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The United Danish Evangelical Lutheran Church in America: A Brief Overview of its History and Activity

by

P. S. Vig

(Translated by Donald Berg)

Introduction

"The United Danish Evangelical Lutheran Church in America" is the name of an organization of congregations and pastors who are among those Danes who have immigrated to America, and who desire to hold firmly to the faith in which they were baptized, to remain in that church to which they have belonged since childhood, and who want to support the effort to preserve that faith in their adopted land and pass that heritage on to their children. This goal is not attainable except by mutual work, sacrifice and effort. "The United Church," as we are now used to saying in daily conversation, is therefore not nearly so much a designation for what has already been attained, but as a goal toward which our limited abilities can reach. I regard this remark as necessary for Danish readers, that they should not find an entirely too glaring a contrast between our "impressive" name and our limited results thus far. "The United Church" is an ambitious title, but it also represents our objective and is thus deemed appropriate for what we are still working toward today, even though our forces are small.

The United Church does not have a long history, the founding of the synod occurred in Minneapolis, Minn., on the first of October, 1896, thus only 16 years ago. Still, that is not so short a time, when it is looked at in relation to the conditions which had developed among the Danes in America. The time since the United Church's formation has been a boom period in material respects in almost all areas, something which is very discernable also among our countrymen here in this country. But times of material progress have never been fruitful times for the church and its work. The price of land has more than doubled since 1896, and as far as the immigrating Danes are concerned, that means that the majority of them have had to seek work in the cities, especially in the larger

cities. Unfortunately, preservation of the Danish language among the first generation of immigrants is more difficult in the large cities than it is in rural areas.

That which led in 1896 to the founding of the United Church has its roots quite far back in the past and in the circumstances, which it will be necessary to dwell on in order to be able to understand that Danish Christians in America, who still desire to remain faithful to the Lutheran Church, now stand divided into two synodical church bodies. Therefore, we will now dwell a little more on what I will call:

The Prehistory of the United Church

Even in the briefest overview of the history of the Danish Church in America, there is one man, who ought to be mentioned ahead of all others, namely the remarkable respected man from Ærø, Pastor Claus Lauridsen Clausen (1820-1892): the first pastor among the Norwegians in America, ordained in 1843; the first President of the Danish-Norwegian Conference (founded in 1870); the first pastor among the Norwegians who saw the necessity of working for training of pastors among Norwegians and Danes in America.

Clausen was the first Dane to be elected to a seat in the legislative assembly of the State of Iowa (in 1856). On his trip to Europe in 1867, when he was Iowa's representative at the World's Fair in Paris, he visited Denmark and, at that time, spoke warmly at several meetings on Fyn, for the sending out of men to proclaim the Gospel among the Danes who had emigrated to America. These meetings on Fyn provided the occasion for the forming of "The Committee," which in 1871 sent out Pastor Grove-Rasmussen to proclaim the Gospel among the Danes who had emigrated to America, and Home Missionary A. S. Nielsen, as well as mission student R. Andersen with a promise which he had given the members of "The Committee" on his trip in Denmark, Clausen ordained A. S. Nielsen on the 17th of November, 1871 as pastor of the Danish congregation in Cedar Falls, Iowa, which was founded by Clausen in 1870. A. S. Nielsen, "The Committee's" first missionary, was from the very beginning the natural leader in "The Danish Church" in America, which received primarily a supply of pastors from Grundtvigian districts and schools in Denmark and therefore worked chiefly in the Grundtvigian direction both in the church and among the people. As

a consequence, none of its pastors (which Clausen had probably expected) joined "The Norwegian-Danish Conference" and there was no relationship between them and Clausen after Nielsen's ordination. Gradually "The Danish Church" received a few pastor prospects also from the Inner Mission side in Denmark, and it eventually turned out that the cooperation between the two sides went less well, especially after the founding of the Danish Peoples' Society in 1887 and the establishment of a seminary at West Denmark, Wis. (1897), whose two teachers represented the two opposite views with the Danish Church. But the occasion for the conflict which led in 1893 to the fracture of the Danish Church were unwarranted comments about the Holy Scripture, which notably the writer of this chapter felt obligated to reply to, and why the main blame for the split has been laid before his door. It has always been easier to lay the blame on others than to admit one's own culpability. But, however that may be, that spirit of unity which is the condition for cooperation in churchly affairs, was broken in the Danish Church. And, for that reason, about 20 pastors with their congregations refused to sign the synod's new constitution of 1893, for which they were regarded (and regarded themselves) as being excluded from the synod. Since then, people have felt that we had broken from the Danish Evangelical Lutheran Church entirely. It was this interpretation which provided the occasion for some disgusting court cases for appropriating property of the congregations whose majority had refused to sign the new constitution, except that, in one case, the court agreed with that interpretation.

In order to show, as strongly as possible that refusal of signing was not a break with the Danish Evangelical Lutheran Church, those pastors who were expelled by The Danish Church held a several-day meeting in Elk Horn, Iowa, beginning on the 30th of September, 1894, where they resolved to constitute themselves as a synod called "The Danish Evangelical Lutheran Church in North America," and also decide to incorporate under this name in accordance with the laws of the state. The Synod's officers were: President, Pastor P. L. C. Hansen; Treasurer, Pastor A. L. J. Soholm; Secretary, Pastor H. J. Dahlstrøm; Editors of "Missionsbudet" (The Mission's Message), which now became the new synod's official periodical publication.

In early 1894 the Mission Society had purchased the college in Elk Horn from Pastor Chr. Anker for \$5000. From the first of October this school became the new synod's seminary, with Pastor P. S. Vig as director, while Pastor Anker continued to be the director of the college.

One of the new synod's pastors, J. N. Jersild, since early 1892 had published the weekly paper "Danskeren" (The Dane) in Neenah, Wis., which had been an excellent support in the struggle for God's Word and the Lutheran doctrine. The paper now gave its large contribution to promoting the new synod, just as it later paved the way for the creation of "The United Church." The synod had all hands busy with work, and it worked with life and delight in unity and good understanding, so we, who at that time were along, will never be able to forget it. When The United Church was created in 1896, "The North Church" consisted of 22 pastors and about 40 congregations.

We must now go back in time to find the origin for the other half of the Society on the first of October, 1896. While "The Danish Church," as already mentioned, received a supply of workers from the among the Grundtvigians in Denmark, there were also some young Danes from the Inner Mission circle in Denmark and partly here from this country, who received their preparation for the pastoral work among their countrymen at "The Conference's" seminaries, first in Marshall, Wis., and later at Augsburg Seminary in Minneapolis, Minn. At the end of training, these men became pastors in "The Norwegian-Danish Conference," but served the Danish congregations of the Conference. Of these men we should name the pastors H. Hansen, A. M. Andersen, G. B. Christiansen, M. C. Hansen-Rohe, A. Rasmussen, and H. P. Berthelsen. Since 1877, the Danish pastors in the Conference had published "Dansk Luthersk Kirkeblad" (Danish Lutheran Church Periodical) with Pastor A. M. Andersen as editor. From the very first the paper came out only once a month with 16 pages, but it contributed to unifying the Danish pastors and congregations into a group for the work in mission among countrymen in America. The work with that little paper led to the idea of establishing a Danish College, and gradually it became clear for the Danish pastors in the Conference, that the work among countrymen would be promoted best by leaving the connection with

a synod that was overwhelmingly Norwegian and which was primarily interested in the work among Norwegians. As a consequence of this, they and representatives from the Danish congregations met in Omaha, Nebraska, from 28 February to 2 March, 1884 and agreed to withdraw from the Conference, seek an affiliation with Inner Mission in Denmark, and, if possible, seek merger with the Danish Church in America, or, if such could not happen, constitute themselves as a separate synod.

The decision concerning withdrawal that was adopted at the meeting in Omaha, was presented at the Annual Meeting of the Conference in the summer of 1884, and this meeting approved those reasons which the Danish pastors cited for the withdrawal, and wished them God's blessings for their work.

At a meeting which was held at St. John's Church in Argo, Nebr. from the 11th to the 14th of September, 1884, those Danish pastors and congregations which withdrew from the Conference agreed to constitute themselves as a synod under the name "The Danish Evangelical Lutheran Church in America." In daily conversation, primarily among critics of the new synod, the synod was designated as "The Withdrawn," or the "Blair Synod." At its founding, the synod numbered 6 pastors, 9 congregations and about 1400 to 1500 souls.

The little synod set to work faithfully on the important work before it: the gathering of souls of countrymen in the Lutheran Church. Right from the start, the importance of education was emphasized, especially for the training of pastors, and in 1886, the school for pastors "Trinity Seminary" was dedicated in Blair, Nebr.

It is not the intent here, to write the history of the synod. It will only be noted that when the last annual meeting was held before the formation of the United Church in Albert Lea, Minn. in 1896, the synod numbered 42 pastors, 57 congregations, and a total number of souls of 6,000.

"The Danish Church" and "The Blair Synod" had never been in any friendly contact with each other, so it is not surprising that the relatively new "North Church's" pastors and congregations, who had earlier been members of "The Danish Church," also had their misgivings about "The Blair Synod." In any case, it did not seem that a merger between the "North" and the "Blair" synods was lying

closed at hand. Gradually, however, as the two synods learned to know each other better, it became evident that what they were in agreement on was greater and more important than whatever differences there were. The idea of merger was mentioned in the papers, especially in "Danskeren" (The Dane) and leading men on both sides discussed the issue, so it could not be shoved aside. "The North Church" was, of course, a quite new synod and at its formation a declaration was made that there would be work toward merger with all Danish Christians who from the heart professed the Lutheran Church. The merger idea received a strong push forward by visits from the home country, when Pastor H. I. F. C. Mathiesen and missionary C. B. Kjær in 1895, and Pastor A. Busch and missionary H. C. Beck in 1896 visited congregations of both synods and held meetings in them. And from the Inner Mission side in Denmark people were pushing strongly for merger of the two Danish synods in America.

On the North Church's side, there was perhaps no less anxiety, since people in "The Danish Church" had costly experience with the old saying "false peace creates new wars." But, on the other hand, there was no one who dared speak against a merger and would therefore be in favor of having three different Danish synods in America, possibly within the same district. The Danes who had immigrated, at least most of them, had not shown strong interest in the Church, so a situation for which unity of the church was not evident, and that would not be helped by a continuation of separate synods. I am convinced that I am in agreement with the truth, when I say, "We were happy about the idea of merger, and were all agreed on the foundation for merger." But not so few on both sides were apprehensive about the question of whether or not with our different backgrounds we would be able to agree sufficiently to bring this idea to reality.

At the annual meeting in Albert Lea, Minn., "The Blair Synod" voted, through its representatives, to seek merger with "The Danish Evangelical Lutheran Church in North America." They also adopted a proposal for a church constitution, which the merger committees from both synods had agreed upon. "The North Church" held their annual meeting in 1896 in Racine, Wis., and unanimously adopted the same constitution. Thus both synods stood ready for merger. On

an invitation by the presidents of the synods, Pastor H. Hansen for the "Blair Synod" and Pastor P. C. L. Hansen for the "North Church," 35 pastors and 21 delegates from the two synods gathered for a merger meeting in Minneapolis, Minn. during the days from the 30th of September to the 2nd of October, 1896. The meeting was held in Immanuel Danish Evangelical Lutheran Church. No one who was there will be able to forget the festive moment when the great assembly of delegates and guests stood and approved the following Articles of Merger which were read (aloud) by the writer of these lines: "Herewith be it resolved that 'The Danish Evangelical Lutheran Church Synod in America' and 'The Danish Evangelical Lutheran Church in North America,' assembled for a joint meeting in Minneapolis, Minn. from the 30th of September to the 2nd of October, on the aforementioned Confessional Foundation are uniting into one body: The United Danish Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. Dated: Minneapolis, Minn., the 1st of October, 1896." After this the voting was undertaken by calling of names. All those having the right to vote answered "Yes." The assembled delegates now approved, with insignificant changes, the constitution presented by both of the former synods, and also elected the following board:

Pastor G. B. Christiansen, President;
Pastor A. L. J. Søholm, Vice-President;
Pastor A. S. Nielsen, Secretary;
Business Manager Hans Andersen, Treasurer.

Pastor P. S. Vig was elected as Director of the Synod's Seminary and Pastor A. M. Andersen as Second Teacher.

The two synod publications "Kirkebladet" and "Missionsbladet" were combined into one under the name "Dansk Luthersk Kirkeblad" (Danish Lutheran Church Periodical) with the two Chief Editors as Co-Editors.

At its founding "The United Danish Evangelical Lutheran Church in America" consisted of 63 pastors, 8 missionaries, 127 congregations and 33 mission fields. The individual congregations are listed in the "Tabulated Overview."

Growth of the United Church.

It is in order here to mention one man, who, in his own way, worked for the merger of the two synods, namely, Pastor P. C. Trandberg. This remarkable man, who came to America in the early summer of 1882, had no little influence on the Blair synod, which in 1887 issued a call to him as Professor at its seminary in Blair. Trandberg did not feel able to accept this call; instead he became a professor for a Scandinavian Lutheran Division at the theological seminary of the Congregationalists in Chicago, Ill. Quite a few young Danes, who became his students there, joined the Blair Synod as pastors and later the United Danish Church. Meanwhile, Trandberg became tired of the relationship with the Congregationalists and began a seminary of his own in Chicago. He kept this going for a while until, tired and worn out, he moved to Minneapolis, Minnesota. From here he attended the Annual Meeting of the "North Church" in Cedar Falls, Ia., in 1895, where he spoke with warmth and sincerity as always. Likewise he was present at the last Annual Meeting of the Blair Synod in Albert Lea, Minn. in 1896, where he both preached and took part in the proceedings. Shortly after the trip home from this meeting, he died in Minneapolis, on the 18th of June, 1896, quite unexpectedly and without prior illness, just barely 64 years old. Thus Trandberg did not get to experience the formation of the United Church, but the merger would have had his sincere approval and prayers. A page in his memory therefore deserves a place in the history of the United Church.

The growth of the United Church has not been especially conspicuous, but smoothly and healthily from both outward and inward perspectives. It has had its struggles, as was to be expected, but has come out of those still stronger. It does not have particularly outstanding personalities to display among its pastors, but steady, faithful workers, each according to his own abilities. It has had a relatively steady annual additional growth in terms of numbers of pastors and congregations, except that not all of the congregations have yet sought acceptance into the synod.

During the past 16 years, since the merger meeting in Minneapolis in 1896, the United Church has grown from 63 to 123 pastors, including the 7 or 8 who will be ordained at the upcoming annual meeting.

During the same period, the number of congregations has grown from 127 to almost 200.

One can get a notion of the productivity of a little Danish Church Synod through the following report of the President to the Annual Meeting of the United Danish Church in Blair in 1911:

“It ought to be of interest to know that the generosity in our Church during this memorable year will attain a total of \$160,000, divided approximately as follows: For churchly and missionary purposes \$25,000; church buildings \$40,000; Jubilee gift \$25,000; pastors’ salaries \$70,000.”

“The Synod’s confirmed members in 1911 totaled 10,823; with contributors numbering 5,433, and the number of souls was 19,610. The contributors who are listed in the annual reports, are members of congregations, but in actuality the number of contributors far exceed the number of members of the congregations; likewise the number of those attending church far exceeds the number of confirmed members. There are some congregations that have not sought formal acceptance in the Synod; thus there are a number of families who with greater or lesser constancy attend worship services of the congregation and make their contributions to its pastor, but are not yet members of the congregation. The “churchly populace” is therefore significantly greater than the Synod’s official numbers. All in all it can be said without exaggeration that the United Church exerts direct influence on 30,000 to 40,000 people and indirect influence on many more.”

The Synod’s continued expansion has made its division into Districts necessary, since joint work in the smaller areas is thereby best promoted. The Synod is divided into eight Districts, of which the Atlantic District is easternmost and the Pacific District is farthest to the west. Just as the Synod has a board of directors, each of the Districts also has its own president, vice-president, secretary and treasurer, and just as the whole Synod holds its joint annual meeting (always in the month of June), so also each of the Districts holds its District meetings, preferably two each year, at which one is designated as the Annual Meeting, during which a board is elected for the coming year and decisions are made concerning the affairs of the District. In particular, the District takes care of the mission in its region. Several of the Districts pay the salary of a mission pastor

wholly or partially at places where there are many Danes but as yet no organized congregations. In time the expansion will surely lead to increased attendance at the Annual Meeting of the Synod, which now is often attended by 1000 to 1200 people, of whom only a good 100 are delegates and/or pastors from the congregations. The annual meeting will eventually consist of a certain number of pastors and delegates from each of the Districts of the Synod since travel expenses, which now are quite significant, will thereby be able to be reduced, and the smallest congregations will be in a position to host the Annual Meeting, which under current conditions is not possible. The Synod will still surely for a long time keep the Annual Meeting in its current form, since this annual meeting of members of the Synod from the different areas and situations has had immeasurable importance for promoting and strengthening the consciousness of our fellowship in faith, confession and work. But when all expenses are included, the Annual Meeting as it is now cannot be held for less than almost \$10,000.

The Various Divisions of Activity

The United Church carries out a large, widely diversified work, which ought to and could be still larger, if only the lack of men and resources were not so large. Unfortunately, it seems that the most outstanding and most influential Danes in America have only little use for the Church. As a consequence of this, we, who are only a small society, have had to do a work which in more than one respect exceeds our powers, something we are constantly reminded of, also by those who surely would be able to do it much better, if they wanted to. Still, however, we are not singing any song of lament, nor are we wasting our time with any reproaches to people. Following is a brief review of the various aspects of the work of the United Church.

I. The Mission must naturally come first on the list, since the United Church is of course, and according to the circumstances, must be a Mission Synod, just as it is a fruit of missions. Yet here we are not thinking about or talking about Home Missions, but on the contrary about missions among non-Christian peoples.

The Indian Mission. In 1892, student N. L. Nielsen went to the Indian Territory to begin a mission among the Cherokee Indians.

Since that time, Nielsen has worked among them, together with his faithful wife, since 1893, with preaching, Sunday School and Parochial School. Early in 1999 he was able to baptize the first Indian, a young girl of 16 years. Since then, more than a hundred have been baptized and have become a part of the little congregation in Oaks, Oklahoma, which has its own church building. Another little congregation has been started in the town of Kansas, Oklahoma (just of few miles east of Oaks). From time to time several young women of the Synod have helped Nielsen and his wife with the school work. Several young women have attended Dana College in Blair. The mission is supported by means of free-will gifts from the Synod.

The Japan Mission. In 1898 J. M. Th. Winther left for Brejning by way of Ringkøbing to Japan to work as a missionary in that country. He had been trained for the pastoral work at the United Danish Church's Seminary in Blair. Since his boyhood, Winther had felt a desire to work as a missionary among the heathens. A little mission society in Southern Jutland had supported him during his training and wanted to support him as a missionary, especially if he decided to go to China. As stated, Winther went to Japan instead, which had increasingly become his objective as the country in which he wanted to work. With that zeal which is unique to him, he now committed himself to learning the difficult Japanese language, and he succeeded. During his stay in America, Winther had become acquainted with Miss Andrea Hansen from Ballum, who was trained as a nurse at the Swedish Lutheran Hospital in Chicago. Since 1899, these two, the man and his wife along with others, have been co-workers in the mission in Japan. We will not describe the mission here, except to say that they have made uncommonly good progress. Since 1901 its center has been Kurume, an old, sedate Japanese city with ca. 30,000 inhabitants. In 1907-1908, Winther and his family were on a visit to America and to Denmark. Since 1909 Pastor J. P. Nielsen and his wife have been his co-workers in the mission, which is supported by the United Danish Church; the mission now has its own residence with a church building, to which especially the young people in the United Church have contributed.

The Utah Mission, i.e., the mission among Danish Mormons in the state of Utah, is carried on by "The Committee" in Denmark in

association with the United Church in America, for which each provides half of the expenses. The intention of such a mission is long-standing among Danish Christians in America, but it first succeeded in getting the intention realized in 1906, when Pastor Harald Jensen and his wife began their difficult work in the large Mormon headquarters location of Salt Lake City. There, they succeeded in getting a church and parsonage built and gained some success among the Danes. A little congregation was formed and meetings are also held in several other cities in Utah and Idaho. Pastor Jensen has now stepped away after 5 years of ground-breaking work, and Pastor J. Th. Lund has been called as his successor in the work.

II. Children's Homes and Sanatoriums and the Widows' Fund

The United Church owns two smaller children's homes, one of which is in Elk Horn, Iowa, which the congregation there began in 1890. The home, called "Elim," has its own building and 40 acres of land. Its first house-parents were Mr. A. L. Boysen and his wife, who managed the home for 7 years. Since the beginning there have been a total of almost 100 children at the home, and they have had to refuse admission to just as many because of a lack of space. The congregation in Elk Horn has since turned Elim over to the United Church. The Children's Home "Bethania," now in Waupaca, Wis., was begun in 1895 in Albert Lea, Minn. It has its own building with an adjoining 30 acres of land. There is room for ca. 40 children besides the staff. This Home's first superintendent was Mrs. G. Petersen from Waupaca, who worked faithfully there for 13 years. The Children's Homes have a joint board of 5 members, 3 pastors and 2 laymen, who are elected by the Synod. The Children's Homes are supported partially by a small payment for those children who have one of their parents alive, and partly by means of gifts from the Synod, especially the latter. The financial report for the year 1910-1911 (from the first of May to the first of May) accordingly shows that payment for the children amounted to \$740.50, and the gifts totaled \$3,443. At that time there were 28 children in Waupaca and 18 in Elk Horn.

The Sanatorium in Brush, Colorado, owes its existence—next to the Grace of God—especially to an individual, the tuberculosis Pastor J. Madsen’s zealous work as well as the financial support he has found in both the Danish Church Synods in America. In the course of a half-score years it gradually became possible to erect a Sanatorium for tuberculosis patients, a home for the elderly, and more. The Sanatorium and Home are situated in a healthy climate and in a particularly comfortable place in that lovely Danish settlement in Colorado. The property, including the land, is worth \$25-30,000. From August 1910 to June 1911 there were 60 patients at the Sanatorium from various nationalities and denominations, and there were 962 weeks of nursing duties performed, of which 317 were donated. Six people reside at the Home for the Elderly. Every year on the 13th Sunday after Trinity an offering is taken in the congregations of the United Synod for this lovely institution, known by the name “Ebenezer.” It deserves the support of all Christian people as a link in the struggle against “The White Plague,” which is constantly spreading.

The Widows’ Fund thus far exists exclusively for needy pastors’ widows. As known, neither pastors nor their widows earn pensions in America, and often the salary of a pastor is only enough to provide food and clothing for the family and that income ceases upon the pastor’s death. It is therefore proper, that pastors and congregations come to the aid of widows and the children of deceased pastors. During the Synod’s last fiscal year more than \$800 in various gifts came in for this purpose. The Fund owns an endowment of \$1000 which yields 6% annual interest. But that amount constitutes only a little support for each of the 8 widows of pastors who are currently members of the Synod. A Pension and Widows Fund has been established among the pastors in order to alleviate the needs for elderly retired pastors and widows.

Sources of important support for the Children’s Homes, the Widows’ Fund and for Missions are the Ladies’ Aids, which are to be found in most of the Synod’s congregations. In some of the congregations Tabitha Societies have been formed, which especially help the sick.

III. School and Youth Work

Our time is a time for schools, and our people are known for their schools. Also in America, the Danes even with relatively poor means have supported the very important school work for the present and for our future. Here, just as everywhere else, funds and the number of teachers are in short supply and approval has been sought from the Danes who live here. It would be desirable for the many large Danish Societies that are found now in this country to be more supportive and more cognizant of the importance of the preservation of our Danish language, manners and customs, than has been the case so far. Present conditions could thus have been quite different. Thus far, there are only the two little Danish Church Synods, which have facilitated Danish school work in America. A short overview of this work within the United Church follows:

Trinity Seminary, the seminary of the United Danish Church in Blair, Nebr. is the oldest institution of its kind in America. It began late in the year 1884, moved into the current building in 1886, and held its 25th anniversary last year. A memorial publication, authored for the occasion by the Seminary's current president, Pastor P. S. Vig, presents a collected overview of the school's history. Only the following will be mentioned here: Besides the Seminary there is a multi-faceted school, known under the general name "Dana College," whose current president is Prof. C. X. Hansen, BA. Dana College includes the "Pre-Seminary," a four-year course for those who want to study theology; and the Seminary for Male and Female teachers (Normal Course) for those who desire training for teaching in the American Public Schools. This has both 4-year and 5-year courses. The Academy—a 4 year course with a subsequent 2-year college course exists for those who desire a generally good preparatory training. The Business School offers an 8- to 12-month course in bookkeeping, stenography, etc. The High School is for those who have limited knowledge in both English and Danish. Further special instruction is available in music, sewing, painting, etc.

The course in Theology is three-years in length and encompasses the usual theological subjects.

The school's buildings, which have been erected gradually as need demanded and funds permitted, have cost in total at least

\$40,000. The funds for salaries for the Seminary's professors as well as for the President of Dana College, which altogether amounts to a good \$3,000, are collected by voluntary contributions from within the Synod. During the 27 years from 1884 to 1911, a total of \$54,000 has been collected in that manner. During the same period there have been a total of 2051 students at the school, of whom 67 have been ordained as pastors. The number of students in 1910-1911 was 182, and that number has been over 200. A total of 11 teachers are currently employed at the College, of whom 4 are women. The students are young men and women, mostly from Danish homes in America, and mostly born in this country. Most of the theological students thus far were born in Denmark. The College is recognized by the states. Likewise, those students who have taken the examination from the academic division here have gained access to the State University by taking a designated supplemental examination.

Colleges. Besides Trinity Seminary, the United Church owns Luther College in Racine, Wis., whereas the College in Elk Horn, Iowa, the oldest Danish College in America, begun in 1878, is now owned and managed by the congregation in Elk Horn. "Brorson College" in Kenmare, North Dakota, is owned by the North Dakota District. More detailed descriptions of these schools cannot be presented here. It is mentioned only that Luther College in Racine during the school year of 1910-1911 had 104 students; the school in Elk horn had 88, and the school in Kenmare 44. -- Thus during the school year 1910-1911 there were a total of 418 young men and women attending the Colleges of the United Church.

Childrens' Schools. The very most important part of the educational system is that which is for the children. Unfortunately only one of our larger congregations (Emaus Danish Lutheran in Racine, Wis.) has managed to keep a Danish parochial school going. In most of the congregations, however, there is a Danish summer school during the months when the public schools have vacation (1 June to 1 September); likewise, there is Danish Sunday School held in most of the congregations, some places in addition to English and in quite a few places only in English. Those who learn to speak and read the Danish language as children will never completely be able to forget it. Therefore the small vacation schools and Sunday Schools are of

utmost importance for the preservation of our language with the Danish Church and also in the entire country. Confirmation instruction can also play a significant role in that regard, since children usually attend confirmation instruction for a couple of years before they are confirmed.

Youth Work. All the world speculates on our youth nowadays; great youth movements are discernable everywhere. It is the Church's best interests to keep its young people in a living relationship to the Church and its work. The United Church, from the very first, has had its eye open to the importance of the cause of young people. A "Committee on Youth Concerns" deals with this important subject especially by the publication of a paper for young people, the holding of larger youth gatherings, overview of youth work in general, and by a report submitted to the Annual Synodical Convention. In the year 1911, there were 112 Youth activities listed in the Synodical Report, whose meetings were attended by close to 4000 participants. The Young People's Societies have contributed generously to Foreign Missions. Thus they have given significant sums for the building of a church in Japan, and several of the societies pay for the education of a Japanese student at the Lutheran Seminary in Kumamoto, Japan, for training as a missionary among his countrymen. This is a source of great joy for the Church that its youth work as a whole is seen as a bulwark for the future.

IV. Newspaper and Book Publishing.

"Danish Lutheran Publishing House" is the name of a book and publishing business, which has had its home in Blair, Nebr., since 1893. At the founding of the United Danish Church, the business was taken over by the new Synod. Here a significant business in book publishing is carried on, and all of the Synod's periodicals and publications are printed and published here. The Publishing House has significant other publishing business and owns excellent printing equipment. Unfortunately, the business, especially since taking over publication of the periodical "*Danskeren*" (The Dane), is under pressure because of significant debt. The entire business with property and accessories is valued at ca. \$40,000. The current debt, however, is approximately \$30,000.

The Synod publishes the following periodicals:

"Danskeren" was started in May, 1892 by the Jersild Publishing Company in Neenah, Wis., Pastor J. N. Jersild, Editor. In 1899 the periodical and associated accessories were moved to the United Church at Blair, Nebr. Since 1901, the paper has been published twice weekly. This periodical has a subscription list of about 4,000 and is edited by Pastor A. M. Andersen. The paper is of great importance for the Synod, both in its origin and growth and as its official published representative.

"Dansk Luthersk Kirkeblad" (Danish Lutheran Church Publication) which started, as mentioned earlier, in 1877, is now a 16-page weekly and is edited by Pastor J. Petersen, Viborg, S. Dakota. It is especially valuable for the dissemination of synodical information.

"De Unges Blad i Amerika" (Publication for the Youth in America), which was started by the Blair Church in 1896, is now published by the Synod's Committee on Youth Concerns. The current editor is Pastor Gertsen in Council Bluffs, Iowa. The paper's purpose is expressed by its title.

"Børnebladet" (The Children's Paper), which began publications in 1890, is a little 4-page, illustrated children's paper, which goes out once a week and is edited by Pastor L. Jensen, Ruskin, Nebr.

Besides those cited above, we should mention the little paper *"Føbe"* (Phoebe), which is published once a month for the Sanitorium in Brush, Colorado, by Pastor J. Madsen, since 1902. This little publication quietly promotes the cause for the sick and suffering within the Synod.

Likewise, in Minneapolis, Minn., Pastor N. Hansen publishes a monthly paper *"Kirke og Folk"* (Church and People) which especially promotes the cause for support for Heathen Missions among our people.

V. Other Activities

The United Church has also had an open eye for the importance of being able to gather our people in settlements where each family can have its own home and avoid being swallowed up by the cities and the homelessness which has debilitated so many of our countrymen here in this country.

Through its "Land Committee" or "Colonization Committee" the United Church has been cooperating in the formation of the Danish settlements in Arcola, Texas (which has now been abandoned); Brush, Colorado; Kenmare, N. Dakota; Daneville, N. Dakota, as well as Culbertson, Montana, where there are now found significant Danish populations and Danish congregations. Further, the following Danish settlements should be mentioned: Dickson and Standard in Canada, which were started by members of the Synod's older congregations.

In addition, the Synod, for several years, has seriously discussed the establishment of a Home for the Elderly without that intention thus far being realized. The same is true for the idea of a Danish Hospital, which we have missed for a long time. It is to be hoped that one or more wealthy Danes might be prompted to give contributions for promotion of these causes.

The United Church has never applied for nor received any financial support from the Church or State in Denmark. The Synod's representative in Denmark is "The Committee," which consists of the following people:

Pastor C. Aschenfeldt Hansen, Nørre Nissum
Pastor H. C. Frimodt-Møller, Aarhus
Dean Fr. Zeuthen, Fredericia
Pastor A. Busch, Hellerup
Inner Mission Representative H. Chr. Beck, Copenhagen
Landowner Rud. Heilmann, Aarhus
Businessman C. Kjærsgaard, Copenhagen

Closing Remarks

This abbreviated overview of the activity of the United Church will only be able to give the reader the impression, I suspect, that a Church Synod in America has much responsibility in many different areas, as well as representing significant values in several respects. It has taken some time before we Danish immigrants, who had grown up under the National Church at home, learned that we had to carry on by ourselves. We had to learn what to do and how to do it, and

we are still in the process of learning how to manage by ourselves. It has not been an easy lesson to learn that being Danish in America is not the same as Danish life in Denmark, and that the work of the church, as a consequence, is necessarily different. It may be easy to say in a few words that such a difference exists, but sometimes we can sense something but not easily put that into words. And then, one might ask, what about the future? What will it bring? That might not be so difficult to answer, as many might think. What will grow in the future and will bear fruit is what has been planted today. The present is the mother of the future. Yes, but will the Danish Church Synods be able to be preserved as Danish? Yes—but for how long no one can say, and some places will last longer than others. Those of us who are working for the Church do not have much time to philosophize over this.

Our people already now have two languages and use them both, the Danish mostly at home, the English outside the home. And those who will work as pastors or teachers among the people must be proficient in both languages. Therefore we strive to train our young men for this, those who will be pastors from now on. The desire to preserve the Danish language in America to the exclusion of English is not only impossible, but foolish. But the preservation of the Danish language together with and alongside the English cannot just happen by itself. It is, of course, a fact that a language is preserved only by being used, and that is the way of everything in life; that which is not used, dies. And in a future unforeseeable for us the Danish language will be used in America, at home, in church and in school, in papers and books, if we who are now living use it as we should. Therein there is both guarantee and encouragement enough for all to want to work while there is time and days left for them.

But God be praised for what He has accomplished in the Danish language in America, by small powers and poor means, to the Honor of His Name and for the salvation of souls.

To Him alone the Glory!