

The Assistant Pastor

November, 1944

Ageless Truth

"In the papers of Abraham Lincoln, there is an amazing passage written for no other eyes than his own, though some reflection of it is in his second inaugural address. It was written toward the end of the Civil War, which seemed to be dragging out endlessly, despite the overwhelming weight of arms and power that was with the North. Lincoln noted:

"In great contests each party claims to act in accordance with the will of God. Both may be, and one must be, wrong. God cannot be for and against the same thing at the same time.

"In the present war it is quite possible that God's purpose is something different from the purpose of either party. . . . I am almost ready to say that this is probably true; that God wills this contest and wills that it shall not end yet.

"By His mere great power over the minds of the contestants He could have saved or destroyed the Union without a human contest. Yet the contest began. And having begun He could give final victory to either side any day. Yet the contest proceeds."

This timeless wisdom of Abraham Lincoln is worthy of our most thoughtful and humble consideration today. The quotation and the remarks preceding it were clipped from the daily column of Dorothy Thompson in the Des Moines Tribune of Friday, November 17, 1944.

The Assistant Pastor

Published and edited by the pastor of the Jerico and Saude Lutheran churches, affiliated with the Norwegian Synod of the Synodical Conference.

Church Directory

N. S. Tjernagel, Pastor

SAUDE CONGREGATION

Trustees: Carl Swenumson, John Natvig, Martin Borlaug.
Treasurer: Milton Boleng.
Secretary: Fred Steensland.
Cemetery Committee: Oscar Natvig, Henry Borlaug, N. S. Tjernagel.
Ladies' Aid: Miss Johanna Ellingson, president; Mrs. Tom Swenumson, secretary; Mrs. Ned Borlaug, treasurer.

JERICO CONGREGATION

Trustees: J. N. Anderson, Tom Roberson, Carl G. Johnson.
Secretary: Alfred N. Anderson.
Treasurer: Ole J. Johnson.
Ladies' Aid: Mrs. Tom Roberson, president; Mrs. K. C. Johnson, secretary; Mrs. Edwin Johnson, treasurer.
Cemetery Committee: Mrs. Carl A. Knutson, Mrs. M. A. Robinson, Mrs. C. O. Vigdal.

OUR MISSION

During the course of the next few weeks your pastor will call on you in behalf of our congregation in New Hampton. Our work of bearing witness to the Gospel of Jesus Christ in New Hampton is now beginning its fifth year. The first pastor to serve the congregation, the Rev. Nils Oesleby, was ordained in the Legion Hall on September 8, 1940. As time went on it became more and more clear that the work there, in order to prosper, would have to be conducted in a more suitable place of worship. As you know, the present place of worship was purchased with the assistance of the Synod a year ago. It has proved most suitable for our purpose, and with the gracious assistance of the Saude, Jerico and New Hampton Ladies' Aids the Chapel has been furnished appropriately.

At the time the building was purchased contributions totalling over two hundred dollars were received from four donors who were members of the Jerico congregation. Your pastor would have appealed to others in the Saude and Jerico congregations at that time to assist the members of Redeemer congregation in making payment for the New Hampton Chapel, but at that time the Synod's Jubilee Thankoffering was uncompleted and we had no desire to interfere with that. However, now at the end of the first year, when the mortgage on the property is due, we shall come to you and ask for your support.

There can be no doubt of the fact that there is a definite need for a Synod congregation in New Hampton, and I am sure the members of the Saude and Jerico congregations will be proud to support this their daughter congregation. The first contributions to the Redeemer building fund came without solicitation, and your pastor will call on you in the same spirit, to receive the assistance of those who are interested in this mission in our own midst. He will not in any sense come as a high-pressure collector.

THE MISSION OF THE CHURCH

(Part of an essay given at the recent Circuit meeting at Northwood)

I

The Need

In what dreadful darkness the people of this world are living has at no time been more evident than in these present days in which the destruction and carnage of warfare is sweeping over the four corners of the earth. The vice among men, and the wickedness among nations that bring about wars are the clearest evidence that the hearts of men are not filled with the light of Gospel truth. The world is in mourning these days over the dead that are dying on all the horrible battlefields of the world. Yes, this is the darkness that Isaiah speaks of, "For behold the darkness shall cover the earth, and gross darkness the people."

But the toil, turmoil and tribulation of these times is not the darkness of which the prophet speaks. Those things which we are enduring these days are merely the evidence of the darkness that is in the souls of men. The darkness consists in the simple fact that they do not know their Savior. They are like blind men groping their way through this life and falling into all manner of snare and pitfall.

The pity is that a star once shined into this dreadful darkness; a star that is the Savior, Jesus Christ, who came to light the way for us to eternity, and to prepare a path of peace and security for us through the dangers of this life. He died, so that we might live, and in Him there is now life and light for all sinners. In Him there is a way of hope; a way to eternal life.

We have that light and life in the Gospel which we of the Lutheran church teach and believe. Unnumbered millions are in need of it. What we must do is therefore crystal clear. We must bring it to them.

II

What Can We Do?

Every good mission sermon tells you the three things that you have it in your power to do in bringing the light of the Gospel to a world in darkness. You may pray for sinners in darkness, you may set them a good example, and you may give of your means to the support of the preaching of the Gospel among others.

Let no one imagine that prayer offered in behalf of others is a matter of small consequence. The Scriptures clearly urge us to pray for ourselves as well as others, and promise that our prayers for everything God-pleasing will be heard. Who can forget Christ's prayers for his enemies, Stephen's prayer for his murderers, and the constant prayers of the Apostles for the persons to whom they ministered? Surely God will hear our prayer when we beseech Him to open the hearts of those to whom the Gospel is preached.

A second potent means at our disposal is suggested by the words of the Sermon on the Mount, "Let your light so shine before men, that they may see

your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven." But strangely, this great means at hand for us all is woefully lacking. Just think what we could accomplish by way of Christianizing the world if everyone of us who believe the Gospel would live according to that same Gospel. But what do we see. Generally speaking, it is impossible to judge by their outward lives whether people are Christians or not. Unbelievers often have as high a code of honor, as high standards of honesty, as Christians. How often do we find Christians testifying to their faith, and speaking out their belief in the Savior Jesus! That which is dearest to us is the last thing we talk about. How many of us live like a Daniel, for instance, whose very life gave evidence of what he believed! Too many of us rather indulge in the dubious pleasures of the world thinking that a little "wild oats" sown can't hurt much, and that it is not well to be too strict. Profanity is too often heard from the careless lips of Christians, and many other sins which others see us commit we pass off as not "amounting to much". Daniel's faith, and his renunciation of all that was evil became a source of courage and strengthened faith for all the people of Israel. What can be said of our lives in respect to the influence they have on other people?

The third thing which is within the reach of all of us is to contribute to the support of the missionary endeavors of our church. The Lord simply asks that we give as He has prospered us. What does that mean? Does it mean that we are to take care of our own personal needs first, and then give of any surplus we may have? What He means is indicated by the words which describe Abel's offering. We are told that he offered of the "firstlings of his flock". In other words he gave of the best he had to the Lord. His gift was not a grudging mite.

What is a reasonable gift to the Lord is indicated by Old Testament accounts in which ten per cent of one's income was demanded for the work of the church. A tenth of ten per cent would come closer to measuring the church contributions of most people today. And that's too bad, because the Scriptures tell us that the Lord "loveth a cheerful giver". How much can we give to the work of "bringing the Gospel to every creature?" The answer to that question depends on our confidence in God's promises who says, "Give, and it shall be given unto you". He has also said "with what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you again". How many of us would be comforted with the thought that God would give to us, on the same basis as we give to him? We can not deceive the Lord.

These are prosperous times for the people of our country. Are we giving more toward mission work than before? Or is a dollar bill still the maximum offering we make on Mission Sundays?

We cannot buy our way to heaven through our gifts. But our gifts show our appreciation for the fact that **Christ** with His Holy precious blood has done what we could not do for ourselves. He has bought a place for us in heaven with His very life's blood.

III What Is Our Field?

The answer to that is very clear. "Go ye therefore and make disciples of every nation." "Go ye into all the world and preach the Gospel to every creature."

Our first duty, of course, is to bring the Gospel to those nearest to us. Parents are responsible for bringing the saving word of God to the children in their own families. As congregations, our first duty is to those in our own communities who do not know the way to salvation. To that end members of congregations should always be on the alert to help such to become interested in the church and in seeking membership. Congregations that are filled with a proper missionary spirit should also be on the alert for nearby communities where the preaching of the Gospel may be undertaken. Such establishment of daughter congregations has taken place in numerous instances during the short history of our little Synod. In Madison, Wisconsin, Holy Cross Ev. Luth. congregation was begun, and has prospered under the interest and support shown by the mother congregation in the same city. At Eau Claire, Wis., a daughter congregation has been established. The same has taken place in the establishment of a congregation at New Hampton, Iowa, and at Currie, Minnesota. Just as a parent may be proud of a healthy child, so these congregations which have mothered new congregations have a reason for pride.

Beyond these people living in darkness in our own midst we also, as a Synod, have a responsibility for citizens of our own nation who have not yet had the Gospel preached to them. Likely fields of endeavor have been surveyed in the past, and the congregations acting together in their joint membership in the Synod have sent missionaries and helped to build houses of worship. The most recent undertaking of that kind has been the establishment of a congregation at Sioux Falls, South Dakota, where a small group of people, interested in our Synod and the doctrines it upholds, requested help to organize a congregation. And there have been many other similar instances where our joint support of mission work has resulted in the establishment of congregations.

There is another field of missionary endeavor which we should not neglect, namely that presented by the many institutions that are supported by our people. We think of children's homes for orphans, epileptic, deaf and blind. There are also missionary opportunities in hospitals and asylums. There is also a very special need for caring spiritually for the aged and infirm among us.

An active church will also desire to support the preaching of the Gospel as opportunity may present in foreign countries among the heathen.

These few words give the very briefest sketch of the work that there is to do. It is a tremendous field. The opportunity that we have is unlimited. When the war is over, the whole world will know it within a few hours. But it is two thousand years since the resurrection, and still many have not heard that story of salvation. Let us give them this blessed message through our gifts and our prayers.

A RICH MAN

The story is told of a relatively small congregation that had a big heart for the mission endeavors of the church. A casual visitor to the locality where this congregation flourished met one of the members informally and inquired of him if the members of that congregation were all wealthy people as this was indicated by the large amounts they contributed toward missions. The man answered, "We are". The stranger further inquired about the business in which the people were engaged and which gave them such rich returns. The man pointed north and said, "We work in that box factory yonder". The man was stunned for a moment and said, "Surely, you don't mean to tell me that all the members of this congregation have no higher source of income than that obtained by common labor?" The man retorted, "I mean to say just that". "Well", said the stranger, "I thought you said your people are rich?" "That we are", was his reply. While the stranger stared in utter amazement the man went on to explain the paradox. This is what he told the stranger: "We are rich, but not in the sense in which you think of riches. You think of riches in dollars and cents. We don't. Our riches and wealth were amassed by the Son of the heavenly Father. Because we were down and out before God, our highest creditor, He came down into this world, lived lonely and poor among men, as a man, permitted Himself to be mocked, ridiculed and abused by men for thirty-three years. He did all that for us. He performed the will of God perfectly; kept all the laws of God and finally gave up His very life on the cross to pay the penalty for our sins, the wages of sin. Now, all that He earned He gave to us, free of charge, and assured us that whoever will believe in Him shall inherit the whole heaven and all its glory. That is our wealth. He became poor that we through His poverty might become rich. See that little church over there? That's where we gather every Sunday morning. There, by the Word that we hear there, He keeps on pouring out His riches upon us and makes us so rich that we can afford to do all we are doing and even more than that." The stranger had listened to the man with abated breath. Neither said another word, just, "good-bye". But that night that stranger thanked his God for having brought him to this village and into the company of this man.

There is the whole secret of mission zeal. We are, every one who calls himself a Christian, just as rich as that man. But do we realize it and are we as thankful as he? Pray God to teach us to know what this man knew and give us the grateful heart that this man had. God teach us the secret of success in supporting our missions.

W. J. S. (from "Northwestern Lutheran").

The following Baptisms have not yet been recorded in the pages of the Assistant Pastor:

Connie Ray, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Joseph Vaala, born May 25, 1944, baptized June 18, 1944. The sponsors were Mr. and Mrs. Jeff O. Knutson, witnesses Mr. and Mrs. Ted. Haugen.

Llewellyn Borlaug, son of Mr. and Mrs. Leonard C. Culbert, born August 3, 1944. Sponsors, Mr. and Mrs. Ned Borlaug, Mr. and Mrs. Odell Natvig.

John Oliver, son of Mr. and Mrs. John Anderson, born July 30, 1944, and baptized on August 23, 1944. Sponsors were Mr. and Mrs. Ole N. Anderson and Mr. and Mrs. Nels Ellingson.

Jean Ann, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Carlyle Natvig, born October 10, 1944, and baptized on October 29, 1944. Sponsors were Mr. and Mrs. Kenneth Benz, Julian Natvig and Mrs. Carl Natvig.

Nels Stephen, son of Corp. and Mrs. Vern L. Borlaug, born on October 26, 1944, and baptized on November 19, 1944. Sponsors were Mr. and Mrs. Ned Borlaug and Mr. and Mrs. Severt Fossen.

Sponsors! Do you take seriously the charge read to you when you are sponsors for a child being baptized, that you should pray for the child? It is a most serious and sacred responsibility and duty. Do not neglect it. The child needs your prayer.

Ensign Paul L. Munson and Miss Geraldine Anderson will be united in Holy Matrimony in the Jerico Church on Wednesday, November 22, 1944. God bless them and their marriage.

The following contributions to the Assistant Pastor have been received since the last issue went to the printer: Chris Treider, \$1.00; O. N. Anderson, \$2.00; Mrs. Emma Borlaug, \$1.00; M. G. Boleng, \$1.00; L. C. Culbert, \$1.00; Pearl Paulson, \$1.00; Oscar Natvig, \$2.00; Carl Swenumson, \$1.00; Pearl Natvig, \$1.00; Olaf Johnson, \$1.00; O. N. Ferkenstad, \$1.00; Mrs. Ole Fossen, \$1.00; Severt Fossen, \$1.00; Olaf Knutson, \$1.00; Ned Borlaug, \$1.00; John Anderson, \$1.00; Larson Bros., \$1.00; Enus Ferkingstad, \$1.00; Nels Ellingson, \$1.00; Fred Steensland, \$1.00; Mark Robinson, \$1.00; Alfred T. Johnson, \$1.00; Knute Roberson, \$1.00; L. S. Roberson, \$1.00; Fred Amman, \$1.00; Alfred N. Anderson, \$1.00; Selmar Aasen, \$1.00; J. A. Robinson, \$1.00; Carl G. Johnson, \$1.00; Mr. and Mrs. Tom Munson, \$1.00; J. N. Anderson, \$1.00; Thos. Swenumson, \$1.00; Alfred Robinson, \$1.00; Iver Natvig, \$1.00; Jeff O. Knutson, \$1.00; Ole J. Knutson, \$1.00. Thank You!

The Final Quarterly Meetings of the congregations will be held as follows: Jerico, Monday, December 4th at 8 p. m. Saude, Tuesday, December 5th, at 8 p. m.

Coming Events

Dec. 14: Saude Ladies' Aid Christmas Party.

Dec. 21, 1:30 p. m.: Jerico Ladies' Aid Christmas Party.

Dec. 22, 8:00 p. m.: Saude Christmas Program.

Dec. 23, 8:00 p. m.: Jerico Christmas Program.

Christmas Seals will be mailed to you again this year for the support of Wheat Ridge Sanatorium. Each family will receive one hundred seals. Please mail your contribution to the pastor in the envelope provided for that purpose. All of you will be very happy to support this fine charity.