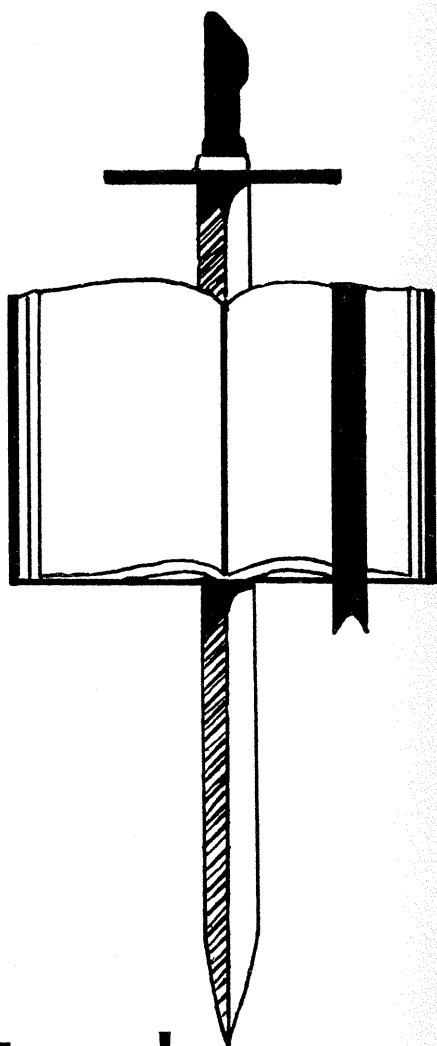


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# Lutheran Synod Quarterly

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Managing Editor: W. W. Petersen

Book Review Editor: J. B. Madson

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## FOREWORD

On August 16 of this year a veteran of the cross, The Reverend Adolph Harstad, was called to his eternal rest. Shortly before his death he sent to the editor a copy of his farewell sermon which he preached at Holy Cross Lutheran Church, Madison, Wisconsin, upon his retirement as visitation pastor. In an accompanying note he said, "I am sending a copy of my farewell sermon at Holy Cross in 1984 for possible publication in the Quarterly. It could be sort of a farewell on my part to pastors and others of the Synod. None of us knows how much longer the Lord will give us to live, and at 86 I think it may not be much longer." Blessed be the memory of our friend and brother, Adolph Harstad!

In commemoration of the centenary of Professor George Lillegard's birth, we continue and conclude the mission lectures which he delivered in 1955 at Theinsville. In the last issue of the Quarterly we mentioned some of the other writings by the professor. We inadvertently overlooked his classic COMMENTARY OF THE CHIEF MESSIANIC PSALMS which is still used in our seminary. "And by it he being dead yet speaketh."

Our readers will appreciate the interesting article by Pastor David Jay Webber entitled AMBROSE ON JUSTIFICATION: A Study in the Catholicity of Lutheran Theology in which he shows the link between Reformation theology and that of the Early Church fathers on the doctrine of justification. Pastor Webber serves Scriptural Lutheran Church, Cape Girardeau, Missouri.

The thought-provoking article by Professor Glenn Reichwald on THE FUTURE OF THE LUTHERAN CHURCH was delivered at last year's Reformation Lectures which commemorated the 100th anniversary of Dr. C. F. W. Walther's death.

We wish to remind our readers of the annual Reformation Lectures which will be held this fall on October 26-27 at Bethany Lutheran College. The topic: LUTHER THE MUSICIAN. The lecturer will be Pastor Kurt Eggert of Milwaukee and the reactors, Dr. Alfred Fremder of Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, and Professor Bruce Backer of Dr. Martin Luther College, New Ulm, Minnesota.

--WWP

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## N. I. J.

Farewell Sermon, preached by  
The Rev. Adolph M. Harstad, at Holy Cross Lutheran  
Church, Madison, Wisconsin (ELS) on March 25, 1984,  
after serving as Visitation Pastor for fourteen  
years and having completed almost fifty-eight years  
in the ministry.

### Prayer:

O Thou, who are the Help and the Strength of all  
them that trust in Thee, we thank Thee for enabling  
us to work together here in administering the  
Gospel of the grace of God in Jesus Christ to souls  
in need of forgiveness of sins and assurance of  
life and salvation. Thou hast gone with us as we  
have preached Thy saving Word in nursing homes here  
in our city and when we spoke Thy Word in public  
and in private. Thou hast not despised our humble  
service. Thou hast daily forgiven us all our sins.  
Forsake us not, we pray Thee, as we enter into  
retirement after these many years of administering  
the Means of Grace in Thy church. May the Word of  
salvation continue with us all, yea, till heaven's  
morning breaks and earth's vain shadows flee.  
Thou hast promised to be with us always even unto  
the end of the world. Fulfill in us all this Thy  
great and wonderful promise. We trust in Thee,  
Lord Jesus. Amen.

The word of our text is written in the second  
chapter of the First Epistle of Paul to the Corin-  
thians and in the second verse of that chapter,  
where we read as follows:

"I determined not to know anything among you save  
Jesus Christ and Him crucified."

In Christ Jesus beloved Christian Friends:

This is the text which I have chosen for this occasion, and it is the text, by the way, on which I preached when I first entered the ministry almost fifty-eight years ago. I had this same text before me then, and I present it before you and before me today. "I determined not to know anything among you save Jesus Christ and Him crucified." The crucified Lord Jesus Christ! He endured that cross for your sake and for my sake. He suffered death for us. He is our Hope and He is our life --spiritual life now and eternal life hereafter. And He it is who makes temporal death, or the death of the body, a blessed thing for those who believe in Him. In the Christian church, dear friends, we have been told by the Lord what we are to preach and teach. It has not been left to us to choose our subject. The Lord tells us: Preach Jesus Christ and Him crucified. That is the very center of our message, as it is the center of the Bible. The whole Bible points us in one direction, to the Lord Jesus Christ hanging on the cross for us to forgive our sins. And on the third day He rose victorious from the dead after He had made full payment for all our sins.

A man who had misspent his life by walking in sin lay critically ill; turning to the pastor he asked, "Do you think that a death-bed repentance does away with a whole life of sin?" And the pastor answered quietly: "No, but Calvary does." It isn't our repentance that does away with our sins, but Calvary. The blood of Jesus Christ, shed on the cross, cleanses us from all sin. We are saved by God's mercy in Jesus Christ and not by any works of ours. A great preacher by the name of Spurgeon said: "God's mercy is so great that it forgives great sins, to great sinners, after great



lengths of time, and then gives great favors and great privileges, and raises us up to great enjoyment in the great heaven of the great God." As John Bunyan says: "It must be great mercy or no mercy. For little mercy will never serve my turn." I have got to have a lot of mercy for my sins, and I am sure you feel the same way. You must have all the mercy that God has. And His mercy is endless to forgive us our sins of our youth, of our middle age, and of our old age. And may it be your determination, as it is mine, to know nothing save Jesus Christ and Him crucified. This has been the theme of my ministry, thanks be to God. And in the chapter that immediately precedes this text, we are told what Jesus Christ has become and what He is to us. And this is God Himself telling us.

We read in verse 30 of chapter one: "Who of God is made unto us (and now notice these four things) wisdom and righteousness and sanctification and redemption." Let us take up these things, one by one, as we have time to do so this morning.

The first thing that is mentioned here that God has made Him unto us is Wisdom. You see, dear friends, Jesus crucified is God's wisdom to the world, and God's strength for our salvation. The acme of real wisdom that God wants us to have is Christ crucified. We know that mere worldly wisdom will save no one. It is Christ crucified that saves, so that is the wisdom which, above all, you and I want to have. If one has not learned to know Jesus Christ, he is lacking the only saving wisdom. Such a person is to be pitied. There is no salvation outside of faith in Jesus Christ. And when we believe in Jesus Christ as our Savior and the Son of God, which He was, then we want to follow all of the teachings of Jesus Christ, and not single out just some of the things, and not be willing to

confess other things. Fie upon us if that is the case with us. I want to follow the things which Jesus Christ confessed and believed and taught. There are things in His teaching which are not popular in our day, and which some do not want to hold to. But we have to hold to them if we want to follow Jesus Christ.

The plenary inspiration of the Bible is one of these things, namely that the Bible is from beginning to end God's Word, reliable, dependable, without mistake. Jesus taught that. He said: "The Scriptures cannot be broken." John 10:35. And to the Emmaus disciple He said: "O fools and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken." (Luke 24, 25) But in our day, you know, even in some churches, it is denied that the whole Bible, from beginning to end, is God's inspired Word. Follow Jesus? One does not follow Jesus if one denies that. I want to follow Him here and believe that my Bible is God's Word from beginning to end.

Another thing: The Ten Commandments. If Jesus is our Wisdom, we must hold to the Ten Commandments as God's standard of morality for all times. We must not yield to the idea of situation ethics or to the idea that the Commandments are outmoded and that we are not bound to them any longer. God gave us our body and life and He gave us the Ten Commandments by which to guide us in the use of our body and life. We see how any departure from them leads to grief and disaster. Jesus marvelously explained the Commandments for us in the Sermon on the Mount.

And again: If we follow Jesus as our Wisdom we will hold steadfastly to Creationism and not yield to the foolishness of evolution which holds that all things came into being by chance over countless ages of time and that man came up from the animals.

Did Jesus believe that? He certainly did not. He said: "Have ye not read that He which made them at the beginning made them male and female." Matt. 19, 4. Jesus is Himself the Creator. He made all things. So if I am going to honor Him as Savior, I must accept Him also as my Creator. He is both my Redeemer and my Creator.

Here at Holy Cross Church, a few years ago, we started a Creation-Science Association. Some of you may remember me in that connection, and I am happy over that. For this doctrine of God's creation is one which all Christians should support.

The next thing mentioned here is that Jesus Christ is our Righteousness. You and I have to have righteousness if we are going to be acceptable with Him. It takes a holy person to be accepted with the holy God. Can you become holy? Can I become holy, sinner that I am? Through Christ crucified we can. And this because in Him all our sins are gone. Christ died for the sins of the whole world. That includes you and me and all men. We are righteous through the righteousness of Jesus Christ imputed to us. God counts it as being ours. He lived a holy life for us, and it is counted as though you and I had lived a holy life. And not only that, but He also died for our sins, so it is the same in God's sight as though we had died for our own sins. You see, we have a Substitute, who took care of our cause, the Lord Jesus Christ who was crucified and raised again. He is our Righteousness, as it says here that He is.

And He is our Sanctification. It is only through Jesus Christ that you and I can begin to live what the Bible calls a sanctified life. That means one that is dedicated to Christ and is walked as best we can in His ways. The believer in Jesus Christ

does not want to walk in sin's ways. "Let every one that nameth the Name of Christ depart from iniquity," the Bible says. Live a holy life as best you can. Not that that makes you holy. It is Christ's life that makes you holy. But when you have accepted Him as your holiness and righteousness, you want your life to conform to His holy life. We are told to follow Jesus' footsteps. We want to walk as He walked in a life of love.

And lastly, it says that He is our Redemption. He has redeemed us lost and condemned creatures at the price of His own blood. So these are the things that the Bible says Jesus is made unto us: Wisdom, Righteousness, Sanctification, and Redemption. That is what Jesus is to you.

If there is anything that I have wanted to be in my life it is to be a man of the cross. When I left Bethesda Lutheran Home almost fourteen years ago to come over here, the best compliment that I received from patients over there at Bethesda Home was spoken by a young fellow whom I had instructed for Confirmation, teaching him to know Christ crucified. When I left there he came to me and said, "You know, when I look at the cross, I think of you." A man of the cross, that is what I want to be.

And now let me thank you, one and all, for the great privilege of serving you for almost fourteen years. It has been a position exactly fitted for me at this stage in my career in a ministry which has continued for almost fifty-eight years, thank God. May He go with me into retirement. And I want to speak a word of thanks especially to my dear friend and co-worker, Pastor Orvick. We have worked together wonderfully. Above all, thanks be to God. Amen, in Jesus' Name.

# LECTURES ON MISSIONS

by  
Geo. O. Lillegard

## III. The Great Mission Century

One of the most remarkable phenomena of world history is the tremendous expansion of the relatively small nations of Europe and the spread of their power to all the corners of the earth, particularly in the 19th century and up to the First World War. A beginning had been made in the 16th to the 18th centuries by the occupation of the Americas and the opening of trade routes to the Far East by the European powers. But the greater part of the migration to the Americas, Australia, South Africa and other regions took place after that time. By 1914, Europeans had not only filled the empty spaces in these areas, but had divided all Africa into colonies, China into spheres of influence, and other areas of the world, including all the islands of the Seven Seas, into dependencies or parts of their burgeoning empires. The British, French, Dutch, Belgians, etc., controlled far larger domains outside of Europe than in it. Russia, too, had extended its power across all of northern Asia and into Alaska and was threatening periodically to burst its seams to the south and west. Germany, Italy, and Japan (this last the only non-European power which was able to take part in the scramble for colonies and world trade) were late comers in the game and were not welcome in it. So they had to be eliminated by two bitterly fought World Wars, with the ironic result that all of the Western powers lost their hold on

their subject peoples and have either already been ousted or are obviously on the way out. Russia fell into the hands of an Oriental-Jewish tyranny; France committed national suicide; Churchill succeeded in liquidating the British Empire; Holland lost its rich East Indies colony; and the United States has made extraordinary efforts to spend itself into bankruptcy by carrying all the burdens of the world on its shoulders. History will some day tell us whether we are witnessing the Decline of the West, as certain philosophers say we are, or whether there may yet be a revival and resurgence of the power and spirit of the West.

It is just as remarkable a phenomenon of history that the expansion of Christian missions throughout the world kept pace with the territorial and commercial expansion of the European powers and peoples. The period from the end of the Napoleonic wars in 1815 to the beginning of the World War in 1914 has been called the Great Mission Century of the Church. Since that time, the work of Christian Missions has continued to advance in some areas, but in others it has received mortal blows. The Church has been officially barred from all Communist domains, except in so far as it is willing to run the errands of its Communist masters and surrender all distinctively Christian tenets. Islam is still a barren field for Christian Missions in all its own territories, and is a deadly enemy and virile competitor of the Christian emissaries in its border areas from West Africa to the Indies and most parts of Asia. Opposition of many kinds is being stirred up against the white man and his religion in hundreds of areas where once the native peoples were comparatively docile and friendly. The Church is suffering, too, from dry rot within, losing sight of the Gospel, even while busily at work spreading abroad the Word of God in the language of the people in every land and clime.

We cannot here review the work done in the various homelands of Christianity, although what we call Home Missions has always been a most important part of the missionary task of the Church. We shall confine ourselves to what is classed as Foreign Missions; and we can review that only very sketchily, giving fuller information on just a few points which may serve to illustrate the work done by missionaries in the heathen world. We shall first make some general observations with regard to the missions of the Roman Catholics, the Eastern Orthodox Churches, and the Protestants, and then review the missionary scene in the various countries, beginning with America.

In the 19th century, the Roman Catholic Church continued to lose political control of areas long under its sway, such as the Italian States, France and its colonies, Mexico and the countries of Central and South America. But it retained its religious hold on the people to a large extent and gained in the end by the separation of Church and State which was forced upon it in many places. It experienced a revival of mission interest, the work being carried on by a large and ever-growing number of religious Orders and Societies.

"Between 1815 and 1914 more religious orders seem to have come into being than in any hundred years" (Latourette, p. 1114). They had their representatives in every part of the heathen world, and their "missions attained a geographical and numerical extent never before equalled" (Id.) In many countries their workers and adherents far outnumbered the Protestants. Whatever we may think of their work from the strictly evangelical point of view, it must be admitted that they brought at least portions of the Bible with them wherever they came, so that it was possible for their hearers to know and to believe in the only Savior.

The Eastern Orthodox Church made advances in this period chiefly through the growing power of the Russian government, since there the Church and the State were closely allied, up to the time of the Communist revolution in 1917. At times, this Church-State encouraged the translation of the Bible into the vernaculars of its many races and peoples and its free distribution among them. Again it would oppose such Bible work and would persecute Lutherans and other Evangelicals. There were leaders in it, like John Sergiev of Cronstadt, who were "steeped in the Bible" and revealed a true understanding of the Gospel and labored zealously for it. In 1870 the Orthodox Missionary Society was formed to raise funds for Foreign Missions, and serious efforts were made to convert and Moslems and other non-Christian peoples under the rule of the Czar. These also were given the Bible in translations into their own languages. Missions were conducted as far as Alaska and outside the Russian Empire, in Japan and other places.

When the Communists came into power, they took stringent measures against all churches and religions. They have sought by the most diabolical combinations of persecution and persistent propaganda the world has ever seen to destroy all faith in God and to turn the Church into merely another propaganda arm of the Satanic system some blinded people would call Christianity in action. But the work of the Church continues underground to a much larger extent, perhaps, than we can know. Bibles are smuggled into the country, and it may be that true religion prospers more under the rule of "the Godless" than it did when it enjoyed the favor of an often very corrupt court. The end is not yet. There are many observers who believe that the Communist regime would have been overthrown long ago by the people, if it had not received support at



critical times from the Western Powers, whose hands seem to be tied by some secret force, as soon as it comes to taking a common-sense attitude toward the oriental criminals who have vowed to destroy Christianity and everything connected with it.

But it was the Protestant Churches which expanded most rapidly during this period and showed the greatest zeal in spreading the Gospel, even as it was the Protestant countries which ruled the world. The people of England took the lead in preaching the Gospel to "the lesser breeds without the law" under their control. The English-speaking world, the United States, Canada, Australia, South Africa, etc., joined England in supporting missions in every part of the earth, including the farthest islands of the seas. By the beginning of our present century, over 80 percent of the mission work in the world was carried on by these countries. This did not mean that Germany and other Protestant countries were remiss in their efforts. On the contrary, the Lutheran countries pioneered in strictly Foreign Mission work "from Greenland's icy mountains to India's coral strand and Africa's sunny fountains." But they had neither the men nor the resources to carry on work to the extent that the English-speaking countries did.

Interest in Foreign Missions grew strong particularly as a result of the religious revivals which spread over Germany, the Scandinavian countries, England and America in this century. Bible societies were formed in these countries as a missionary arm first of all, and they have done a tremendous work through this whole period in making the Bible or important parts of it available to practically every people under the sun. By its 139th anniversary, the American Bible Society had distributed over 450 million copies of the Scriptures; the British and Foreign Bible Society even

more. The total number of languages in which at least one book has been translated now stands at 1084. In spite of the attacks of Modernism and unbelief on the Bible and of such bitter foes as the Communists, more Scriptures were distributed last year than ever before, --over 15 million by the ABS alone. Thus, although the Protestant churches had lost ground geographically by the middle of our century, particularly through the loss of China to the Communists, we can say that their work has continued to expand, and that the light of the Gospel is being brought to ever new areas, even by those who "darken counsel by words without knowledge" and deny the very light which they carry in their hands.

The American Indians were from the beginning a prime object of missionary interest for the white immigrants. They were a small minority, never more than half a million in number apparently (in North America); and they were divided into many tribes speaking different languages and with different cultures. Practically all of them had missions of various churches in their midst, and more money was spent on them per capita than upon other racial group. Fifty years ago, 40 percent were counted as Christians, today 60 percent, --the percentage being about the same as among whites in general. Flourishing missions have been conducted among them also by various Lutheran groups, the Evangelical Lutheran Church, the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod, the Wisconsin Synod, and others. It is interesting to note that a number of famous schools, like Dartmouth of Vermont, were originally begun for the Indians.

The Negroes in USA have been much more numerous than the Indians. In 1815 the Negroes made up almost 20 percent of the total population, now about 10 percent. The work of Christianizing them

was carried on chiefly by the Methodist and Baptist churches. The proportion of Negro Christians has increased *pari passu* with that of white Christians in the course of the century, beginning with about 12 percent before the Civil War and growing to over 50 percent today. The Protestant Episcopal Church, the Roman Catholics, Presbyterian, and Lutheran churches also have worked among them but have gained few converts. Ninety percent of the Negro church members belong to Baptist and Methodist bodies.

Successful mission work has been carried on also among Chinese and Japanese immigrants who settled in segregated areas to a large extent. The Missouri Synod has a growing mission church in New York City's Chinatown.

The largest non-white element in America to remain impervious to the Gospel is the Jews. Over half of the Jews in the world, more than ten million, are now in the United States. Although only a minority of them are faithful to their synagogues, the rest being secularized, there have been very few converts to Christianity among them. A disproportionately large number are Communists or support the Communist cause in various ways.

In the British and Dutch possessions in the West Indies and Central and South America, Protestant missions are carried on from the beginning of their occupation. Some, like Jamaica, became almost entirely Protestant; others, like Trinidad, remained chiefly Roman Catholic from the time of the Spanish rule. In general, the Negro and Indian population of all these islands belongs either to some Protestant mission or to the Roman Catholic Church. The English Episcopalians, Methodists, Baptists, and Moravians have all had large memberships. The ULC has a mission in British Guiana.

In Latin America, Protestant mission work was carried on at first mainly among immigrants from Europe, but later on also among the native Indians. These were either pagan or nominal Roman Catholics. The Missouri Synod work in Brazil and Argentina has followed this pattern. Protestant work has been conducted also among Roman Catholics in Mexico, Columbia, and other states at the cost of much opposition and even open persecution by the dominant Catholic Church. All of the larger church bodies in America have been represented in this field, as well as some smaller ones, like the Nazarenes, etc. Protestants are strongest in Brazil. They number over a million members in all parts of Latin America, the Protestant community being much larger. "Here Protestantism was making more substantial gains from a nominally Roman Catholic population than anywhere else in the world. They were several times greater than those being made from professedly Protestant constituencies the world around." (Latourette, p. 1291)

North Africa became during the 19th century more completely Moslem than ever, so far as the natives were concerned. But there was a large immigration of Spanish, French, and Italians to this area, who brought their Catholicism with them. Protestant mission work among the Moslems and Jews gained very few converts. In Egypt and the Sudan Protestants had more success, gaining converts especially among the Coptic and Greek Orthodox sects which had maintained themselves there from the early days of Christianity. There are Lutherans working in this region as well as in the Cameroons nearby. In Ethiopia, the situation has been much the same. The Catholic Pope at one time made overtures to bring the Coptic Church into his communion, but the effort failed; and Italian Catholics did not endear themselves to the Ethiopians by their war with them in the 1930's.

Palestine numbered many thousand Arab Christians until they were driven out by Jewish Zionists, besides a sprinkling of all branches of the church attracted thither by the places sacred to Christians. American Protestants were active there and American Lutherans have taken over the extensive work formerly done by the Germans, or as much of it as could be salvaged from the Civil War. There were Protestant missionaries also in Syria, Lebanon, Armenia, Persia, Assyria, and other West Asia lands. Few converts were won except from the old Nestorian and Orthodox churches. "Now and then a Jew was converted and occasionally a Moslem. However, Moslem law and custom made accessions from Islam almost impossible. Through personal contacts, literature, schools, and hospitals, thousands of Moslems were brought under the influence of Christianity and here and there a Christian leaven penetrated some elements of Moslem society. But very few declared themselves Christians by receiving baptism" (Latourette, p. 1210). They saw the Light of the world but would not receive Him.

In Australia, populated in the 19th century by immigrants from Great Britain in the main, the various Protestant communions, especially the Anglicans, Presbyterians, and Methodists, built strong churches which not only gathered in the immigrants but also carried on mission work among the scattered, and dwindling, native tribes and on the islands of Australia, New Zealand, New Guinea, etc. The first group of Anglican missionaries came to New Zealand in 1814, other Protestants as well as Catholics somewhat later. They succeeded in converting practically the whole native Maori people to Christianity. As early as 1854 it was said that all but about *one* percent of the Maoris were at least nominally Christian. The white population also claimed almost 100 percent church

membership, 40 percent of them Anglicans. There are small Lutheran Synods in both Australia and New Zealand, chiefly of German antecedents, and they as well as other Lutherans are carrying on aggressive mission work in Darkest New Guinea, the largest unexplored and unevangelized territory yet left in the world.

The story of missions among the island peoples of the vast Southern Pacific is one of the most heartening in all history. Protestant missionaries brought the Gospel all through the 19th century to one group of natives after the other, from New Guinea on the west to Hawaii on the east, -- the Melanesians, Micronesians, and Polynesians. Often within less than a generation almost an entire island or island group became professedly Christian. There are no more interesting stories of adventure than those of John Williams, whose missionary labors covered four and a half million square miles; or of John G. Paton, the apostle of the New Hebrides. During the last war, many of the islanders by their piety put to shame the Service Men from "Christian America," and these owed their lives in many cases to the help they received from the native Christians. Some soldiers were so impressed by what they learned of the power of the Christian faith among the natives, that they on their return to the States prepared to enter the Christian ministry.

The large island of Madagascar lies close to Africa but belongs ethnically with the Malayan and Polynesian islands. There too mission work was carried on very successfully by both Protestants and Catholics from the beginning of the century. Missionaries and native Christians were persecuted for a time, and Protestants were put under various disabilities when the French took control of the country in 1895. Lutherans from

Norway and America played a large part in evangelizing this beautiful island. By 1914 almost a fourth of the population was Christian and by 1950 about a third, equally divided between Protestants and Catholics. The churches have become largely self-supporting and take a good share of propagating their faith, though there still are many white missionaries on the island.

In Africa south of the Sahara, divided as it has been into over twenty colonies or states, the religious picture has been very complex. Naturally, Protestant missions were strongest in territory occupied by the British, Dutch, and Germans, while the Catholics were strongest in areas occupied by the French, Portugese, and Belgians. The area now included in the Union of South African States was the first to be settled by white men, and during the 19th century it was there that Christianity made the most striking progress. The Norwegian Schreuder Mission, the first mission society organized in Norway, began work among the Zulus a century ago; the Norwegian Missionary Society later on in Natal. The Dutch Boers as well as the British did noble work among the natives. By 1914 Christians constituted a larger proportion of the population than in any other African country, about one-third of the whole. By 1950 this proportion had grown to more than half the population, the large majority being Protestants. One of the striking features of the work there has been the large number of new sects formed among the Christian natives. These grew from fifteen co-called "separatist" churches among the Bantus in 1914 to over a thousand by 1950, with over a million members. Nowhere else in the world has there ever been such a multiplicity of sects. All had African leadership and were in many cases organized as a protest against white control. Some were definitely syncretistic,

combining Christian and native animistic elements.

The most famous missionary to Africa, David Livingstone, began his work in South Africa but moved on to explore hitherto unknown parts of "Darkest Africa" and was thus instrumental in the opening of missions in Central Africa; Nyassaland, Uganda, and the Congo region. By 1950 about a third of the people of Nyassaland were Christians, half of them Protestants, the rest Catholics; in Uganda, 40 percent were regarded as Christians, about a third of them Protestant. In the Belgian Congo, as a result of the support given by the government, the large majority of those Christianized became Roman Catholics. By 1950 there were about three and a half million Catholics, while about a third of the total population was regarded as Christian in that large and wealthy region.

Nigeria under British rule was open to all missionaries, but few converts were made in the predominantly Moslem Northern Nigeria. In the pagan Southern Nigeria, several British societies labored together with Southern Baptists from the USA. The Synodical Conference work there is familiar to all. The romantic story of Samuel A. Crowther belongs here. He was rescued as a boy from a slave ship to which he had been sold for a few ounces of tobacco; was educated in the newly founded college in Sierra Leone and was its first graduate. He then became a missionary among his own people and was the first African to be made a bishop of the Anglican Church. By 1950 only about six percent of the Nigerians were counted as Christians, two-thirds of these Protestants. A similar percentage of the people is Christian in Southern and Northern Rhodesia, where the Wisconsin Synod has opened work.



In Portuguese East and West Africa, the Catholics were favored by the government. A third of the population is now called Christian, three-fourths of these Roman Catholic. Tanganyika, the former German East Africa, had six percent of the population Christian, about half of them Protestants. The former German work there has been cared for by the National Lutheran Council since the war. French Equatorial Africa has come into public notice of late because of the medical mission work carried on by the famous Albert Schweitzer, Modernist theologian, authority on Bach, organist, philosopher, and medical doctor. He classifies as a Buddhist rather than a Christian by his view of Life as sacred in its every form, even that of deadly germs or poisonous insects, vermin, etc. And his mission work is in no way related to the Gospel of Christ, rather to Hindu Asceticism.

In this whole area of Central and Southern Africa, missionaries met uncivilized tribes who were without a written language and practiced an animistic religion of the most degraded type. They reduced the language to writing, translated and distributed the Bible and Christian literature, founded schools and gathered Christian churches. It is notable that they had far greater success, in spite of such handicaps, in converting the animistic heathen in the Pacific Isles and in Africa than they had in gaining for the Christian faith the more civilized peoples of India and the Far East. The "higher" a religion is, the harder it is to win people away from it to faith in Christ -- Jews and Moslems coming first in the scale, Hindus, Buddhists, and Confucianists next. So while India, China, and Japan remain overwhelmingly pagan, we can say that Africa in the areas outside of Moslem influence is predominantly Christian; and the work proceeds apace in spite of Communistic and Nationalistic disturbances in

various parts of the no-longer-so-dark continent.

We move next to India, the great sub-continent which for so long was the brightest jewel in Britain's crown but has now become its great problem child. During the period from 1815 to the present, Christianity in some form or other penetrated to every part of this huge complex of differing races, religions, languages, and cultures. At the beginning of the past century there were Christian churches in India which had been present there continuously for centuries -- such as the ancient Syrian Church which maintained contact with the Jacobites in Syria, a branch of which is called the Thomas Christians; the Roman Catholic Church which had maintained missions there from the 15th century; and a few Protestants who traced their origin to the Danish-Halle mission begun in the 1700's. At that time the Roman Catholics were estimated to have numbered over two million members, but by 1800 A.D. they were only half as many. They soon regained their losses, however, in the 19th century and by 1950 numbered over three million adherents. The Protestants grew more rapidly during this period, from a few thousand in 1815 to a million in 1914 and five million by 1950. However, the percentage of the total population counted as Christian was only about two and a half percent. Most of the Christians were in the southern part of the country, the Mohammedan north being, as elsewhere, an unfruitful field for missionaries. The great majority of the Christians were from the lowest castes and from hill tribes whose religion was animistic, so that there too we must say that there were very few converts among the educated Hindus, adherents of the philosophical religions of India. It is noteworthy that the Christians, though the poorest of outcasts, became, under the influence of Christianity, superior in many ways

to the "high and mighty" non-Christians. They had a higher percentage of literacy than the country as a whole, their average death rate was less than that of Moslems and Hindus, and such vices as drunkenness, divorce, and polygamy practically disappeared among them. Lutheran Churches of all lands have been active in India, including the Missouri Synod. The largest missions were those conducted by Anglicans and Methodists. All missions have emphasized education as a means of gaining a hearing among the higher castes, but there have been few actual accessions to the Church from among them. There has come a number of syncretistic movements from them, which attempted to combine Hinduism with Christianity.

In spite of the many blessings obviously brought to the country and to individuals by Christians missions, they are being put under various disabilities now that the country has gained its independence from British rule. Missionaries have difficulty getting entrance permits. It may be only a question of time till the doors will be closed to foreign missionaries, and all work will have to be done by the native Christians themselves. The overweening pride of the upper castes and ruling classes makes them such as would rather rule over ruins than permit others to correct the evils from which this stronghold of false philosophy and unclean phallic religion suffers.

In Ceylon which was first under Portuguese, then Dutch, and finally British rule, a much larger percentage of the population is Christian than in India -- about ten percent compared to two or three percent. Protestant work is being carried on by British Baptists, Methodists, and Anglicans and a few American Congregationalists.

In Burma, where the Baptist Adoniram Judson

pioneered, the Burmese proper were solidly Buddhist and few converts were made among them by either Protestants or Catholics. But the Karens, a minority race who were animistic in religion, proved fertile ground, and the Protestant work especially has grown rapidly in spite of the World War and the civil war between Burmese and Karens which followed it.

In the Malay peninsula in Singapore, the native population was solidly Mohammedan, and neither the Catholics nor the Protestants made many converts among them. But successful efforts were made to Christianize the many Indians and Chinese who immigrated into this prosperous area. The Protestant work is carried on in the main by Anglicans and American Methodists.

Siam and Thailand is a solidly Buddhist country where missionaries have had very little success. The Catholics have labored there ever since the 17th century, but number only about 40,000 today. The Protestants, American Presbyterians, are still fewer.

In Indo-China, which has been much in the news of late, the Roman Catholics have practically monopolized the mission work. Under French protection, they were very successful and had over a million members, or five percent of the population, before World War II. Certain villages and sections were entirely Christian, largely in the north which has now been surrendered to the Communists. Thousands of these Christians have had to flee to the South, where they share the miserable lot of refugees and form another drain upon the American taxpayer.

In the East Indies, Christian missions prospered under Dutch rule to a remarkable degree,

especially among the tribes who were animistic in religion, such as those on the Celebes Island and the Bataks of Sumatra. The missions were almost entirely Dutch and German. The Rhenish Missionary Society has done a great work among the Bataks, about a third of whom are now counted as Christians. On the island of Java a few thousand Moslems have been gained for the church. The influence of Christian Missions has extended far beyond its membership, through the schools, hospitals, literature, and so forth, which owe their existence to the Christian Church. Since the last war, the native churches have sought to become entirely independent of the foreigners. But Americans have had to help them, particularly in the old Rhenish Mission field among the Bataks on the island of Sumatra.

In the Philippines, as we have heard, the dominant religion through the 19th century was Roman Catholic. When the USA took over control of the islands from Spain, Protestant missions were begun both among those still pagan and among the Catholics. In the Catholic Church itself a movement for independence from the Spanish priests who had ruled hitherto, resulted in the formation of the "Filipino Independent Church" which, to begin with, had Unitarian leanings but ended up by affiliating with the Protestant Episcopal Church. The Papacy took drastic measures to reform its church organization on the islands and made some progress in spite of the war and the civil disturbances which followed it. The Protestant Missions, carried on chiefly by Presbyterians, Congregationalists, Evangelical United Brethren, and some Methodists and Disciples of Christ, joined in 1948 to form "The United Church of Christ in the Philippines." The Missouri Synod has carried on mission work there since the last war.

In Korea, Catholic missionaries were active from the beginning of the century. Protestants came in the 1870's, chiefly Presbyterians and Methodists. They built a large number of self-supporting churches which were active in bringing the Gospel to others. The war resulted in tragedy for Korea, ending as it did in the partition of the country, the surrender of the northern part to the Communists, and the civil war which left most of the country desolate. And the end is not yet. Through all persecutions and trials, the native church has continued to grow; many of the refugees from the north have established themselves again in the south and have built churches to replace those lost to the Communists.

In Japan, Christian missionaries were admitted only after Commodore Perry in 1853 persuaded the Japanese to open their doors to foreign commerce. The Roman Catholics were enabled to take up again the work they had begun in the 16th century and found a number of people who had kept their faith secretly through the years that Christianity was officially proscribed. By 1912 the Roman Catholics numbered about 67,000 members. The Russian Orthodox Church opened a mission in North Japan in 1861 which was "numerically the most successful mission of the Russian Orthodox Church among non-Christians outside of the Russian Empire" (Latourette, p. 1330). It numbered in 1912 more than 30,000 members.

But it was the Protestant Missions which exercised the greatest influence in the new Japan. By 1913 the membership was 103,000, only half of one percent of the population; but this was not a true measure of their importance to the country, which sought systematically to develop a Western-type civilization. However, Buddhism and the native Shintoism, being promoted by the Emperor,

kept their hold upon the great majority of the people. The disturbed period from 1930 on when the Western powers began resisting Japan's efforts at building an empire in the Orient, brought great difficulties for the missionaries, and our war with Japan meant the end of their work. It was continued, however, by native Christians who had long sought to make their churches independent of the foreigner. During the war the Emperor forced the union of all Protestant Churches into what was called "The Church of Christ in Japan." But after the war, the Episcopalians and Lutherans withdrew from this organization. The missionaries returned in increasing numbers, and new missions were started, among them several Lutheran missions. The United Lutheran Church has conducted a considerable mission effort in Japan since 1892.

In Formosa, the American Prebyterians have carried on mission work among the native Formosans. Since the war, millions of Chinese have sought refuge in Formosa, and a large number of Protestant missions, including that of the Missouri Synod, have followed them and are working successfully with the active support of Chiang Kai Shek and his government.

As said before, China was the last of the fortresses of heathenism to be opened up to Christian Missions. The first Protestant missionary, Robert Morrison, arrived in 1807, but had to limit himself to literary work and to Bible translation. By 1843 there were only six converts in the mission. He had not gained access to China proper, but resided in the foreign "concession" near Canton and on the island of Macao. After the Opium War, five cities were opened for missionaries and traders, but it was not until after another war in 1860 that permission was granted to missionaries to travel anywhere in the country. After that time, both

Catholic and Protestant missions grew steadily, though the many difficulties in the way meant that there was no progress comparable to that in other parts of the heathen world. The influence of Christianity made itself felt, however, in many ways not indicated by an increase in the actual membership.

As an instance of the penetrating power of the Word of God, even when heard only fleetingly, we may tell the story of the so-called Tai-Ping (Great Peace) rebellion. A village schoolmaster near Canton, Hung by name, happened to hear a foreign missionary preach, several years before the Opium War, and was given a tract which explained the Christian beliefs and attacked idolatry. After the defeat of the Chinese by the British in that war, he studied the tract with new interest and came to faith in its teaching. He visited some American missionaries in Canton and, after studying the Christian teaching further, began to carry on mission work among his countrymen and was particularly zealous in destroying idols. Therefore he ran afoul of the authorities but was able with the help of his fanatical followers to fight them off and to gain control of the district in which he lived. By 1853, the movement had acquired large proportions, and its military strength was increased by the addition of several robber bands, including one led by a woman, who became interested in the new iconoclastic religion. In the meantime, their religious practices became more fanatical, like some of the Pentecostal sects today. They believed that Hung and two of his fellow leaders represented in some way the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, and consequently that their commands were law. As their power grew, they attacked one province after the other, laying waste much of the richest part of the empire. They established their capital in Nanking and bid fair to gain



control of the whole country; but their campaign against Peking broke down, and Nanking was finally captured by the Imperial armies under the leadership of the famous English officer, "Chinese" Gordon, and the American, General Ward.

Opinions differ as to the character of the religion of the Tai-Ping rebels. There were those who thought that the missionaries should have joined hands with the rebels, and who deplored the assistance given to the corrupt Peking government by the foreign powers -- assistance which was by no means appreciated. The rebels professed faith in the Bible of which they had a translation. They used prayers and laws based directly on the Bible. In their services, hymns were sung and their liturgy contained the lines: "Our Heavenly Father, of His great mercy, did not spare His own Son but sent Him down to give His life to redeem sinners. When men know this and repent, they may go to heaven." An Englishman who lived and worked among them wrote about their piety in worship, their kindness to foreigners whom they claimed as "fellow worshipers of Jesus," and expressed wonder that Europeans generally should "prefer slaughtering the Tai-Pings to accepting them as brothers in Christ." One writer explains this strange behavior by the circumstance that the Tai-Pings had utterly prohibited the use of opium, and that was the chief article of trade for the British merchants who determined the policy of their government. The British soldiers and navy took part in 43 battles and massacres, in which about 400,000 Tai-Pings were killed, and upward of two millions more died of starvation as a result of the operations of the allied troops. (Wheeler, *The Foreigner in China*, p. 221ff.)

It is in any case hard to prove that those Tai-Ping rebels were any less Christian than were

the emperors and kings in Medieval Europe who gave the people the choice of baptism or death, or than the Pope who claims to be the Vice-Regent of Christ on earth. If events had been allowed to take their course without outside intervention, it is quite possible that China today would be a nominally Christian country, wide open to the labors of Christian preachers and teachers instead of being hermetically closed again to any Christian influence. The white man has not always fought on the side of the angels.

Missionaries of every church and every land found their way to China, particularly after the Revolution of 1911. The largest society was the China Inland Mission which by 1914 had over a thousand missionaries. Lutherans from Germany and the Scandinavian lands as well as from America, including the Missouri Synod, established themselves particularly in Central China but were represented all the way from Manchuria to Canton. By 1914 the Roman Catholics were said to number 1,500,000 and the Protestants about one third of a million. By 1947 the Roman Catholics numbered 3,500,000 and the Protestants somewhat less than 1,000,000, or a total Christian membership of less than one percent of the population of China. The Protestant missionary force numbered around 6,000, the Roman Catholic about half of that.

Then came the shameful betrayal of the Nationalist Government and the conquest of all China by the Moscow-trained-and-supported Chinese Reds. There is today not a single foreign missionary of any kind who is carrying on mission work in that land. The native church still maintains itself, though under severe persecution unless it will consent to serve the Communist State as a propaganda agency for world Communism and the destruction of "American Capitalism." We still need to

voice the question attributed to Francis Xavier, when he four centuries ago knocked in vain on the doors of self-sufficient China" "O Rock, Rock, when wilt thou open to thy Master?"

#### IV. The Religions of the Heathen World

We have heard in bare outline the story of the preaching of the Gospel to all nations down through the centuries. We have seen how that preaching met with willing ears and hearts in some cases, but only with perverse hardening of hearts in others. We have seen also how God at all times "left not himself without witness" in the different parts of the world, not only by his creation and preservation of the universe and by the moral law written in the hearts of men, but also by making the Light of the world accessible to any who would receive it in faith. Even of the heathen who had not yet heard the Gospel Paul says: "When they knew God, they glorified him not as God, neither were thankful; but became vain in their imagination, and their foolish heart was darkened. Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools, and changed the glory of the uncorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man, and to birds, and four-footed beasts and creeping things" (Rom. 1:21-23). They could see from the existence of the world that some great and wise Being must have created it. But they turned willfully away from the revelation God thus made of Himself and suppressed the truth concerning Him. "They changed the truth of God into a lie, and worshipped and served the creature more than the Creator, who is blessed forever" (Rom. 1:25); so that they are without excuse. Still more

inexcusable was their failure to make use of the opportunities given them individually and as a people to learn to know the true God through His full revelation of Himself in his Son, the Savior of the world. Here, too, the great majority of people have clung to some perversion of the truth instead of the simple truth itself.

However, in spite of his rejection of the true revelation of God, man remained incurably religious. For, as someone has said, man is "a religious animal." Therefore we find the situation all over the world to be just what Paul found it in Athens, where he "saw the city wholly given to idolatry," and said: "Ye men of Athens, I perceive that in all things ye are too superstitious (very religious)" (Acts 17). The heathen world is thoroughly religious. It is wholly given to idolatry. Its religious beliefs pervade its whole life, govern the conduct of the people down to the smallest detail and make them in a very real sense the most abject of slaves, "carried away unto the dumb idols even as they are led" (I Cor. 12:2).

There are certain characteristics of heathen or false religions which are essentially alike all over the world, though they appear in a thousand different forms. Actually, as the famous Max Mueller somewhere said: "There are two religions, the religion of works, and the religion of grace by faith in Christ." The church member who turns Christianity into a religion of good works is spiritually as far removed from the truth as the pagan idolater or the superstitious savage. The same self-righteousness and pride characterize them both. The Pharisaic mind, like the heathen mind, can see sin in others, but not in itself. The good citizen who lives an outwardly respectable life may appear to be poles apart from the

cannibal or head-hunter. But both follow the same principle; for the cannibal, when he eats his enemy, regards it as a good work by which he gains for himself the strength and virtue he needs for this life and the next, even as the Pharisee does his good works to earn eternal life. Every one who despises the grace of God in Christ is a pagan at heart, though he may be very religious and pious, very self-sacrificing and moral in his life and conduct. This, then, is the most important hallmark of heathenism and false religion, that it makes a man the architect of his own salvation. So true Christians cannot emphasize too strongly the deep, fundamental cleavage between grace and works.

Another general characteristic of heathen religion is its pantheism, the idea that God is everything and everything is God. Pantheism becomes in reality atheism; for if everything is God, then nothing is truly God. So Paul can say that the heathen with their many gods are "without God in the world" (Eph. 2:12). Christ teaches us to look upon God as a personal Being, distinct from His creation, whom we can call Father, and who revealed Himself to the world primarily in the person of His Son, God from eternity, yet born in the fulness of the time as a man. The heathen world puts in the place of this personal God an indefinable force or soul which pervades not only living things, but even inanimate objects. Its theories with regard to this world-soul may be worked out by philosophers and religious thinkers so as to appear very reasonable. But the same ideas are followed by the rude savage and applied in his life in thousands of ways which represent the crassest superstition. It would take volumes to describe them in full. They are called Animism, when they refer to the beliefs and practices of uncivilized tribes; they are called Pantheism when

they refer to the reasoned philosophies of either the heathen or the so-called Christian world. The animistic heathen believes that this all-pervading force, sometimes called *manna* or soul-stuff, is what makes him a living being; when he gets sick and dies, it is because the soul-stuff has left his body. The same soul-stuff is found in all other living things, whether animal or plant life, and even in what we would call dead matter, some objects having more, some less. So a stone or mountain top or a stick or a star has its share of soul-stuff and can influence a man's destiny. This soul-stuff, like the scientific law of the conservation of energy, never dies; it only changes its abode from one thing or person to another. Consequently, the heathen all believe in the continuation of life beyond the grave in some way or other, though they do not believe in the immortality of the soul for the individual. Just as belief in some kind of god, or gods, is instinctive, so is belief in the after-life in even the most degraded barbarism. As Livingstone said: "There is no need to speak of the existence of God or of a future life, even among the lowest tribes, for these are generally accepted truths among them."

It is hard to see that this belief in an immortal soul-stuff lies at the basis of many of the other beliefs, practices, and customs of the heathen. One of the most common heathen ideas, found all around the world, is that of the transmigration of souls, familiar to us especially from its Hindu forms. When a man dies, his soul must find a home some other place. It may be in another person, or it may be in some animal, plant, or even an inanimate object. Sometimes, as in Buddhism, the idea of retribution and reward is connected with this belief, so that one who has done good in this world may be given to return in some higher, more fortunate position in his reincarnation;

while one who has done evil must return in a lower form of life where he suffers many torments. But among many peoples, the idea of punishment or reward in the after-life is entirely lacking. Everything with regard to man's life is put on a purely materialistic place, with a blind Fate or impersonal, automatic force determining every detail of his life without regard to moral conduct. This transmigration idea is a great burden on society and is largely responsible for the poverty and misery which prevail in heathen lands. For example, in India monkeys destroy the crops which the starving people need, but are never molested because some ancestor or spirit might be dwelling in them. In West Africa, a team of agricultural scientists not long ago sought to help the natives by destroying the rats which infested the area, but had to give up because the natives began rioting when they saw all the rats lying dead.

The belief in the continuing soul-life for the dead leads also to ancestor worship, which is found almost everywhere in the heathen world, ancient and modern. When people die, they become spirits in the other world, who need to be provided for by their descendants. So their descendants to several generations are required to bring offerings of food, clothing, and whatever they might be thought to need. The souls of the dead profit by the soul-stuff in these offerings, which therefore lose their value for men on earth. In China the transfer of these offerings to the spirit world is made by means of fire, imitation paper money and paper effigies of every kind being burned to provide for them in the style to which they had become accustomed. If the children fail in their duty, the spirits of the dead become "orphan spirits," who bring trouble and disaster upon their disloyal descendants.

The soul-stuff idea forms the basis also for fetishism. A fetish may be any part of an animal, plant, or article which is supposed to contain the mysterious power or soul-stuff in a special degree and so can help a person to build up his own soul-stuff. Taboo is the negative of this -- some article which must be guarded against lest it harm one's soul life. Just as we have to handle the force called electricity with care, if we are not to be killed by it, so the heathen regards the world as full of a mysterious power, which can destroy as well as build up and nourish a man. Therefore it needs to be handled with care in accordance with the laws and customs handed down from the fathers.

In many parts of the world the same belief leads to cannibalism, head-hunting, scalping, etc. The savage eats his enemy because he thinks thereby to gain his soul-stuff. In China, men will eat the heart of executed robbers, thinking thus to gain some of their courage. Head hunters prize the heads of their victims because the head is supposed to be a prime source of this soul-stuff. Since the hair and nails which grow even in old age are thought to have a special amount of this soul-stuff, they are particularly prized and are guarded by the living lest they fall into an enemy's hands. Possession of some part of another person or of his image gives one control of him even to the point of causing his death. In China there were people who for this reason would be afraid of having their pictures taken. In the West Indies, so-called Voodooism claims to be able to destroy a person by sticking pins into an effigy of him. Weird tales are told of the power medicine men and priests wield over the people by their "black magic," -- a truly satanic power which must not be discounted as mere fraud but recognized as coming from the devil himself.



(Cf. the article: *The Men with Deadly Dreams* in the Saturday Evening Post, August 1955).

Magic, too, is bound up with this pantheistic idea of an impersonal soul-stuff permeating everything. Just as the scientist seeks to control the forces of nature by scientific means, so the magician seeks to control what is actually to a large extent those same forces of nature by the scientific means known to him. It is not a matter of praying to the gods or evil spirits and asking them to help or to keep from harming men. It is rather a matter of forcing the mysterious powers of the earth to obey the magician's will. (There is much prayer in the Christian world which might classify as magic rather than true prayer, because it regards prayer as a means, in effect, of compelling God to do man's will.)

In many parts of the world, Animists do not make images of the object which they regard as sacred or possessed of extraordinary power. But some do so in order to have them conveniently at hand at all times. The Chinese represent the spirits of their ancestors by tablets on which the name of the ancestor is written, the name itself having magical virtue. Other spirits may be represented by images, like the teraphim of the Old Testament, and be used for magical purposes rather than as objects of worship. There is, in fact, little real worship of the spirits, who are feared for the harm they may do rather than honored for the blessings they may bring. As a practical matter, the people live without God, and their religion is literally a worship of devils rather than of God. (Cf. I Cor. 10:20)

In this connection, Joh. Warneck, says in *The Living Christ and Dying Heathenism*: "For us who know that we are safe in God's hands, it is

impossible to imagine what a dreadful power this fear is in the life of the heathen. There we see revealed the kernel of real heathenism, and all its theology and mythology are but the shell inclosing it. With this fetter every animist is bound. The incessant fear of demons, and of their evil plots, and of the sorcery closely connected with their worship by which these people are tormented, passes our conceiving. Alienation from God, who alone is to be feared, is the ultimate basis of this irrational fear. Heathenism has lost God, and consequently has been given up to the fear of spectres whose power is real just in proportion to the estrangement from God.

"The fear of spirits is intensified by the authority of priests and magicians, who are supposed to cultivate fellowship with the spirits, and to have power over them. The magician tyrannizes over them . . . . For he knows how to injure or strengthen the souls of the living by restraining or letting loose the spirits. He is a man greatly dreaded among most peoples." Thus St. Paul says: "We know that an idol is nothing in the world, and that there is none other God but one. For though there be that who are called gods, whether in heaven or in earth, (as there be gods many and lords many), but to us there is but one God the Father" (I Cor. 8:4). But at the same time he says that "the things which the Gentiles sacrifice, they sacrifice to devils, and not to God" (I Cor. 10:20). And these devils he describes as "principalities, powers, the rulers of the darkness of this world" (Eph. 6:12), and calls their prince "the god of this world. . . who hath blinded the eyes of them which believe not" (II Cor. 4:4).

One feature of Animism which is common to practically all heathen religions is fatalism or

determinism. This is found in so-called higher religions, like Mohammedanism or Hinduism, as well as the lowest devil worship. It is a characteristic also of modern materialistic philosophy. A man does what he does because he was born that way. He is the product of an inscrutable fate, or in modern terms, of his heredity and environment, and cannot be and do anything else than he is and does. On the one hand, the heathen bow with calm resignation to the blows of Fate, since they believe them to be fore-ordained and unalterable -- which may seem to be a virtue; but on the other hand, this belief makes them unwilling to exert themselves to become better or do better even in material ways. If they are destined to become rich, they will become rich regardless of what they do. If they are destined to be poor, nothing they do can change their fate. Here is one of the fruitful sources of the decay and progressive deterioration of society which are so prominent in the heathen world. No one has any sense of responsibility. Everyone does what everyone else does, and everyone bows in submission to what they all fear. The blame of all human short-comings is thrown upon Fate, to which the gods are subject as well as men. This belief also does away with mercy and kindness to the unfortunate. If people become sick or famished or are struck down by some accident, it is their fate, and nobody has any business trying to change it. The Chinese would do nothing to save a drowning man; if anyone interfered with his fate, he would become responsible for his whole life thenceforth. However, there is little consistency in heathen beliefs, and their conduct is not always governed consistently by their beliefs either.

One form of Animism is called Totemism, found from Alaska to Australia. Totems are usually animals or plants assumed as the emblem of a clan or

family. A totem often represents the ancestor of the clan and is a kind of social alliance between a group of human beings and the animals or plants to which the totem belongs. Sometimes marriage is controlled by the totem. If the totem of one tribe is one which would eat the totem of the other, the two cannot intermarry. Thus gods, men, animals, and plants are thought to be united in one social organization.

In more civilized heathen lands like India, China, Japan, etc., this same animistic religion prevails and governs the life of the people in much the same way as in the barbarous regions. Thus in China, ancestor worship has been for millenniums the real religion of the people, both high and low. It was there long before the time of Confucius as well as of Lao-Tse, the philosophical founder of the Taoist religion. Combined with it was a belief in all sorts of spirits, both good and evil, called Shen and Kwei respectively. In their ancient philosophy, the Chinese represented all good things as proceeding from a good spiritual principle called Yang, and all evil things from an evil principle called Yin. The Yang represented light, warmth, productivity, and life, the male element, as well as the heavens from which these things come, and it produced the Shen or gods. The Yin was associated with darkness, cold, death, the earth, the female element, and produced all the Kwei or devils. The Shen-Kwei, both good and evil, animate every being and every thing. They constitute the soul of man, the Shen representing his intellect and finer qualities, the Kwei his body, evil passions, etc.

The world is crowded with Shen and Kwei. The gods are Shen who animate heaven, the sun, moon, stars, wind, rain, etc. There is a universal deification of anything and everything from sticks

and stones to the heavenly bodies. Highest among all the gods is the Supreme Ruler in Heaven, Shang Di. Some scholars find in this god merely the heavenly counterpart of the emperor on earth, or a personification of the Yang, the good Shen in the universe. They point out that the worship of Shang Di was combined with the worship of the Earth as the female consort of Heaven or Shang Di. Others find primitive monotheism in this Shang Di, although his worship was carried on only by the emperor and from the earliest known times was joined with the worship of six honored spirits and of the hills and rivers. This was the state religion of China. A reasonable theory calls the imperial worship of Shang Di simply a form of ancestor worship, Shang Di representing the first ancestor of the Chinese emperor. There is a similar situation in Japan, where the emperor was worshipped as the direct descendant of the original gods.

This religion is ordinarily called Confucianism, although Confucius who lived in the sixth century B.C. had nothing to do with originating it. He simply accepted it as part of the traditions of the ancients which he honored, and which he found commonly accepted among the people. He was a political rather than a religious reformer, and his own teachings are a mere moral philosophy, leaving religion out of account. In fact, he was agnostic. When someone asked him about gods, his answer was: "When we do not know men, how can we know gods?" His fundamental moral principle was: "By nature man is good." (Cf. Modern Progressive Education.) Respect for parents and all those in authority took the place of fear and love of God as the moral incentive. Insofar his philosophy is superior to modern Deweyism, which provides no incentive at all except the person's own non-existent moral goodness. But in time, this

agnostic was given practically divine honors. Temples were built in his honor all over the country, and his tablet was worshipped by the scholars in the same way as they worshipped the tablets of their own ancestors.

Another philosopher, born fifty years before Confucius, called Lao-tse, wrote in a learned and mystical manner about the marvelous, unchanging "Tao" which pervades everything. This Tao corresponds somewhat to the ancient Greek philosophical term Logos, and is translated the Way, or the Word, or Doctrine. Lao-tse, too, was in reality an atheist whose followers soon made him a god. In practice, the Taoist philosophy was combined with the original animistic religion of the people, and its ancestor and Shang Di worship. It is characterized by belief in all sorts of spirits against which one must guard himself in many ways, and by the practice of sorcery and magic of innumerable kinds. The Chinese use firecrackers to scare away the evil spirits from the home or a wedding or funeral procession. They have so-called "spirit walls" or gates set up in front of an entrance so that the evil spirits cannot get in; for they are able to fly only in a straight line. A mirror over the door will scare them away when they see their own ugly image in it. The Taoist priests live by practicing all sorts of magical arts to drive away the spirits which cause disease and other calamities. Their hierarchy heads up in a pope who has great power over the demon-possessed. He exorcises the demon, entices him into a bottle, plugs it up, and keeps the demon imprisoned there indefinitely. Charms written on a piece of paper cure diseases if placed on the affected part or swallowed with a cup of tea. The Boxers thought they could make themselves immune to foreign weapons by Taoist incantations.

Combined with this belief in an omnipresent spirit world went belief in a hierarchy of gods among whom Shang Di was chief, while the Kitchen God, the God of Wealth, the God of War, and other minor deities practically monopolized the worship of the people. The Kitchen God, whose image is in every fireplace, has the duty of keeping an eye on each family and reporting once a year to Shang Di in heaven; so, to keep him from "telling on them," the people stick his lips together with honey or bribe him with offerings. Confucianists often condemned the superstitious practices and customs of the Taoist religion, but still followed them when it came to curing diseases, cleansing a house of evil spirits, etc.

The third great religion in China is Buddhism in its Northern or Mahayana form. Buddha, a contemporary of Lao-tse and Confucius, was born of a princely family in India, but as a young man made the "Great Renunciation," left his wife and child and princely prerogatives, and led the life of a wandering beggar and hermit. He tried earnestly to follow the ascetic way of overcoming all the evils of life, for which he was highly honored by his people. But he found it was not the way to his goal. So he made the second "Great Renunciation" by renouncing asceticism, the accepted way of India, and practicing what he called the middle way to peace. His teaching, too, was an atheistic philosophy which made use of many of the Hindu ideas and practices, but in a new way. According to him, the gods of the Hindu religion as well as men are caught in the meshes of the material universe. All are involved in the "wheel of life," the transmigration of souls, and are subject to an inevitable fate. Salvation consists in getting rid of all desire for existence as the only way to escape sorrow and pain. Buddha's philosophy is thoroughly pessimistic. The four "Noble Truths"

are: that life is all sorrow; that there is no escape from it in this material universe; that one must extinguish all passions and desire for life and happiness; and that the way to this state of extinction, which is called Nirvana, is by the Eightfold Path: right beliefs, right aims, right speech, right conduct, right means of living, right endeavor, right mindfulness, right meditation. Nirvana is not a heaven of bliss but a state where there is no longer any conscious existence; it is the cessation of being.

Buddha organized an order of mendicants among his followers, who devoted themselves strictly to his principles. They took vows not to destroy life, not to steal, lie, indulge in sexual intercourse, use intoxicating drinks, etc. To them as to Hindus in general, "life" meant all forms of life, and strict rules governed every detail of their actions. They were told how to build huts so that no animal would be inconvenienced or killed. A monk was forbidden to dig lest worms should be accidentally killed. Temples were built as refuges for animals and fish saved from death by pious Buddhists. Similar rules governed the life of nuns.

Buddhist ideas and practices underwent radical changes as the years passed. As said, Buddha was an atheist; but his followers soon made him a god about whom wonderful stories were told. He was pictured as a savior through whom men might gain heaven, Nirvana now having become a place of bliss and joy instead of mere non-existence. The pessimistic philosophy which denied the value of any life, whether of gods or men or animals, became one which promised peace and salvation to those who worshipped Buddha and trusted in him. This new form of Buddhism, called Mahayana Buddhism of the Great Vehicle, is the form which is found in



practically all eastern Asia, including Japan. The original form, called Hinayana Buddhism or the Buddhism of the Little Vehicle, has long been found only in Ceylon, Siam, and Burma. This stressed a man's work, the efforts of each individual constituting his means of grace. The Mahayana system stressed prayer to Buddha as the great means of grace.

Buddha's religious teachings were spread all over the Orient by zealous followers. About a third of the population of the world is counted as Buddhist. In the last years there has been a revival of it in Japan and other Buddhist lands; and Buddhists are becoming prominent even in our country.

Buddhism bears many resemblances to the Roman Catholic religion, such as the belief in purgatory and the whole cultus connected with it; the worship of Kwan Yin, the Goddess of Mercy, corresponding to the Virgin Mary, etc. Consider the following comparison between the two in E. Griffis' *History of Japan*, p. 251f.: "Buddhism had degenerated into a commercial system of prayers and masses, in which salvation could be purchased only by the merit of the deeds and prayers of the priests. Nevertheless, its material and outward splendor were never greater (than in the 16th Century when the Jesuits first came). Gorgeous vestments, blazing lights, imposing processions, altars of dazzling magnificence, and a sensuous worship captivated the minds of the people, while indulgences were sold and saints' days and holidays and festivals were multiplied. . . . The priests of Rome came with crucifixes in their hands, eloquence on their lips, and with rich dresses, impressive ceremonies, processions, and mysteries out-dazzled the scenic display of the Buddhists. They brought pictures, gilt crosses,

and images, and erected gorgeous altars, which they used as illuminated texts for their sermons. . . . The transition from the religion of India to that of Rome was extremely easy. The very idols of Buddha served, after a little alteration with the chisel, for images of Christ. The Buddhist saints were easily transformed into the twelve apostles. The cross took the place of the torii. . . . In the roadside shrine Kwan Yin, the Goddess of Mercy, made way for the Virgin, the mother of God. . . . Nearly all the Christian churches were native temples, sprinkled and purified. . . . The same lavatory that fronted the temples served for holy water or baptismal font; the same censer that swung before Amida (Buddha) could be refilled to waft Christian incense; a new convert could use unchanged his old beads, bells, candles, incense, and all the paraphernalia of his old faith in celebration of the new. Almost everything that is distinctive in the Roman form of Christianity is to be found in Buddhism: images, pictures, lights, altars, incense, vestments, masses, beads, wayside shrines, monasteries, nunneries, celibacy, fastings, vigils, retreats, pilgrimages, mendicant vows, shorn heads, orders, habits, uniforms, nuns, convents, purgatory, saintly and priestly intercession, indulgences, works of supererogation, pope, archbishops, abbots, abbesses, monks, neophytes, relics, and relic worship, exclusive burial grounds, etc., etc., etc."

Some of the early Jesuits explained these similarities by saying that the devil had invented these imitations of holy things in order to keep his hold on the people. It is more historical, however, to say that these things came into the Catholic church from heathenism at the time when mass conversions were being produced by military force rather than by the preaching of the gospel.

The unchanged heathen brought their old heathen customs and notions with them into the church.

In practice, the people of China mix all three religions, Confucianism, Taoism, and Buddhism together, so that it is hard to say which elements belong originally to which religion. Built into the face of a sheer cliff back of our home in Wanhsien, China, there was a temple dedicated to the chief gods of all three religions: the Confucian Shang Di, the Taoist Yu Hwang Shang Di, and Buddha; and the face of the temple bore the inscription: "The three religions are one." They have been distinguished as follows: "Confucianism ministers to the moral man, Taoism deals chiefly with the problems of the spirit forces which play upon the present life of men, and Buddhism makes vivid the future life, and thus appeals to the religious sense . . . Confucianism deals with the visible present, Taoism with the invisible present, and Buddhism with the invisible future." Thus they do not conflict with one another, but can well be joined in one.

Buddhism is the dominant religion in Tibet where it has some distinctive traits, and in Japan into which it was introduced from China. The early religion of the Japanese called Shintoism, "The Way of the Gods," was much like the early religion of China, including ancestor worship and worship of the ruling emperor as a direct descendant of the gods. Confucianism, also, was introduced from China and served to strengthen the loyalty of the people to their ruler, and the spirit of reverence for parents and superiors. There, too, all three religions were blended into one in the life of the people, though there were Confucianists and Buddhists who clung more strictly to the teachings of their respective faiths. A number of Buddhist sects arose in Japan centuries

ago, among them the so-called Pure Land Sect, which emphasized faith in Buddha as the savior; he was worshipped by ceaseless repetition of certain formulas similar to the Catholic invocations of the Virgin Mary. The doctrine offered a cheap ticket to Paradise and became very popular. Another sect, "True Sect of Jodo," lays emphasis on faith alone without any ritual or good works or act of self-sacrifice, such as are otherwise demanded by Buddhism. Faith will accomplish all, if one worships Buddha only and prays for nothing that does not concern salvation. In this teaching it has been said that Buddhism completed the cycle, denying everything that he denied. Still another sect, called the Zen Sect, believed that the saving knowledge could be transmitted without words by contemplation alone. Buddha sitting in deep contemplation of his navel is their symbol. In order to become like Buddha, one must grasp the fact of "utter and entire void." The motto was: "O, to be nothing! Nothing!" This branch of Buddhism became popular with the Samurai warriors of Japan. By it death was robbed of its terrors, so that they would for any good or bad reason commit hara-kiri, a sure way of maintaining their honor unsullied.

In India, besides the Hinayana Buddhism already described, we find an assortment of specifically Hindu religions and philosophies which are, on the one hand, the most high-sounding, abstruse religious thinking to be found anywhere; and are, on the other hand, the most filthy phallic (sex worshipping) religions to be found anywhere. Their ancient writings, called the Vedas, Brahmanas, and Upanishads, are a collection of hymns and prayers, theological treatises dealing in the main with ritual, and philosophical speculations, respectively. This literature concerns a series of gods, chief of whom are Indra,

Agni, Varuna, and Vishnu; but it reflects also animism and belief of evil spirits and in magic as the means to control them. The last named, the Upanishad, philosophizes about the Brahman or Alman, as the soul of the universe and is profoundly pessimistic, seeing nothing in store for man but an endless series of transmigrations, the "wheel of life," from which one could break only by doing good deeds to build up Karma for the future, and by extinguishing all desire.

Later developments of this Vedic religion led to the formation of the caste system, with the priestly class, the Brahmans, at the head; the warriors, Kshatriyas, second; the farmers, Vaisiyas, third; and the servants, Sudras, the fourth. Lowest of all the scale were the outcastes. It is a serious mistake to regard this caste system as merely a matter of social organization or to compare it with the negro problem in our country. It is completely bound up with the religion of the Hindus.

"The further development of Indian religion. . . is in two directions. There is a philosophical movement, in which the Bahmanic ideas of god, the world, the soul and its changes are further worked out (on Pantheistic lines), and which leads to the six schools of Hindu philosophy. On the other hand, the gods have their history. Brahma remains the great god, but as his character is so undefined, he is little worshipped. Indra, the old national god, yields to Vishnu, the old sun god of the three steps (heaven, the air, the earth) who becomes the favorite deity. The stern and destructive Siva is a new figure, and seems to be partly an adaptation of a god of the savage aborigines: his worship is the most fanatical. These three, the Creator, the Upholder, and the Destroyer, form the Trimurti, or divine trinity of India --

a trinity arrived at not by unfolding the riches of the one great god, but by compounding the claims of three gods who are rivals. The doctrine of incarnation is also found here. Vishnu has ten avatars or incarnations in human form. He comes down to the earth when there is a special reason for his interference. In these avatars, especially in Krishna, the war god, whose exploits as a hero are told in the great epic, the Mahabharata, the need is to some extent met, of which both Buddhism and Christianity lay hold, of a divine figure who is not too far away from man, and who can be regarded with personal affection." (A Menzies, *The History of Religion*, p. 350 f). In some modern Hindu sects, Christ is looked upon as one of the series of avatars.

We cannot enter into the distinctive doctrines of the six systems of philosophy developed on the basis of the Upanishads, called Yoga, Vedanta, etc. All of them make religion a matter of speculative thought, not a matter of life and conduct or the hope of salvation. The most popular worship among the people seems to be that of the gods Krisna and Siva, represented by phallic emblems. Even a man like Ghandi, educated in England, believed that the cow was sacred, and practiced the asceticism typical of Hindu fanatics.

There is also a Buddhist sect peculiar to India, called Jainism, which emphasizes asceticism. It has a very poor opinion of women who are several degrees lower in the scale of life than cattle, but it does permit them to become ascetics. "The belief that it is wrong to kill anything leads the Jains to the most absurd tolerance of vermin. At times they fear to move or to breathe freely lest they kill some of the small insects with which the very air of India frequently swarms. In almost every town where Jains

live, animal hospitals abound. One at Kutch is said to have contained 5000 rats!! . . . Hopkins declares that a religion that denies God, worships man, and nourishes vermin has no right to exist. Its one virtue, that of not killing, it holds in such exaggerated form that it becomes grotesque" (G. A. Barton, *The Religions of the World*, p. 176).

The last of the religions of the heathen world, which we can touch upon only very briefly, is Mohammedanism. Its beginning is dated 622 A.D., the year of the Hegira or flight of Mohammed to Medina, on which the Moslems base their calendar. The cardinal doctrine of Mohammedanism, which contains some Jewish and Christian elements as well as much Arabic superstition and paganism, was the oneness and uniqueness of Allah, The God. He was conceived of as a transcendant man, and as the absolute despot of the world to whose will all must bow. The Moslem view of God may be described as Deism plus fatalism carried to their ultimate. Mohammed is the last and greatest of the prophets to whom God made his final revelation to man. God being what He is, man must submit unconditionally to his will, whence the name Islam, which means "submission." Mohammed believed a very material heaven and hell. In the former, the faithful would enjoy all the pleasures of the flesh without limit and without satiety; while in the latter, infidels would be tormented in fire of a definitely literal nature. The whole duty of the good Moslen is summarized in these five articles: 1. Professed belief in Allah; "There is no god but Allah, and Mohammed is his prophet." 2. Prayer five times a day. 3. Alms-giving on a fixed scale. 4. Fasting during the month of Ramadan. 5. Pilgrimage to Mecca. His Bible is the Koran, which means "reading," a collection of Mohammed's teachings. It is a conglomeration of laws, dreams, and exhortations which make very dull reading.

The Moslem faith spread very rapidly and numbers today about one-sixth of the population of the earth. The varieties of Islamic thought rival those of the Christian Church, and the number of its sects surpasses that of the Church. To this day its adherents show themselves most fanatical in their beliefs, and it is seldom that the Gospel of Christ makes any impression upon their hard work-righteousness and their carnal assurance that a delightful heaven awaits them, without there being any need of the mediation or atonement of Christ, who is to them a prophet indeed, but of far lower rank than Mohammed.

Our review of the religions of the heathen world, inadequate though it is, should serve to bring out the hopelessness and fear under which the slaves of Satan groan. No man can paint in too dark colors the misery, poverty, heartlessness, and unmitigated wickedness of the heathen world in its every part. Those who worship false gods, whether in heathen lands or in so-called Christian countries, "having no hope, and without God in the world" (Eph. 2:12), are bound in the toils of their sins or a vain asceticism as they are. It is as such hopeless, lost souls that the missionaries of the Gospel must regard them, so that they will do their best to bring them the message of salvation in which alone true peace and joy may be found. Only in Christ will any man gain "wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption" (I Cor. 1:30). It remains to consider the principles and methods of Christian mission work which the church of the true Gospel must follow in order to fulfill its duty as the bearer of the Light of the world to those who still sit in darkness and the valley of the shadow of death.



## V. Mission Principles and Methods

We have reviewed the history of Christian Missions and the religion and philosophies which compete with the Gospel for the faith and allegiance of the people. We need further to consider some of the principles which must govern us in our mission work, and the methods which we should follow in order to let the light of the Gospel shine undimmed and clear.

Since the Gospel is a message from God to sinful, rebellious men, and since He wants all men to come to the knowledge of the truth, it is clear that we should first of all seek to bring that message to those who have not yet heard it. Where people have the Scriptures in their own tongue, where churches which use the Bible are already planted, we should not seek to begin new missions, unless we have a very clear and definite call to bring them truths which are neglected or denied by the existing churches. St. Paul preached the Gospel "from Jerusalem, and round about unto Illyricum" (Rom. 15:19), testifying to the fact of Christ's resurrection both among those who already were Christians or had the Gospel, and among those who had not yet heard it. But he said to the Romans: "Yea, so have I strived to preach the Gospel, not where Christ was named, lest I should build upon another man's foundation; but as it is written, To whom he was not spoken of, they shall see: and they that have not heard shall understand. For which cause also I have been much hindered from coming to you" (Rom. 15: 19ff). There were so many who had not yet heard the Gospel that Paul felt it was his first duty to preach to them. At the same time he tells the Romans: "I would not have you ignorant," brethren, that oftentimes I have purposed to come

unto you, (but was let hitherto) that I might have some fruit among you also, even as among other Gentiles. I am debtor both to the Greeks, and to the barbarians; both to the wise, and to the unwise. So, as much as in me is, I am ready to preach the Gospel to you that are at Rome also" (1:13ff). In a sense the world was truly his mission field. Although he had a special call to bring the Gospel to the Gentiles (Acts 9:15), he did not neglect the Jews, but preached to them first, wherever he came; he "became unto the Jews as a Jew, that he might gain the Jews" (I Cor. 10:20). Consequently, we are to seize every opportunity that is offered us to preach the Gospel in its truth and purity, at the same time as we look for those fields white unto the harvest where there as yet are no laborers or only a very inadequate number of them. The Moravian Brethren were guided in their missionary activities by the principle: Go where the field is hardest and the rewards least promising. And we, too, should not look only for mission fields where the prospects, humanly speaking, are brightest for the speedy development of a Christian community, but should go where the need is greatest and the darkness deepest. As we have heard before, both Nigeria and Rhodesia are among the least evangelized areas of Africa, only six percent being counted as Christian. The Wisconsin Synod followed right principles insofar, when it settled upon Northern Rhodesia for its new mission field.

In this connection we need to consider the attitude we should take toward the many sectarian churches which, though they have the Bible, still teach contrary to its clear statements and offer the people only a garbled Gospel, a light dimmed by the smoke of human science and conceit. St. Paul had many opponents within as well as without the church, who caused him trouble and distress.

To the Corinthians he said: "I fear, lest by any means, as the serpent beguiled Eve through his subtilty, so your minds should be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ. For if he that cometh preacheth another Jesus, whom we have not preached, or if ye receive another spirit, which ye have not received, or another gospel, which ye have not accepted, ye might well bear with him" ("you submit to it readily enough," RSV II Cor. 11:3-4). And to the Galatians he wrote even more sternly: "I marvel that ye are so soon removed from him that called you into the grace of Christ unto another gospel: which is not another; but there be some that trouble you, and would pervert the gospel of Christ. But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed" (Gal. 1:6ff). Scripture is full of warnings against false prophets and false teachers who speak in the name of the Lord, though the Lord never sent them. At the same time, we are not to enter into another man's fold and steal his sheep from him. St. Paul said also: "Some indeed preach Christ even of envy and strife; and some also of good will: the one preach Christ of contention, not sincerely, supposing to add affliction to my bonds; but the other of love, knowing that I am set for the defense of the Gospel. What then? Notwithstanding, every way, whether in pretense, or in truth, Christ is preached; and I therein do rejoice, yea, and will rejoice" (Phil. 1:15-18). He rejoiced in every preaching of the Gospel, even if it was done by such as were his enemies because of his uncompromising stand for the liberty of the Christian man. Therefore it is a Scriptural and Lutheran rule not to proselytize. Dr. Fritz's version of Walther's *Pastorale*, on the basis of such passages as Acts 20:28; I Peter 5:2 and 4:15, says: "Therefore what is commonly called sheep-stealing (enticing

members to leave one congregation and affiliate with another of the same denomination) and proselytizing (visiting members of a Christian congregation of another denomination with the intention of persuading them to leave that congregation and denomination) is forbidden; for a pastor or any other Christian has no right to *break into* the flock of another pastor. This, however, should not keep any pastor or any Christian from bearing testimony to the truth when *called upon* to do so or whenever *opportunity presents itself* to do so; . . .if we call on members of a non-Christian church, such as Unitarians, Christian Scientists, Modernists, and the like, with the intention of winning them over to the truth and persuading them to join a Christian congregation, we are not proselytizing; for such persons are not affiliated with a *Christian* congregation nor with a Christian church as such; being without the pale of the Christian church, such people are missionary material" (page 57f).

It is essential to follow this rule not least on foreign mission fields where native Christians are only too ready to drift from one denomination to the other, if they think to gain any material advantage thereby. In every mission field, even where a certain church seems to have the whole territory to itself, it is easy for a missionary to become entangled in local feuds, if he is too ready to accept as a sincere conversion to the truth (as represented by his own church) what is only a defection from another church for personal or unworthy reasons, or an attempt to gain the help of a foreigner for one side of a tribal or local dispute. Appeals that come to a missionary from heathen or sectarian groups to open work in their area generally need to be investigated with a cold and fishy eye. The Missions of the Synodical Conference churches have had some sad

experiences in this respect which they could have been spared, if the missionaries had used better judgment and followed correct principles. Missionaries should, then, keep on friendly terms with representatives of other churches, at the same time as they avoid all religious unionism and testify as occasion offers against the errors of sectarian churches.

A missionary in foreign fields needs to be on guard against temptations and dangers which do not trouble the Home Mission worker. If he is working among uncivilized tribes or such peoples as the Indians and Negroes in our own country, there is, for example, the question of living standards. The white man is not likely to survive very long if he tries to live the way the native African does, or if he shares the unsanitary, insect-ridden life of the heathen with their many filth-diseases and dangerous epidemics. And a dead missionary, as Dr. Livingstone observed many years ago, is of no particular value to a Mission. On the other hand, a missionary, while steering clear of the Scylla of undue self-denial, must beware also of falling into the Charybdis of extravagance. There are many missionaries who live on a scale which is unnecessarily high -- so far above that of the native that it would correspond to the life of the millionaire in our land. When Paul said: "I am made all things to all men, that I might by all means save some" (I Cor. 9:22), he did not mean that he would adopt all the social customs, respect the false beliefs, and descend to the moral level of the people among whom he worked, on the principle: "When in Rome do as the Romans do." He meant that he would preach to each and every man, whether Jew or Greek, whether with the Law or without the Law, whether weak or self-sufficient, whether slave or free, in the way best calculated to win him for the only saving

Gospel. So we must not think it necessary to ape the heathen in their manner of dress, or to follow their social customs which are, in the main, closely interwoven with pagan superstitions and beliefs, but should be ourselves and let Christian customs govern our own lives. There were, e.g., missionaries in the time of the Manchu Rule in China who wore long queues, the sign of subservience to the Manchus, thinking thereby to please the Chinese or to hide their foreign origin. Seldom did they succeed in that, but were rather ridiculed for it, especially if their queues were false and were only pinned on.

Missionaries need to bear in mind also the deep-rooted racial prejudices which exist everywhere in the world, the pride of race or national pride, which have their justifiable aspects. Internationalist propaganda to the contrary, patriotism is still a virtue. We must not treat the native condescendingly, as if he were a creature of a lower order because his skin is black or yellow and he lives in filth and in a stench which we would not like to see in a pig-sty. To the native, the foreigner only demonstrates his weakness and unfitness for life in a hard world, if he is visibly affected by such things. It is a life-long task to acquire an intimate knowledge of the pagan's mind and of the meaning of his customs and religious beliefs and practices -- knowledge which a foreigner should gain if he would do his work aright. And no man can really acquire this without first learning the language of the people. He will not be considered intelligent until he does learn it. For in every part of the world, men judge others by their ability to speak the language they themselves know. The missionaries who have done best work are those who have mastered the language of the people, so that they could not only gain the confidence of the natives,

but also translate the Bible and other Christian literature into the native language, thus enabling them to drink from the eternal springs of God's Word without a foreigner as intermediary. It is indeed possible to reach men by an interpreter, as is done to a large extent on our Nigeria field; but that is far from ideal. If we are to build an indigenous church, one which can stand on its own feet and take up the work of spreading the Gospel to ever new areas, we must from the beginning use the language of the people. Else the Gospel will ever be a foreign thing to them, something to be dropped as soon as the foreigner and his power and influence are removed.

One lesson which it may be hard for the missionary to learn is that we should not introduce our western forms of architecture, dress, etc., among the natives, although we follow them in our own life. There were churches in China, for example, which represented the worst types of Western church architecture and which disfigured the landscape. On the other hand, there were those who adopted Chinese styles of architecture, including specifically pagan features. And there were mission publishers who thought they had to illustrate Bible stories as if they were enacted in China instead of in Palestine. St. Paul had to contend continually with Christian Jews who wanted to force upon the Gentiles all the laws and customs to which they themselves felt bound. He had to contend, also, with those who wanted to bring pagan superstitions and beliefs with them into their new worship. Here the missionary must be sure that he is not yielding to syncretistic forces, at the same time as he avoids foisting foreign customs and conventions upon the natives.

The danger of falling into syncretistic ideas and practices is a very real one on every mission

field. The Bible teaches us by both precept and example that the Christian must make a clean break with every form of idolatry and false worship. The story of Aaron and the Golden Calf, of the "high places" and images set up at Dan and at Bethel, of Elijah and the priests of Baal, and the prophetic denunciations of idol worship -- all must be understood as involving syncretistic worship of the true God under forbidden forms, combining the worship of God with idols. Paul refers to these Old Testament stories when he warns his new converts: "Now these things were our examples, to the intent we should not lust after evil things, as they also lusted. Neither be ye idolaters, as were some of them; as it is written, The people sat down to eat and drink, and rose up to play" (I Cor. 10:6ff). Again he says: "Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness? and what concord hath Christ with Belial? or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel? and what agreement hath the temple of God with idols? . . . Wherefore come out from among them and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing" (II Cor. 6:14ff). And yet, in spite of these emphatic warnings, there are all too many Christian missionaries who think it necessary to compromise with heathen religions and customs in order to win converts.

People who are unionists at home will be syncretistic abroad. The man who is willing to compromise the clear Bible teaching in order to get together with others called Christian and work with them for the advancement of the church (as is done, e.g., in the WCC) will also be willing to accept heathen religions and philosophies as essentially the same thing as the teachings of the inspired prophets and apostles. Modernistic churches



have in reality surrendered the fundamental Christian position and gone over to the work-righteous religion of the heathen. Therefore they propose to do mission work on the basis that they are not to bring the heathen something new or final, but that they together with them are to *search for* the truth, whether in the Bible or in heathen writings. This is, in fact, the spirit which *rules* on the major mission fields today. Some years ago, a Commission headed by a Harvard professor, visited the chief mission fields of the world and came back with a report advocating the procedure outlined above. On June 19, 1955, in San Francisco, a "Festival of Faith" was held as a sort of "pep fest" in preparation for the meeting of the United Nations, which featured a "Service of Prayer for Peace and Divine Guidance to the United Nations." Dr. O. F. Nolde, a leader of the U. L. C. and of the World Council, as well as of the International Missionary Council, presided. Prayers were offered by representatives of the Jewish, Bahai, Buddhist, Eastern (Greek) Orthodox, Hindu, Christian Protestant, and Moslem faiths. The ritual contained sentences from Confucian, Hindu, Buddhist, Christian, Moslem, and Jewish writings. Fittingly enough, the Boy Scouts served as Guides for the meeting. The Roman Catholic Church took no part. (Will we have to learn self-respect and a proper attitude over toward errorists from the Roman Catholics?)

In China, as we have heard, the Jesuits began their mission work on an openly syncretistic basis, accepting ancestor worship and the Imperial worship of Heaven and Earth as a part of their religion. We have noted the affinities between Buddhism and Roman Catholicism also. But it is not only Modernists and Catholics who have followed this program. One of the first theological professors in the Union Lutheran Seminary in Central

China, Dr. L. Reichelt, for many years conducted a special mission to Buddhists, in South China. His teachings were a frank amalgam of Buddhist and Christian ideas, and the ritual, church organization, and manner of life of his group were closer to Buddhism than to Christianity. Still more common is the tolerance in Christian missions of a multitude of superstitious, idolatrous practices and customs which the conscientious native Christian will bitterly oppose, but which foreign missionaries too often do not understand well enough to reject for their idolatrous implications.

Missionary churches which have been honey-combed by Modernism, the Social Gospel, syncretism and heresies of every kind can not be expected to resist the anti-Christian movement called Socialism, which has gained control of such a large part of the heathen world. No doubt it will be only a very small minority which will survive the persecutions directed against any and all who refuse to follow the Communist line.

A principle which might seem self-evident, but often is set aside, is that the Christian missionary must preach the Gospel first and foremost. That is the *new* element which alone will attract the heathen to the Christian Church. They know the law, although they do not obey it. Like the Pharisees, they can see very well the sins of others, but their own sins they will deny. What they do is always right. They must learn to know who the true God is, how He has created the world and governs all things, how He has redeemed and acquitted ungodly men, before they will be able to break away from the animism, fatalism, and sorcery which rule them. They will not begin to understand what sin is and how they need to be cleansed from it until they have learned to know the true God in His Son, Jesus Christ. When we read the

long catalog of sins against which Paul warns his converts, we realize that the Christians in his congregations also were very imperfect. Yet he addressed them as children of God by faith in Jesus Christ. After Paul had given the Thessalonians high praise for their faith in the Gospel, he still had to say: "But this is the will of God, even your sanctification, that ye should abstain from fornication: that every one of you should know how to possess his vessel in sanctification and honor; not in the lust of concupiscence, even as the Gentiles which know not God: that no man go beyond and defraud his brother in any matter" (I Thess. 4:3f). So today, too, we cannot expect that new converts are going to manifest all the Christian virtues from the beginning. The process of sanctification is with them also a life-long matter. But they *should* know the Gospel and trust in Christ for their salvation.

Some missionaries make the mistake of assuming that the Gospel and the mysteries of the kingdom of God are beyond the understanding of barbarians, and that they need to be civilized before they can become capable of being Christians. Hans Egede labored in Greenland for many years, trying to bring European education and culture to the Eskimos before he gave them the Gospel, but with poor results. The Moravians who preached the Gospel from the beginning made much greater progress in Christianizing the Eskimos and thus civilized them also. Education, like sanctification, comes as a fruit of the Gospel, but is not a prerequisite for it.

As an example of the readiness with which the pagan mind can apprehend the Gospel teachings, we might tell this story from China. A Chinese gentleman had attended our chapel meetings for some time. Once when I sought to show how we must

accept God's gifts in faith, whether we can understand everything about them or not, and that our faith is the empty hand which receives God's gift, he was reminded of a story which went, briefly, like this: A certain magistrate, when he took over the office in a new city, wanted to teach the people to trust in him as a man whose word was his bond. So he had a large stone placed at the gate into the city and announced that any man who would carry the stone to his yamen (official quarters) would receive \$10,000. Everyone thought this was some sort of hoax and refused to be taken in by such a foolish promise, until one day a stupid farmer (the word for stupid and honest is the same in Chinese) came in, read the proclamation, took the magistrate at his word, carried the heavy stone to the yamen and received his reward. This Chinese, yet unbaptized, was clearer on the part faith plays in our salvation than some Lutheran theologians are, who make faith a cause or ground of our salvation.

What are the mission methods a missionary must follow in order to fulfill his task properly? Principles always remain the same, methods of applying them may vary according to circumstances. There are generally recognized methods of doing mission work on the *home* fields which we need not review here. Some of these are useful on the foreign field, others not. The methods of the revivalist, for example, have little lasting value in a pagan land for the simple reason that there is in the heathen nothing to "revive." There must first be patient instruction in the fundamentals of the Gospel, as well as the "evangelistic" preaching of the Word. Paul could build churches with Jews and proselytes as a nucleus, who were already familiar with the Old Testament. In the heathen world today we have to "start from scratch," telling the story of the Bible, both Old and New

Testament. A missionary might reach thousands with public preaching in street chapels, in market places, etc., and by distributing Christian tracts and Gospel portions. But the nucleus of his congregation will have to be formed out of those near him, servants and others with whom he has daily contacts. When a congregation finally has been gathered, it should be instructed in its rights and duties as a Christian church, no matter how small and incapable of functioning it may seem to be. Here is one place where men learn by doing. Natives should understand that this is now their work; they should be active in mission work, exercise church discipline, etc. Too often the missionary seeks to control everything in the churches he founds, acting as a sort of pope. His power of the purse gives him the opportunity to do so, if he does not guard against the temptation.

The missionary in most parts of the world has another power which may be a temptation to him, that is, his connection with a powerful Western government which directly or indirectly rules the people among whom he works. It is under the protection of European "Christian" powers that missionaries have done most of their great work of bringing the Gospel to all the corners of the earth. And we should not question the fact that this has been a blessing to the world. St. Paul repeatedly made use of his Roman citizenship to save himself from violence and death. He relied upon the Roman government to protect him in his travels through the empire and never apologized for it. There were enough dangers and persecutions for him to face without seeking unnecessarily to add to their number. There have, indeed, been many representatives of foreign governments who were unfriendly to missionaries and who gave the white man a bad name among the natives, thus increasing the difficulties of the missionary.

work among them. But in general they have done what they could to protect their nationals, even when these went off on seemingly hare-brained adventures among cannibals, head-hunters, and fierce savages, over whom the government could exercise only a slender control. Still in recent years, modernistic leaders on the mission fields have joined revolutionary elements in agitating against foreign control, e.g., against the concessions and the extraterritorial rights so long held by Western powers in China. This is simply another part of their program of undermining and destroying true Christian missions.

We must recognize, too, that many people have been brought into the church as a result of the white man's political control over them rather than by the preaching of the Gospel. Seeing the wealth and wisdom of the white man, the natives have thought to gain some of that wealth and wisdom by joining the foreigner's church. Granted that their conversion was just as superficial as that forced upon many people in the Middle Ages by "Christian" governments, it still remained true that an opportunity was thus given to instruct the people in the Bible and help them gradually to a better life. When the "Christian" general, Feng Yu Hsiang, instructed his army in the catechism as a part of their military training and then baptized the whole army at once with a water hose, was he any worse than the medieval kings who baptized the people at the point of the sword! No doubt there are many "rice Christians" among the millions now counted as the fruit of mission work in all parts of the world; but before we criticize them, we might take a look at the superficiality, worldliness, and materialism which prevail in our home churches. When a man like the labor leader, Walter Reuther, whose principle it is that we must feed a man's stomach before it is any use to

preach the Gospel to him, can be welcomed in Missouri Synod circles and praised as a Lutheran, we need to examine ourselves and consider how many "rice Christians" there may be among us.

The power which supports the missionary in his legitimate labors, however, can also be abused so as to involve him in difficulties of his own making. There are missionaries who have encouraged and supported Communistic revolutionaries in their violent rebellion against their rulers. Some have listened to native Christians who claimed they were being persecuted for their faith's sake and have helped them in court, only to find out when it was too late that these Christians were engaged in some nefarious undertaking for which they deserved to be punished. There are those who have used their position as representatives of the Great Powers to act and live like kings with autocratic authority over their subject peoples. In some cases, missionaries have *earned* the respect and power they enjoy by their long labors for the people, especially among savage tribes in Africa or the South Seas, or among the oppressed peoples in India. But in other cases the missionaries were simply indulging the little pope that hides in the hearts of all men. In the end, undue dependence upon the strong arm of government may react definitely against the church, if the foreign government withdraws or is weakened in some way, as has happened in so many parts of the world during the last generation. In China, the Communists had no sooner gained control of the country than they made the missionaries their chief object of attack. Today the few Protestant and Catholic missionaries who are left are either in prison or are at least prevented from doing any mission work. The power of government is a two-edged sword which may wound those who rely on it as well as those who oppose it. It is, then,

a poor way of doing mission work to call too directly upon the civil power for support. Church and state are separate domains, and both function best when they are not mixed together, whether at home or abroad.

Besides the direct preaching of the Gospel to the heathen, missionaries have used what we may call auxiliary agencies in their mission work. They have established schools, especially in such countries as India, China, and Japan -- in later years also in Africa -- to give the natives the modern Western-type education they desire. In this way they hope to appeal to the higher classes and to gain a hearing for the Gospel among the leaders of the country. Such schools have been a blessing to the missionary cause when they were operated on a strictly Christian basis, but too often they have become completely secularized, although they were supported by mission funds. In China, students at such colleges were among the ringleaders of the revolutionary movement which aimed to eliminate the white man, even though they were receiving their education entirely at the expense of the church. Such modern education, divorced from religion, is no better from a Christian point of view than the education the Chinese or Hindus give their people themselves. They merely jump from the frying pan of heathen philosophies, which are materialistic and fatalistic, into the fire of modern secular philosophy which is no less materialistic and fatalistic. In short, schools to teach the Bible to the young and to train teachers and preachers for the church are a necessity. Schools to provide a modern education for the upper classes mean little to the Christian cause and may only become a means by which the church receives a mortal wound.

Another mission auxiliary is medical work.



This, too, may be a wonderful aid to the missionary cause. Miracles of healing are wrought among the natives, which may have the same effect upon them today as the miracles of the apostles had in the first Christian century. We may say that in the providence of God they actually do take their place. But then intensive, personal Christian work must be done in connection with all the healing activities of the medical missionaries. If the medical work becomes an end in itself, if it is not used as a means of pointing the heathen to the Great Physician, it will surely become but a snare. Huge sums of money have been spent by practically all Mission Societies during the last decades on schools and hospitals, but their value to the Christian cause has decreased as the years have passed. Christ healed the people who did not trouble to thank Him, but he had praise only for those who confessed their faith in Him. So we shall, indeed, do all we can to cure the bodily ills of the natives we would reach with the Gospel, but we shall not rely too much on such cures to build the Church of Christ. Not gratitude for physical aid, but the Gospel itself opens the door of the heart of sinful man.

Another auxiliary to Christian missions is Social Service, such as famine relief, caring for the blind, the slaves and other unfortunates for whom the heathen world does nothing at all. Both in India and China, missions grew rapidly for a time in certain areas as a result of the famine relief work conducted by foreign missionaries. But in the end the results gained in this way melted away until only a remnant was left. Such things, including scientific aid to agriculture which some missions have dabbled in, are not a Means of Grace. They can build good will between the missionary and the people and give him open doors to the preaching of the Gospel, but they

never can be the means of winning men to a true faith. It is a part of the modern Social Gospel to say that we must take care of the physical needs of an individual or people before it is any use to preach the Gospel of life and salvation by faith in Jesus Christ. That Social Gospel is false both according to Scripture and according to sound psychology. In Christ's parable, Lazarus perished of sickness and hunger. Yet he had the saving faith and trust in God, as his name indicated and as his coming to the bosom of Abraham in Paradise demonstrated. The rich man had every earthly benefit, yet he lacked faith and condemned himself by his expressed contempt for the sacred Word of Scripture, the only God-given Means of Grace. In heathen lands, as in the home fields, it is the poor who most readily accept the Gospel, not those who live the easy, well-fed life of the rich and powerful.

Finally, the foreign missionary must from the beginning plan his work with a view of eliminating himself eventually and building a self-supporting, self-propagating church. He will need to train teachers and assistants who can take over much of the detail work in the congregations he founds. The foreigner is to plan the church in such a way that it will bear fruit, growing inwardly and spreading its seeds abroad. This was the apostolic method. Paul spent only a few months or years in the various places to which he brought the Gospel; but he left helpers, men like Timothy, Titus, and Silas, to "set in order the things that were wanting" (Titus 1:5). The foreigner, by his very status as an outlander, is not qualified to serve indefinitely as the pastor of native congregations. The time may come when he will be a hindrance and source of danger to the native church rather than a support and aid. Paul lost no time in fleeing from cities where persecution arose against him;

he left the young Christian churches to take care of themselves, lest he only bring danger and trouble on them. So the missionary who would try to brave such opposition as the Communists stir up against him is not following Biblical example, but is more foolhardy and dimwitted than courageous and wise. A Christian should always be ready to suffer martyrdom for his faith, but he should never seek martyrdom or bring it upon himself by ignoring such admonitions as: "When they persecute you in this city, flee ye into another" (Matt. 10:25).

It is, of course, no easy matter to find or select properly qualified men for leadership in the native churches. Here the instructions and admonitions in the Pastoral Epistles need to be followed carefully and completely. There are those among the natives, perhaps brilliant men intellectually, who may acquire a thorough knowledge of the Bible and yet prove in the end to be scoundrels who had succeeded in hood-winking the foreigner, while living a scandalous life to the great detriment of the church. Here is where more control of the affairs of the local church, including the appointment of native workers, by the native Christians themselves might help. They would know the character of their fellow Christians much better than the missionary could. Whatever weakness and mistakes may result from self-government in the young local churches, the dangers resulting from too much papistic government are bound to be greater in the end. In any case, there is no other way to build a living, indigenous church than to expect its members to take over and continue the work which the missionary has begun.

Even the most faithful missionary may not succeed in converting whole peoples to the Christian faith or in producing the fruits of faith

that he would like to see among the native Christians. But if he has held aloft the light of the Gospel and called men to repentance and faith in accordance with the Word of God, he can be confident that the Lord of the Church will say to him in the final judgment: "Well done, good and faithful servant; thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy Lord" (Matt. 25:33).

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-- Geo. O. Lillegard

## AMBROSE ON JUSTIFICATION

### A Study in the Catholicity of Lutheran Theology

The Lutherans of the sixteenth century consistently maintained that their cultus and confession were truly catholic: "...nothing has been received among us, in doctrine or in ceremonies, that is contrary to Scripture or to the church catholic"<sup>1</sup>; "...No novelty has been introduced which did not exist in the church from ancient times..."<sup>2</sup>; "...our churches dissent from the church catholic in no article of faith but only omit some few abuses which are new and have been adopted by the fault of the times..."<sup>3</sup> According to the Lutherans it was Rome, and not Wittenberg, which had departed from the authentic catholic faith of the apostles and fathers of the Church.

One of the most significant assertions of the Lutheran reformers was that sinners are justified before God by grace through faith alone, and not by human works or merits of any kind. In regard to the Lutheran doctrine of justification, the Apology of the Augsburg Confession makes the following statement:

We know that what we have said agrees with the prophetic and apostolic Scriptures, with the holy Fathers Ambrose, Augustine, and many others, and with the whole church of Christ, which certainly confesses that Christ is the propitiator and the justifier.<sup>4</sup>

Was this claim valid? Was the Lutheran doctrine of justification truly catholic, or was it (as the Pope and his followers claim) a sectarian, heretical innovation? Since the Lutherans appealed

explicitly to the ancient Father St. Ambrose (among others) as one who taught what they were teaching, it will be helpful to examine Ambrose's writings on justification to determine if the Lutherans really understood his position and if his teaching did in fact confirm theirs.

St. Ambrose (c.338-97), Bishop of Milan, has always been remembered as a courageous churchman, an able teacher, and a faithful shepherd. Christendom has also counted him as one of the eight "Doctors of the Church," and an examination of his writings readily confirms the appropriateness of this honor.

Ambrose's theology is first and foremost a Christ-centered theology. According to Ambrose, "where Christ is, there are all things, there is his teaching, there forgiveness of sins, there grace, there the separation of the dead and the living."<sup>5</sup> Ambrose accordingly focuses on the saving work of Christ as the only hope for sinners: "He gave himself to be offered for our sins, that by his blood he might cleanse the world, whose sin could not be abolished in any other way."<sup>6</sup> "The Lord's death is my redemption, for we are redeemed by his precious blood."<sup>7</sup> Ambrose's doctrine of the atonement actually includes two facets. The significance of Christ's suffering and death as a "ransom" to the devil is explained in the following words:

If we were redeemed not with perishable things--with silver and gold--but with the precious blood of our Lord Jesus Christ, surely the one who sold us had a right to our service in the coin of a now sinful race. And, undoubtedly, to release from slavery those whom he held bound he demanded a price. The price of our freedom was the

blood of our Lord Jesus, and it had to be paid necessarily to the one to whom we had been sold by our sins.<sup>8</sup>

The significance of Christ's suffering and death as an expiatory sacrifice to God is explained thus:

Jesus took on himself even death, that the sentence of condemnation might be carried out, that he might satisfy the judgment that sinful flesh should be cursed even unto death. Nothing therefore was done contrary to the sentence of God, since the condition of God's sentence was fulfilled.<sup>9</sup>

As might be expected, the grace of God has a central place in Ambrose's theology. He asks,

What can we do worthy of heavenly rewards? By what labours, by what sufferings, can we wash away our sins? Not according to our merits, but according to the mercy of God, the heavenly decrees concerning men are issued.<sup>10</sup>

According to Ambrose "the grace of the Lord is given not as a reward which has been earned, but simply according to the will of the giver."<sup>11</sup> Ambrose also writes: "Let no one arrogate aught to himself, let no one boast of his merits or his power, but let us all hope to find mercy through the Lord Jesus."<sup>12</sup> It is indeed God's gracious call which alone sets the sinner free, and Ambrose therefore prays to his Lord:

Call forth thy servant. Although I am bound with the chains of my sins, being now buried in dead thoughts and works, yet at thy call I shall go forth free and be

found one of those sitting at they feast.<sup>13</sup>

And how, exactly, is God's gracious salvation actually received by each individual Christian? According to Ambrose, "God chose that man should seek salvation by faith rather than by works, lest any should glory in his deeds and should thereby incur sin."<sup>14</sup> The evangelical character of Ambrose's theology also comes out when he writes as follows in regard to John 3:36:

Let us consider another similar passage:  
"He that believeth on the Son hath eternal life, but he that believeth not the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abideth on him." That which abideth has certainly had a commencement, and that from some offense, viz., that first he not believe. When, then, anyone believes, the wrath of God departs and life comes. To believe, then, in Christ is to gain life, for "he that believeth in him is not judged."<sup>15</sup>

The following comparison which Ambrose makes between the woman with the issue of blood and the Christian clearly demonstrates that he understands "faith" to be much more than a mere mental acceptance of certain doctrines and facts:

The woman was immediately healed, because she drew to him in faith. And do you with faith touch but the hem of his garment. The torrential flow of worldly passions will be dried up by the warmth of the saving Word, if you but draw near to him with faith, if with like devotion you grasp at least the hem of his garment. O faith richer than all treasures! A faith stronger than all the powers of the body, more health-



giving than all the physicians!<sup>16</sup>

In examining Ambrose's use of the terms "justification" and "justified," it becomes clear that he associates justification with forgiveness. Ambrose states that "he is justified from sin to whom all sins are remitted through baptism."<sup>17</sup> According to Ambrose, good works cannot be a cause of forgiveness and justification because in our sinful condition we are simply incapable of producing works that are truly good. He writes that "we are not justified by works but by faith, because the infirmity of our flesh is an impediment to works; but the brightness of faith overshadows the error of works and merits forgiveness of our faults."<sup>18</sup> Again, "Not of works, but of faith, each is justified by the Lord."<sup>19</sup> Again,

Without the works of the Law, to an ungodly man, that is to say, a Gentile, believing in Christ, his "faith is imputed for righteousness," as also it was to Abraham. How, then, can the Jews imagine, that through the works of the Law they are justified with the justification of Abraham, when they see that Abraham was justified, not by the works of the Law, but by faith alone? There is no need, therefore, of the Law, since through faith, an ungodly man is justified with God.<sup>20</sup>

The Pauline emphasis on justification as the imputation of Christ's righteousness to the sinner is reflected in the following statement by Ambrose:

In Adam I fell, in Adam I was cast out of Paradise, in Adam I died. How shall God call me back, except he find me in the

Second Adam--justified in Christ, even as in the first Adam I was made subject to guilt and destined to death?<sup>21</sup>

Sanctification and good works naturally follow justification and are necessary as the fruits of a true justifying faith. However, Ambrose makes it clear that these fruits must not be relied on as in any way earning God's favor:

I will glory not because I am righteous but because I am redeemed; I will glory not because I am free from sins but because my sins are forgiven me. I will glory not because I have done good nor because someone has done good to me but because Christ is my advocate with the Father and because the blood of Christ has been shed for me.<sup>22</sup>

Ambrose's most thorough treatment of the doctrine of justification is found in a letter to a layman named Irenaeus,<sup>23</sup> which is quoted at length in the Apology of the Augsburg Confession.<sup>24</sup> This letter, in which Ambrose also outlines the proper distinction between Law and Gospel, deserves to be quoted at length here as well:

Sin abounded by the Law because through the Law came knowledge of sin and it became harmful for me to know what through my weakness I could not avoid. It is good to know beforehand what one is to avoid, but, if I cannot avoid something, it is harmful to have known about it. Thus was the Law changed to its opposite, yet it became useful to me by the very increase of sin, for I was humbled. And David therefore says: "It is good for me that I have been humbled." By humbling myself I have broken the bonds of that ancient transgression by which Adam

and Eve had bound the whole line of their succession. Hence, too, the Lord came as an obedient man to loose the knot of man's disobedience and deception. And as through disobedience sin entered, so through obedience sin was remitted. Therefore, the Apostle says: "For just as by the disobedience of one man the many were constituted sinners, so also by the obedience of the one the many will be constituted just."

Here is one reason that the Law was unnecessary and became necessary, unnecessary in that it would not have been needed if we had been able to keep the natural law; but, as we did not keep it, the Law of Moses became needful to teach me obedience and loosen that bond of Adam's deception which had ensnared his whole posterity. Yes, guilt grew by the Law, but pride, the source of guilt, was loosed, and this was an advantage to me. Pride discovered the guilt and the guilt brought grace.

Consider another reason. The Law of Moses was not needful; hence, it entered secretly. Its entrance seems not of an ordinary kind, but like something clandestine because it entered secretly into the place of the natural law. Thus, if she had but kept her place, this written law would never have entered it, but, since deception had banished that law and nearly blotted it out of the human breast, pride reigned and disobedience was rampant. Therefore, that other took its place so that by its written expression it might challenge us and shut our mouth, in order to make the whole world subject to God. The world, however, became subject to him through the Law, because all are brought to

trial by the prescript of the Law, and no one is justified without the works of the Law; in other words, because the knowledge of sin comes from the Law, but guilt is not remitted, the Law, therefore, which has made all men sinners, seems to have caused harm.

But, when the Lord Jesus came he forgave all men the sin they could not escape, and canceled the decree against us by shedding his blood. This is what he says: "By the Law sin abounded, but grace abounded by Jesus," since after the whole world became subject he took away the sins of the whole world, as John bears witness, saying: "Behold the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!" Let no one glory, then, in his own works, since no one is justified by his deeds, but one who is just has received a gift, being justified by Baptism. It is faith, therefore, which sets us free by the blood of Christ, for he is blessed whose sin is forgiven and to whom pardon is granted.<sup>25</sup>

It seems fair to conclude that the sixteenth century Lutheran doctrine of justification was fully congruent with the teaching of St. Ambrose on this subject, and that the Lutherans' appeals to him were both legitimate and accurate. Ambrose taught that sinners are justified before God by grace through faith alone, and not by human works or merits of any kind. On this central article of the Christian faith, the Lutherans were thoroughly "Ambrosian," and if Ambrose's views are a reflection of the authentic catholic position, the Lutherans were also thoroughly "catholic."

## ENDNOTES

1. Augsburg Confession, epilogue to XXVIII, 5 (Latin), in The Book of Concord, translated and edited by Theodore G. Tappert (Fortress Press, 1959), p. 95.
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3. AC prologue to XXII, 1 (Latin), in Tappert, p. 48.
4. AP IV:389, in Tappert, p. 166.
5. Ep. 4, in The Fathers of the Church, Vol. 26 (1954), p. 104.
6. In ps. 47 enarr. 17, quoted in F. Homes Dudden, The Life and Times of St. Ambrose (Oxford, 1935), Vol. II, p. 606.
7. De fide III:36, quoted in Dudden II, p. 607.
8. Ep. 72, in The Fathers 26, pp. 93-93.
9. De Fuga 44, quoted in Dudden II, pp. 608-09.
10. Expos. ps. 118, 20:42, quoted in Dudden II, p. 631.
11. Exhort. Virginitatis 43, quoted in Dudden II, p. 632.
12. Expos. ps. 118, 20:42, quoted in Dudden II, p. 631.
13. De Poenitentia II:72, quoted in Dudden II, p. 626.

14. In ps. 43 enarr. 14, quoted in Dudden II, p. 627.
15. De Poenitentia I:53, in The Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, second series, Vol. X (Eerdmans reprint, 1983), p. 338.
16. De Virginitate 100, quoted in Dudden II, p. 628.
17. Quoted by Augustine in Contra Julianum II; quoted in turn in Martin Chemnitz, Examination of the Council of Trent, Part I (Concordia Publishing House, 1971), p. 475.
18. De Jacob 6, quoted in Chemnitz I, p. 508.
19. Exhort. Virginitatis 43, quoted in Dudden II, p. 627.
20. Quoted in James Buchanan, The Doctrine of Justification (Baker Book House, 1955), p. 94.
21. De Excessu Sat. II:6, quoted in Dudden II, p. 610.
22. De Jacob et vita beata, ch. 6, quoted in Chemnitz I, p. 507.
23. Not to be confused with the second century church Father St. Irenaeus, Bishop of Lyons.
24. Ap IV:103, in Tappert, pp. 121-22.
25. Ep. 73, in The Fathers 26, pp. 466-68.

-- David Jay Webber

SYMPOSIUM ON THE FUTURE OF THE  
LUTHERAN CHURCH

Dear Students, Colleagues, Visitors, and Friends,

It is with some trepidation that I express myself on the future of the Lutheran Church in the United States with three distinguished historians present: Dr. August Suelflow, Dr. Robert Kolb, and Prof. Arnold Koelpin.

When one looks around today at the various groups and individuals which label themselves "Lutheran," one sees infinite variety. Were one to use the familiar question of the quiz program, "Will the true Lutheran Church please stand up," all would do so. But a closer examination would reveal a total theological spectrum -- from a decision-spiritual experience type to the opposite extreme of a semi-Marxist or even Marxist liberation theology. An entire spectrum of theological choices is available to anyone who wants to call himself a Lutheran. Hence when one looks at the future of the Lutheran Church, the present -- which serves as the theological foundation for the future -- is in itself the problem.

What I am trying to say is that we are, humanly speaking, creating the future by what we say, by what we do, and by what we are today. But what do we see when we look around? I speak here as a member of the Evangelical Lutheran Synod and against its background.

We see a loss of a sense of the past. Hence we have nothing to carry us into the future. The Evangelical Lutheran Synod, or the ELS, arose out of

a split. It refused to enter into a merger which, prompted by Norwegian nationalism among other things, rather completely ignored present doctrinal differences. The ELS reacted against a merger document which allowed for two forms of divine election. But that merged church has disappeared, having gone through three additional mergers as an independent body or as a part of others. What is the ELS to react against today? This also raises the question of why the ELS exists as a synod today. It certainly knew why it existed in the past. It certainly was very Waltherian in the person of its great theologian, U. V. Koren.

Grandsons now fill the pulpits of the ELS. Sociologists tell us that this is a very dangerous time in the life of any church body. The Lutheran Church - Missouri Synod learned this the hard way. The fathers contended for the truth, and the sons honored the fathers. But the grandsons tend to homogenize into the American scene. They tend to want to be like others; they may even know the words and the watchwords which their fathers and forefathers used. But the urgent thrust and meaning those words had for the fathers is often muted or even gone. In the ELS such words were "the unconditioned Gospel," "Unionism," and a host of others. How can we revive that zeal of the past as we move into the future?

What has happened to theology in the Lutheran Church? More and more time is spent at synodical conventions on church business -- budgets, etc. -- than on the business of the church: doctrine and missions. The ELS still has a doctrinal essay at its synodical conventions. But many Lutheran synods have either completely dropped them or substituted a so-called Bible study. What is happening in Lutheran Church bodies?



Another problem today is that laymen are often left out of the business of the church theology. Theology is reserved as the special preserve of the theologians. The actual practice of theology has become a kind of Gnosticism, reserved for those in the know. Perhaps this is the price that must be paid in any church body whose theologians run after the changing fads of the historical-critical method. Thus laymen are permitted to pay the bills of the church, but are not allowed to participate --beyond the token lay member or two on some boards -- in the discussion of theology and in the resolution of theological questions. It is strange that pastors often do not really seem to trust the members whom they have instructed, preached to, and taught in Bible classes. It should also be remembered that in the ELS a number of congregations were family congregations. An individual family or two refused to enter the merger and so formed the nucleus of present-day congregations. Laymen could and did make the right choice when properly informed. Today laymen are too often left out of the theological process; hence they do not involve themselves either.

Another problem which the Lutheran Church faces -- and must solve -- as it moves into the future is the tendency and fact that conservative Lutherans love to fight each other. If anyone questions this, all he need do is read the letters sent to Christian News. Such conflicts will certainly hinder any impact of the Lutheran Church on the future. Conservative Lutherans also at times adopt certain political forms and processes as Christian. One must ask what has happened to the doctrine of the two kingdoms. I intentionally leave this area vague because I have no desire to illustrate what I said in the first part of this paragraph. What I am really saying is that conservative Lutherans very often have a tendency

to "shoot themselves in the foot." This is shown by their approach to each other and to certain issues. There will be no future if we destroy ourselves in the present. The past offers excellent perspectives so that we do not ride theological "hobby horses." This is a luxury which we cannot afford.

Another problem is that conservatives live so much in the past that they do not keep up on current issues and trends in theology in a way that they should. This includes both reading and continued education. It is interesting what has happened in certain Lutheran bodies. They lost their seminaries to the liberals; the conservatives did not always comprehend what was happening. The "Don't-rock-the-boat" administrators insisted that all was well. But it was not! Scripture was denied, and basic doctrines of Christianity were often denigrated. Look also at what has happened today with the Lord's Supper. Luther devoted reams of paper to define the mode of Christ's real presence in the Lord's Supper. Yet we hear those who call themselves Lutheran saying that the various formulations offered about the mode of Christ's presence in the Lord's Supper are little more than differences of opinion. They have learned nothing from Luther and from the stand of the faithful Lutheran confessors in the early 19th Century. But this should not be surprising, since a number of men who took part in the formative meetings of the ELCA did not even want to use the name "Lutheran" for the new body.

What does all this mean for the future of the Lutheran Church? Does the Lutheran Church have a future? Do I believe that the Lutheran Church has a future? Yes, I do! I believe this most sincerely because our Lord has promised us that His Word will never return void. Wherever the

Gospel is preached, there souls will be won for Christ. I believe that the Lutheran Church will have a future when it turns for guidance to the great teachers of the past and experiences the same thrills and blessings which those heroes of the faith experienced as they searched the Word of God, and as they created and later reaffirmed the truths of the Lutheran Confessions.

I believe that the Lutheran Church will have a future when it involves its laymen in its theology. The Lutheran Church today also needs a C. F. W. Walther to lead it. The Lutheran Church will have a future when its synods become what they were in the past -- a fellowship of a common faith both fides qua and fides quae. We will have a revival and a future for the Lutheran Church when it becomes less institutionalized and more conscious of the means of grace. After all, the orthodoxy of a church body is not established by a balanced budget, but by what is taught and practiced in the parishes. Perhaps the best way to move into the future is to look back and carry into the future that which made the early Synodical Conference such a vital body.

I believe that the Lutheran Church will have a future when the pastoral office is seen once again as a vocation and not as a profession, and when pastoral conferences will once again place the study of the Word at the top of their agendas. Then pastors will act and react in the light of the Word. They will be prophets -- messengers of God -- and not mere priests or church functionaries.

I believe that the Lutheran Church will have a future when it treats the Word of God as a message from God and not as the object for philosophical speculation. After all, theology is a

means toward an end -- the salvation of mankind -- and not an end in itself. I believe that the Lutheran Church will move ahead dynamically when it does not approach theology with the mind set of the Pharisees, but as our Lord did in His dealings with people. He had both flexibility when He dealt with the individual and yet singleness of purpose. So also the Lutheran Church must not just pass resolutions but act with resolution.

In other words, the Lutheran Church does have a heritage to build on as it moves into the future. It has a rich heritage illustrated and illuminated by men such as Luther and Walther. But it needs to rediscover that heritage for itself, restudy that heritage to make it its own, build on that heritage, and finally move with vigor into the future with guidance from the past. The Lutheran Church must know whence it came. Then it will know where it is going. It will have a future when it knows, uses, and builds on its theological heritage.

Presented by Glenn E. Reichwald at the Reformation Lectures - Bethany Lutheran College and Bethany Lutheran Theological Seminary - in Mankato, Minnesota on October 29, 1987.

CORRECTIONS:

Please note, page i of the June 1988 Quarterly, paragraph 2:

Change the year of birth of George Lillegard to 1888 instead of 1988.