

OFFICIAL PROCEEDINGS

of the

102nd Annual Session

of the

ILLINOIS CONFERENCE

of the

Evangelical Church

Held in the

FIRST EVANGELICAL CHURCH

PEORIA, ILLINOIS

May 22 to 26, 1946



BISHOP GEORGE E. EPP, D.D., LL.D., *Chairman*

JOHN F. SCHAEFER, *Secretary, Editor and Publisher*

REPORT OF MEMORIALS COMMITTEE

Ministers

Reverend John Marth was born Jan. 10, 1869, at Melsungen, Germany. At the age of 19 he came to the United States and settled in Ottawa, Ill., where, on Nov. 1, 1894, he married Sarah Elizabeth Claus.

Brother Marth was recommended for the ministry by the Zion Evangelical Church Ottawa and was licensed and ordained by the Illinois Conference. Throughout his 40 years in the ministry he served Roberts, El Paso, Perkins Grove, Dwight, Graymont, Hollands Grove, Belvidere, Geneseo, Bensenville, and Batavia. He retired 12 years ago.

He completed his education at North Central College and the Evangelical Theological Seminary, and has since been a keen student in the philosophy of religion and historical Christianity. He won many souls for Christ through his evangelistic preaching, and in his retirement, continued to be an appreciative and co-operative worker in the church.

Death came July 30, 1945, after a long illness. Surviving are his widow, a daughter, a son, and a brother, the Rev. Conrad Marth of this Conference.

Throughout his ministry he has won not only a place for himself in the hearts of the people he served, but also a place for the Christ whom he loved so dearly and served so faithfully. Surely, "He that winneth souls is wise."

Reverend Frank L. Reetzke was born in Chicago in 1883 and died in the Garfield Park Community Hospital, Chicago, September 10, 1945.

As a boy of fourteen he was converted in the Methodist Church where he attended. It was as a mature man that he was challenged with the ministry and served in the Congregational Church in South Dakota for three years. Returning to Illinois he united with the Evangelical Church and accepted an appointment.

Brother Reetzke attended Moody Bible Institute and McCormick Theological Seminary in Chicago. He was ordained by the Illinois Conference.

In 1908 he was married to Miss Anna Koehler. Of the four children who came to bless the home, two preceded the father in death.

He served the following fields in Illinois: Pierce, Diversey, Elmhurst, Norwood Park, Springfield, El Paso, and Englewood.

He was a faithful preacher, and always had an evangelistic passion for the souls of men. Having served his Master to the very end of his earthly life he now serves Him in that Heavenly abode inherited by those who love and faithfully serve their Lord.

Reverend H. H. Thoren, 82 years of age, passed away in Chicago after a long illness, on Nov. 27, 1945. He had been retired for nine years but had lived a very active life through 52 years of faithful service to his Church.

Brother Thoren was an early northern Illinois circuit rider and held pastorates at Manhattan, Sterling, Highland Park, Naperville, Barrington, and Chicago. His first charges were in the Mount Carroll and Black Oak area and he also preached at Grand Detour, Freeport, and Epleanna.

From 1900 to 1907 he was associated with Western Union College as president, dean of its school of theology and pastor of the college church. Following this, he served a short time in the Montana Conference and then returned to the Middle West.

The possessor of nine college degrees, Dr. Thoren has become familiar to all by his valuable help in compiling material used in the centennial edition of the history of the Illinois Conference.

He was born May 9, 1863, in Germany, and came to the United States 17 years later. He studied for the ministry at North Central College, received his license in 1884 and was later ordained. He was married Aug. 10, 1887, to Louise Gurney who passed away four years ago.

Brother Thoren has "fought a good fight," he has "kept the faith,"—henceforth there is "a crown of righteousness."

Reverend J. George Finkbeiner, an effective servant of Christ and his Church, died at Downers Grove, Ill., Dec. 4, 1945. He was born near Crediton, Ont., Feb. 5, 1864. As a lad he had a definite Christian experience which brought him into the Evangelical Church.

He received his education at North Central College, was licensed by the Canada Conference, and continued in the active ministry for 47 years. He served the following fields: Perkins Grove, Loraine, Chadwick, Davis, Owosso, Mich., Aurora, Dixon, Highland Park, Chicago (Adams St.), Chadwick (second time), Aurora (second time), Shannon, Highland Park (second time), Chicago (Lane Park), and Downers Grove. He also served efficiently in many positions of responsibility in the general church, and the Illinois Conference. In 1895 he married Miss Cora Long of Davis, who survives.

Brother Finkbeiner had an unusually wide circle of acquaintance. He was always known as a conscientious, sincere, frank, loyal, and sympathetic friend, a faithful pastor, an able preacher, a wise counsellor. He made an outstanding contribution to his church, and through her his productive life continues to bear fruit in the earth.

Reverend Charles Wunsch was born Dec. 1, 1869, in Germany, and died Jan. 18, 1946, at his home in Pontiac, Illinois. In 1881 he came with his mother to America and settled in Owega Township, Livingston Co. Upon attending the Owega Evangelical Church, he experienced a change of heart, became a loyal member, and served in all major offices of the church.

Prior to entering the Christian ministry, he served as a missionary for the American Sunday School Union. He was licensed to preach in 1909, and ordained deacon in 1917.

On Jan. 5, 1890, he was married to Miss Emma Friesleben. To this union was born four sons and two daughters.

Brother Wunsch served the following appointments in the Illinois Conference: Roberts, Emmanuel-Weston, Weston-Roberts, Pontiac-Weston, and Groveland.

His loyalty to Christ and the Church has inspired countless men and women and children who knew him and were blessed by his faithful service.

Reverend Isaac Divan was born in Cadiz Township, Green Co., Wis., on Nov. 27, 1854, and died at the home of his daughter in Mt. Morris, Ill., April 8, 1946.

He was recommended for the ministry in 1883 by the St. Peter's Evangelical Church of the Orangeville Circuit, and was licensed by the Illinois Conference. During the fifty years of his active ministry he served Weston, Assumption, El Paso, South Dixon, Dixon which he started as a mission field, Stockton, Rock Grove, Cedarville, Reddick, Forreston, Pierce, Ottawa, Peotone, Sterling, Woodbine, and Prairie View.

Brother Divan was interested in church construction and architecture, and his advice was sought frequently. At Assumption, Dixon, and Reddick churches were built under his direction. He also was the architect and builder of the present Oakdale tabernacle and hotel.

Of Brother Divan it can be said as it was said of his Master, "He went about doing good." He was loyal to his calling to the end and today he has inherited the place of "many mansions" prepared for all those who love and faithfully serve their Lord.

Bishop Emeritus Samuel Peter Spreng was born in Wayne Co., Ohio, Feb. 11, 1853, and was called on Good Friday, April 19, 1946. As a youth he had a definite experience of personal salvation through Christ, and soon after felt the call to the Christian ministry.

He received his education at North Central College and was licensed to preach by the Ohio Conference. He served for 70 consecutive years as an itinerant minister of the Evangelical Church as pastor, district superintendent, editor, and bishop. For 20 years he served with great distinction as editor of the *Evangelical Messenger* until he was elected bishop in 1907, and then served in this capacity for 23 years until his retirement in 1930. He transferred his membership to the Illinois Conference in 1920 on establishing his episcopal residence in Naperville.

Bishop Spreng was an inspiring leader with profound spiritual insight whose talent and ability was recognized at home and abroad. He was an eloquent and persuasive preacher and a prolific writer. He carefully studied the social and spiritual movements of the day which gave rise to our church, and with his literary gifts made the history of the Evangelical Church live again. With rare genius as a writer he also gave us a concise statement of our Evangelical faith. He occupied a unique position as mediator between the founding fathers and succeeding genera-