

Biographical Sketch of Dr. Otto F. Linn

by Miss Mary Husted, February 11, 1960

Great oaks from little acorns grow, is a familiar truism; but considering the great number of acorns that fall, very few, we must admit, ever become great oaks. So it is in the realm of human growth and maturity – only a few attain the stature of greatness. Of these few, our Dr. Otto F. Linn is one.

Born June 27, 1887, in a small town some miles east of Liberal, Kansas, he grew up a studious and serious minded youth. Though an avid student he also took a keen interest in athletics and was on his school's first string football team. While yet a high school boy he gave his heart to Christ and dedicated his future to the work of the Kingdom of God. He tells of how as a teen age lad he practiced preaching out in the pasture to the animal creatures standing about.

Not long after his graduation from high school, he went to Anderson and lived in the Gospel Trumpet Home sharing in the work and the training opportunities of that day. He began his actual preaching ministry at about twenty years of age and was ordained five years later in 1912. He was associated with the work in the Bronx, New York City, with such pioneers as D.O. Teasley and G.P. Tasker. Some of his very early pastorates were in the towns of Anthony and Caldwell, Kansas and Dacoma, Oklahoma. He did missionary work in Denmark and Sweden for two or three years in the middle 1920's. He was married to Julia Lindell June 23, 1928.

Feeling a great need for formal education if he was to continue in the great work of the ministry, Otto Linn entered Phillips University where he completed work for his baccalaureate and master's degrees. During the 1930's he earned his Ph.D. in New Testament at the University of Chicago, taught four years at Anderson College, and began his six years pastorate at Dundalk, Maryland, and at the same time worked with the group of scholars on the Revised Standard Version of the Bible. In 1942 he was invited by Dr. Gray to become Dean of Pacific Bible College, and served in that capacity until 1956 when he became so afflicted by the inroads of Parkinsons Disease that he was forced to retire.

Marked academic progress was made by the college during his administration. The college was approved by the State Department of Education for the granting of the Bachelor of Arts and Bachelor of Theology degrees; by the Veterans Administration for the education of veterans; and by the Department of Justice for the admission of foreign students. The library, under his guidance, was increased from a few hundred books housed in what is now Irma Mouser's office, to more than 10,000 volumes, moved by "operation booklift" in October of 1954, from the third floor of the administration building to the beautiful structure which bears his name.

No more meaningful commentary could be made of the greatness and stature of Otto F. Linn than simply to point out, on the wall of the library lobby, the line of scripture chosen by him to be carved in the marble panel: "Whoever would be great among you must be your servant, and whoever would be first among you must be your slave."