respect.

This convention decided to inaugurate joint financial appeals for Augsburg and Oak Grove.

In his report to the convention in 1925 Gynild recognized that the language situation had become acute. Nearly all the congregations desired as pastors men who spoke the English language well.

The Annual Conference of this year received two special communications, one from the St. Olaf Congregation in Minneapolis and one from the Minneapolis ministers of the Lutheran Free Church. The former requested that the representative system be introduced in connection with the Annual Conferences and that advance notice be given of special items of business to come before these meetings. The latter urged that a budget system be introduced in lieu of the old method of appealing for funds through our church papers and by traveling representatives.

The Organization Committee reported that ninety-five congregations had now formally adopted the "Principles."

Indicating the need that was being felt for increased supervision, the Annual Conference now resolved that the president should step in and help congregations where such help was needed, [80] provided such assistance was not declined by the congregations concerned. This represents a marked change from the time when the president was only a moderator and was not even permitted to report to the Annual Conference. The following year Gynild commented in his report that the Lutheran Free Church really needed a president to devote all his time to

the office.

Professor J. L. Nydahl reported for the Organization Committee at the meeting in Willmar in 1926. In his opinion there was now greater unity and cohesion in the Lutheran Free Church than there had been before. One hundred and seven out of 135 pastors in active service had sent in church statistics. By availing himself of figures from previous years and by securing information in other ways, Nydahl had calculated that there were now 43,210 souls in the congregations affiliated with the Lutheran Free Church. Fifty-nine percent of the church services had been conducted in English. One hundred and twenty-four congregations had now formally adopted the "Principles." The average for pastors' salaries had risen to \$982 per year, which was not high when we consider that this was in the prosperous twenties.

Several matters of major consequence received the attention of the annual convention at Trinity Church in Minneapolis in 1928. One was an extended report from a previously chosen committee on efficiency and economy. [81] It concerned itself with Christian giving in general, with the financial status of our various enterprises, with a budget system, and with a general treasury to replace the many treasuries of our boards and other agencies.

Another was the matter of church union again, brought to a head by one of the recently-elected professors at Augsburg. In a brochure published by the professor he maintained that Augsburg Seminary was no longer faithful to its historic trust, that it had altered its course, and that for this and other reasons the Lutheran Free Church should unite with the Norwegian Lutheran Church of America. The reply to these charges was made by Professor George Sverdrup, the president of Augsburg. In his extended answer he analyzed the charges carefully and made refutation of them one by one.

The appeal for union made at this time was seconded by a communication to the Annual Conference signed by twenty-three pastors. However, other groups of pastors together with individual congregations and groups of congregations submitted communications in opposition to union. When the matter came before the Conference for action, a three-fold resolution was adopted, the gist of which was that the Lutheran Free Church was not in favor of union but was in favor of co-operation with other Lutheran bodies. The exact vote was not recorded, but it was overwhelmingly opposed to the proposed step. [82]

With the death of E. E. Gynild in 1928, one of our stalwart leaders and one of the greatest Norwegian preachers in America was taken from our midst. Other staunch leaders to pass away at approximately the same time included such men as Evangelist Peter Nilsen, Professors E. P. Harbo, J. H. Blegen, and J. L. Nydahl, and Pastor E. O. Larsen.

Pastor H. J. Urdahl succeeded Gynild as president of our church. In his first report, made in 1929. Urdahl gave it as his observation that the younger pastors of the Lutheran Free Church were walking in the ways of the founding fathers as far as preaching was concerned. He asked, however, that they stress schools, missions, and charities more than they were doing. He suggested also that the district chairmen look after the work in their respective districts. The baptized membership of our church

was now given as 44,974.

At the meeting at Fergus Falls, Minn., in 1930, the president stated that he regretted to report that the jubilee Campaign for funds to reduce the indebtedness of our schools had not succeeded as well as had been expected. However, approximately \$103,000 had been raised, notwithstanding the onset of the great depression. He also said that the placement of pastors had become one of our most difficult problems, another consequence of the stringent economic conditions. [83]

The Annual Conference of 1930 marked the entry of the Lutheran Free Church into closer fellowship with other Lutherans in the United States. This occurred when it was decided to join the federation of Lutheran bodies known as the American Lutheran Conference, then in process of formation.

The year 1930 also witnessed the election of Pastor T. O. Burntvedt to the presidency of the Lutheran Free Church, a position in which he still continues to serve.

President Burntvedt's first report on the state of the church was given at the convention in Fargo in 1931. In it he stated that there were indications of spiritual life in many congregations, while others seemed dead. There had been a reduced income to all branches of our church work on account of the depression. The transition from Norwegian to English was taking place very rapidly.

A joint meeting of the presidents of Augsburg and Oak Grove, their boards of trustees, and the district chairmen had passed a resolution that the academy at Augsburg be discontinued. A joint meeting of the Augsburg board of directors and board of trustees had subsequently passed a resolution that the Lutheran Free Church be responsible for one institution only, namely, Augsburg College and Theological Seminary. In the latter resolution the Annual Conference did not concur; [84] Oak Grove was included usual as a participant in the joint ingathering of funds for the schools. Two years later the last class was graduated from the academy department at Augsburg.

The convention in 1931 also decided to publish *The Lutheran Messenger* twice each month, on the condition that the Young People's Federation finance the project.

The convention decided further to abandon the idea of moving Augsburg to Augsburg Park, a site of land on the southern edge of the, city of Minneapolis, acquired in 1921 by the Augsburg Park Association. In 1926 the Annual Conference had authorized the institution's board of trustees to take preliminary steps toward raising \$500,000 to move the school. For economic and strategic reasons the idea of moving the school was now definitely relinquished.

At the convention in St. Olaf Church in Minneapolis in 1932 President Burntvedt mentioned in his annual message that there was widespread suffering in our land, due to the severe depression. Special aid was being given congregations in the drouth area of the Dakotas and Montana. The school problem was still unsolved. The president also made the observation that "we as a church have suffered because of lack of vision in home mission endeavor." The great home mission opportunities of the first two decades of the century, with great influxes of Lutheran people into new regions, were now a thing of the past. [85] A new type of home mission work would have to be

started, said the president.

The parochial reports gave the estimated number of congregations as 367, numbering 44,800 souls.

The report in 1933, the "bottom" year of the depression, reflects the conditions which were current in our country very strongly. Sacrifices had been made during the year by our teachers, pastors, and missionaries, and by our people in general. Church attendance was on the increase, and spiritual awakenings were continuing to take place. Especially had the work of Evangelist J. M. Halvorson been richly blessed. Pastors were accepting calls at no stipulated salaries. Home mission projects were being better planned and accorded greater supervision than hitherto. Pastor H. J. Urdahl had passed away during the year, following a protracted illness.

Dr. Burntvedt noted at the Annual Conference in Duluth in 1934 that the country was still in the throes of unemployment and the depression. Drought conditions were also still prevalent in the Middle West. Notwithstanding these conditions, there had been an improvement in the attitude of our congregations toward our common endeavors. It had been possible to reduce our indebtedness by ten percent.

The present stewardship organization in our church was effected at this time, [86] with the president of the Lutheran Free Church as the general stewardship secretary and with a secretary in each of the districts of the church.

The Annual Conference of the previous year had passed a resolution making the president of the church also the superintendent and executive secretary of home missions. However, this resolution for various reasons was never put into effect.

The following year the president's report referred to "New Deal" plans for restoring prosperity. It emphasized also that moral conditions were bad and that a spiritual awakening was needed. Special aid was still being given to the drought regions. The Publishing Company was gradually making its way out of the debt which it had assumed when it was organized in 1922.

Pastor Melvin J. Olson, reporting for the Board of Organization, formerly known as the Organization Committee, announced that an English translation of the baptismal ritual of 1920 of the Church of Norway had been made. Parochial statistics indicated a membership of 45,927. English services numbered 9,001 and Norwegian 4,345. The value of church buildings and parsonages owned by Lutheran Free Church congregations had now passed the \$2,000,000 mark.

In his address in 1936 President Burntvedt stressed the fact that in doctrine the Lutheran Free Church is conservatively Lutheran. [87] The president felt that our position should be re-affirmed because of the widespread prevalence of religious liberalism in our day. He noted that there was progress and spiritual awakening in some congregations, while others were rather dead. Sunday-school institutes for the training of teachers were now being conducted in various parts of the church. The report continued by saying that many pastors were in straightened economic circumstances. The matter of placing pastors was still a difficult one. Bible camps and Pocket Testament Leagues were becoming more numerous. There were now eighty all-English congregations and none using Norwe-

gian exclusively. The suggestion that English be made the official language of the Lutheran Free Church was now made by the president, with Norwegian optional for those who desired to use it.

There had been another marked spiritual awakening at Augsburg. In his report President Sverdrup made an urgent plea to the Lutheran Free Church for a renewed emphasis upon Christian higher education.

President Burntvedt's report in 1937 was in the nature of a fortieth anniversary address. In it he pointed out that the Lutheran Free Church had begun as a movement among Norwegian Lutherans, but that it had now become one of the established Lutheran church bodies in America, with a congregational form of organization and ministering to Americans without regard to nationalistic or linguistic backgrounds. [88]

The drought still persisted in the Dakotas. Not a few of our church members in those areas were moving to the Puget Sound region. The placing of pastors was still a vexing problem. Two full issues of our English church paper were being published monthly.

In Professor Sverdrup's report to the Annual Conference he spoke of an unusual spirit of enthusiasm at the school. Finances, too, were better. Said Sverdrup: "Somehow the new day seems to be here."

In 1938 Dr. Burntvedt spoke of war hysteria in addition to the continued depression. The Bible camps especially were bringing a great spiritual blessing to many. By and large, said the president, the congregations had grasped the ideals of those who had founded the Lutheran Free Church.

The preceding year had been an unusual one in several respects. On Armistice Day in 1937 Professor George Sverdrup, the president of Augsburg Seminary since 1911, had been called by death. This great shock to the Lutheran Free Church had come shortly after Sverdrup had been chosen to assume the leadership in connection with the solicitation of funds for the construction of the proposed Sverdrup-Oftedal Memorial Hall. He reached approximately the same age as his father. [89] With unswerving fidelity and loyalty to its great ideals and its task, Dr. Sverdrup had seen Augsburg through many difficult and trying years.

Dr. Bernhard M. Christensen was named as the next president of the institution.

Dr. Burntvedt accepted the responsibility of acting as director for the ingathering of funds for the new building at Augsburg, in addition to his regular duties as president of our church. The response on the part of the congregations was excellent. Memorial Hall was built at a cost of approximately \$150,000, nearly all of which was paid at the time of its dedication in the fall of 1939.

The parochial statistics for 1938 showed that there were 375 congregations and sixteen missions, with a baptized membership of 48,280. These were carefully compiled figures. Over seventy-five percent of the regular church services had been conducted in the English language. The average ministerial stipend had now risen to \$1,112 per year and the valuation of church properties had risen to \$2,200,000.

In June of 1939 the president said that war was imminent.

In regard to the work in the congregations he stated that more and more attention was being given to the Christian instruction of the young.

Interest in home missions was increasing. A centennial commission had been appointed. And the new building at Augsburg had been taken into use. [90]

Europe was at war as the Annual Conference assembled at La Crosse, Wisconsin, in 1940. In reporting on the progress of the work, Dr. Burntvedt informed the convention that Pastor J. M. Halvorson had resigned as evangelist after having given fifteen years to the work. His efforts had been richly blessed in many congregations. A Board of Elementary Christian Education had been chosen. The Board of Home Missions was strengthening the centers of its work. Lutheran Welfare Societies were springing up in the various states, making it possible for the various Lutheran bodies to do Christian social work as one unit. The Lutheran Free Church Publishing Company, though still struggling with debt, was slowly improving its financial position. And the Pension Society was planning to reorganize.

The Annual Conference of 1941 was held in Morris, Minnesota. In his address President Burntvedt said that the church must grow strong in sacrificial service and must again sound clearly the call to spiritual awakening. The financial situation in the Lutheran Free Church was not discouraging, continued the report. Since 1932 we had met all our obligations and retired not a little of our indebtedness, notwithstanding a decade of the worst depression ever experienced in our national life.

The reports from Augsburg showed that the enrollment at the school had reached a new high point. [91] During the year which had just passed a total of 495 students had been registered.

The Board of Home Missions announced that there were 102 home mission congregations connected with the Lutheran Free Church. Pastor John T. Quanbeck had been called as field secretary by the Board.

The parochial statistics showed that there were 369 congregations and sixteen missions, with a total of 49,506 baptized members. English services had numbered 11,203 and Norwegian 2,210. From this it was clear that more than ninety percent of all the work done in our church was being done in English. The complete transition from Norwegian to English had virtually been made.

The figures went on to show that there are over 16,239 pupils in our 288 Sunday-schools, in addition to 2,274 teachers. The value of church properties, exclusive of that which is held in trust for the congregations by the various boards, was listed at more than two and one-half million dollars. Pastors' salaries had reached an average of \$1,250 per year, plus perquisites and the free use of a parsonage. Congregational expenditures for local work was in excess of \$250,000 for the year.

Our 1942 Conference was held in Fargo. It was attended by 98 pastors and 393 registered lay delegates, as well as by many visitors. [92] The meeting devoted itself very earnestly to the work of our church, which showed not a little progress. Dr. T. O. Burntvedt was re-elected as president for the fifth

consecutive term of three years.

Thus the years have gone by. One church leader after another has appeared on the scene, made his or her contribution to the work of the Lord in our midst, and gone on to the reward of grace. Movements and issues have engaged the interest of our pastors and our people. The work of the kingdom has been done.

The comment made by Pastor Urdahl a few years ago that the younger generation in the Lutheran Free Church is walking in the spiritual ways of the founding fathers seems to be borne out very well by the record. [93]

CHAPTER FOUR

How Our Church Functions

THE Lutheran Free Church consists of 385 congregations and missions, comprising 142 parishes or calls. Of these congregations, 326 are rural and 59 urban. The average membership of each is 130 souls.

The congregations are the basic working unit in our church. The great preponderance of our spiritual work is done through them.

They are all organized in much the same manner. At the head is the pastor, who is usually also the president. He is chosen and called by the congregation. The pastor-congregation relationship may be terminated by either party, as a rule upon the giving of three months' notice. Only rarely does a parish formally dismiss its pastor. A board of deacons of from three to six members is chosen by the congregation to assist the pastor, [94] particularly with reference to the spiritual work of the congregation. A board of trustees, usually of three members, is likewise chosen, to administer the business affairs of the congregation. Together with the pastor, the deacons and the trustees make up the church council. The congregation also elects a secretary and a treasurer. Usually it names the Sunday-school superintendent. A number of standing and special committees are also chosen.

The main services are held on each Sunday morning in the city churches and as frequently as possible in the rural churches. Since many of our pastors serve as many as three or four congregations, and at times even more, the main service must oftentimes be held in the afternoon or evening. The pastor as a rule does the preaching. He is also specifically charged with the tasks of ministering to the spiritual needs of the sick and of giving instruction to young people and adults in preparation for confirmation or adult baptism. Besides these designated responsibilities, he exercises general supervision over the work of the parish. Many of our congregations have midweek Bible study and prayer services, usually conducted by the pastor. He frequently attends the meetings of the organizations within the parish. Special evangelistic meetings are arranged from time to time, at which either an evangelist or a visiting pastor delivers the messages. [95] Lay people often participate in these and other meetings. On occasion laymen also preach at the regular services.

All congregations have an annual business meeting. In

addition, some have monthly or quarterly meetings.

As a rule there are a number of subsidiary organizations within our parishes. Most congregations have Sunday-schools; only a few small rural congregations do not. Nearly all have ladies' aid societies. A large number have Luther Leagues (young people's societies) and choirs. A few have men's brotherhoods and Boy Scout troops. There are also a few other age and interest groups, such as Girl Scouts, evening guilds of young married and unmarried women, and groups of married folk. In our church we endeavor to make the auxiliary organizations within our congregations lead into the congregation and not away from it. Besides these organized groups many congregations have a number of working committees, such as finance, visiting, and membership committees.

The congregations of the Lutheran Free Church are located largely in the northern part of the Middle West and in the Puget Sound area of the Pacific Coast. For the sake of convenient reference the congregations are herewith listed, with the post office address and the name of each.

MINNESOTA

Ada	Bethany
Adrian	Zion
Aitkin	Bennetville Mission
Aitkin	Cedar Lake
Aitkin	Zion
Alida	Sell Lake
Anoka	Spring Lake Park
Argyle	Middle River
Ashby	Trinity
Audubon	Audubon
Badger	Badger Creek
Bagley	First
Battle Lake	First
Battle Lake	Skibtvedt
Beardsley	Holden
Bemidji	Aardahl
Bemidji	Nymore
Bertha	Zest
Boyd	St. Petri
Brainerd	Bethel
Brainerd	Bethlehem
Brandon	Chippewa
Browerville	Little Elk Mission
Clearbrook	Immanuel
Climax	Climax
Climax	Sand Hill
Constance	Glen Cary
Cyrus	St. Petri
Dale	Immanuel
Dalton	Kvam
Dalton	Sarpsborg
Dalton	Zion
Donnelly	Kongsvinger
Doran	Stiklestad
Doran	Vukku
Duluth	Kenwood Mission

Duluth	Trinity	Mora	Calvary
Eagle Bend	Eagle Valley	Morris	Bethany
Ellendale	Pontoppidan	Morris	Scandia
Farmington	Christiania	Nary	Malvik
Fergus Falls	Vang	Newfolden	Bethany
Fergus Falls	Zion	Newfolden	Bethlehem
Fosston	Kingo	Newfolden	Folden
Gatzke	RandeenMission	Newfolden	Westaker
Georgeville	Gausdal	New London	New London
Goodridge	First	New York Mills	Nazareth
Goodridge	Reinir	Northfield	Bethel
Greenbush	Bethany	Ortonville	Eidskog
Greenbush	Oiland	Paynesville	Nordland
Hallock	Two River	Pelican Rapids	Bethel
Hawley	Aspelund	Pennock	St. John's
Hawley	Grong	Perham	Bethlehem
Hawley	Hegland	Perley	Landstad
Hanska	Rice Lake	Pequot	Kedron
Hendricks	Lake Hendricks	River	St. John's
Henning	Trinity	Rochester	Bethel English
Hills	Trinity	Roseau	Moe
Hoffman	Lands	Roseau	Rose
Holt	Immanuel	Roseau	Spruce
Hope	First	Sacred Heart	Trinity
Isle	Lakeview	Salol	Norland
Karlstad	Oslo	Sebeka	Bethany
Lake Lillian	Tromso	Sebeka	Bethel
Lake Park	Cormorant	Shevlin	Landstad
Lake Park	Zion	Skime	Bethesda
Lamberton	Sharon	Skyberg	Hegre
Lancaster	First	Spicer	Green Lake
Laporte	Kabekona Valley	Starbuck	Minnewaska
Laporte	Trinity	St. Paul	Bethany
Long Prairie	Immanuel	Sturgeon Lake	Nordland
Lonsdale	Trondhjem	Tamarack	Bethany
Lucan	Trinity	Thief River Falls	Bethlehem
Luverne	Zion	Thief River Falls	Norden
Madelia	First	Thief River Falls	Rindal
Madelia	Lincoln	Thief River Falls	Saeterdal
Malung	Salem	Thief River Falls	Zion
Maplebay	Maplebay	Underwood	Rindal
McGregor	Grayling	Underwood	Tordenskjold
Minneapolis	Elmwood	Verndale	Our Savior's
Minneapolis	First Col. Heights	Vining	West Nidaros
Minneapolis	Nokomis Heights	Walker	Immanuel
Minneapolis	Oak Grove	Wanamingo	Wanamingo
Minneapolis	Olivet	Wannaska	Bethlehem
Minneapolis	Rosedale	West Concord	W. Con'd Mis.
Minneapolis	St. Luke's	Willmar	Eagle Lake
Minneapolis	St. Olaf	Willmar	Willmar
Minneapolis	St. Petri	Wilton	Trinity
Minneapolis	Trinity	Windom	Bethlehem
Minneota	Hemnes	Winger	Dovre
Montevideo	Camp Release	Winger	Union Lake
Montevideo	Trinity	Zerkle	Rice
Moose Lake	St. Olaf	Zimmerman	Eidskog
Moose Lake	Zion		

NORTH DAKOTA

Abercrombie Bethany
Adams St. Peter
Alamo Zion
Alkabo Writing Rock
Alsen Zion
Ambrose Immanuel
Appam Bethany
Argusville Osterdalen
Barton Barton
Battleview Bethel
Bergen Bethel
Berwick Berwick
Binford Bethany
Binford Bethlehem
Bisbee Norwegian
Bonetraill St. Peter
Braddock Bethel
Braddock Zion
Brinsmade Lebanon
Buxton Grue
Buxton Ringsaker
Carpio First
Carpio Nazareth
Churchs Ferry Zion
Colgan Zion
Coteau Zion
Derrick Bethany
Edinburg Garfield
Egeland Lakeview
Epworth Bethany
Fairdale Aadalen
Fargo Pontoppidan
Fort Ransom Standing Rock
Fortuna Clear Lake
Foxholm Foxholm Mssion
Galesburg Stordahl
Grafton Our Savior's
Grand Forks Sharon
Grenora Scandia
Hamlet Trinity
Hampden Zoar
Harvey Bethel
Harvey St. Peter
Harvey Trinity
Hatton Bethel
Hatton Zoar
Hillsboro Aal
Kintyre Klepp
Landa Bethany
LaMoure High Prairie
Leeds North Prairie
Leonard Zion
Litchville St. Thomas
Maddock Fairview
McGregor Our Savior's
McLeod Bethany

McVille
McVille
Milton
Minot
Minot
Mohall
Napoleon
Northwood
Osnabrock
Palermo
Pembina
Portland
Rugby
Sharon
Stanley
Tagus
Temple
Temple
Tioga
Tioga
Tioga
Tolna
Towner
Tunbridge
Upham
Valley City
Valley City
Vang
Voltaire
White Earth
White Earth
Wildrose
Wildrose
Williston
York
Zahl
Zahl

New Luther Valley
Zion
Hitterdal
Trinity
Zion
Hammerly
First
Ebenezer
Gulberg
Trinity
Pembina
Aurdal
Bethany
Hoff
Scandia
St. Olaf
St. Olaf
Temple
Bethany
Lindahl
Zion
Gethsemane
Mouse River
Tunbridge
Deep River
First
Zion
Aspelund
Hjerdal
Beaver Creek
Norman
St. Paul's
Zion
Our Redeemer
Hurricane Lake
Bethel
Rudser

WISCONSIN

Amery
Aniwa
Argyle
Argyle
Ashland
Bangor
Barronett
Barronett
Bartonett
Bayfield
Beaver
Blanchardville
Blanchardville
Chippewa Falls
Clayton
Clayton
Clear Lake
Colfax

Our Savior's
Bethany
Adams
Argyle
Nidaros
Bells Coulee
Barronett
Heart Lake
Ringebo
Bethesda
Beaver
Blanchardville
York
Our Savior's
English
Marsh Lake
Moe
Running Valley

Cumberland	Bethany
Cumberland	East Cumberland
Cumberland	First
Deronda	Trinity
Drummond	Drummond
La Crosse	Bethel
Marinette	Our Savior's
Mason	Moland
Mason	West Mason
McAllister	English
Mt. Horeb	Hauge
New Auburn	Bethel
Oconto	Cullen
Oconto	Trinity
Peshtigo	Zion
Porterfield	Norwegian
Racine	Zion
Sand Creek	Zion
Superior	St. Paul's
Timberland	Timberland

WASHINGTON

Bellingham	Ebenezer	Poulsbo	Poulsbo
Blaine	Golgotha	Richmond Beach	First
Cathiamet	Puget Island	Saxon	Saxon
East Stanwood	Zion	Seattle	Ballard
Ellensburg	First	Seattle	Bethany
Enumclaw	Trinity	Silvana	Salem
Everett	Calvary	Skamokawa	Skamokawa Mis'n
Ferndale	Ferndale	Spokane	Bethany
Lakewood	Bethany	Tacoma	Olivet
Lawrence	Bethany	Tacoma	Zion
Port Orchard	First	Vashon	Golgotha

SOUTH DAKOTA

Bijou Hills	St. Olaf	Roslyn	Sharon
Edson	Edson Mission	Sisseton	Scandia
Faith	Bethel	Veblen	Nidaros
Grenville	Zoar	Wallace	Telemarken
Hammer	Pcrkingstad	Wallace	Wallace
New Effington	Bethany	Waubay	Egeland
Pukwana	Pukwana	Waubay	Waubay
Red Elm	Trinity	Webster	Tabor

MONTANA

Antelope	Dovre	Reserve	Rock Spring
Brockton	Zion	Westby	Oslo
Homestead	Bethel	Westby	Scandia
McElroy	McElroy Mission	Westby	St. John's
Medicine Lake	Medicine Lake		

IOWA

Fertile	Elim
Osage	Immanuel
Slater	Hauge
Thompson	Trinity

OREGON

Astoria	Bethany
Portland	Bethel
Silverton	Calvary

NEW YORK

Bronx	Bronx
City Island	City Island Mission

ILLINOIS

Rockford	Our Savior's
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KANSAS

Everest	Zion
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NEBRASKA

Newman Grove	Shell Creek
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CONGREGATIONS IN CANADA

Algrove, Sask.	Algrovc
Archerwill, Sask.	Archerwill Mission
Beaver Flat, Sask.	Nordland
Broderick, Sask.	Bethany
Bulyea, Sask.	Our Savior's
Clanwilliam, Man.	Immanuel
Dahlton, Sask.	Bethany
Davidson, Sask.	Immanuel
Demaine, Sask.	Lands
Donalda, Alta.	Sharon
Donalda, Alta.	Spruce Coulee
Edberg, Alta.	Bethlehem
Elbow, Sask.	Bethel
Erickson, Man.	Bethel
Govan, Sask.	Govan
Hagensborg, B.C.	Augsburg
Hawarden, Sask.	Bethlehem
Hawarden, Sask.	Zion
Killam, Alta.	Zion
Layco, Sask.	Marshall
Loreburn, Sask.	Skudesnes
Naicam, Sask.	Our Savior's
Penzance, Sask.	Zion
Rose Valley, Sask.	Rose Valley
Scrip, Sask.	Ponoss Lake
Sedgewick, Alta.	Flagstaff
Simpson, Sask.	Simpson Mission
Viscount, Sask.	Bethany
Waldeck, Sask.	Diamond Hills Mission
Waldeck, Sask.	Waldeck Mission

THE DISTRICTS

The parishes of the Lutheran Free Church are grouped into eighteen districts, ranging in size from four to twenty parishes. Each district has its own president, vice-president, secretary, treasurer, and stewardship secretary. District meetings

are held as a rule three or four times each year, in one of the congregations. These meetings are almost exclusively devotional and evangelistic in nature. The president of the district presides at these meetings and is also responsible for the general supervision of the work in the district. The stewardship secretary is a member of the general stewardship board of the Lutheran Free Church, which meets twice each year. His task includes the promotion of Christian stewardship in his district in general. [102] He is also expected to keep the congregations of his district informed of the progress that is being made in the annual ingathering of the needed funds for schools and missions and to assist them as far as possible in reaching their allocations. In some instances laymen serve in this capacity. Laymen are also chosen occasionally to other positions in the district organization. Very frequently the district also sponsors young people's conventions, though some have their own Luther League federation. Most of them also have district organizations of their women's groups.

The following is a list of the districts of the Lutheran Free Church, from east to west:

Rockford, Illinois, District
Marinette, Wisconsin, District
Northern Wisconsin District
Duluth, Minnesota, District
Southwestern Minnesota District
Minneapolis, Minnesota, District
Willmar, Minnesota, District
Fergus Falls, Minnesota, District
Fosston, Minnesota, District
Thief River Falls, Minnesota, District
Waubay, South Dakota, District
Fargo, North Dakota, District
McVille, North Dakota, District
Rugby, North Dakota, District
Minot, North Dakota, District
Westby, Montana, District
West Coast District
Canada District. []

THE ANNUAL CONFERENCE

The Annual Conference of our church is held from the second Tuesday in June through the following Sunday. Plans are now under consideration to begin on Wednesday evening and thus shorten the time of the meeting by nearly two days.

The right to participate in the deliberations of the Annual Conference and to vote is accorded to all ordained pastors in regular standing in the Lutheran Free Church and to all voting members of congregations affiliated with our church. Similar rights may also be granted to voting members of other Lutheran congregations. Such members must sign special blanks indicating that they approve of the "Principles" and "Rules" of our church and are desirous of working toward the objectives set forth in the second paragraph of the "Rules." Very few make use of this privilege.

Our Annual Conference does not operate under a representative system whereby a limited number of delegates are chosen to act for the congregations. Congregations may, if they

so desire, send representatives from their midst to the Annual Conference. But the number from any one congregation is not limited. The annual convention of our church is not a legislative body, the decisions of which are binding upon the congregations of the Lutheran Free Church. [104] It is intended rather as an assembly of Lutheran Christians from our various congregations, gathered for the purpose of counseling together concerning Christian life and work and making recommendations in regard thereto to the church at large. It is assumed that spiritually-minded and spiritually-interested members of our congregations will come to these annual meetings of their own volition in order that they themselves may be edified thereby and may assist in making the decisions which will in their common judgment best advance the work in the kingdom of God entrusted to us as a church. It is further taken for granted that the congregations will accept the decisions that are thus made and referred to them, though it is not legally or otherwise incumbent upon them to do so. Much time during these meetings is devoted to inspiration and edification, and the members of the convention are expected both to give and to receive in this respect.

The Conference begins with divine services on Tuesday morning. In the afternoon the nominating committee, the most important of the Conference, is chosen by ballot, nominations having previously been made from the floor of the convention. This committee consists of four pastors and three laymen, whereof no two may be from the same district. It is the duty of these seven men to nominate candidates for the convention's five major working committees, [105] as well as for a number of other committees. They also place in nomination candidates for membership on the various corporations and board of the church. The officials of the Lutheran Free Church, however, are nominated and elected directly by the meeting. They are the president, vice-president, and secretary. The president is chosen for a term of three years; the others are elected annually. Each Conference also names an ordainer, who is in charge of the ordination of pastors throughout the ensuing year.

The reading of reports follows. The first is that of the president, in which he reviews the work of the Lutheran Free Church as a whole throughout the year which has just passed. It is also a message on the state of the church. His report is followed by that of the Board of Organization, a board which corresponds somewhat to the general church council of the synodically organized bodies. This report covers such matters as the status of the general treasury, the work of the evangelists, special committees, and commissions, and gives a summary of the parochial statistics.

The reports from the board of trustees and from the president of Augsburg College and Theological Seminary are next in order. The former concerns itself primarily with the financial affairs of the institution, and the latter with the spiritual, educational, and other aspects of school life. [106] The treasurer's financial statement is also submitted. Oak Grove Seminary thereupon presents similar reports.

Either the Lutheran Board of Missions (the foreign mission board) or the Board of Home Missions reports next, alternating each year. These reports give a comprehensive review

of the missionary work done on the respective fields during the year. Statements showing receipts and disbursements for the year are appended to these reviews.

This brings to a close the Tuesday afternoon session. In the evening a devotional service is held, at which one of the pastors or professors introduces a portion of the Scriptures as a theme for the remaining devotional sessions of the Conference.

By Wednesday morning the committee on nominations has made its first report and the Conference proceeds to the election of its five principal working committees. The first of these is called Committee Number One. It receives the reports of the president and the Board of Organization, studies them, and formulates recommendations on the basis thereof for the consideration of the Conference. The next is Committee Number Two. It receives the reports from the schools, and follows a similar procedure of study and recommendation with them. Committee Number Three and Committee Number Four do likewise with the reports from home and foreign missions. [107] The reports from the charitable agencies, the Publishing Company, and from all other activities go to Committee Number Five, unless otherwise determined by the convention.

The Conference also names a resolution committee, a membership committee, an ordination committee to serve at the next annual convention, and any other committees it may deem necessary.

After electing these working groups the Conference continues to hear reports until all institutions and agencies serving our church have been heard from. This usually brings the meeting to Wednesday afternoon.

The early part of the afternoon is devoted to further elections. At four o'clock an impressive service in memory of the pastors and professors who have passed away during the year is held. The evening service is conducted by laymen while the ministerium has its annual gathering.

By Thursday noon all reports have been given and most of the elections have taken place. The Conference now proceeds to hear and deliberate upon the recommendations made by its five chief committees. At this time the whole work of the Lutheran Free Church comes before the Annual Conference for consideration and discussion. All members of the Conference are accorded the privilege of the floor. After due consideration the convention makes its decisions. [108] These are in turn referred to the congregations through the press and through the Annual Report as the recommendations of the convention with regard to the work of the Lutheran Free Church for the coming year. The remainder of the convention, with the exception of the evening and Sunday sessions, is occupied with this task.

On Sunday there is a communion service at 9:00 A. M., a convention service at 10:30 A. M., an ordination service in the afternoon, and a farewell devotional service in the evening.

The registration list of the Annual Conference of 1942 included the names of 98 pastors and 393 lay people. Many others attended the sessions as visitors.

THE CORPORATIONS AND THE BOARDS

The Lutheran Free Church as such does not have legal cor-

porate existence. However, the Board of Organization is incorporated under the laws of the land. This became necessary in order that this Board might become legally entitled to receive and administer legacies or other gifts made to the Lutheran Free Church as a whole.

The joint endeavors of the Lutheran Free Church are carried out by boards which have been duly elected by their respective corporations, after nominations have been made by the Annual Conference.

These corporations vary in size from approximately fifteen to one hundred members. [109] They are self-perpetuating, but their members must be chosen from a list of nominees which has been approved by the Annual Conference. There is therefore a most intimate connection between the church as a whole and the corporations. As a rule these corporations have their annual meetings during the Annual Conference. At these meetings they fill any vacancies which may exist on their respective boards of directors and give consideration to matters pertaining to the work entrusted to them. These bodies are duly incorporated and are therefore responsible to the laws of our land.

Each corporation chooses a board of from five to nine members to administer its affairs. From the manner in which they are named, as we have already noted, it is clear that these boards are directly responsible to the church as a whole.

The boards in our church which are thus directly related to our Annual Conference are the following:

The Board of Organization

The Board of Trustees of Augsburg College and Theological Seminary

The Lutheran Board of Missions

The Board of Home Missions

The Board of Trustees of Oak Grove Seminary

The Board of Directors of The Lutheran Free Church Publishing Company

The Board of Directors of the Pension Society

The Board of Directors of Bethesda Homes

The Board of Directors of the West Coast Lutheran School and Charity Association

The Board of Parish Education (unincorporated). [110]

The organizations to whose boards election does not take place in the manner indicated, but which also serve the Lutheran Free Church are the following:

The Luther League Federation

The Siloah Mission

The Lutheran Deaconess Home and Hospital

The Women's Missionary Federation.

The various boards choose their own officers. As a rule each board meets several times during the year. Many of our pastors and lay people, serving without remuneration, give much valuable time, thought, and effort to the work of our church by serving as members of these groups.

THE OFFICIALS

The president of the Lutheran Free Church devotes all his

time to his important office. Throughout the year he advises and counsels with the congregations as occasion arises. He is often called upon to recommend ministerial candidates to vacant calls and to assist in making pastoral changes. He serves as moderator during the Annual Conference and also presides at the annual meeting of the stewardship secretaries from all the districts of the church. He is the designated chairman of this general stewardship board, which has become increasingly responsible for raising the needed funds for our church work each year. [111] In his capacity as chairman of this board he conducts a stewardship rally in the fall of the year in each of our eighteen districts. Here he gives an address on Christian giving and sets forth the financial needs of our kingdom endeavors.

Our president is ex officio an advisory member of both the home and the foreign mission boards. Other boards in our church at times request his presence at their sessions. He is also our representative in the National Lutheran Council and as a rule attends the annual meeting of this body in January of each year. He is furthermore a member of the executive committee of the American Lutheran Conference. A number of other committees and commissions, both within and without our own church body, likewise call upon him for counsel and guidance. In addition, he is frequently called upon to officiate at church dedications, ministerial installations, anniversary celebrations, and other church-related occasions.

Added to the obligation inherent in his office to give spiritual and prophetic guidance to the church, these many tasks make the president's position one that requires a great expenditure of strength and devotion.

The vice-president serves in the absence of the president.

The secretary of our church keeps the minutes of the Annual Conference and acts as custodian of the archives. [112] Together with the president he edits the Annual Report.

The Annual Conference also elects an ordainer. By tradition some pastor other than the president of the church is chosen. This official is in charge of the ordination of pastors during his term of office.

A transportation secretary is also elected by the annual convention. All applications for transportation privileges must be cleared through his office.

CHAPTER FIVE

Augsburg College and Theological Seminary

Augsburg College and Theological Seminary is the chief educational institution of the Lutheran Free Church. The Seminary and the Church have been most intimately identified with each other throughout their whole history. As has already been indicated, it was the work of the leaders at Augsburg Seminary which gave rise to our church. Had there been no Augsburg, there would have been no Lutheran Free Church, at least not as we know it. On the other hand, without the financial contributions of the Lutheran Free Church there could have been no Augsburg.

The founding of the school dates back to 1869. In that year

the Scandinavian Lutheran Augustana Synod decided that it would be to the mutual advantage of its Swedish constituency on the one hand, and its Norwegian and Danish membership on the other, to form two synods, one for each of the two groups. [114] As a preliminary step it was decided to establish a separate institution for the training of pastors to work among the Norwegian and Danish immigrants in this country.

Pursuant to this decision, a board of trustees was chosen to administer the affairs of the proposed institution. Shortly afterwards this board purchased the property of an academy at Marshall, Wisconsin, for the sum of \$4,000. Among the more active members of the board were Professor A. Weenaas, Pastor Johan Olsen, and Pastor Ole Paulson, all three of whom were to take an important part in the affairs of the new school. Also on the board was Pastor O. J. Hatlestad, who proposed that the institution be named Augsburg Seminary.

On September 1, 1869, the school was opened. There were two departments, the seminary proper and the preparatory, or pro-seminary, department, the latter modeled along the lines of an American high school. Professor A. Weenaas was the first president. During the first year there were eleven seminary students and eight students in the preparatory department. In October the school was officially named Augsburg Seminary. Thus from the very beginning the school made known to the world its adherence to the Augsburg Confession, one of the great statements of the Christian faith, [115] a statement which has come down to the Lutheran Church from the Lutheran Reformation. In the first pronouncement made by the faculty of the school the institution also made itself the proponent of congregational liberty, as opposed to synodical authority.

But before the year was over the existence of the new seminary was gravely imperiled. The Norwegians separating from the Scandinavian Augustana Synod, together with Pastor C. L. Clausen and others, had formed a new church body known as the Norwegian-Danish Evangelical Lutheran Conference. With this body the new seminary was to be affiliated. However, a small group under the leadership of Pastor O. J. Hatlestad withdrew and organized itself as the Norwegian-Danish Lutheran Augustana Synod and, maintaining that it was the direct continuation of the Scandinavian Augustana Synod, laid claim to the school. On October 17, 1870, the Norwegian Augustana Synod demanded the keys to Augsburg Seminary and requested President Weenaas and the students to vacate the premises. After giving earnest thought to the matter, Weenaas complied. He chose rather to yield than to be projected into a bitter controversy over the property of the school.

Throughout the remainder of the second year class work at Augsburg Seminary was carried on in "Cooper's attic," a room ten feet long, eight feet wide, and eight feet high which had been rented from a farmer who lived on the outskirts of the little town of Marshall. [116] There were no facilities for rooming or boarding the students. Professor and Mrs. Weenaas took as many of them as possible into their modest home; the rest had to find accommodations elsewhere. Though their financial resources were very scant, the school managed somehow to struggle along until the year was nearly over. But on May 25, 1871, the president called the student body together

and informed them that the situation had become so critical that it would be necessary to give up the venture entirely. The scene which followed is one of the most sacred and inspiring in all the annals of Augsburg. One by one the students, most of whom were mature men, arose and pleaded for the life of the institution. None who were present could ever forget the moment when, gathered about the little table in the crowded attic, Professor Weenaas and the students, after the reading of the Word of God and prayer, joined hands and vowed faithfulness to God and to one another in continuing their labors at Augsburg on behalf of the kingdom of God. After this manifestation of loyalty on the part of the students, Weenaas felt that he could continue, confident that the work would succeed.

It was clear to all, however, that the school could not remain at Marshall. [117] It had already been decided, several months previously, to seek a new location. In March, 1871, a committee of seven men, elected by the Norwegian-Danish Lutheran Conference to look into the matter, recommended that Augsburg be relocated in some city where the facilities of a state university might be available. The obvious choice was between Madison, Wisconsin, and Minneapolis, Minnesota.

At the Annual Convention held in Trinity Lutheran Church of Minneapolis the following June, the latter city was named as the future home of Augsburg. Three important considerations led to the decision: first, Minneapolis was strategically located, in the midst of the stream of heavy Norwegian migration to the west; second, the residents of Minneapolis had offered greater financial inducements than Madison; third, the recently-established University of Minnesota offered free instruction in English to the students of Augsburg, most of whom were recent arrivals from Norway. The leading spirit in the removal proceedings was the pastor of Trinity Church, Ole Paulson, who came to be known as Augsburg's "grandfather."

During the fall and winter of 1871-72 a building was erected on the present site of the institution. In the fall of 1872 school work was begun. Because of the increased enrollment it became necessary to seek the services of another professor. [118] Accordingly, in the fall of 1873, Professor Sven Oftedal arrived from Norway and began his colorful career at Augsburg and in the life of the Middle West. The following year he was joined by Professor Georg Sverdrup, whose name more than that of any one else is synonymous with Augsburg Seminary. The faculty was further augmented at this time by the addition of Professor Sven Rud Gunnerson, who also gave many years of his life to the school.

The arrival of Sverdrup and Oftedal marks the beginning of a new era at Augsburg. President Weenaas, who up to this time had been virtually the lone teacher, now speaks of a "new Augsburg." The future seemed full of promise. Nor did the high hopes of many fail to materialize. Year after year men were graduated from the Seminary and sent out as ministers among the Norwegian immigrants in the United States and Canada and as missionaries to distant countries.

But the lot of Augsburg did not become an easy one. This was particularly true with regard to the school's finances. The men in charge of the work were compelled to contend almost continually with financial difficulties. Several reasons might

be given for this state of affairs. In the first place, the immigrants were not accustomed to giving directly to institutions such as these. [119] In the lands from which they had come the churches and seminaries were financed by general taxation. It was not necessary for the Christian people of their homelands to organize financial appeals for such causes, as was the case in this country. And, secondly, the immigrants had only recently arrived in this new land and most of them were still destitute of means. To add to their dilemma, crop failures were general in the 1870's, and many of the newcomers were reduced to a condition of extreme poverty.

Then, too, Augsburg became a center of controversy because of the ideals of personal Christian life as well as of congregational life which the leaders at the school advocated with such great vigor. These ideals were distinctly opposed to the religious formalism and the aristocratic and authoritarian tendencies which prevailed in many parts of the Lutheran Church in this country. Sverdrup and Oftedal, the young professors from Norway, were contending for personal Christianity, spiritual awakening, witnessing by the laity, evangelism, a democratic ministry, and a church life which followed as closely as possible the pattern set forth in the New Testament.

The men of Augsburg were strongly opposed by other immigrant church leaders, who were in favor of transplanting the ecclesiasticism of Norway to American soil. Much contention and bitterness developed between the theological disputants. [120] Both Sverdrup and Oftedal spoke and wrote incisively. There was no mistaking what they meant. Their opponents, on their side, gave no quarter. The lengths to which some of them went in pressing their attacks against Augsburg and its professors is almost beyond comprehension in our day. The lot of the leaders at Augsburg became a trying one, and they suffered untold agony of soul and mind. Perhaps the greater portion of this fell to Professor Sverdrup. After Weenaas' resignation in 1876, Sverdrup was made president of the institution and as such was called upon to shoulder the heaviest burdens and responsibilities.

Up to this time the school had had only two departments, a theological and a pre-theological. In 1874 a college department was added. There were now three departments: theological, college, and preparatory. An attempt was made for a year or two to give a scientific as well as a classical course in the college, but this development was temporarily abandoned. The college course which was offered was designed to prepare students for the study of theology, for graduate study, and for teaching. The first college class was graduated in 1879.

Though the school was growing both numerically and academically, the first seven years of Professor Sverdrup's administration, 1876-1883, were made exceedingly difficult by the controversy which was raging in the Norwegian-Danish Lutheran Conference, with which the school was affiliated. [121] At times the very existence of the school was threatened. During the seven years which followed, 1883-1890, conditions were appreciably better. There was greater unity within the Conference and the work at Augsburg prospered. A new dormitory was built in 1884. Some progress was also made in building up an endowment fund. During the school year 1888-89

there were no less than forty-two students in the theological department.

In 1890 the Norwegian-Danish Lutheran Conference, the Norwegian Augustana Synod, and the Lutheran Anti-Missourian Brotherhood merged to form the United Norwegian Lutheran Church. As a result of this union, Augsburg seemed destined to expand very rapidly. It had now become affiliated with a large and powerful church body. But the immediate future was not as bright as it seemed.

Instead, the next seven years, 1890-1897, proved to be perhaps the most trying years in all the history of the institution. Controversy flared up anew and became more intense than ever before. The contending parties faced each other before long in the civil courts of the land.

The question at issue was the transfer of Augsburg and its physical properties to the corporation of the United Norwegian Lutheran Church. [122] The board of trustees of Augsburg, which had held the properties in trust for the former Norwegian-Danish Lutheran Conference, was of the conviction that the proposed transfer would constitute a violation of its trust because it would yield control of the school to men who were not in sympathy with the ideals for the perpetuation of which the school was founded. There were also legal difficulties involved in the proposed transfer. Throughout the protracted and heated struggle Sverdrup and Oftedal, together with the members of the board of trustees and their sympathizers, were in a decided minority. And the majority which was against the school was a strong one. In due time this situation was to leave the school again in an exceedingly precarious position.

The conflict resulted eventually in an open breach. At the meeting of the United Church in St. Paul in 1895 Sverdrup and Oftedal were denied seats. They were delegates from the Trinity Lutheran Congregation of Minneapolis. In the same year twelve congregations were expelled from the United Church for adopting resolutions to support Augsburg Seminary. A number of pastors were also dropped from the roster of the Church for sympathizing with Augsburg.

Thus Augsburg College and Theological Seminary found itself for the time being the protégée of twelve congregations and a few pastors and professors. Shortly afterwards, however, another hundred or more congregations joined the twelve, [123] withdrawing from the United Norwegian Lutheran Church in sympathy with the school and its leaders. Together these congregations became the Lutheran Free Church, which has since sought to carry out the ideals for which the school has contended, and has constituted the chief financial and moral support of the school.

The outlook for the future of Augsburg was now regarded as hopeless by many observers. A large church body had severed its connections with the institution. In the final outcome of the litigation which had been in process, Augsburg was left without its endowment fund. A part of the library was also lost. Moreover, there was a resultant decline in enrollment. Great faith indeed was required to carry on in the face of such a dark prospect.

It seems almost a miracle therefore that within seven years a new classroom and administration building could be erected

and be fully paid for within a very short time. This was the present Main Building, which was built at a cost of \$42,000 and dedicated on January 1, 1902. Considering the size of the Lutheran Free Church and the financial conditions at the time, the effort had no doubt required some real sacrifice on the part of many of our church members. [124] The fact that a marked spiritual awakening was taking place in the widely scattered congregations of the Lutheran Free Church in Minnesota and the Dakotas was in all likelihood the greatest contributing factor in the success of the undertaking.

Some now seemed to think that the roadway ahead would not be a difficult one. But this did not prove true; it was a long, hard way. The Main Building was paid for, but the income for current expenses tagged woefully. As a result, the school found itself in distress again and again, making necessary frequent special campaigns for funds. The enrollment also began to decline.

The situation was greatly aggravated by the death, within a short period of time, of several of the leaders. Professor Sverdrup died in 1907. Two years later Professor H. A. Urseth was stricken. And in 1911 Professor Oftedal was laid to rest. Within four years Augsburg had lost three of its most outstanding leaders. Sverdrup had been president from 1876 to 1907, a total of thirty-one years.

In 1911 the Annual Conference elected George Sverdrup, a son of the senior Sverdrup, as his father's successor. He had served as acting president since 1909, succeeding Professor Oftedal, who had administered the affairs of the school during the interim following the death of the elder Sverdrup.

Professor George Sverdrup was born in Minneapolis in 1879. [125] He was graduated from South High School in his native city before he was fifteen years of age. In 1898 he received the degree of Bachelor of Arts from Augsburg College. He continued his studies at the University of Minnesota and Yale University, the latter institution awarding him the Master of Arts degree in 1905. The following year he studied at the American School of Archeology in Jerusalem. Before assuming his first professorship at Augsburg he spent one year at the University of Leipzig in Germany. In 1914-15 he attended the University of Oslo in Norway, on leave of absence. His special field of study was Semitic languages and Biblical archeology. Upsala College, East Orange, N. J., awarded him the degree of Doctor Literarum Humanarum, honoris causa, in 1929.

Augsburg was passing through a difficult period when the younger Sverdrup took over the leadership. During the ten years prior to his administration the average number of theological students had been twenty-four and the average number of college students forty-eight. During the decade which followed, 1911-1921, the average for the theological department rose to twenty-six, but the average number of college students dropped to forty-one. This decennium included the years of World War I., a fact which would account in large part for the decline. Co-education had not as yet been introduced at Augsburg. During the last year of the war of 1914-1918 there were only twenty-three students in the college at Augsburg. [126]

But there were also other reasons for the decreased enrollment. One was the restricted nature of the curriculum offered.

From 1874, when the college department was first added to the school, until 1921 the college offered essentially only one course. It emphasized chiefly ancient and modern languages, especially Greek, philosophy, literature, and religion. Another reason for the low enrollment was the fact that Augsburg was a men's college. Our institution as well as other men's colleges in our country were finding it difficult to maintain themselves as such. There were also internal troubles at the school, which did not improve matters.

A great change was under way at Augsburg as the junior Sverdrup began the second decade of his administration. Shortly after the close of the first World War we find the institution on the way to becoming the "greater Augsburg" of which some had been speaking. In 1922 coeducation was officially introduced. The young women of the Lutheran Free Church could now attend their own college. New subjects were added to the curriculum. A greater variety of courses was offered. Additions have since been made from time to time and today Augsburg College offers its students a standard four-year liberal arts college, [127] with special emphasis on courses leading to teaching, graduate study, and the study of theology, law, medicine, and nursing.

One of the results of these changes was a marked increase in the number of students who registered at the college annually. During the period 1921- 1931 the average enrollment rose from forty-one to 166, an increase of four hundred percent. The average number of theological students dropped to nineteen during the same decade. This growth in the college continued throughout the depression decade of 1931-1941. The average for this period was 314 per year in the college. There was also an increase in the number of theological students, the average rising from nineteen to twenty-two. During the school year 1940-1941 Augsburg College and Theological Seminary had a total enrollment of 495, the highest in its history.

The following table tells the story of attendance at Augsburg down through the years.

Year	Theological Dep't	College	Academy
1896-97	33	84	70
1897-98	28	91	75
1898-99	34	96	50
1899-00	34	104	63
1900-01	44	75	51
1901-02	43	65	72
1902-03	39	41	79
1903-04	26	45	55
1904-05	17	38	65
1905-06	18	44	94
[128]			
1906-07	16	44	72
1907-08	18	52	105
1908-09	17	48	86
1909-10	21	56	83
1910-11	25	51	100
1911-12	29	53	81
1912-13	32	52	87
1913-14	30	37	83

1914-15	27	37	66
1915-16	30	31	93
1916-17	21	28	80
1917-18	26	25	83
1918-19	26	23	44
1919-20	19	38	88
1920-21	21	37	89
1921-22	19	44	71
1922-23	14	75	69
1923-24	20	105	66
1924-25	16	135	62
1925-26	17	186	58
1926-27	19	220	52
1927-28	23	248	42
1928-29	18	230	42
1929-30	17	192	47
1930-31	22	223	42
1931-32	32	220	32
1932-33	26	232	
1933-34	25	249	
1934-35	22	238	
1935-36	18	233	
1936-37	26	278	
1937-38	25	267	
1938-39	14	413	
1939-40	15	450	
1940-41	18	477	
1941-42	17	412	
[129]			

On Armistice Day in 1937 President George Sverdrup succumbed to a heart ailment. He had been the head of the school twenty-six years. He and his father together had served as president during fifty-seven of the institution's sixty-eight years of history. During his incumbency he had seen long years of patient effort and unswerving loyalty richly rewarded. The college registration had grown from 37 in 1921 to 278 in 1937, an increase of over 700 percent. Plans for a new building at Augsburg had been completed and Professor Sverdrup himself had begun his work as director of the ingathering of funds for the new structure when he was called by death. Shortly afterwards the new building, appropriately named Sverdrup-Oftedal Memorial Hall, was completed at an approximate cost of \$150,000. Dr. T. O. Burntvedt, who had completed the work begun by Sverdrup in connection with the solicitation of funds, gave the principal address and officiated at the dedicatory exercises on November 5, 1939.

In 1938 Dr. Bernhard M. Christensen was chosen to succeed the late Dr. Sverdrup. Augsburg's new president was born near Marinette, Wisconsin, in the year 1901 and is an alumnus of both the college and the seminary. He was awarded the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in 1929 by the Hartford Theological Seminary, Hartford, Conn. He has also done graduate work at the University of Berlin, [130] the University of Gottingen, Columbia University, and Princeton Seminary, the latter institution conferring upon him the degree of Master of

Theology. Professor Christensen has been a member of the theological faculty at Augsburg since 1930, having also taught at Augsburg from 1922 to 1925.

Besides the leaders whose names have already been mentioned, many others have served Augsburg and the Lutheran Free Church as teachers, some of them over an extended period of years. Professor H. A. Urseth, who wrote a number of Gospel hymns and translated the Explanation and the Bible History, served from 1898 to 1909. Professor Andreas Helland, author of the classic history of Augsburg entitled *Augsburg Seminary Through Fifty Years*, was a member of the faculty from 1901 to 1940. Dr. John O. Evjen, eminent church historian and author, was a professor at Augsburg from 1909 to 1919. Professor Elias P. Harbo taught from 1909 to 1927. And Professor L. Lillehei has served since 1919. All were members of the theological faculty.

A larger number of men and women have served the institution as members of the college faculty for ten years or more, some of them much longer. Their names are included in the following complete list of those who have been members of the faculty at Augsburg more than a decade. [131]

Name	From	To	Remarks
Sven Oftedal	1873	1904	Emeritus to 1911
Georg Sverdrup	1874	1907	
John H. Blegen	1885	1916	
Theo. S. Reimestad	1885	1899	
Wilhelm M. Pettersen	1886	1910	
A. M. Hove	1887	1901	
Johannes L. Nydahl	1891	1928	
H. A. Urseth	1898	1909	
H. N. Hendrickson	1900	Present	
Andreas Helland	1901	1940	Except 1902-03
S. O. Severson	1903	1915	
George Sverdrup	1907	1937	Except 1908-09; 1914-15
Elias P. Harbo	1907	1927	
William Mills	1908	1918	
John O. Evjen	1909	1919	
P. A. Sveeggen	1915	Present	
L. Lillehei	1919	Present	
Elmer D. Busby	1919	1929	Emeritus to present
J. S. Melby	1920	Present	
Jennie Skurdalsvold	1921	Present	
Henry P. Opseth	1922	Present	
Arthur Nash	1922	Present	Except 1934-35
Bernhard M. Christensen	1922	Present	Except 1925-30
Carl Fosse	1923	1942	
Gerda Mortensen	1923	Present	Except 1934-35
S. B. Severson	1923	1933	
George Soberg	1925	Present	
Marion W. Lindemann	1926	Present	Except 1930-31; 1937-38
Marie Kjelaas	1926	Present	Except 1933-34
Karl Ermisch	1928	Present	
Selma A. Storien	1928	1940	Except 1936-37

Miss Ragna Sverdrup has been treasurer of Augsburg since 1912, and Mss Ethel Ingebredtsen has been in the administrative office since 1921.

The responsibilities in connection with the school's fiscal affairs and properties have been borne largely by the following five men in their capacity as president of the institution's board of trustees: Professor Sven Oftedal (1897-98; 1900-04; 1906-08; 1910), Pastor E. E. Gynild (1909; 1911; 1917-19), Mr. K. B. Birkeland (1912-16; 1920,25), Mr. Edward G. Hammer (1926-35), and Pastor John A. Houkom (1936,present). [132]

The board of trustees of a Christian college and theological seminary such as Augsburg must grapple with many difficult problems. As a rule they are not provided with the necessary funds for growth and expansion. In recent years it has become increasingly clear to a number of people in the Lutheran Free Church that Augsburg must have more funds. Another building or two are urgently needed. There are also other needs. To maintain a standard liberal arts college and a seminary requires a large expenditure of money each year. As more of our people gain a more adequate understanding of these things, the necessary funds will be forthcoming. Not only should there be an increase in general contributions, but larger sums in the form of special gifts and bequests should be set aside for the work of Christian higher education in our midst.

The following is the record of general contributions to Augsburg year by year, bequests and other special gifts not included. [133]

Year	Amount
1896-97	\$ 3,596.79
1897-98	3,579.24
1898-99	6,834.84
1899-00	14,155.66
1900-01	3,836.34
1901-02	3,126.26
1902-03	8,342.23
1903-04	27,179.18
1904-05	5,647.73
1905-06	6,626.36
1906-07	8,040.63
1907-08	25,399.21
1908-09	7,084.63
1909-10	8,374.96
1910-11	11,478.87
1911-12	12,418.70
1912-13	12,866.63
1913-14	11,425.79
1914-15	13,245.81
1915-16	27,666.38
1916-17	13,715.00
1917-18	25,794.01
1918-19	43,875.04
1919-20	25,098.46
1920-21	20,226.88
1921-22	18,049.03
1922-23	22,432.25
1923-24	31,795.35
1924-25	37,979.36

1925-26	30,799.28
1926-27	41,719.89
1927-28	31,547.34
1928-29	40,074.86
1929-30	52,104.82
1930-31	20,957.61
1931-32	35,224.71
1932-33	19,179.42
1933-34	24,023.73
1934-35	25,635.01 [134]
1935-36	24,444.29
1936-37	33,051.39
1937-38	22,693.49
1938-39	23,714.63
1939-40	23,388.14
1940-41	25,016.74
1941-42	36,985.39
1896-1942	\$970,452.36
Present net valuation	\$345,882.07

Augsburg Seminary was the first training school for pastors established by the Norwegian immigrants in the United States. Since it was founded in 1869 the seminary department has graduated 562 young men, nearly all of whom have gone out into life as pastors or as missionaries to foreign fields. This has indeed been a notable contribution to the kingdom of God. One needs but think of the hundreds of thousands of people to whom they have ministered in the United States, Canada, Madagascar, China, India, and Africa. One visualizes their work among the children, in Sunday-school and confirmation classes. One reflects on their efforts on behalf of our young people, leading many of them to a conscious acceptance of the salvation which is in Christ Jesus. One sees them from Sunday to Sunday, week in and week out, portraying Christ and Him crucified to the thousands who hear them. One goes with them to the bedsides of the sick and the dying, to the homes of the needy and the afflicted. [135] One calls to mind the men and women in large numbers who have been trained by them for Christian service through the Christian church. One pauses in appreciation of the unselfish contributions they have made to the community life of our land wherever they have labored.

Augsburg College has awarded Bachelor of Arts degrees to 981 young men and women. Many of the young men have continued their studies in the theological department. Others, including many of the young women, have gone out as teachers in our public grade and high schools. Still others have entered other vocations. Many of them have become leaders among the laity in our congregations. As Christian people we appreciate the need of Christian men and women in all walks of life. In supplying this need the Christian college makes a vital contribution.

CHAPTER SIX

Foreign Mission Work

The Lutheran Free Church has inherited much of its love

for foreign missions. Nearly all the people who comprised the Lutheran Free Church in its foundation period were of Norwegian ancestry, most of them having come directly from the land of the Vikings. And one of the interests they brought with them to this country was the cause of Christ among the non-Christian nations.

Norway has been one of the leading mission countries of modern times, particularly when its population and economic resources are taken into consideration. It has been stated on good authority that Norway has a higher percentage of its nationals engaged in foreign mission work than has any other country in the world. [137]

Mission interest in Norway was given its early impetus by the Herrnhutians from Germany, beginning at about 1820. The groundwork, however, had been laid by the nation-wide spiritual awakening which came to Norway as a result of the evangelistic labors of the peasant-layman Hans Nielsen Hauge. Norway's first national mission society was organized in 1842. Since that time Norwegian Christians, working through a number of mission societies, have done great things for God in foreign lands.

This awakening of mission interest in Norway occurred just as emigration to America was getting under way, Elling Eielsen, the first Norwegian Lutheran pastor in America, was ordained near Chicago in 1843. However, during the formative period of Norwegian-American Lutheranism the latent mission interest of the immigrants was largely kept in abeyance, because of the great immediate task of providing for the spiritual needs of themselves and their children. This task included the building and maintenance of church edifices, parsonages, academies, colleges, seminaries, and charitable institutions. It also involved the training of pastors and teachers in large numbers.

But before very long, voices were raised in behalf of the Christian foreign mission enterprise. One of the earliest and one of the strongest of these was the voice of Professor Georg Sverdrup, then president of Augsburg Seminary, who has been called the father of foreign missions among us in America. [138] Imbued as he was with the evangelical and missionary spirit of the Christian awakening in Norway, he brushed aside considerations of poverty and expediency and called for action on the part of the immigrant church in our country.

This does not mean that Norwegian Lutherans in America up to this time had done nothing for foreign missions. They had. Many of them had continued to pray and to maintain an active interest in the work being done by the mission societies in their homeland. There was a steady trickle of contributions from this country to the societies in Norway. Visits to congregations in the United States by missionaries in the service of the Norwegian societies did much to sustain the interest of the immigrants in the missionary cause.

The suggestion made by Professor Sverdrup that the young church in America gird itself for action and carry on its own missionary program met with a prompt response. When in 1885 he gave expression to the desirability of forming a mission society at Augsburg, the students called a meeting at once and decided to act in accordance with his request. Shortly after-

wards several students volunteered for service as missionaries. The Annual Meeting of the Norwegian-Danish Conference, the church body with which Augsburg was at that time associated, [139] thereupon established a special treasury for receiving funds to send these men out as missionaries as soon as they were ready to go. That the congregations shared the interest manifested by the students was indicated among other things by the fact that there was a marked increase in missionary contributions.

To begin with, it was deemed advisable to work in collaboration with the Mission Society of Norway. An agreement with this society was accordingly effected, and on June 13, 1887, Pastor J. P. Hogstad and his wife were commissioned as the first Lutherans to be sent to Madagascar as missionaries from America. Two years later Pastor and Mrs. E. H. Tou were sent. While the funds for their work were to be supplied from America, the missionaries were to be in the service of the Norwegian Mission and subject to its rules and regulations.

Because of this early collaboration with the Norwegian Mission our own field of labor very naturally came to be in Madagascar. It was to this island that the Mission Society of Norway had sent many of its missionaries. There unoccupied fields still called. What could be more fitting than to assume responsibility for a portion of these? Thus the interest in Madagascar missions which the immigrants had on the other side of the Atlantic was continued on this side.

The French island of Madagascar, located off the southeast coast of the African mainland, [140] is as large as North and South Dakota, Minnesota, and Wisconsin combined. By agreement with the other missions, the Lutheran Free Church operates in the southwestern part of the island, most of its work being concentrated on the coastal plain in that area. There we have seven missionary districts. Five of these districts have resident missionaries as administrators, located at St. Augustin, Manasoa, Betsioky, Betroka, and Ampanihy. The other two districts lack missionaries for the time being and are administered from one of the neighboring main stations. The valley of the Onilahy is the most densely populated part of our field. Our work was centered there for many years, but it has now been extended beyond the valley. Manasoa is the center of our whole Madagascar mission. Here we have our main church, residences for the missionaries, a girls' school and a boys' school, a Bible school, and a medical dispensary.

Our mission field is in the tropical zone. Temperatures range from 50 to 115 degrees Fahrenheit. There is a rainy season, which is also hot, extending from October to April, and a dry season, from May to October. There is no snowfall. The climate and the prevalence of dysentery and malaria have a very deleterious effect upon the health of white people. Without quinine it would be virtually impossible for our missionaries to continue their work among the Malagasy. [141] The exact population of our field is not known, but it is estimated that the Lutheran Free Church has assumed responsibility for the evangelization of about 225,000 natives in this region.

In 1890 the Norwegian - Danish Conference merged with other Lutheran synods in this country to form a new church body. When the controversy regarding Augsburg Seminary in

this new body developed, the status of the Augsburg graduates in Madagascar was also complicated for a time. But eventually agreements were worked out whereby the Lutheran Free Church and its missionaries were allocated their own portion of the field in Madagascar, for which we have since been responsible. Since the Manasoa station had been founded by one of our missionaries, Pastor Tou, in 1890 and since it was included in the field taken over by the Lutheran Free Church, we have dated our Madagascar mission from that year. We are already in the second half-century of our missionary endeavors in that land.

In 1896 our forces on the island were augmented by the arrival of Pastor J. B. Hoigaard and Sister Pernilla Pederson. In 1898 they were joined by Sister Caroline Olson, Miss Julie Larson, and Pastor and Mrs. J. B. Jerstad. In the very next year no less than five more workers were on their way to Madagascar: N. A. Hatlem, Sister Milla Larson, Pastor and Mrs. Ludvig Pederson, and Dr. J. O. Dyrnes. [142] The sisters were all deaconesses from our Lutheran Deaconess Home and Hospital in Minneapolis. It is very evident that a strong spiritual and missionary awakening was taking place in these early days of the Lutheran Free Church.

Since that time, from 1900 to 1940, we have sent forty missionaries to this field, an average of one each year. A complete list of their names is appended to this chapter, together with some pertinent data.

Not all who were sent to Madagascar were permitted to live out their lives on the mission field. Ill health compelled a number to return to the homeland. Others were forced to give up their work for other good reasons. Many of our early missionaries died soon after reaching Madagascar, victims of the diseases prevalent there.

The first missionaries were, naturally, inexperienced. They did not know how to protect their health from the inroads made upon it by tropical conditions. Moreover, suitable homes were not available, and living in native huts brought disaster. During the first thirty years nine missionaries were laid to rest in the cemetery at Manasoa. During the past twenty years only one death has occurred. The graves of our missionaries in Malagasy soil bear silent but strong testimony to the constraining power of the love of Christ in human lives. [143] Those who are buried there are: Sister Pemilia Pederson (d. 1898), Mrs. J. B. Hoigaard, N. A. Hatlem, and Sister Caroline Olson (d. 1900), Mrs. E. H. Tou (d. 1901), Sister Milla Larson (d. 1902), Mrs. Halvor Sageng (d. 1904), Pastor J. B. Jerstad (d. 1911), Miss Ragna Dahle (d. 1919), and Mrs. J. O. Dyrnes (d. 1937).

Several of our missionaries have been privileged to serve for twenty years or more. They are Pastor and Mrs. O. M. Molvik (31), Pastor and Mrs. O. A. Asheim (22 and 29 respectively), Sister Milla Pederson (25), Miss Inga Helland (20), Dr. and Mrs. M. A. Helland (21), and Pastor and Mrs. M. G. C. Vaagenes (21 and 18 respectively).

Dean of all our missionaries is the widely-known theologian and physician, Dr. J. O. Dyrnes, who first sailed for Madagascar in 1899, relinquishing a fine medical practice in this country. He has been in the service of our foreign mission

board ever since and his work ranks with the most outstanding in the annals of modern missions. He has treated clinically over 350,000 natives, has founded and supervised Christian schools, organized evangelistic work, administered mission affairs, preached, and otherwise ministered to the tribes of south-western Madagascar. He was ably assisted for a period of thirty-one years by his recently deceased wife, Sarah Johnson Dyrnes.

Ever since the early years of the Lutheran Free Church a number of our people have been interested in China missions. [144] Some of them contributed to the mission work carried on in China by the former Hauge Synod. In about the year 1910 our people became more vitally interested than ever in Christian missionary work among the Chinese people. This interest had been aroused by one or two unaffiliated China missionaries who had made contacts in our congregations and by reports of the work being done by other Lutherans in China. In 1913 the agitation for a China mission of our own was brought to fruition in the form of a resolution adopted by our Annual Conference authorizing our foreign mission board to launch such a mission. The Lutheran Board of Missions complied, but not without strong misgivings and even protestations on the part of some of the veteran members of the Board. In November, 1914, our first missionary to China, Pastor Lars Hompland, departed for the Orient. He was joined early in the following year by Missionary A. B. Gjølseth. In December of 1915 Pastor and Mrs. Arthur Olson also sailed for China.

The area which comprises our field of labor in China is located in the eastern part of the province of Honan. This province is divided into four districts, or Tao, which in turn are divided into 108 Hseins. The Lutheran Free Church field extends throughout four of these subdivisions, namely, Kweiteh, Suichow, Checheng, and Li-iyi. [145] Each of these Hseins has a district city by the same name. In addition to these four cities, there are in this area between 250 and 300 market towns and several thousand villages. The topography is even. The land is fertile, with a rich, yellow soil. Three crops are produced each year. The climate is temperate. Temperatures range from a few degrees above zero in the winter to 110 degrees Fahrenheit in the summer, with high humidity. Over two million natives inhabit our field.

After a few years our first two missionaries resigned from our mission. As a consequence the chief burden in connection with our China mission fell upon other shoulders, especially those of Pastor and Mrs. P. T. Konstertie, Pastor and Mrs. Arthur S. Olson, Pastor and Mrs. Frederick Ditmanson, and Miss Alma Shirley. Dr. and Mrs. Ralph Mortensen also worked on our field for three years, but are now stationed in the city of Hankow, where for many years Mortensen has been engaged in Christian literary work for several of the Lutheran missions in China. Dr. and Mrs. Einar C. Andreassen did medical missionary work on our field in China from 1919 to 1926.

When our China mission was begun in 1914, several of our mission leaders expressed grave doubts concerning our ability adequately to support two missions. However, contributions rose steadily, and it was possible for some time to continue the work both in Madagascar and in China without too much difficulty. [146]

With the onset of the financial stringency of the thirties, and with it a prolonged drought and resultant crop failures in the area in which many of our congregations are located, the question of carrying on the two missions was brought up for reconsideration. During the year ending in June, 1930, contributions to foreign missions in the Lutheran Free Church reached the sum of \$44,382.70. Three years later, when the depression was at its worst, missionary receipts dropped to \$24,158.79. This was a decline of more than \$20,000 in three years. In the face of such drastically reduced revenues the Lutheran Board of Missions in 1932 recommended to the Annual Conference that the Lutheran Free Church center its efforts on only one of the fields. After some discussion the Annual Conference decided to conduct a referendum among the congregations on the proposal of the Board. Out of approximately 375 congregations 156 took the matter up for consideration and voted. Seventy-five were in favor of continuing the work on both fields; fifty-one favored concentrating on one field, and thirty voted to leave the matter to the discretion of the Board. When the directors met in May, 1933, [147] they decided to continue both missions "until such time as the Lord may show us a way of transferring to or of consolidating with some other mission." This action has been carried out and the Lutheran Free Church has continued its missionary labors in both Madagascar and China. In 1940 our foreign mission receipts were again up to nearly \$40,000.

The work here at home in connection with the foreign mission enterprise of the Lutheran Free Church was conducted by a committee from 1896 to 1899. The first chairman of the Mission Committee was Professor Georg Sverdrup. Its first secretary, treasurer was Professor J. H. Blegen. In 1899, pursuant to a resolution adopted by the Annual Meeting, this committee was incorporated as the Lutheran Board of Missions. Sverdrup served as the (executive) secretary of the Board until his death in 1907. Blegen served as treasurer until 1925, more than a quarter of a century. Professor Andreas Helland succeeded to Sverdrup's position on the Board, serving from 1907 to 1919, when Augsburg Seminary requested that he devote his full time to his professorship. In 1934 he became secretary-treasurer, in which capacity he still serves. Through his children, who have served on the mission fields of Madagascar, China, and India, and through long terms of service in the home office, Professor Helland has been privileged to make a singularly large contribution to the cause of missions. In 1919 Pastor Johan Mattson was made secretary of the Board. [148] In 1926 the treasurership was added to his office. He served until 1933. During his incumbency Pastor Mattson made a trip to China on behalf of our missionary work there. Thus it appears that four men - Sverdrup, Blegen, Helland, and Mattson - have borne the brunt of the responsibility in connection with our foreign mission effort as far as the home base is concerned.

God has blessed both our Madagascar and our China missions. There are now more than ninety-five congregations on our two fields, with a total of 7,200 members. Since the beginning of our work more than 11,500 Malagasy and Chinese have been baptized. There are at present 150 native pastors and evangelists on our fields, 110 Sunday-schools with 4,100 pu-

pils, and 2,000 catechumens (non-Christians receiving instruction preparatory to baptism). It is conservatively estimated that our work on these fields reaches and directly affects more than 8,000 people. The efforts of the Lutheran Free Church in foreign lands have not been in vain.

The record of contributions by the Lutheran Free Church to its Madagascar and China missions is as follows:

Year	Amount
1893-1895	\$ 739.24
1895-1896	3,332.10
1896-1897	5,208.79 [149]
1898-1899	10,462.60
1899-1900	7,892.13
1900-1901	12,345.23
1901-1902	9,914.09
1902-1903	9,965.69
1903-1904	12,489.30
1904-1905	12,435.05
1905-1906	12,439.06
1906-1907	12,025.77
1907-1908	12,005.22
1908-1909	11,516.46
1909-1910	13,431.86
1910-1911	14,635.30
1911-1912	10,423.99
1912-1913	11,601.77
1913-1914	13,741.96
1914-1915	18,469.92
1915-1916	24,633.83
1916-1917	23,736.65
1917-1918	29,098.60
1918-1919	34,144.39
1919-1920	37,725.47
1920-1921	39,412.37
1921-1922	36,228.36
1922-1923	36,153.50
1923-1924	35,408.13
1924-1925	40,700.72
1925-1926	42,242.79
1926-1927	40,810.89
1927-1928	44,261.92
1928-1929	42,522.80
1929-1930	44,382.70
1930-1931	31,223.84
1931-1932	27,999.54
1932-1933	24,158.79
1933-1934	28,543.48
1934-1935	29,729.77
1935-1936	28,354.65 [150]
1936-1937	28,481.75
1937-1938	28,443.20
1938-1939	33,408.76
1939-1940	39,522.60
1940-1941	34,531.11
1941-1942	37,110.59
1893-1942	\$1,146,041.64

MISSIONARIES TO MADAGASCAR

Commissioned	Name	Remarks
1887 J. P. Hogstad		Resigned in 1906.
1887 Mrs. Hogstad		Resigned in 1906.
1889 E. H. Tou		Resigned in 1903.
1889 Mrs. Tou		Died in 1901.
1896 J. B. Hoigaard		Resigned in 1901,
1896 Sister Pernilia Pederson		Died in 1898.
1898 Sister Caroline Olson		Died in 1900.
1898 Mrs. Larsen-Hoigaard		Died in 1900.
1898 J. B. Jerstad		Died in 1911.
1898 Mrs. Jerstad		Returned in 1911.
1899 N. A. Hatlem		Died in 1900.
1899 Sister Milla Larson		Died in 1902.
1899 Dr. J. O. Dymes		Still serving.
1899 Ludvig Pederson		Resigned in 1902.
1899 Mrs. Pederson		Resigned in 1902.
1900 Sister Alida Olin		Resigned in 1901.
1900 Chr. Jorgensen		Resigned in 1904.
1900 Mrs. Jorgensen		Resigned in 1904.
1901 E. P. Wien		Resigned in 1903.
1902 Sister Caroline Unhiem		Resigned in 1909.
1902 Sister Henriette Nilsen		Resigned in 1919.
1902 R. Sageng		Resigned in 1907.
1902 Mrs. Sageng		Died in 1904,
1906 Mrs. Johnson-Dyrnes		Died in 1937.
1908 Sister Mathilda Thorson		Resigned in 1916.
1909 Sister Tilla Hegland		Resigned in 1916.
1909 Olai Molvik		Still serving.
1909 Mrs. Molvik		Still serving.
1911 Sister Petra Petersen	Still serving (Mrs. Asheim)	
1913 A. W. Halland		Emeritus.
1913 Mrs. Halland		Emerita.
1913 Ole. Bjorgan		Resigned in 1920.
1913 Mrs. Bjorgan		Resigned in 1920.
1915 Edw. Sand		Resigned in 1916.
1915 Mrs. Sand		Resigned in 1916.
[151]		
1916 Ragna Dahle		Died in 1919.
1916 Sister Milla Pederson		Still serving.
1917 L. H. Awes		Resigned in 1921.
1917 Mrs. Awes		Resigned in 1921.
1917 Jens K. Nygaard		Drowned enroute to field.
1917 Mrs. Nygaard		Drowned enroute to field.
1919 Ole A. Asheim		Still serving.
1919 Albert Hanson		Resigned in 1925.
1919 Mrs. Hanson		Resigned in 1925.
1919 M. A. Helland		Resigned in 1941.
1919 Mrs. Helland		Resigned in 1941.
1920 M. G. C. Vaagenes		Still serving.
1920 Inga Helland		Still serving.
1923 Hanna Bovre (Mrs. Vaagenes).		Still serving.
1926 Caleb Quanbeck		Still serving.
1926 Mrs. Quanbeck		Still serving.
1938 Malvin Rossing		Still serving.
1938 Mrs. Rossing		Still serving.

1940 Maurice Molvik Sailing Delayed.
 1940 Mrs. Molvik Sailing Delayed.

MISSIONARIES TO CHINA

1914	Lars Hompland	Resigned in 1921.
1914	Mrs. Ronning-Hompland	Resigned in 1921.
1915	Alfred B. Gjelseth	Resigned in 1917.
1915	Mrs. Gielseth	Resigned in 1917.
1915	Gudrid Lundebey	Resigned in 1918.
1915	Arthur S. Olson	Still serving.
1915	Mrs. Olson	Still serving.
1917	P. T. Konsterlie	Still serving.
1917	Mrs. Konsterlie	Still serving.
1918	Ralph Mortensen	Still serving.
1918	Mrs. Mortensen	Still serving.
1918	Frederick Ditmanson	Still serving.
1918	Mrs. Ditmanson	Still serving.
1919	Dr. E. C. Andreassen	Resigned in 1926.
1919	Mrs. Andreassen	Resigned in 1926.
1921	G. Sather	Resigned in 1927.
1921	Mrs. Sather	Resigned in 1927.
1924	Alma Shirley	Still serving.
1940	Lenorah Erickson	On candidate list.
1940	Ina C. Heggem	Not yet stationed.

CHAPTER SEVEN

Home Mission Work

By Home Missions, we mean the sending of Christian workers, usually pastors, into the various communities of our own country to preach the Gospel, win people for Christ, and establish and build up Christian congregations. This could conceivably be done by individual congregations; but since very few of them would be able to assume the financial responsibilities involved, a plan has been worked out whereby all the congregations can do home mission work through one agency. In the Lutheran Free Church this agency is known as the Board of Home Missions.

This Board consists of six members and is named by the Annual Conference. Actual election to the Board takes place in the Home Mission Corporation, but nominations are made by the annual convention of our church. The Board elects its own officers, [153] including a treasurer, who with the authorization of the Board receives and disburses all contributions to home mission work sent in from the congregations.

When the Board decides to begin work in a certain place, it calls a pastor and promises him a certain salary. The first year it may be necessary for the Board to pay practically all of the home mission pastor's stipend. But as the work gets under way and a congregation is formed, the people whom he serves begin to pay a part of his salary. As the work progresses, this amount increases. Meanwhile, until such congregations are able themselves to provide all the necessary funds to carry on the work, the Board of Home Missions gives them assistance

in the form of annual grants from the central treasury which has been established for this purpose. Sometimes congregations are able to relinquish their home mission aid within a comparatively short time. In other instances such aid is continued over a long period of years.

There may be several reasons why a home mission parish must be given assistance for many years. The field may be a difficult one. Economic conditions in the area in which the congregations are located may be such that self-support becomes difficult. Or the pastor may not be well suited to the call. In any event, the parish is financially not self-sustaining. Our home mission subsidies may therefore be considered as aid from stronger congregations or parishes to weaker ones. [154] They may also be considered as a first step toward equalizing pastors' salaries, a problem which as yet has not been under consideration by our church.

Many home mission parishes begin to contribute to home and foreign missions, to Christian education, and to charities even before they become self-sustaining. This is undoubtedly the right procedure. In this way old and young in the congregation are given a share in the work of the church as a whole. Furthermore, they will thus receive the right outlook and the proper training for participating in these Christian enterprises when their congregations do become self-supporting.

It is obvious that when a parish becomes independent of mission aid it in turn becomes a greater contributor to the work of our church. From a purely financial standpoint it should be clear to every one in the Lutheran Free Church that the future growth of all our institutions depends in great measure upon the effectiveness of our home mission program.

This has not been recognized with sufficient clarity by the people of the Lutheran Free Church. One receives the definite impression when reading the record, that our church has permitted its home mission work to become a "weak sister," as it were. There must be a radical change in this respect, and that for several reasons. [155]

The first reason is that our own country needs a strong program of Christian home mission work. Home missions is part of the vast program of the Christian churches of our land to Christianize America and to build the church of Jesus Christ with all its ministering agencies in our midst. A distinguished authority in the field of Christian education made the statement recently that there are seventeen million young people in the United States not receiving Christian training in an organized school of any kind. Our census figures tell us that seventy million people in our country have no connection with either a church or a synagogue. Moreover, the Christian forces of our nation are being challenged by the new paganism and by numerous other "isms," as well as by all the ancient forms of evil. It is clear that our own beloved United States of America is a vast mission field. In the next hundred years our church should respond as never before to our own country's challenge.

The second reason is that the future of our own church is at stake. We can develop a more effective program of Christian higher education and do more and better work in the field of charities and foreign missions only if we launch out upon a vigorous home mission program. The growth which the

Lutheran Free Church has enjoyed in the past is attributable chiefly to its home mission enterprise. [156] Our future growth will depend in even greater measure upon our home mission work.

To begin with, the home mission work of our church was concerned chiefly with the immigrants from Norway and Denmark and their children. As wave after wave of immigration brought thousands upon thousands of Norway's sons and daughters to our shores, the leaders of our church saw a great challenge and a great opportunity. The spiritual needs of these people must be met. Ministers of the Gospel must follow the new settlers to their new homes on the prairies, in the woods, or in the cities of the New World.

No one else in all America was better qualified to do this than the Norwegian Christians themselves. They knew the language, the psychology, and the distinctive traits of these people. They had a special interest in them because they were their own kith and kin.

Nor were they slow to take up the work. Long before ordained ministers put in their appearance among the Norwegians in this country, zealous lay preachers traveled from settlement to settlement and preached the Word of God. This they have continued to do ever since, though on a gradually diminishing scale. The first real home missionaries among the Norwegian immigrants in America were lay people. [157] From 1825 to 1843 all the spiritual work done among Norwegians in America was done by men who had not been ordained. Their work was spontaneous, voluntary, unpaid, and unorganized, but nevertheless effective. Without it, no spiritual work would have been done among the earliest immigrants.

With the coming of church bodies and ministers a prodigious home mission effort was launched. Perhaps no national group in this country has succeeded in bringing a greater part of its constituency into the fold of the church than the Norwegians.

One of the picturesque figures of this period was the home mission pastor. As settlement moved westward, the home missionary followed. Nor was the clerical-looking man with the little satchel long in putting in his appearance. At times it was made dear to him, especially by certain ungodly elements, that he was not welcome in the pioneer community. But as a rule the Norwegian immigrants were glad to see the pastor come; many of them even wept for joy at the thought of having the church with all its blessings in their midst in this new and strange land. The sod house, the one-room claim shanty, the farmer's barn, the hall above the grocery store, the school house, the first big house in the settlement, all took turns as meeting places until the first church was built. The arrival of the home mission pastor was the occasion for a general community gathering. [158] Services were held, children were baptized, communion was observed, young people were catechized, couples were married, and committal services were held for the dead.

Railway trains were slow and old-fashioned. Automobiles and modern roads did not exist. These were ox, cart and horse, and buggy days. Accommodations in the homes of the people and in the hotels of the day were poor. The home mission pastor's income was pitifully meager. He and his family

were well inured to self-denial. The pastor himself was compelled to forego the joys of his home much of the time. He had to be in his buggy or riding the trains in his Master's service. But the builder for God pressed on, seeking out new fields, founding new congregations, preaching, teaching, comforting, building, struggling, sacrificing. However, there were some compensations. People were glad to see the home mission pastor; they flocked to his services; they took the Word of God to heart; it was easy to preach; there were many conversions; people were willing to sacrifice with the pastor on behalf of the work of the church. His was also the joy of service, and the satisfaction of seeing things accomplished in the work of the kingdom of God. The Lutheran church in America today owes its existence in large measure to the work of these pioneer pastors. [159]

As the transition from Norwegian to English progressed, more and more home mission work was done in the language of our country. Today practically no home mission work is done in Norwegian. No longer do the pastors of our church seek out and minister to only one element of our population. Today all America is our field of labor. In this great work the Lutheran Free Church has also had its part. Even before our church was formally organized, Professor Georg Sverdrup, as president of the "Friends of Augsburg," reported to the annual meeting of the group that "our home mission work has developed with great rapidity, and its expansion should be continued. It has been generously supported by financial contributions"

This was in 1897. As yet there was in our church only one mission committee, which conducted both the home and foreign mission work of the emerging church. Professor Sverdrup was its president and Professor J. H. Blegen its secretary and treasurer. The committee's total receipts for the year amounted to \$5,263.34, of which \$1,951.24 were designated to home missions.

Mission aid was given the following parishes:

MINNESOTA: Badger, Thief River Falls, Clarissa, Farwell, Chokio, Aitkin, Moose Lake, Lake Bemidji, St. Paul.

NORTH DAKOTA: Minot, Denney, Milton, Manfred. [160]

OTHER STATES: Amery and Rhinelander, Wisconsin; Escanaba and Ishpeming, Michigan; and Astoria, Oregon.

It is evident that the amount of assistance given each call was exceedingly small, eighteen of them sharing in the distribution of \$1,900. Furthermore, the portion of the pastor's salary paid by the parishes was also pitifully small.

During the year 1897-98 two committees were formed, one for home and one for foreign missions. However, Sverdrup and Blegen were named respectively president and secretary of both. The contributions to the home mission committee for the year amounted to \$2,363.03.

On July 10, 1898, Pastor E. P. Harbo became president and Pastor Andreas Helland secretary of the Home Mission Committee.

During the decade which followed, the home mission work of the Lutheran Free Church grew apace. Contributions increased 400 percent, climbing from a little over \$2,000 to a

little over \$8,000. Work was begun in many new places, the names of which follow:

MINNESOTA: Henning, Fosston, Metz, Lake Itasca, Lake Lillian, Minneapolis (St. Luke's and St. Petri), Bagley, Hawley, Windom, Hallock, Little Falls, Cloquet, Crookston, Fergus Falls, Sandstone, Starbuck, Carmel, Cormorant, Wannaska, Luverne, Dorris, and Pine Lake. [161]

NORTH DAKOTA: Towner, Litchville, Hatton, Carpio, Kenmare, Portal, Mohall, Braddock, Hampden, Marmon, Minnewaukon, Tioga, Daneville, Bonetrail.

OTHER STATES AND PROVINCES: Mason, Eau Claire, West Superior, Bayfield, Clintonville, Madison, Ringle, Arborvita, and several places near Marinette, Wisconsin; Ironwood and Hancock, Michigan; Everett, Ballard, Ellensburg, Spokane, Bellingham, and Silvana, Washington; Chicago and Capron, Illinois; Woden, Iowa; Highmore, South Dakota; Bella Coola, B. C.; Kinisteiio, Edberg, Perry Point, Alberta; Demaine, Hanley, Melfort, Eagle Hill and Ridgeford, Sask.; and Clanwilliam, Man.

In 1902 Pastor Chr. Ytrehus became the first superintendent of home missions in the Lutheran Free Church. Four years previously Professor Helland had urged strongly that this office be established. Ytrehus resigned the following year. He was succeeded by Pastor J. U. Pedersen.

In 1906 the Mission Committee was incorporated under the name Board of Home Missions, with E. P. Harbo as president and Carl S. Vang as secretary.

We gain an idea of the rapidity with which congregations were being organized during this period from the superintendent's report in 1908. [162] It stated that from June, 1907, to June, 1908, fifteen new congregations were established.

During the next decade, 1907, 1917, the home mission work of our church continued to expand very rapidly. Contributions rose from approximately \$8,000 in 1907 to \$12,000 in 1917. New missions were established in many places. These included the following:

MINNESOTA: Mora, Maplebay, Staples, Sebeka, Deerwood, Minneapolis (Olivet, Columbia Heights, and Rosedale), Goodridge, and Atwater.

NORTH DAKOTA: Lansford, Medina, Palermo, Wildrose, Vang, Freda, Englevale, Van Hook, Crystal Springs, Cottonwood, and Cooperstown.

OTHER STATES: Kimball, Pollock, and Buffalo, South Dakota; Shelby, Westby, and places near Plentywood, Montana; Silverton, Westport, and Portland, Oregon; Arlington, Wallochot, Ferndale, Vashon, and Kent, Washington; Beaver, Racine, and Elderon, Wisconsin; Oslo and Viking, Florida; Lawton, Oklahoma; Detroit, Michigan; and Rockford, Illinois.

CANADA: Govan, Craik, Lucky Lake, Swift Current, Horfield, Dahlton, and Lawson, Sask.; Lundemo, Killam, Pleasington, and Camrose, Alta.; and Vancouver, B. C.

In 1910 the secretary of the Board of Home Missions, Pastor E. M. Hanson, reported that seventeen of the mission calls had no pastor. [163] The following year Pastor O. H. Sletten, reporting in the same capacity, stated that twenty new congregations had been organized during the year. Two years later Secretary Elias Berlie announced the formation of an additional

fifteen new congregations. In 1915 the treasurer reported the greatest annual sum ever given to home missions in our church up to that time. The amount was \$13,580.31. Pastor Carl S. Vang was home mission superintendent throughout the latter half of this decennium.

During the next ten years, from 1918 to 1928, contributions to the home mission cause reached their greatest average height in the history of our church. They mounted from \$12,133.61 in 1917 to the sum of \$23,025.31 in the year 1927-28.

During this decade the following new places were accepted for mission aid: Barronett, Wisconsin; Holt, Eagle Bend, Thor, and Ashby, Minnesota; Erie, Pennsylvania; Grand Forks, Leonard, Enderlin, McGregor, and Jamestown, North Dakota; L'Anse and Pequaming, Michigan; Osage and Slater, Iowa; Faith, South Dakota; Cocolalla, Idaho; Los Angeles and Rio Linda, California; several places near Medicine Lake, Montana; Piapot, Sask.; and Donald, Alta.

In 1918 Pastor H. C. Caspersen became secretary of the Board of Home Missions. [164] He is at the present time completing his twenty-fourth year and is still active at his post. No one in the history of our church has been connected in an official capacity with our home mission work as long as Secretary Caspersen.

In 1920 he reported the organization of twelve new congregations. At this meeting announcement was also made of the resignation of Pastor Vang as superintendent. He had served since 1913. In the report of 1921 mention is made for the first time of the Church Extension Fund, made possible by a gift of \$1,600 from the Women's Missionary Federation of our church. This is a revolving fund from which loans are made, chiefly to home mission congregations, for the purpose of securing church buildings or parsonages. At the present time the net amount of the Fund is approximately \$25,000. It should be much larger because of the many urgent requests for loans from this Fund. It is almost impossible these days to do home mission work in larger centers unless loan funds are available for securing facilities for carrying on the work.

About the year 1922 Pastor Chr. Ytrehus began to travel throughout the congregations in the interest of home missions, a work in which he persisted for many years. Much of his time was devoted to raising funds for our home mission enterprise. [165]

The period 1929-35 was marked by a drastic decline in home mission contributions, coincident with the economic depression of those years. The figure dropped from \$25,286.73 in 1926 to the extraordinarily low sum of \$9,637.65 in 1933, a decline of sixty-two percent. In order not to make it even more difficult than it was for the home mission pastors, it was necessary to borrow funds to pay them at least a part of their promised allowance. An indebtedness was thus incurred, which it took some time to retire. And very little new work was started. One congregation was organized in the Bronx in New York City and another in Minneapolis, the Nokomis Heights Congregation. Aside from this the parishes at Menominee, Michigan; Amery, Wisconsin; and Nymore, Minnesota, were divided, making it necessary for some of the congregations involved to

receive home mission assistance. Otherwise it did not seem that much could be done.

During the next five-year period, from 1936 to 1941, there was a gradual improvement in the finances of our home mission work. From the low point in 1933 contributions were almost doubled by 1941, reaching the sum of \$17,221.69. This amount, however, was only two-thirds of the figure reached in pre-depression years.

During the last five years it has been possible to strengthen our home mission work in a number of places and to establish several new congregations. [166] Included among these are: Oak Grove Congregation in Minneapolis and congregations at Port Orchard, Washington; Medicine Lake, Montana; Harvey, Williston, and Pembina, North Dakota; North Branch, Minnesota; and Spring Lake Park Congregation, north of Minneapolis.

In 1941 the Board of Home Missions elected Pastor John T. Quanbeck as field missionary. The Lutheran Free Church has had no home mission superintendent since 1922.

Our brief survey of the home mission effort of our church indicates that there has been noteworthy achievement as a result of our endeavors.

In the first place, many congregations have been added to the Lutheran Free Church as a result of this work. When our church was first organized in 1897 it consisted of less than 125 congregations, most of which were very small. If each of these congregations averaged a membership of fifty souls, it would mean that the Lutheran Free Church began with 6,250 members. Today the number of our congregations is well along toward the four hundred mark and we have a baptized membership of 50,000 souls. While all of this increase can by no means be attributed to our organized home mission work, no doubt the greater portion of it can. Much home mission work has also been done by congregations and pastors who have not received financial assistance from the Home Mission Board, [167] but there is no doubt general agreement among us that the growth of the Lutheran Free Church is attributable chiefly to its united home mission effort.

In the second place, and most important of all, through our home mission work our church has had a part in the evangelization of our country, in the winning of souls and in building the church of Jesus Christ. Only eternity can fully reveal what this has meant.

But we have also experienced a number of disappointments and reversals in our home mission work. The well-informed reader will note that the Lutheran Free Church has no work today in a number of places where work was once started by our home mission board.

For this condition a number of reasons might be advanced. One would be that insufficient funds were available to carry out a more effective home mission program. Another might be that no specialized training was given the pastors who went out as home missionaries. No doubt church politics played some part. There were also local difficulties, such as shifts in population due to drought, crop failure, or other conditions.

It would seem from the record that much of our difficulty has been due to lack of proper direction and supervision in our

home mission effort. [168] The statistics indicate that perhaps more work was started at times than a church body of our size could reasonably be expected to carry through. Then, too, there has been an obvious failure to link our home mission work with towns and cities. We have given by far the greater proportion of our attention to the rural areas. This in itself must not be looked upon as remissness on the part of our church; it is rather a worthy contribution to the rural life of the distinctively agricultural region in which most of our work has been done. But the fact that we did not include in our program more of the nearby villages and cities has been a disadvantage to our work, especially with the coming of automobiles and improved roads.

It would be interesting to the younger people of our congregations to have a few word-pictures of some of our outstanding home missionaries, but this must await another day. And to make a list of the men who have served as missionaries on the home field would be practically to duplicate the list of those who have been ordained in the Lutheran Free Church. A large proportion of our pastors have at one time or another served home mission congregations.

This means that several hundred ministers, together with their wives and families, have cast their lot with other hundreds and thousands of our lay people on the home mission fields of our church. [169]

Here they have labored in the Gospel that the Lord might win unto Himself a church. Many are the sacrifices they have made; the work was hard and the financial remuneration very meager.

Furthermore, the Lutheran Free Church home mission pastor endured more than the usual hardships of pioneer ministers. His lot was made even more difficult by the fact that he was committed to doing evangelistic work and attempting to build living congregations. His thought was not simply to gather as many people as he could possibly persuade to join a church organization. His emphasis was rather upon winning people for Christ. Consequently, he worked very frequently with fewer numbers and with less financial support. His lot was not an easy one. The many pastors and their families who have served on the home mission field merit the deep appreciation of our church.

Yet notwithstanding all their difficulties, these men persevered. As a result we have today an association of congregations which not only has certain definite convictions regarding the way Christian church work should be done, but has also, through a study of the Word of God and through experience, found what it believes to be the right way to work toward its goal - the goal of living and free congregations in the Lord Jesus Christ.

The annual contributions to our home missions, [170] exclusive of testamentary gifts, are herewith appended.

Year	
1893-1896	4,989.72
1896-1897	1,951.24
1897-1898	2,363.03
1898-1899	2,736.75
1899-1900	3,043.72
1900-1901	4,040.89

1901-1902	4,051.00	
1902-1903	6,160.32	
1903-1904	8,733.72	
1904-1905	5,800.17	
1905-1906	6,724.76	
1906-1907	8,032.64	
1907-1908	7,425.02	
1908-1909	6,689.09	
1909-1910	9,121.77	
1910-1911	8,884.40	
1911-1912	7,526.65	
1912-1913	10,729.60	
1913-1914	10,390.67	
1914-1915	13,580.31	
1915-1916	13,950.02	
1916-1917	12,133.61	
1917-1918	15,080.41	
1918-1919	20,587.05	
1919-1920	18,991.36	
1920-1921	19,679.22	
1921-1922	19,213.94	
1922-1923	21,515.77	
1923-1924	20,865.31	
1924-1925	22,543.33	
1925-1926	25,286.73	
1926-1927	21,115.25	
1927-1928	23,025.31	
1928-1929	20,178.96	
1929-1930	18,441.49	
1930-1931	16,741.14	[171]
1931-1932	15,093.17	
1932-1933	9,637.65	
1933,1934	11,723.04	
1934-1935	10,421.30	
1935-1936	11,803.14	
1936-1937	13,473.65	
1937-1938	14,109.47	
1938,1939	14,298.82	
1939-1940	13,350.60	
1940-1941	17,221.69	
1941-1942	19,452.60	
1893-1942	\$593,009.40	

CHAPTER EIGHT

Institutions And Agencies

The Lutheran Free Church ministers in the kingdom of God through a number of institutions and agencies other than those already considered. Included in our survey of these will be several which are no longer active. But since they have been a part of our history we shall discuss them briefly in this chapter.

OAK GROVE LUTHERAN SEMINARY AND BIBLE INSTITUTE

At the Annual Conference held at Battle Lake, Minnesota, in 1906, the Lutheran Free Church decided to establish a ladies' seminary. A committee chosen by the Conference to carry out this resolution decided to locate the proposed school at Fargo, North Dakota, and purchased a large brick residence situated on eight acres of land for use as a school building and campus. [173] Dedicatory exercises took place on October 31 of the same year, and on the following day school was begun. The institution was known at this time as the Oak Grove Lutheran Ladies' Seminary. Fifty-five young women were in attendance the first year.

Pastor J. E. Fossum was named president of the school; but since he could not assume his duties at once, Professor J. E. Lobeck was chosen as temporary president. His connection with the institution would indicate that Oak Grove was in a sense the successor of the Wartburg Mission School of Belgrade, Minnesota, which made its last report to the Lutheran Free Church in the same year in which Oak Grove was founded. The Wartburg School in turn had been started as the Northwest Free Church Mission School in Trysil Congregation, Douglas County, Minnesota, in January of 1897. It had been moved to Belgrade in the fall of the year.

Professor Fossum assumed his duties as the head of Oak Grove in the autumn of 1907, Professor Lobeck continuing as a member of the faculty. During the year a dormitory was built, now known as East Hall.

In the years which followed, a number of improvements and changes were made. In 1921-23 the New Main building was constructed, at a cost of \$90,000. This is a modern, four-story brick structure, and is used both for school work and as a dormitory. [174] In 1926 Oak Grove was recognized as an accredited high school by the North Central Association. Co education was introduced in the same year. In 1937 a president's residence, known as the Roen Memorial, was added to the campus. And in 1939 a Bible Institute was made part of the institution, in fulfillment of a promise made when the Willmar Lutheran Bible School was closed in 1926.

Throughout the years, Oak Grove has offered the standard high school courses as well as a course for parochial school teachers. Special attention has been given to Christianity and related subjects. The attendance has varied from 55 to 135 pupils, with an average of 90-100. A total of 587 young people have received diplomas from the school.

More closely identified with Oak Grove than any other name has been that of Professor J. E. Fossum. He served as the administrative head of the institution for a period of twenty-six years: 1907-25 and 1930-37. He has always been a member of the faculty. At the present time he also serves as the school's treasurer. He has thus given thirty-five years of his life to Oak Grove.

Others who have served as president are Professor Gustav Nordberg (1926-30) and Professor T. H. Quanbeck. The latter was elected to the office in 1937 and is thus completing his fifth year of service. [175]

Those who have served as president of the school's board of trustees have been Pastor S. Romsdal (1907), Pastor H. S. Quanbeck (1908,10), Pastor O. L. Torvik (1911-13), Pastor L.

M. Hailing (1914,22), Pastor H. O. Helseth (1923-32), and Dr. O. H. Sletten (1933,present).

Several other individuals have also done a great deal for Oak Grove. Among these was the late Miss Jorgine Roen of Fargo. In 1916 she started the campaign for funds for the new building and personally took part in the solicitation. She served as the school's treasurer for many years without remuneration and in addition made frequent and generous contributions to the institution. One of her latest gifts was the residence for the president of the school. Also very active on behalf of the school was Pastor Elias Aas, who traveled throughout the congregations, presenting the cause of Oak Grove and soliciting funds for it, from 1915 to 1925.

Total contributions to Oak Grove from 1906 to 1942, including building funds, amount to \$344,224.97. The present net worth of the institution is \$96,413.48. [176]

THE LUTHERAN FREE CHURCH PUBLISHING COMPANY

The present publishing house of our church is a merger of several agencies. The first of these to report to an Annual Conference of the Lutheran Free Church was the Free Church Book Concern. It was organized as a stock company in the fall of 1896 by a group of individuals interested in the work of the Lutheran Free Church, then just emerging. Its purpose was to publish and distribute religious books and periodicals for the new church body. Mr. Olaf Hoff was the leading spirit in the venture. The articles of incorporation provided that up to eight percent of any profits accruing to the concern might be distributed among the stockholders, but that all other profits were to be given to the Lutheran Free Church. During the first years the business succeeded in turning over approximately \$ 1 00 each year to our institutions. Thereafter it was not able, except on one or two occasions, either to declare any dividends or to give anything to the church.

In 1904 the Concern began to experience financial difficulty. The following year it became necessary to borrow funds. By 1914 its obligations had mounted to \$26,042.80. At this time it was proposed that a new corporation be formed for the purpose of taking over both the Book Concern and the Folkebladet Publishing Company and that this corporation be made directly responsible to our church. [177] Suggested articles of incorporation appear in the Annual Report of 1915. However, agreement regarding the terms of the transfer was not reached. As a result the project was abandoned, at least temporarily.

The old company tried to continue, but its financial position grew steadily worse. Not until 1922 was the frequently suggested plan realized whereby a publishing company under the direct control of our church was created.

During the time it was in business the Book Concern had published and sold many thousands of pieces of Christian literature, especially Sunday-school books, hymnals, and devotional books. Perhaps its greatest publishing venture was the six-volume collection of the writings of Georg Sverdrup. The Concern had also published the *Child's Friend*, a Sunday-school paper, since the year 1900. During the twenty-five years of its

existence the company had rendered a distinctly necessary service as the publishing agency of the Lutheran Free Church. Mr. O. A. Hain had been manager from 1902 to 1922.

Absorbed by the new company was also the Folkebladet Publishing Company. This had been organized as a private stock company, in 1877, twenty years before the formation of the Lutheran Free Church, [178] in the days of the Norwegian-Danish Lutheran Conference. At that time Professor Sven Oftedal had been elected to campaign for funds to liquidate the indebtedness of Augsburg Seminary. In order to secure a medium for publicity, Oftedal and several other men formed a company for the purpose of publishing *Folkebladet*, a weekly periodical in the Norwegian language. The cause of Augsburg Seminary was therefore the direct occasion for the appearance of this paper. When the campaign for funds was over, *Folkebladet* was continued, primarily as a spokesman for the principles and ideals for which the Seminary stood. Subsequently it became the official organ of the Lutheran Free Church.

The first mention of the Folkebladet Publishing Company at one of our Annual Conferences was made by its manager, Iver A. Hain, in 1907. *Folkebladet* had incurred a debt of \$3,000. Shortly after, wards this was greatly reduced, but within five years it was up again to over \$1,900. The paper had at this time nearly 5,500 subscribers. Failure on the part of many of them to remit for their subscriptions was given by the manager as the chief reason for the recurring deficits. He urged that something be done to enable the paper to maintain itself.

But apparently nothing was done. In 1917 the management reported that during the year it had cost \$2,439.96 more than the total revenue to publish the paper. [179] By 1922 the obligations of the company had reached \$10,541.41.

It was now taken over by the new Lutheran Free Church Publishing Company. During the many years of its existence the Folkebladet Publishing Co. had through *Folkebladet*, our Norwegian church paper, provided the most effective tangible bond between the congregations and the institutions of our church.

The editorship of *Folkebladet* has been held by the following men: Sven Oftedal (1877-84), J. J. Skordalsvold (1884-85), Sven Oftedal and Georg Sverdrup (1885,89), A. M. Arntzen (1889,93), K. B. Birkeland (1893,95), Iver A. Hain (1895-1914), J. L. Nydahl (1914,18), S. Rislov (1918-21), E. P. Harbo (1921-22), and H. C. Caspersen (1922-present).

The business affairs of the company were handled for many years by Iver A. Hain, who retired in 1921.

The third agency to become a part of the new publishing company in 1922 was the Messenger Board. This board had been created by the English Conference of our church in 1917 for the purpose of publishing the Lutheran Messenger, our English church paper, the first issue of which came from the press in January, 1918.

This paper, too, found it difficult to maintain itself financially. [180] A deficit of thirty dollars was sustained the very first year. By 1921 it was being suggested that our church give financial assistance to the new publication. Expenses were exceeding income, although the paper already had nearly 2,000 subscribers. The following year a special grant was made from

the "Joint Fund" of the Lutheran Free Church. Since then the paper has been subsidized alternately by the Board of Organization, the Young People's Federation, and again of late by the Board of Organization. Such assistance has been necessary even though some of the early editors served without remuneration. Only recently has the editor of our English church paper begun to receive compensation.

The editors of the Lutheran Messenger have been the following: Claus Morgan (1918,23), H. C. Caspersen (1923,27), M. J. Olson (1927-31), Bernhard M. Christensen and M. J. Olson (1931-32), Christensen, Olson and N. C. Anderson (1932,35), J. S. Melby, Olson and Anderson (part of 1935), J. S. Melby (1936-present).

Other publications associated with the Lutheran Free Church have been *Gasseren*, a missionary monthly in the Norwegian language founded in 1900 for the purpose of promoting interest in our Madagascar mission, *Waisenhus Tidende*, a Norwegian religious paper published on the West Coast, and *Luthersk Tidsskrift*, a Norwegian theological magazine. [181] The latter was discontinued in 1914 and the others were merged with *Folkebladet* in 1916. The Child's Friend, our Sunday-school paper, appeared from 1900 to 1917 in the Norwegian language only. Then for some years it was published in both English and Norwegian. In later years only an English edition has been issued. Pastor Olav Refsdal was the paper's first editor, continuing from 1900 to 1903. Professor Andreas Helland, who had assisted Pastor Refsdal, was the editor during most of the year 1903. Professor J. L. Nydahl served at this editorial post from 1904 until his death in 1928. Dr. Claus Morgan has since been the editor.

As has already been stated, the Lutheran Free Church Publishing Company was formed and duly incorporated in 1922 for the purpose of taking over all the publishing and book-selling work of our church. The stockholders of the Free Church Book Concern and of the *Folkebladet* Publishing Company at that time relinquished all equities held by their and were in turn relieved of responsibility for any obligations in connection with their respective companies. The Lutheran Free Church Publishing Company received the assets of the two old companies, amounting to \$42,754.95. It also assumed their total indebtedness, which amounted to \$49,024.09. To make the picture more complete, it should be added that subsequent experience proved the assets to have been appraised for somewhat more than could be realized from them. [182]

Our publishing company was thus burdened with a heavy indebtedness from the very beginning. Moreover, no working capital was provided by the church. It would seem therefore that the new company was foredoomed to go the way of its predecessors. But it has not failed. On the contrary, it has steadily improved its financial status. By 1927 the indebtedness had been reduced to \$40,000. In 1929 it was down to \$26,000, by 1937 to \$22,000. Since then it has been still further decreased.

These gains have been made possible by the fact that the annual losses sustained in the publication of our church papers have been covered by profits from the commercial printing department of our publishing house and by direct subsidies from

our general church treasury. Since 1926 these subsidies have amounted to \$36,179.21. Our church papers, it will be seen, are far from self-sustaining, due to their limited circulation.

The men who have accepted the responsibility of heading the board of directors of the Lutheran Free Church Publishing Company have been Claus Morgan (1922-27; 1931,40), N. O. Barlindhaug (1927-31), and Wm. B. Rykken (1940-present).

Under the board of directors and the present manager. [183] Mr. A. B. Batalden, a determined and apparently successful effort is being made to put the publishing business of our church on a sound financial basis and to utilize to greater advantage its potentialities as a Christian publicity agency. The printed word has always been one of the most important means of spreading the Word of God. At the present time ways and means are being sought to place one of our church papers in every home in our church and thus greatly increase the effectiveness of these publications.

THE LUTHERAN DEACONESS HOME AND HOSPITAL

The Lutheran Deaconess Home and Hospital was founded in 1889 in Minneapolis, Minnesota. Eleven men from the Norwegian-Danish Lutheran Conference and Sister Elizabeth Fedde, of the Deaconess Home in Brooklyn, New York, signed the articles of incorporation. It was originally intended as an all-Norwegian Lutheran institution, but subsequent events brought it largely within the orbit of the Lutheran Free Church. It has reported to our Annual Conference since 1922.

In 1891 the first building on the present site was occupied as a hospital. Not long afterwards an addition was built. In 1891, too, Sister Ingeborg Sponland became the Sister Superior, succeeding Sister Elizabeth Fedde, under whom the work of caring for the sick had been begun in temporary quarters on Hennepin Avenue. [184] Sister Lena Nilson became the Sister Superior in 1904 and is still active in her work.

In 1910 a ninety-bed hospital building of brick construction was erected at a cost of \$90,000. In 1912 there were no less than fifty-two deaconesses connected with the Home and Hospital.

The Deaconess Hospital School of Nursing was founded in 1916, with Miss Inger Bergh as director, a capacity in which she still serves. At this time a home for nurses was also built; it is now known as Inger Bergh Hall. Nearly 400 young women have been awarded diplomas as nurses from the School.

Sister Marie Folkvard became the superintendent of Deaconess Hospital in 1921. Soon afterwards the institution was given a Class A rating, one of the first voluntary hospitals in Minneapolis to be accorded this distinction by the American College of Surgeons. In 1923 a two-story addition to the hospital was built at a cost of \$150,000. In 1927 Sister Marie became ill. The following year she passed away.

She was succeeded by Sister Anna Bergeland, who has been superintendent since 1928. During her administration a service building has taken its place among the other buildings, constructed in 1937 at a cost of \$80,000. Last year a new home for the deaconesses was added, [185] at a cost of approximately \$90,000. Sister Anna is one of the charter members of the

American College of Hospital Administrators.

The deaconesses connected with this institution have not only served within their own Home and Hospital. In 1897, when there were thirty-eight sisters, twenty of them were on duty at eleven different stations outside of their own home institution. These consecrated women have served their Master on foreign fields, in other hospitals, in children's and old people's homes, and in congregations as parish workers.

A great amount of charitable work has been done by the institution. During the early years of the hospital over fifty percent of the work was done gratis. Much free service was also rendered in the homes of the sick by the sisters. The necessary funds were contributed by congregations and individuals.

In later years, too, much gratuitous hospital care has been given. A large portion of this has been made possible by funds raised by the Women's Auxiliary of the Deaconess Hospital. In 1924, a typical year, twenty-nine percent of all the work done by the hospital was charity work. During the period 1931-41 the value of such services exceeded \$40,000. This was exclusive of the work represented by accounts which could not be collected. A total of more than \$200,000 of gratis hospital service has been rendered by the Home and Hospital, again excluding unpaid accounts. [186]

The presidency of the governing board of Deaconess Hospital has been held by five men: Professor Georg Sverdrup (1889,1903), Professor J. L. Nydahl (1903,1914), Pastor Paul Winther (1914-15), Pastor Claus Morgan (1915-33), and Dr. T. O. Burntvedt (1933-present).

The Deaconess Hospital has a capacity of 150 beds. Its present valuation is in excess of \$455,000.

BETHESDA HOMES

Bethesda Homes appears for the first time in the records of the Lutheran Free Church in 1908. It was founded by Pastor N. S. Heggerness of Mankato, Minnesota. In 1898 it was established as the Lutheran Home Asylum of Lamberton, Minnesota. Pastor J. Mortensen was the leading spirit. In 1905 the home was moved to a site five miles north of Willmar, Minnesota, where it has since been located. It was originally a children's home only, but in 1910 the first unit of a sunset home was added. This project was completed in 1915. In 1924 another building for the old folk was constructed, costing nearly \$50,000, financed largely by funds advanced by prospective residents of the new building. A farm building was erected in 1924. [187]

During the years it has been in operation Bethesda Homes has given Christian care to hundreds of children and retired folk. The number of children in the home has at times been as high as sixty. The number of adults has increased steadily, numbering at the present time sixty-five.

With the inauguration of social security legislation on a vast scale by the federal government under the Roosevelt administration, children from broken homes have been accorded a status somewhat different from that which formerly prevailed. The authorities now emphasize the placing of such children in adoptive homes. As a result, the need for orphans' homes has

been greatly reduced. The present practice in Minnesota and neighboring states is to keep children from disrupted homes in temporary receiving homes until adoptive investigations and arrangements have been made. It was to conform with this new program that Bethesda Homes decided to close its children's department in 1939. Its home for old people is being maintained at full capacity.

A large farm is operated in connection with the Homes, and some financial support is derived in this manner. To meet the balance of its needs in caring for homeless children the congregations of our church have made regular contributions for more than forty years. In the adult department a number of the residents have contracted for their own maintenance; [188] however, here too there have always been not a few for whose care the institution has been dependent upon the financial support of the congregations.

A number of men and women have been very closely associated with Bethesda Homes throughout the years. Mr. C. H. Anderson was the first president of the board of directors, being succeeded by Pastor J. Mortensen, who was president from 1899 to 1908 and who served as pastor of the Homes from 1899 to 1905. Pastor E. E. Cynild served as rector from 1905 to 1911 and from 1921 to 1923. Pastor Johan Mattson was president of the board from 1908 to 1918. Pastor E. O. Larsen served as rector and field secretary from 1912 to 1926. Pastor S. Rislov was president from 1925 to 1932. Pastor O. C. Dahlager served the Homes in several capacities from 1933 to 1939. Pastor Nicolay Nilsen was president from 1934 to 1939, his successor being Pastor George J. Knudson. Pastor Ingel Hovland has been rector since 1934.

THE MARTHA AND MARY HOME AND THE EBENEZER HOME

The Martha and Mary Home for children was founded in 1891 by Pastor and Mrs. I. Tollefsen of Tacoma, Washington, during an epidemic of illness. [189] While ministering to dying parents the pastor was asked to care for the surviving children in a number of instances. This he promised to do, even taking some of them into his own home. But eventually other arrangements became necessary. Under the leadership of Pastor Tollefsen the congregation at Tacoma and a few other friends decided to establish a home for these and other children similarly situated. Nearby Poulsbo was chosen as the site. On May 30, 1891, a home large enough to accommodate twenty children was dedicated. Mrs. I. Tollefsen was the first matron.

This original building was enlarged and remodeled a number of times, making it possible to care for as many as sixty children. In 1941 a new brick building costing approximately \$20,000 was erected to take the place of the old structure. It was dedicated on May 30, the golden anniversary of the founding of the home.

The Martha and Mary Home functioned for two years without a sponsoring board, but in 1893 "The West Coast Lutheran School and Charity Association" was formed to take over the work. This corporation has been responsible for the Home ever since, except during the period 1897-1912, when it was under

the direction of the Lutheran Deaconess Home and Hospital of Minneapolis. It made its first report to the Annual Conference of the Lutheran Free Church in 1918. [190]

During the past half century this institution has given a home to no less than 800 children. Besides the first matron the following have served the institution in that capacity: Marie H. Jahren, Martha Holte, Marie Thorsrud, Sister Hedda Hermanson, Sister Ronning, Sister Julia Helseth, Sister Emma Larson, Sister Gina Ensberg, Clara Varenson, Nettie Hanson, Emma Sorenson, Miss Hagen, Mrs. S. Myhre, and Mrs. Even Evenson.

The following pastors have served as rectors: I. Tollefsen, H. Langeland, P. T. Peterson, M. Gjerde, Olaf Ellingson, P. M. Fosse, Chris Mohn, J. L. Bestul, A. T. Moen, and Johan Mattson. The present rector is Pastor H. O. Lee.

The Ebenezer Old Folks' Home was started upon the initiative of an elderly Civil War veteran, a layman by the name of Peter Bjork. He resided alone in the city of Tacoma, Washington. He offered his home, valued at \$4,000, to the Corporation for the Martha and Mary Home if they would also erect an old people's home. His offer was accepted and building operations were begun in the fall of 1908. On June 28 the following year the building was dedicated. The total cost was approximately \$8,000. Several years later an addition was built, making it possible for the home to accommodate about forty residents. This home also is operated by the West Coast Lutheran School and Charity Association. [191] At present thirty-nine men and women make their home here. Their average age is over eighty years. Most of them come from the Puget Sound area of the Pacific Coast, but Canada, Oregon, South Dakota, and Minnesota are also represented.

The Association which operates these homes also has a farm in connection with them, from which some income is secured each year. But the homes have derived their chief financial support from our congregations and from other individuals in the immediate area, as well as from our church in general. Both homes together have been conservatively valued at \$60,000.

The idea of having a pension society in our church was first proposed at a meeting of the ministerium in 1909. The following year a committee of ministers brought the matter to the attention of the Annual Conference. In 1912 the latter named a committee of three to give study to the matter of establishing a fund to "care for the needy pastors' and professors' dependents." This committee submitted to the next Annual Conference a plan for giving such assistance, but the convention merely commended the cause and suggested that a simpler plan be prepared.

In 1914 the Conference voted that the ministerium proceed to establish an organization for the indicated. [192] The following year a set of revised rules for a pension society was presented. These were adopted and the society was ready to begin functioning in 1916. But, since the rules provided that there must be a membership of at least 100, it was not possible to start until July 1, 1919. And since it was further stipulated that no pensions could be paid out until the Society's funds had reached \$30,000, it was not until 1925 that any help was received by the eligible dependents. That year fourteen mem-

bers received \$200 each. The following year the pensioners received the same. Thereafter the amount fell off gradually. Nevertheless, during the period 1925-1941 the Pension Society paid out to eligible dependents the sum of \$46,047.49.

The Society is at the present time, upon recommendation of its board of directors, in process of reorganization. While it was the original intention to make the organization a real pension society, these plans failed to materialize. The reasons for this are obvious. 'The congregations of our church did not give the project the financial support which it required and many of the newly ordained pastors did not join the organization. It might more properly have been called a pastors' mutual aid society; the contributions from the congregations represented a very small portion of the sums paid out to dependents. [193]

It is to be hoped that the re-organized society will become effectual in helping superannuated missionaries, pastors, professors, and their dependents. Since these workers are not eligible to participate in the federal social security program, it becomes the more necessary for the church to make such provisions for its workers. It is not consistent to deny some form of social security to religious workers while the rest of the workers of our land enjoy these benefits.

THE WOMEN'S MISSIONARY FEDERATION

The Women's Missionary Federation of our church was organized in 1916 and held its first annual meeting in Fargo in 1917. Its stated purpose is "to promote interest in and awaken love for the work of the kingdom of God at home and abroad." Twenty-four women's societies and a number of individuals affiliated with the organization the first year.

The Federation has undertaken a number of projects from time to time. These have included purchasing and maintaining a home for missionaries on furlough, building and repairing mission stations and missionary residences in Madagascar and China, publishing mission literature, distributing mission boxes, paying a woman missionary's salary, and organizing women's mission groups in congregations and districts. In 1921 the Federation started the Church Extension Fund of the Lutheran Free Church with the initial contribution of \$1,600. [194] The Federation has since made annual contributions to this Fund. In recent years the organization has been particularly active in producing and disseminating mission literature. It holds its annual meeting on Thursday of the Annual Conference. As a rule the evening session of the church convention is that day at the disposal of the Federation.

Mrs. C. M. Roan was the first president (1916-18). Other presidents have been Mrs. Johan Mattson (1918-36), Miss Gerda Mortensen (1937-39), and Mrs. John E. Blegen (1940-present).

During the quarter century of its existence this organization has contributed a total of approximately \$42,000 to foreign missionary projects, \$14,000 to home missions (Church Extension Fund), and \$3,500 to the general treasury of our church. At the present time the Women's Missionary Federation comprises 208 member-societies and in addition 240 individual members.

THE LUTHER LEAGUE FEDERATION

As early as 1910 the English Conference had worked out

plans for a "union" of young people's societies in the Lutheran Free Church and had submitted them to the local societies. But it was not until ten years later that such an organization was formed. By 1922 fifty societies had become members. [195]

In 1937 the name of the organization was changed from the Young People's Federation to the Luther League Federation. Recently the Federation abandoned the delegate system under which it had operated since its organization. All Luther Leagues in our church are now considered members of the Federation.

This organization has been active in its support of our English church paper, the Lutheran Messenger, having given it financial assistance for many years. It has also endeavored to strengthen the local Luther leagues. It has published a Luther League Handbook and it issues the quarterly Luther League Helper, providing program helps for the local societies. It likewise sponsors the publication of Christmas Echoes. Recently the Federation has sent out speakers during the summer to stimulate interest in and to strengthen the local leagues. The Pocket Testament League in our church is also under its sponsorship. The number of Pocket Testament leaguers is now over 3,800. To further encourage good reading this organization sponsors a circulating library. The Federation has also conducted several Bible camp seminars. The highlight of its activities is the Luther League convention which it holds annually in October or November. This meeting is exceptionally well-attended and as a rule imparts a strong spiritual impetus to Christian work among our young people. [196]

THE SILOAH SEAMEN'S MISSION

This mission was established by a society organized in Seattle, Washington, in 1916 upon the initiative of Pastor I. Tollefsen. Its purpose, as indicated by its constitution, is to bring the Word of God to seamen, fishermen, loggers, and miners.

The headquarters of the mission are located in a mission hall in downtown Seattle. Here Gospel services are conducted throughout the week and on Sundays. Here also a reading room and an office are maintained. The reports indicate that as many as 127,000 men have made use of the reading room in one year; the Gospel services have in one year been attended by more than 95,000 people; as many as 127,000 free meals are served annually, and free lodging given to 2,248 men; more than 25,000 Bibles and other books have been distributed. The superintendent of the mission also makes visits to hospitals, prisons, and ships in ministering to the men. His office functions as an employment bureau, an office for receiving sailors' mail, and a depository for valuables. Classes in English for Scandinavian seamen are held from time to time, and various other types of service are rendered.

This mission has been allocated a monthly subsidy by the Board of Home Missions of the Lutheran Free Church since the year 1924. Its present superintendent, [197] Mr. Amandus Anderson, has been in charge since 1921.

THE ENGLISH CONFERENCE

The English Conference of the Lutheran Free Church was

formed in 1906 for the purpose of encouraging the use of the English language in the doing of Christian work in our congregations. The average young church member of our day can scarcely believe that such an organization was once necessary. As a matter of fact, the English Conference was by no means well received by our church at large; many were hostile to it for years. It was accused of trying to force the use of English upon the congregations, of failure to appreciate the heritage of the immigrants, and at times even of jeopardizing the spiritual life of the church.

Specifically, the English Conference promoted such causes as the following: English Sunday-school work; the organization of English young people's societies; evangelistic work in the English language; young people's conventions; a federation of young people's societies; an English Sunday-school paper; a liturgy for English church services; graded lessons for Sunday-schools; the translation of important documents into English; the organization of English congregations; the encouragement of English work in congregations already established; an English hymnal; [198] an English church paper; a church extension fund; institutes for Sunday-school teachers; the recognition of English as one of the official languages of our church; and the financing of the Lutheran Messenger.

Notwithstanding the opposition it encountered for a number of years, the English Conference persisted in keeping the language question before the church and in working toward its solution. After sixteen years the president of the Conference recommended its dissolution. Most of its objectives had been attained or were in process of attainment under the sponsorship of agencies established by the church.

Included among those who devoted a great deal of time to the English Conference were Professor H. A. Urseth, Pastor O. H. Sletten, Pastor Claus Morgan, Pastor Carl E. Nordberg, Pastor A. Oftedal, Professor H. N. Hendrickson, Editor N. N. Ronning, Professor J. L. Nydahl, and Pastor C. M. Tollefsen.

BETHANY COLLEGE

In 1905 the Bethany High School reported to the Annual Conference of our church. This school had opened its doors on October 10, 1904, in Everett, Washington, with an attendance of sixty pupils. Preparatory, normal, Bible, commercial, and music courses were offered. In 1907 the institution changed its name to Bethany College. [199]

The school was beset by financial difficulties from the very outset, and in 1917 was compelled to close its doors. The attendance had varied from twenty-seven to sixty. A number of pastors and missionaries in the Lutheran Free Church received at least a part of their early training at this institution.

THE WILLMAR BIBLE SCHOOL

In 1920 the Annual Conference of our church decided to start a Bible school. Willmar, Minnesota, was chosen as the location for the school, and opening exercises took place on October 24, 1921. Six years later the Annual Conference decided to merge the school with Oak Grove Seminary at Fargo. During its brief existence the Willmar Bible School averaged twenty-three students each year.

THE HOSPITAL MISSION

Upon the completion of his pastorate in Trinity Lutheran Church of Minneapolis in 1919, Pastor W. M. Hagen began visiting the sick and shut-ins in a number of the hospitals and homes of that city. Shortly afterwards a committee was formed, under whose sponsorship the work was continued until shortly before Pastor Hagen's death in 1936. During this period of sixteen years his ministry at the bedside of the ill and the aged reached several thousand people. [200]

CHAPTER NINE

Fellowship With Other Lutherans

The Lutheran Free Church has maintained its identity as a church body for nearly fifty years. This it has succeeded in doing notwithstanding the fact that we have not been a large church body and that there have been movements both from within and from without our own group which, if successful, would have terminated our existence as a distinct organization. Our Annual Conference has voted overwhelmingly on several occasions not to consider organic union with those bodies with whom it was proposed that we unite.

It would appear therefore to a casual observer that our church has elected to dissociate itself from the larger fellowship of American Lutherans and to live a narrow and isolated church life. This, however, is not a true statement of the situation. [201] On a scale commensurate with our numbers there has been a definite disposition on the part of our church to think in terms of the wider fellowship, even in terms of national and world Lutheranism.

The great founder and leader of our church, Professor Georg Sverdrup, had a distinctly ecumenical outlook. This comes to light very frequently in his writings. And since it was he who more than any one else gave direction and content to the thinking of our people, it was only natural that our church should share his ecumenicity, at least to some extent.

From 1880 to 1890 Sverdrup was an ardent advocate of church union. Article after article appeared from his pen in behalf of a union of the then-existing Norwegian Lutheran church bodies in America.

He had been in America only five or six years when he began to write about cooperation among the churches and eventual union of the synods. He said in 1880 that when the congregations woke up there would first be co-operation and then union of the various groups. When Pastor P. A. Rasmussen proposed that the Norwegian Synod and the Norwegian-Danish Conference unite, Sverdrup declared that the suggestion was an occasion for real rejoicing and that it gave encouragement to the work. But Rasmussen's proposal foundered on the resolution which was passed by the Minnesota District of the Synod in which it was charged that the Christian [202] faith proclaimed by the Conference was in harmony neither with the Bible nor with the Lutheran confessional writings.

The following year Sverdrup pointed out several of the prevailing hindrances to union. One was the insistence of cer-

tain groups upon the acceptance of their interpretations of Lutheran doctrines, as well as of the doctrines themselves. The other was narrow-mindedness. Sverdrup would give his approval to neither of these.

In reply to the former, Sverdrup took the position that the doctrinal basis for union must be the simple Christian faith of the Lutheran people as set forth in their catechetical books (barnelaerdom). He also regarded as fundamental in any negotiations involving church union that the sovereignty and the liberty of the congregations be accorded proper recognition. He stated with characteristic incisiveness that he was opposed to rearing large and powerful synods on the graves of simple Christian faith and spiritual liberty. Rather would he have people work for the spiritual life and freedom of the congregations in small and scattered groups.

Yet he saw a great need for union. In 1882 he wrote: "One thing is clear: We cannot think of having an abiding Lutheran Church in our midst unless we are united in our efforts." [203]

The following year Sverdrup dealt with the problem of getting the people of the various Lutheran church bodies to recognize one another as Lutherans. This could not be done, he maintained, by trying to compel every one to agree to the theological propositions formulated by the theologians. How then could it be done? "Simply by working together . . ." said Sverdrup. "The essential thing is co-operation, carried out in oneness of spirit . . ."

In 1884 he repeated that the Word of God and the Lutheran confessions alone were a sufficient basis for union. The theses of the theologians were not necessary. And again he warned that in any union of the churches the organization must be such as to preserve the liberties of the local congregation. He made it plain, moreover, that even at best there were also certain dangers involved in union. Among them were slothfulness and diminished activity.

As the union of 1890 approached, Sverdrup wrote an article in which he reviewed the arguments both for and against such a step. On the credit side he found that pastors in rural areas would not have to cross each other's paths when serving their respective congregations, thus avoiding duplication. Instead of three or four small, struggling congregations in a community there might be one strong one. Likewise, instead of three or four weak seminaries among the Norwegian Lutherans there might be one or two well-equipped institutions. [204] Pastors and teachers might be better paid; friction between neighbors might be eliminated, and so forth. On the debit side Sverdrup envisaged the disruption of old and cherished Christian fellowships and a slowing down in the tempo of the work of the church. However, in balancing the accounts, he still concluded that union was desirable. He even chided the "serious-minded Christians" of a certain synod for declining to enter the proposed union.

Though he was an ardent advocate of union at this time, Sverdrup did not agree with those who contended that the struggles and the schisms of the past had been altogether baneful, the result of evil passions and unholy motives. On the contrary, he saw in these controversies a struggle and a search for the true form of a Lutheran free church, that is, a church

which was allowed to choose its own forms, unhampered by state-church restrictions.

In 1890 the union took place, resulting in the formation of the United Norwegian Lutheran Church, a union which might well not have resulted had Professor Georg Sverdrup not favored it. During all the negotiations he was president of the largest and oldest seminary involved in the merger.

But union had scarcely been fully consummated before the same Sverdrup found himself the virtual head of a group of congregations which had entered into the union but which now were no longer a part of the merged body. [205] Some of them had been ejected from this body and some had withdrawn. Since this matter has been discussed previously in this volume, we shall not at this point go into the reasons for the breach. Only this might be added: It was Sverdrup's contention that the basis for the union of 1890, which had been adopted in Eau Claire in 1888, had safe-guarded the rights of the local congregations, but that this agreement had subsequently been violated.

It is clear that the union for which Sverdrup and his colleagues had worked so long and from which they had expected so much did not achieve the results anticipated. Instead, it brought great disappointment and protracted agony of mind and spirit to President Sverdrup and many of the friends of Augsburg Seminary. One of the results of their experience in this union was their decision to adopt a type of church organization which would make it impossible for either a majority or a minority of congregations to deprive the local congregations of their sovereignty or liberty. There was henceforth to be no more regimentation of the congregations.

Sverdrup wrote and spoke of union no more, at least not in the sense in which he had done so prior to 1890. And the Lutheran Free Church, of which he became the founder, has followed him also in this respect. The idea of uniting with other Norwegian Lutheran bodies has been advanced a number of times in the history of our church, [206] but our Annual Conferences have consistently declined to enter into such negotiations.

However, this has not meant that the Lutheran Free Church has severed contact with other Lutherans and isolated itself from the larger Lutheran fellowships. Convincing proof of this is found in the history of our relations with other church bodies. Union as a means of achieving greater ecumenicity had failed, at least as far as Sverdrup and his followers were concerned. But the ecumenical spirit was still present. How was it to express itself now? The Lutheran Free Church answered in one word: co-operation. Henceforth this term became somewhat of a slogan in our church whenever the question of church mergers arose.

In the paragraphs which follow we shall endeavor to trace briefly the history of Lutheran Free Church co-operation with other church groups.

It is, in the first place, significant that even after the disappointing experiences of Sverdrup and his friends in the 1890's they did not desire the formation of another synod. What they meant by this is not altogether clear. Professor Andreas Helland, for instance, maintains that the Lutheran Free Church was intended only as a "movement," and that when its principles were

recognized re-union with others might well take place. In the practical working of things, [207] however, our church has become more than a "movement"; it has become a well-defined church body, though not along the old synodical lines. But the mere fact that it was intended only as a "movement," pending full recognition of the fundamental ideas and ideals of church life and church organization for which the leaders at Augsburg stood, indicates clearly that the leaders of our church were very anxious to keep in touch with the church at large.

Perhaps the first example of our co-operation with others in the work of the kingdom of God is our part in the work of the Santal Mission. This work among the Santals of India was started in 1867 by Lars O. Skrefsrud of Norway and H. P. Borresen of Denmark. It was the original intention that the necessary funds for carrying on this mission should be raised in India, but eventually supporting societies were formed in Denmark, Norway, and the United States.

The American Santal Committee was formed in Minneapolis in 1891. Several of the men who were members of this first committee became affiliated with the Lutheran Free Church when it was formed a few years later. And our church has been represented on this Committee ever since. The following is a fairly complete list: Mr. H. Bottolsen (1891-93), Pastor M. F. Gjertsen (1891-1901), [208] Professor Sven Oftedal (1891-1911), Professor J. H. Blegen (1891, 1928), Mr. O. M. Anderson (1896-1923), Professor A. Helland (1911, present), Mr. Sivert Thompson (1923-35), Pastor W. M. Hagen (1928, 36), Dr. O. H. Sletten (1929, 35), Pastor J. Ringstad (1935-40), and Prof. J. S. Melby (1940-present).

The Lutheran Free Church has also given four missionaries to the Santal Mission. Pastor and Mrs. M. A. Pederson served under the Santal Board from 1904 to 1937, a period of thirty-three years, nearly all of which was spent in India. And Pastor and Mrs. B. A. Helland have been in the service of the same mission since 1926, engaged principally in school work.

Another early example of co-operation is our participation in Jewish missionary endeavors. The cause of Christ among the Jews has always had a number of warm friends in the Lutheran Free Church. The Sverdrups spoke of it often and mentioned it frequently in their writings.

The agency through which several Lutheran church bodies in this country engage in missionary work among the Jews is known as the Zion Society for Israel. It was organized in Stoughton, Wisconsin, in 1878 by a group of men belonging to the Norwegian-Danish Lutheran Conference. The members of the first board of directors were: Pastor J. P. Gjertsen, Pastor M. F. Gjertsen, Professor S. R. Gunnerson, [209] Pastor Lars Lund, and Pastor Gustav Oftedal. At least two of these became affiliated with the Lutheran Free Church when it was formed. Professor J. H. Blegen of Augsburg Seminary was secretary of the Zion Society for thirty-five years. He also wrote a book entitled *The History of the Zion Society for Israel*. Down through the years our church has always had at least two members on the Society's board of directors. At the present time Pastor J. R. Gronseth and Pastor Sverre Torgerson are our representatives. Pastor A. G. Dahle of our church served as a missionary under the auspices of the Zion Society from 1923 to 1926.

From 1878 to 1913 the Society worked among Jewish people in Russia. Since 1913 its work has been centered in America, particularly in such cities as Chicago, Minneapolis, St. Paul, and Brooklyn, New York.

Our next cooperative venture was with the Hauge Lutheran Synod, a Norwegian Lutheran church body with which the Lutheran Free Church had much in common. In 1905 this Synod took the initiative in regard to co-operation, and our church responded promptly. A joint committee consisting of the president and the secretary of each group and a fifth member chosen by these four was quickly formed and work begun. Not long afterwards this committee presented its report, [210] which recommended that the two church bodies co-operate along the following lines: 1) joint devotional and evangelistic meetings; 2) the deaconess cause; 3) home mission comity; 4) mutual support of foreign mission enterprises; 5) mutual recognition of pastors' ordination; 6) joint summer school for ministers.

The following year the Annual Conference of our church accepted the proposals made by the joint committee and proceeded to put them into effect. Men from both the Hauge Synod and the Lutheran Free Church were elected to the board of trustees of the Deaconess Home and Hospital in Minneapolis. Pastor I. Tollefsen, the rector of the institution, visited the congregations of both church bodies in the interest of the Deaconess Home. A joint summer school was also held. But with these beginnings the movement seems to have died. The time was evidently not yet at hand when co-operation as a means of united action was acceptable or practicable.

The next attempt at co-operation was more successful. In 1911 our Annual Conference authorized its Sunday-school committee to work together with similar committees from three other Lutheran bodies in the production of Sunday-school, textbooks.

Several joint sessions of these committees were held, both as a committee of the whole and as subcommittees. The result was the publication of the first system of graded lessons in Norwegian Lutheran church circles in our country. [211] The first volumes appeared in 1915. Professor J. L. Nydahl, Mr. N. N. Ronning, and Professor J. E. Lobeck were our representatives in the work.

In 1915 the Minneapolis Lutheran Inner Mission Society reported to our Annual Conference. In this report it was stated that the Lutheran Free Church had been represented in the work of the Society from its very beginning and that a number of our congregations were making contributions to this work. Its activities included work among the poor and sick, unmarried mothers, and homeless children. The Society also maintained a hospice, an employment bureau, and a kindergarten and day nursery.

This seems to have been the beginning of Lutheran Free Church participation with other church bodies in Christian social service. In recent years these united efforts have resulted in the formation of state welfare associations, which are common agencies for all Lutheran inner mission work within the respective states. These organizations are among the best illustrations of the possibilities of united action through cooperation. Lutheran welfare societies have now been formed in

several states, including Minnesota, Wisconsin, North Dakota, Iowa, and South Dakota. At our Annual Conference held in La Crosse, Wisconsin, in 1940 our church officially recommended that our congregations participate in these united efforts. [212] The Lutheran Free Church is represented in the directorship of the Minnesota, Wisconsin, and North Dakota State Welfare Societies.

In 1917 our widening fellowship through co-operation became national in scope for the first time. The occasion was America's entry into the First World War. Acting with great promptness, the Lutherans of our country organized the National Commission for Soldiers' and Sailors' Welfare. This was a cooperative action for dealing with some of the problems of our men in the armed services. On November 14, 1917, the Board of Organization and the Board of Home Missions of the Lutheran Free Church met in joint session and named a special committee to represent our church in this common task. Our congregations also participated in the remarkably successful campaign for funds which the Commission launched.

In 1918 the National Lutheran Council was organized as the successor to the National Commission for Soldiers' and Sailors' Welfare in order to deal with post-war as well as war problems. Pending action by our Annual Conference, the Board of Organization of our church immediately named Professor George Sverdrup to represent our church body in the Council. A few months later the Annual Conference voted to affiliate with the Council. [213]

Following World War 1, the National Lutheran Council carried out a tremendous task in feeding and clothing and otherwise providing for poverty-stricken Lutherans in Europe. Large sums were also raised and disbursed on behalf of "orphaned" foreign missions. Churches and pastors were maintained in devastated areas. This work was continued for a number of years. As European relief needs tapered off, the Council concerned itself with problems affecting Lutherans here at home.

With the outbreak of the present war the National Lutheran Council is once again serving as the common agent of most of the Lutheran churches of our land, establishing Lutheran service men's centers for our American boys and giving aid in foreign lands to some of the missions which have been cut off from support from the homeland.

The Council now includes in its membership practically all the Lutherans of the United States with the exception of the Synodical Conference. However, it does have a working arrangement also with the latter Conference in regard to service men's centers in the present emergency. The National Lutheran Council is a federation, not an amalgamation, of church bodies. It is thus the greatest example of united action through cooperation which Lutherans in our land have ever witnessed. [214]

The Council holds an annual meeting in January of each year. Our church has been represented in the Council by the following men: Dr. O. H. Sletten (1918,23), Pastor H. J. Urdahl (1924,28), Pastor Johan Mattson (1929), and Dr. T. O. Bumtvedt (1930-present).

During the years from 1918 to 1941 the Lutheran Free Church contributed more than \$46,000 to the work of the Coun-

cil, particularly towards relieving the distress of European Lutherans and foreign "orphaned" missions.

Our church has also had a small part in worldwide Lutheran fellowship. In 1929 it elected Professor George Sverdrup as its delegate to the Lutheran World Convention, which met in Copenhagen, Denmark, in the summer of 1929. At the next meeting of the Convention, held in Paris, France, in 1935, Pastor Olaf Rogue was the official representative of the Lutheran Free Church.

The Lutheran World Convention is truly representative of the Lutherans of the world, numbering more than 80,000,000 souls. This federation of Lutherans was formed in August, 1923, when 160 delegates from Lutheran churches in more than twenty-two countries met in Eisenach, Germany. The following lands were represented: Africa, Australia, Austria, Canada, Czecho-Slovakia, China, Denmark, Esthonia, Finland, France, Germany, Holland, [215] Hungary, India, Jugo-Slavia, Latvia, Lithuania, Norway, Poland, Roumania, Russia, Sweden, and the United States. With the exception of the Synodical Conference in America and a comparatively small group in Germany, the Lutheran World Convention represents the Lutherans of the whole world.

Mention should also be made of Lutheran Free Church co-operation in the publication of a uniform edition of *Luther's Small Catechism*. Our Annual Conference decided in 1925, in response to an invitation issued by a joint committee from a number of Lutheran synods, to be represented on the committee which was to edit and publish this Jubilee Edition of Luther's masterpiece. Professor George Sverdrup was named.

Aside from becoming a member of the National Lutheran Council our church has never taken a step involving more extensive co-operation than its decision in 1930 to become a part of the federation of Lutherans known as the American Lutheran Conference.

This federation now includes five church bodies: the Norwegian Lutheran Church of America, the American Lutheran Church, the Augustana Synod, the Lutheran Free Church, and the United Danish Lutheran Church, in the order of their numerical strength. About one-third of America's five million or more Lutherans are members of this Conference. [216]

Another third is represented by the United Lutheran Church, and the other by the Synodical Conference, composed chiefly of the Missouri Synod. There are indications that the United Lutheran Church may before long become federated with the American Lutheran Conference.

Co-operation in the Conference is practiced through a number of commissions chosen to deal with various phases of church life and endeavor. These commissions are concerned with such matters as home, foreign, and inner missions, student service, Christian higher education, youth service, hospitals, elementary education, and social trends. As a rule each constituent church body is represented on each commission. Perhaps the most effective work of all has been done in the field of student service. The commission under which this work is being done has inaugurated a growing program of Christian work which seeks to keep in touch with and to minister especially to students in tax-supported institutions of higher learning. The Board

of Home Missions of our church makes an annual appropriation to this service. Dr. T. O. Burntvedt, Dr. George Sverdrup, and Dr. Bernhard M. Christensen have been particularly active as our representatives in the work of the American Lutheran Conference.

Members of the laity as well as pastors of the Lutheran Free Church have also co-operated extensively [217] in the work of a number of laymen's societies which have functioned in the Middle West and on the West Coast for several generations. These intersynodical societies, chiefly of Norwegian Lutheran origin, are generally regional in scope, as a rule embracing a section of one of our states or one of the Canadian provinces. The membership consists almost entirely of laymen, many of whom preach. These societies conduct meetings lasting two or three days in congregations within the area covered by their respective societies. Their services are edificational and evangelistic in nature and much of the speaking is done by laymen. A fairly large number of the lay preachers in these organizations have been affiliated with the Lutheran Free Church.

In 1920 a number of these societies banded together to form the Hauge Lutheran Inner Mission League. One of their official evangelists, as well as editor of their paper for many years, was Mr. Peder Fostervold, recently deceased. He was a member of our church in Willmar, Minnesota.

Our church has also been represented in the work of the Ebenezer Home for the Aged in Minneapolis, which was founded in 1917. Pastor Gustav Oftedal of our church was one of the leaders in this movement. Dr. Claus Morgan has been secretary of the institution's board of directors for many years. Mr. John Field, of St. Luke's Church in Minneapolis, [219] has likewise taken an active interest in Ebenezer. The first matron of the Home was Sister Caroline Unhjem from the Lutheran Deaconess Home and Hospital in Minneapolis. Pastor Carl S. Vang of the Lutheran Free Church, the present rector of the institution, has served since 1936 and Pastor Elias Aas and Pastor Chr. Jorgensen of our church have been identified with this cause for many years as field representatives.

We have also co-operated with other Lutherans in the work of the Lutheran Bible Institute of Minneapolis. Pastor Johan Mattson was a member of the first corporation which was formed to promote this endeavor. Dr. T. O. Burntvedt, the president of the Lutheran Free Church, was a member of the Institute's board of directors from 1921 to 1939, serving as chairman from 1929 to 1939. Pastor J. M. Halvorson has also been a board member. At the present time we are represented in this work by Pastor Ingvald M. Norum.

Lutheran Free Church participation in co-operative efforts have also included temperance and prohibition work, in which our church has always been in the forefront. It has officially and unofficially endorsed and worked together with such various anti-liquor organizations as the Anti-Saloon League, the Prohibition Party, the Consolidated Drys, the Minnesota Total Abstinence Society, the United Temperance Movement of Minnesota, and other similar organizations. [219]

We have also co-operated for many years with such other agencies as the National Home Mission Council and regional home mission councils, the National Foreign Mission Confer-

ence, the Lutheran Deaconess Conference of Motherhouses, the National Lutheran Educational Association, the National Lutheran Editorial Association, and the National Lutheran Managers of Publishing Houses Association.

Worthy of mention would also be the pastors' institutes held at Augsburg Seminary in September of each year. As a rule, some well-known professor or pastor from one of our sister Lutheran churches is invited as the institute's guest speaker. In this way, too, it has been our privilege to keep in touch with our fellow-Lutherans in America.

Our record of inter-Lutheran collaboration is thus a consistent and a rather impressive one. While the leaders at Augsburg and their constituency have since 1890 steadfastly declined to enter into negotiations looking toward synodical amalgamation, the Lutheran Free Church has with almost equal consistency entered into co-operative agreements with other Lutheran bodies and actively participated in the carrying out of such arrangements. By a rather remarkable coincidence, [220] co-operation as much as union seems to have been the vehicle for united action also in the wider Lutheran circles of our country. Many of the common problems of American Lutheranism have been solved in this way.

Undoubtedly a number of individuals in the Lutheran Free Church also at this time are in favor of union with some other church body or bodies. There have been such at various times throughout our whole history. But it is generally held by the people of the Lutheran Free Church today that the interests of the kingdom of God can best be served by retaining our identity as a church body, in order both to continue the tasks entrusted to us and also to co-operate with other Lutherans in America in working out the problems which are common to us all. [221]

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