



Arne Benjamin Sovik

September 16, 2014

Sovik, Arne Benjamin age 96, September 16, 2014. Born at Kikungshan (now Jigongshan), China, to Norwegian-born American missionaries. Graduated from St. Olaf College in 1939 and from Luther Theological Seminary in St. Paul in 1943, then was ordained and called to the China mission in Henan province. Displaced by Japanese action, he spent the last year of the war in Chongqing, working in the National Student Relief Committee, an ecumenical organization serving students who had fled to West China. He left China in 1947. After a year of teaching at Concordia College, Moorhead, and traveling in missions promotion, Sovik received a Ph.D. from Yale University in 1952 with a study on church and state relations in modern China. Since return to China was impossible, Sovik was sent to Taiwan, where for three years he chaired the Taiwan Lutheran Mission and helped to establish the indigenously led Taiwan Lutheran Church. In 1955 he began work at the world mission program of the Lutheran World Federation (LWF), Geneva, Switzerland, his 25 years there broken by four years heading the world mission offices of the Lutheran Church in America in New York. He participated in a 1963 conference on the Church and the Jews which led to widespread work on the subject. Beginning in 1971, he headed a unit on Christian relationships with other faiths and ideologies, including the then-aggressive Maoist form of Marxism in an isolationist China. As a result of a World Council of Churches conference on Salvation Today in 1973, he wrote a book of the same name for use in North America churches. A linguist himself, he wrote articles that were

translated and published in various languages. Following retirement in 1984, he did some work for the evangelization of Chinese in France, lectured for short terms in a seminary in Indonesia, and edited a newsletter about China. After moving from Geneva to Minneapolis in 1992, he continued speaking on the church in China. During 2004-5, he taught English at a university in Chongqing. Sovik was preceded in death by his daughter Ann Brandenburg (1951-77); Ruth, his wife of 50 years who died in 2000; and his twin brother Edward. He is succeeded by his wife Ellen (nee Clark), whom he married in 2003; his three other children with Ruth: Nord (Maureen), Liv, and Nathan; sister Margaret Lindell; and many nephews & nieces. A memorial service will be held at Central Lutheran Church, Minneapolis, Friday, Sept. 26 at 11 a.m., preceded by visitation at 10 a.m. In lieu of flowers memorials may be made to Central Lutheran, Luther Seminary, St. Olaf College or as may be preferred.