

OSWALD HOFFMANN

Preaching the Gospel Around the World

BORN: DECEMBER 6, 1913 *Snyder, Neb.*

DIED: SEPTEMBER 8, 2005 *St. Louis, Mo.*

HIS NAME WAS OSWALD, but from boyhood everyone called him “Ossie.” He grew up in Snyder, Neb., where his father was a Lutheran pastor. The family later moved to Springfield, Ill., when his father was called to teach at Concordia Theological Seminary. As a boy, Hoffmann knew he wanted to be a pastor like his father and grandfather. Later in life, he recalled “I cannot remember a time when I did not want to become a pastor. That is all I ever prepared myself for. Anything else that would happen would be a surprise from God” (*What More is There to Say But Amen*, 26).

After attending Lutheran elementary and high schools, Hoffmann continued his studies at Concordia College, St. Paul, graduating in 1932. In 1935, he completed his ministerial training at Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, after which he accepted a position as professor and choir director at Bethany Lutheran College in Mankato, Minn. At the same time, he was called as pastor of a congregation in Cottonwood, Minn.

In 1941, Hoffmann was called to teach biblical languages at Concordia College New York, Bronxville, N.Y. During these years he grew more interested in church relations and striving for effective outreach with the Gospel message.

In 1948, Hoffmann was charged with establishing the Synod’s first Department of Public Relations, based in New York City. In this role, he cultivated relationships with secular and religious media outlets, as well as government agencies. As director, Hoffmann also moved into radio and television communications. He was instrumental in the production of the film *Martin Luther*, which premiered in 1953.

Even while Hoffmann served as the director of the Department of Public Relations until 1963, in 1955, he

was called to also be speaker of “The Lutheran Hour.” He served as speaker for 33 years, preaching for radio broadcasts on stations across the U.S. and around the world. He traveled throughout the world preaching and teaching the message of God’s Word — even to presidents and heads of state. Hoffmann worked for years with the Lutheran Laymen’s League, which from 1930 was committed to supporting the Lutheran Hour programs.

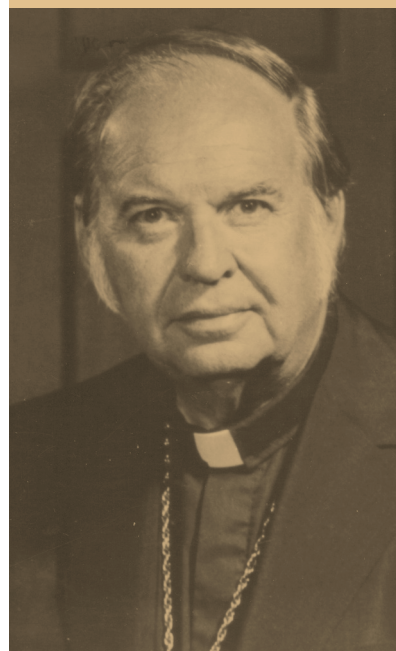
Hoffmann loved studying the Bible, especially the Greek New Testament. He served on the board of the American Bible Society and, in 1977, was elected president of the United Bible Societies.

His last message as Lutheran Hour speaker was broadcast from China on Christmas Day, 1988. In his autobiography detailing his remarkable and eventful life, Hoffmann summed up his career as a pastor and evangelist: “I have never tired of preaching the Gospel, for it is the power of God both for a believer’s eternal life as well as for the abundant life in Christ on earth.”

For more information about the 175th anniversary of the LCMS, visit lcms.org/175.

DISCOVER MORE

Oswald C. J. Hoffmann, *What More Is There to Say But Amen: The Autobiography of Dr. Oswald C. J. Hoffmann* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1996).



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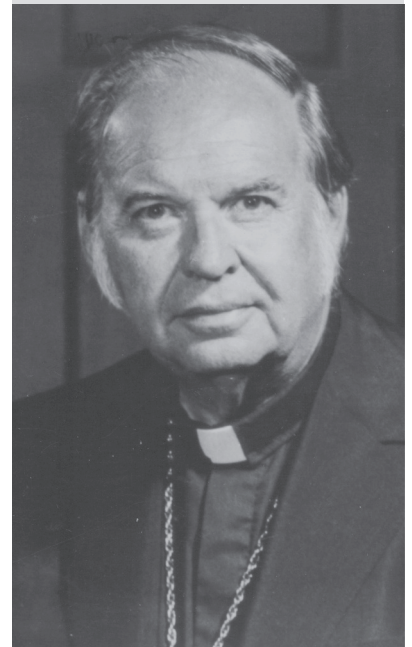
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