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A CHAPLAIN'S WORK IN A PRISONER OF WAR CAMP

A Thesis Presented to
The Faculty of Concordia Seminary

In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Bachelor of Divinity

by

Chaplain G. A. Zoeh

May 1946

Approved by

Louis Lick
J. E. Meyer

Dedicated to

My beloved wife, Louise

And two Children

Clem Arthur and Anne Louise Zoch

for

Their constant inspiration to me in writing this thesis

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CHAPTER I

Introduction

Realizing that wars cannot be won without God and to give our men in the uniform an opportunity to worship while away from home, our government has always advocated a Chaplains Corps for its army. Already in the Revolutionary War some 170 years ago, General George Washington called upon the clergy in the eastern cities to go out to the American troops and to preach to them, pray with them and to offer spiritual advice and comfort to them. Also in the Civil War, in the Spanish-American War and in World War I, we found many chaplains serving the armed forces of our country. And especially was this the case in World War II, just concluded. Statistics show that on V-J Day, September 2, 1945, there were approximately 10,000 chaplains of all denominations serving our country either in the army, the navy or in the air corps.¹ Of these, 235 were of our Missouri synod Lutheran Church,² and I was one of them.

Why I entered the Chaplaincy

I shall never forget how the Lord led me into the chaplaincy. Already months before Pearl Harbor had I been recommended for the chaplaincy by my district president, the Reverend W. E. Homann of Bancroft, Nebraska, and encouraged to do so by many brethren in the ministry. For quite some time I had given the matter serious consideration, but could never fully resolve to leave my congregation and to join the Chaplains Corps. Then came February 2, 1942. It was on a Monday morning and I was working in the study. Suddenly, without any special reason at all, I turned on the radio and the very first voice heard was that of a man

¹ The Army and Navy Chaplain, October-November 1945, p. 13

² The Lutheran Chaplain, September 1945, p. 17

from the Chief of Chaplains Office in Washington, speaking of the dire need of more chaplains in the United States army and pleading with the ministers of all faiths, if at all possible, to join the Chaplains Corps. This made a profound impression upon me. "Why did I tune in on the radio just when this man was pleading for more chaplains? Was it merely a coincidence?", I kept on asking myself. I again began to give the matter further consideration, but still I could not decide to join the chaplaincy. Then came the annual Pastoral retreat in Omaha. That was exactly a week later. And at this meeting I was again approached by my district president and asked to reconsider the matter in all seriousness. This I promised to do. Needless to say, serious and prayerful days followed. I again discussed the matter at length with my wife and with a goodly number of friends and brethren in the ministry. For days and weeks I thought about the matter and prayed most earnestly for divine guidance. Finally I did come to the conclusion that it must be the Lord's will that I enter upon the chaplaincy and applied. However, it was not until July 18 that I was ordered by the War Department in Washington to proceed on active duty.

Time and Places Served

During the three and a half years of my chaplaincy I served the following time and places:

1. From August 1 - September 17, 1942 at the Port of Embarkation in Ft. Mason, California, right in the heart of San Francisco;
2. From September 24 - February 13, 1943 with the 457th Anti-Aircraft Battalion in Camp Hulen, Texas;
3. From February 18 - May 4, 1943 with the 6th Regiment at Ft. Mc-

Clellan, Alabama;

4. From May 8 - June 5, 1943 I attended the Chaplain School at Harvard University in Cambridge, Massachusetts;

5. And from June 8, 1943 until my separation from the service on January 27, 1946 I served as Camp Chaplain of the Prisoner of War Camp in Hearne, Texas.

A General Description of a Chaplain's Work

The work of a chaplain in the United States army, generally speaking, is of a three-fold nature - religious, military and community.

Religious Work

The religious work, of course, is the chief and most important work of a chaplain. This he carries on in practically the same manner as he would do it in a civilian congregation. He conducts regular services - general services for his entire command and particular services for the men and women of his own church - teaches Bible classes, administers the sacraments, does mission work, confirms, performs marriages and burials, distributes religious literature, makes calls, conducts religious and other interviews and the like. And all of this strictly according to his convictions and beliefs. To do this work a chaplain generally is furnished with a chapel, fully equipped with an altar, pulpit, organ, and pews, and with an office completely furnished with a desk, chair, typewriter, phone and all other necessary material. He is also given a competent assistant to help him in his work.¹

Military Work

The military work, which comes second in importance, consists chiefly

¹ TM 16-205, The Chaplain, April 21, 1941, Chapters 4-9

of paper work in the office and of daily association with the men of his particular unit. He is expected to spend as much of his time as possible with them, showing interest in them, marching with them, speaking with them, and encouraging them. These things are to be done chiefly for the purpose of building and keeping up the morale of the men.¹

Community Work

The community work, which comes last, is done outside of the army. As chaplain he is not only responsible for the men and women of his particular organization, but also for the families of the military personnel. He is to show interest in them by visiting them from time to time and take care of their spiritual needs. He is also to keep the people in the neighborhood posted on the work of the camp, particularly the religious work. As time and opportunity presents itself he, therefore, will preach in neighboring churches of his faith and lecture before various church groups and civil organizations. He will make calls on neighboring ministers and city officials in order to keep up a good relationship between the camp and the community.²

However, since most of my time was spent in a Prisoner of War Camp here in America, I would now like to speak of that work in particular.

¹ TM 16-205, The Chaplain, April 21, 1941, Chapter 10

² TM 16-205, The Chaplain, April 21, 1941, Par. 59, 60, 86-87

CHAPTER II

A Description of the Camp

The Prisoner of War Camp, in which I was privileged to work for over two and a half years, was located two miles west of Hearne, Texas. It was a medium-sized camp covering about 300 acres of ground and in general resembling any other camp.

However, being a Prisoner of War Camp, it naturally differed somewhat from a regular army camp. A regular army camp is made up as one large unit, while our Prisoner of War Camp was divided into several separate sections. There, first of all, was the American section, consisting of administration buildings, barrack buildings, mess-halls, warehouses, theater building, recreation hall, post exchange building and the chapel. This section was located in the front part of the camp. In the back part of the camp was the Prisoner of War section, surrounded by two 12 feet high barbed wire fences and formed in a square. This unit again was divided into three different compounds, a Station Hospital, and the German Postal Unit, separated from one another by another high fence. Each compound consisted of four office and supply rooms for our American personnel, approximately 30 barrack buildings for the prisoners, a dispensary, a recreation hall, a library, an educational building, and a workshop. The Station Hospital with 300 beds was located to the extreme right and the German Postal Unit manned by 250 German prisoners and handling over 100,000 pieces of mail daily to the rear of the camp. On the west side of the camp proper was a large garden of about 25 acres, which was taken care of by the prisoners, and on the extreme east side was the Prisoner of War cemetery.

This brief description will give us somewhat of an idea of the size and type of the Prisoner of War Camp, in which I was working.

Life in the Camp

In discussing the life in the camp, let me first briefly touch upon the life of our American boys and then speak more extensively on the life of the prisoners of war.

American

The main part of an American soldier's life in this camp, as in any other army camp, consisted chiefly of work. Some worked in the administrative department, while the majority of them worked in the military department. The administrative work consisted of taking care of the business matters of the camp, while the military work consisted chiefly of training and of the guarding of enemy prisoners. In the administrative department work was done for eight hours a day - from 8 in the morning till 5 in the evening -, while in the military department work was done in eight hour shifts.

After working hours, the time of the individual American soldier was practically his own. If he lived with his family in town, he was permitted to go home and return in due time on the following day. The rest of them would remain at the camp and spend their leisure time in various ways. Some would spend their time in reading, in writing, in studying, in talking, or in playing of cards and of music. Others would take part in sports. In the evening many of them attended the movies and the dances, while others would fritter their time away in eating, in drinking, in gambling and in a life of immorality and debauchery. Cursing and swearing was also very prevalent at the camp.

Here I would also like to mention the relationship of our men toward each other and also toward the prisoners. Considering the fact that our men came from all walks of life, it was remarkable how well they got along with one another. In true American fashion a most cordial relationship existed among the entire American personnel, officers and men alike. Of course, as could be expected, there were a few exceptions to the rule, but they were few and far between. However, the spirit and the relationship of our officers and men over against the prisoners of war was, I am sorry to say, not always the best. To be sure, there were many of our men, in fact, the greater majority of them, that did consider the prisoners as honorable prisoners of war and would treat them in a fair and humane manner according to the rules and regulations laid down in the Geneva Convention of July 27, 1929 and signed by all belligerent countries of this war excepting Japan. They did not coddle them nor show special privileges to them, but they did treat them as human beings. While others - and I am happy to say that these were in the minority - looked upon the prisoners, not as honorable prisoners of war but as criminals and outlaws. They hated them and showed their contempt for them in word and action. And especially was this the case with the German prisoners of war. Of course, if prisoners were disrespectful and disobedient to any American officer or man, it was absolutely proper and in perfect agreement with the rules and regulations of the Geneva Convention to punish them in some way or another. However, that was to be done by the proper authorities and in a proper manner.¹

¹ Geneva Convention, July 27, 1929, Title 1, Art. 2 and 3
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Japanese

The life of the Japanese prisoners of war was a very simple and uneventful one the short while they were in our camp. Unlike the German prisoners, they did not have to work except to take care of their barracks and the grounds of their compound. The reason for their inactivity was their utter ignorance of American labor and their slowness in learning it. To avoid any contact with the German prisoners of war, they were entirely separated from them and placed in a separate compound. There they were fed, clothed, and housed entirely at the expense of our government. They ate rice almost exclusively, wore regular prisoner of war clothes and lived in comfortable barracks. Their leisure time was spent chiefly in sleeping, talking and in the playing of baseball, which they had learned from us Americans in their home-land. To keep them further occupied, some appropriate and instructive movies were shown to them several times a week. Since the majority of them could not read nor write, there naturally was very little reading and writing done to occupy their spare time. Their relationship toward one another as well as toward us Americans was exceptionally good. It seemed that they were in constant fear of possible reprisals for their sneaky attack upon Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941.

German

Different, however, was the life of the German prisoners of war in this camp. Their's was a very active and eventful one. Describing their camp life, I would first of all like to speak of it in a general and then in a specific way.

The Geneva Convention referred to above specifies that prisoners of war should be fed, clothed and housed free of charge by the detaining pow-

ers just as their own men are fed, clothed and housed, and should receive a small daily allowance of 10 cents for personal use.¹ And I will say that our government strictly adhered to this rule of the Geneva Convention. In fact, up to the time of the unconditional surrender of Germany on May 8, 1945, many were of the opinion that they were treated better than our American boys. After the unconditional surrender, however, and especially after the news and the pictures of the horrors and atrocities perpetrated in various concentration camps within Germany were released to the American public, our government upon public demand greatly reduced the food rations of the German prisoners. In fact, it was cut down to such an extent that it was hardly sufficient for those prisoners that were required to do heavy manual labor.

Furthermore, the Geneva Convention specifies that all prisoners of war could be used for labor, excepting the officers and the disabled, and were to be paid a stipulated amount as agreed upon by the two respective powers.² And we did use the labor of the prisoners. We had them work in their own compounds, on our grounds, in mess-halls, in kitchens, in work shops, in warehouses, in the hospital, in the camp garden and in fields outside of the camp. For work done in and around the camp, they were paid by the government at the rate of 80 cents a day, while for work done in the field outside of the camp, they were paid by the farmer at the rate of \$4.80 a day. The worker received 80 cents of it, while the government retained the \$4.00 for its expenses. And here, too, I am happy to say, our government and camp officials strictly adhered to the rules and regulations of the Geneva Convention, at least up to the time of the sudden collapse of the German army. After that all prisoners of war, including the officers,

¹ Geneva Convention, July 27, 1929, Title 2, Ch. 2, Art. 11, 12

² Geneva Convention, July 27, 1929, Title 2, Ch. 5, Art. 23, 27

were required to work. It was argued that the Geneva Convention agreements no longer were binding after the defeat of Germany.

After working hours the German prisoners of war spent their leisure time in various ways. Being athletically-minded the majority of them naturally took an active part in sports, their favorite sport being football, played on the order of our soccer. Others would spend their time in writing letters to loved ones at home and near relatives in this country. Others again spent their leisure time in reading and studying various books and magazines, both in German and in English, made available to them in their libraries. Daily newspapers, various kinds of magazines and thousands of books were placed in their libraries covering practically every subject, including religion. Being an intelligent and a progressive people, hundreds of them attended night classes. Each compound conducted a regular school in which university courses were offered to the students. The president of the main school was a former faculty member of the University of Berlin and most of the teachers were university graduates. Lovers of music - and they had some very accomplished musicians in their midst - spent their idle moments in playing the piano, the organ and other instruments. Some of them even composed their own music. They also organized a symphony orchestra of some 50 pieces and gave regular concerts on every Sunday afternoon, playing some of the most difficult compositions masterfully and beautifully. Lovers of fine arts painted the most beautiful pictures of people and of outstanding sceneries, while still others occupied their time in making various kinds of toys and articles from every source available. Indeed, the life of the German prisoners of war at our camp was, generally speaking, a very active and eventful one.

Speaking of their camp life in a specific way, I of necessity will have to divide them into two distinct groups - the Nazi and the anti-Nazi.

Nazis

The Nazis as such were exceedingly proud and arrogant in their general behaviour. From their very infancy, it seems, they were brought up with the idea that they (the Germans) were really a superior people, in fact, that they were the very best and the most intelligent people in the world. When you came in contact with them, they would not only make you feel inferior to them, but would even tell you so in a typical Nazi fashion. And because of their arrogance and superiority complex, they were very hostile toward us and everything American. That will explain why it was just these boys that caused us all the trouble we experienced in our camp and why they were so destructive and wasteful of our property and goods. Deliberately did they often damage and destroy our property, steal tools and other American goods, and shamefully waste our water and food.

But they were not only hostile toward us and things American, but especially so toward the anti-Nazi in their own midst. Words fail me to properly describe the vicious and destructive attitude taken and shown by the Nazis toward the anti-Nazis. In their opinion there was not a more detestable creature in the world than a man in their own midst, who would say or do anything contrary to the wishes of Der Fuehrer and the Nazi party. Such a person, in their opinion, was not only a shameful betrayer of their beloved Fatherland, but was also worthy of the most cruel and ignominious death. And as soon as a fellow-German would act anti-

Nazi or would say something unfavorable of Hitler and the Nazi party, he would immediately be reported to the Nazi gestapo in the camp, placed on the black-list, and at the earliest opportune time, generally in the early morning hours when everybody was asleep, put to death in a most gruesome and merciless manner. They would generally club or stab them to death. We have had a number of cases like that in our camp. For instance, one prisoner was overheard saying something somewhat favorable of things American, and by the next morning he was a dead corpse, having been mercilessly beaten to death with clubs. Another man made the statement: "I am afraid that Hitler made a mistake by having attacked Russia," and had it not been for the fast thinking and acting of our American guards, this man would have undoubtedly met the same fate. And so we could go on showing the extreme hateful and destructive spirit of the true Nazis over against the anti-Nazis, as it existed in our camp, but let this suffice.

Anti-Nazis

The anti-Nazis were an entirely different group of men. These were not trained and educated by Hitler and were, therefore, more democratic in spirit and friendly toward us. They were very cooperative and helpful to us, in fact, so much so that at times it was very difficult to realize that they were really our enemies in war. At the same time, however, they hated and were very fearful of their fellow-prisoners, the Nazis. So great was their hatred against the Nazi that they wished them forever destroyed, and their fear of them so great that they spent many sleepless nights while at the camp. Some in their fear and anxiety were even driven to commit suicide. What a relief it was to them when Germany finally surrendered and Nazism was crushed! For the first time in

about twelve years they could now again live a normal life and be unafraid of the terrible curse of Nazism.

Such was the size, type and life in the Prisoner of War camp in Hearne, Texas. In the next chapter I shall speak on the personnel of the camp.

CHAPTER III

The Personnel of the Camp

In speaking on the personnel of the camp, I again would first like to touch upon the American and then on the prisoner of war personnel.

American

The American personnel was made up of two classes - the civilian personnel and the military personnel. The civilian personnel, numbering about 75, consisted of men and women outside of the army, who did mostly clerical work in the various offices of the camp. These were employed and paid by the Civil Service department of our country to relieve the critical manpower shortage within the army. However, after the cessation of hostilities this number was greatly reduced and the work again taken over by available military personnel.

The military personnel of the camp numbered all the way from 1100 down to 300 officers and men. At the beginning of the camp in June of 1943 our government made 50 officers and about 1050 enlisted men available to us to organize and carry on the work of the camp, but after the work was properly organized and things were running along smoothly, the American personnel was gradually reduced to the absolute minimum of 300 officers and men. At the head of the camp was a full Colonel, who was responsible for the entire work of the camp. A Lieutenant Colonel was at the head of the prisoners of war, while a Major was responsible for the American military personnel. And these three officials were assisted in their work by various department heads and their assistants, who were Captains and 1st and 2nd Lieutenants. And these again were assisted in their work by a competent group of non-commissioned officers and of the

necessary number of privates. As already indicated in the previous chapter, the American military personnel was made up of various types of men. They came from all walks of life. We had doctors, lawyers, bankers, politicians, business men, railroad men, university graduates, high school graduates, grammar school graduates and illiterates, rich and poor, old and young. Some of these were very religious, while others again were not. Speaking of religion, the greatest number of them were Catholic, a goodly number Protestant, and a few Jewish, while about 10% claimed no church affiliation at all.

Japanese

The Japanese prisoner of war personnel numbered about 500. Two were commissioned officers, 20 non-commissioned officers and the rest were privates. As is natural with the Japanese people, practically all of them were small in stature, averaging no more than five feet in height. Unlike the Germans, they did not appear very strong and healthy. Most of them appeared to be very simple and ignorant. I was told by one of the English-speaking Japanese officers (only a very few of them could speak English), that education was not encouraged in Japan and that the average child does not attend school more than six years. And in religious matters they, too, were very ignorant. Approximately 95% of the Japanese prisoners of war at our camp were either Shintoists, worshipping the Emperor as their God, or Buddhists, worshipping Buddha, while only 5% of them belonged to some Christian church. What a challenge to our Missouri Synod Lutheran Church!

German

The German prisoner of war personnel far outnumbered the Japanese. In fact, this was chiefly a German prisoner of war camp. The number of

German prisoners varied from time to time. At one time we had as many as 5000 and then again as few as 3000 German prisoners of war. The average number, however, was about 4000. And these were either Nazi or anti-Nazi. Since there was absolutely no way of telling who was a Nazi and who was not, it was very difficult to estimate the number of Nazi and the number of anti-Nazi at our camp. As closely as we could determine, however, we had approximately half and half - 2000 Nazis and 2000 anti-Nazis.

Nazis

First let me speak of the Nazis. These were all very educated, strong and robust men. And they were also very young men. Only a very few of them were over 30 years of age. The reason for that was: Those over 30 years of age were still brought up under the Hindenburg regime, while those under 30 years of age were brought up under Hitler and the Nazi party. That will explain why practically all the younger men in Germany are Nazis, while the older ones, as a rule, are not, and why these younger men together with some of the older ones, were the officers in the German army, while the older ones, generally speaking, were not. Having been trained by Hindenburg these older ones were not entrusted with leadership, but placed in such positions where they could do no harm to the cause of Nazism. And, as described in the previous chapter, these dyed in the wool Nazis were a most arrogant class of people, superior in bearing and contemptuous of everybody else. Religiously they were pagan and fanatic, which leads us to a brief discussion of Nazism and its philosophy of life.

What I will have to say on this will be taken from two different

sources, first, from what I have heard and learned myself in my conversations with the Nazis and the anti-Nazis on that subject, and secondly, from a brief document on: "Der Kampf des Christentum's in 3 Reich", written at my request by Pastor Guenther, who before the war was a Lutheran minister in Germany, but now a prisoner of war in our camp.

Nazism

The birth of Nazism, it seems, dates back to the dark and critical days that followed the defeat of Germany in World War I. In the early 20's, as we will recall, there were extremely difficult times in Germany. She was poverty-stricken and there was wide-spread hunger and starvation throughout the land. Economically and financially she was on the verge of bankruptcy. Religiously she was wavering. And in view of these existing conditions the people of Germany were clamoring for a change. To ease the situation and to bring Germany back on her feet again, various parties sprang into existence in different sections of the land, each advocating a different policy. Chief of these parties were the Social-Democratic, the Communistic and the National-Socialistic, now known as the Nazi party. And each of these had a great following from the outset. However, in the end the Nazi party, headed by Adolf Hitler, once a mere corporal in the German army but now a shrewd politician, won out and the people by the millions were flocking to its side.

Here we may ask: "What was Hitler's policy that so many Germans supported?" Stating it briefly, let me say that it was based chiefly upon REVENGE. Although beaten by and forced to surrender to the Allies

in 1918, the people of Germany and especially the leaders of the Nazi party had never conceded defeat. The signing of Wilson's famous fourteen points on November 11, 1918 was not the end of the war, but only a temporary armistice, as far as they were concerned. Being Aryians in blood they felt that they were superior to any other people in the world and, consequently, were rightfully entitled to be the masters and eventual rulers of the world. Now with that idea in mind Hitler and the party leaders proposed to the people that they all unite and build a powerful Germany under the leadership of Hitler, several cabinet members and the Reichstag. Cities and villages were to be rebuilt and modernized, factories erected and war materials of every conceivable type manufactured, super-highways and railroads constructed throughout the length and breadth of the country, soldiers trained and a most powerful army, navy and air force built and various other improvements made. Everything possible was to be done to assure Germany of a decisive victory over her enemies and of her final goal, the eventual domination of the world. That, stating it briefly, was the policy of Hitler and the Nazi party. And this policy made a tremendous impression upon the rank and file of the German people and gained overwhelming support in all sections of Germany.

Now to carry out this policy and to accomplish this goal, the people, first of all, had to be united in this supreme effort. To accomplish this a systematic program of propoganda was carried out. The people were told privately in their daily contacts with one another and publicly in speeches delivered by leading advocates of the Nazi party that they really were a superior people and that they, therefore, were rightfully entitled to rule the world. Also the radio and the press were used to bring this

thought across to the people. This same propoganda was carried on in the different schools and universities of the land. That was the first step taken to unite the people in the all-out effort of eventually conquering the world. Next, Germany also had to become a strong nation physically. To achieve that end a well-balanced diet was prescribed to every individual, especially to the children and the coming generation of Germany. Then soldiers were trained and a large powerful army, navy and air force was built secretly. Factories of various types were erected throughout the length and breadth of the country and war materials of every conceivable type were manufactured. Super highways and railroads were constructed and many other things done to assure them of their final goal. And due to all these activities better times naturally were returning to Germany and many other people were joining the party. Of course, as could be expected, not all people of Germany joined in this all-out effort of eventual domination over the entire world. There were still a great many broadminded and sensible people left, who could not see eye to eye with the leaders of Naziism. To win these people over to their cause the Nazi leaders gradually began to force them into the party system with false promises and also with threats. They were told that, if they would join the Nazi party and would help them achieve their goal, they would some day hold prominent positions in the party and would be permitted to take part in the ruling of the world, but if they would not join the movement, they would lose their jobs and their prestige with the people. Fearing opposition to the cause and a possible threat of overthrowing the Nazi party, a gestapo system - a secret police system - was formed within the party to watch the people

and, if possible, to scare them into the party. Concentration camps were also built and people threatened to be sent there unless they would fall in line with the principles and purposes of Nazism. And, sad to say, many of the non-cooperating people of Germany were sent to the concentration camps, where they were not only shamefully mistreated but many also tortured to death. I had many occasions to speak with men, who had been there for the above-mentioned reason, but had then changed their mind because they had been shamefully mistreated and threatened with death. The fear of these concentration camps and the constant watching of the gестапо had driven many millions more, though unwillingly, to the camp of Nazism. Germany simply had to succeed this time and so everything possible was done to achieve this end.

But soon, in fact already in the early years of Nazism, the leaders of the party found that there was a truly great obstacle that was hindering them in their all-out effort for world supremacy, and that was Christianity. Christianity taught a system of humility and brotherly love, while Nazism preached haughtiness and contempt for other people. Something had to be done to remove this obstacle. Nazism had to stay, so Christianity and the belief in the teachings of the Bible had to go. In fact, Christianity had to be rooted out of Germany forever.¹ Heretofore, Christianity had never brought any real blessing to their land, it was argued. But how to stamp out Christianity, was the great question. Hitler and his cohorts did not want a repetition of Rome,² where "the blood of the martyrs became the seed of Christianity". Hitler and the members of the party were clever enough to realize that, if they as a nation would

¹ Guenther: "Der Kampf des Christentums im 3 Reich"

² Guenther: "Der Kampf des Christentums im 3 Reich"

openly attack Christianity, close churches, and forbid the people to worship their God, they would not only meet with great opposition from within and thus hinder their forward movement, but would also arouse the suspicions of other people and bring the wrath of the world down upon them. To avoid all this and still accomplish their evil designs, they set out in a quiet and underhanded way slowly and gradually to root out Christianity in their midst. In private and in public, in the press and over the radio, they began to belittle religion and to ridicule the idea of a personal belief in a living God.¹ There, after all, was no God, they said to the people. And if there was a God, then He certainly was not a loving God, as the scriptures taught and the people believed. If He really was a loving God, they reasoned, then He certainly would not have permitted the German people, who were a good and a superior people, to lose the war and throw them into such a terrible state of poverty in which they now found themselves as an aftermath of World War I. Why then believe in such a God? That's nonsense, they said. If we want to be a superior people, as we really are, and eventually want to be the masters of the world, then we must forget all about God and place our confidence in Der Fuehrer and in his philosophy of life. Next, they began to condemn the Jews for having robbed them, as they said, of practically all their wealth and property after the conclusion of the last war. And since Jesus was a descendant of the Jews, they also began to condemn Him and His teachings as found in the Bible. Why be so foolish and read the Bible? they would say to the people. We have often been told here in America that Hitler ordered all the Bibles to be burned and his book: "Mein Kampf" substituted in it's

¹ Guenther: "Der Kampf des Christentums im 3 Reich"

place, but that was not true. True it is, the people were at first encouraged to discard the Bible as an ancient myth and accept the teachings of Nazism, as found in "Mein Kampf", but the Christian people within Germany, especially the older ones, refused to do that. There were still quite a number of them, I should have said millions of them, that believed in the true God of the Bible and in Jesus Christ as the Saviour of all mankind. Later on, however, as I was told time and again by the German prisoners of war at our camp, both Nazi and anti-Nazi, Hitler not only publicly denounced Christ as a Jew, but also issued a special decree in which he forbade the reading of those portions of scripture, which spoke of Christ and the Jewish people. That covered the entire Old Testament scripture and much of the New Testament scripture, including the writings of Paul, which certainly did not leave much of the scripture to read. Let me make this plain, these parts of the Bible were not confiscated, but only condemned and forbidden to read. And the members of the Nazi party, now numbering in the millions and having the upper hand in Germany, fully and completely subscribed to this decree of Hitler, whom they idolized as a God and worshipped as the Saviour of their fatherland. People found reading the Bible were naturally viewed with suspicion, considered enemies of Hitler, and placed on the black-list. Churches were left open and people permitted to worship, as before, but as time went on it became increasingly more difficult for the Christians to go to church and quietly worship their God. They were watched, ridiculed and even persecuted by the members of the Hitler youth, who were sent to the churches on Sunday mornings for that very purpose. Preachers were watched and listened to. If they would say anything

contrary to Der Fuehrer and the Nazi beliefs and practises, they would be forced to resign and threatened to be sent to the concentration camp. And many faithful pastors, who refused to yield, were actually sent to a concentration camp, including Niemoller, and some were never seen alive again.¹ Other ways of the Nazi party to remove Christianity as a threat to their evil designs were,² All religious schools, including theological seminaries, were ordered closed and the Christian boys and girls as well as the theological students were obliged to attend state-controlled schools, where the Nazi poison could be instilled into the hearts and minds of the German youth and future ministers of the church; parental authority had to cease and religious training of the children in the homes had to be discontinued, since, according to another special decree by Hitler, the child no longer was the property of the parents, but of the state; all youth and similar organizations within the church had to be abolished and pure civil organizations under the control and supervision of the state were formed; church people could not hold any public offices; outside religious gatherings were strictly forbidden; the printing of religious literature was no longer tolerated and publishing houses were all closed; the radio was not to be used in any way for the furtherance of Christianity; and the Christians everywhere were openly warned to forsake their Christianity and join the Nazi party. Thus, Hitler and the leading advocates of Nazi-Germany tried desperately, though unsuccessfully, to stamp out Christianity as an obstacle that stood between them and world domination. That was the Nazi philosophy of life - God and eternity was forgotten entirely and man was dreaming only of supremacy and happiness in this world.

¹ Guenther: "Der Kampf des Christentums im 3 Reich"

² Guenther: "Der Kampf des Christentums im 3 Reich"

Now many of these devout followers of Hitler, well-trained in the Nazi philosophy of life, we also had in our camp - highly educated men, but disgustingly arrogant and extremely irreligious and fanatical. That will explain their hostile attitude toward us and their destructive actions toward the anti-Nazis in the camp. Even some of their own clergymen, who should have upheld Christ and the cause of Christianity, denounced true Christianity and preached Nazism. They proclaimed Hitler as the Saviour of Germany, and whosoever believes in him and works for him, shall not perish from the face of this earth, but have an abundant life in the future Germany, which eventually will extend over the entire world. A shame and a disgrace to the name of the Christian ministry!

Anti-Nazis

How about the personnel of the anti-Nazis in the camp? As already stated at the beginning of this particular section under discussion, the number of anti-Nazis at this camp was about 2000. They were the older men trained under Hindenburg and most of them were educated by Christian parents and teachers. Though not quite as highly educated in secular branches as were the Nazis, they nevertheless were a very intelligent group of men. One would find no illiteracy among any of the prisoners, as often is the case in America. Not being members of the party, they naturally were only privates in the army. In general, they were a good high-type group of men, friendly toward us, but bitter toward the Nazis. That, however, does not mean that they were all religious men, in fact, only a small percentage of them were. The main reason for that was: Because of the religious conditions at home, many of these otherwise good Germans had also fallen on the wayside. Prac-

tically all of them were baptized and confirmed either Catholic or Protestant, yet only a very small percentage of them still confessed Christianity. They were not opposed to the church and Christianity, but had only become calloused and indifferent in things spiritual. Nazism had also succeeded in getting them away from Christ. And still there were some, possibly about 10%, that were just as sincere and devout in their Christian beliefs as their fathers and mothers were at home, and in many cases much more so than I found it among our boys. With their own eyes they had seen the curse of Nazism at home and here at the camp and that, I believe, made them extremely loyal and faithful to their God. And that was particularly the case with my Protestant chaplain. I had the privilege of reading many of his sermons and often heard him preach, and I will say that all these sermons were heart-searching, comforting gospel sermons delivered in a most solemn manner. Here I wish to add also that among these anti-Nazis, I had two God-fearing and conscientious young men, who during their stay in the camp resolved to dedicate the rest of their life to the service of the Lord and thus help their fellow-countrymen to again come out of their spiritual darkness and help lead them back to God and their eternal salvation. With that sincere intent they decided immediately while yet in camp to begin studying for the Holy Ministry with the fervent hope that some day they may be able to complete their studies and enter the holy ministry. And I am happy to say that in the year's time they took up the study of theology at the camp through a correspondence course with our faculty in St. Louis and under my personal direction and supervision, both of these consecrated young men successfully completed the study of Pieper's Dogmatics and Fuerbringer's "Einleitung zum

Alten und Neuen Testament", and at the time of their departure from the camp they were busily engaged in the study of the Greek and Hebrew languages, New Testament Exegesis and Church History. May God lead both of these staunch supporters of Christianity and valiant soldiers of Jesus Christ into the holy ministry at some future date and may they both be a great blessing to the German nation! That is my hope and daily prayer.

CHAPTER IV

Our Work in the Camp

My work in the camp was of a two-fold nature -- religious and military. The religious work, of course, was the main work. And as the only chaplain in the camp, I was responsible for the religious work of the entire camp, whether American, Japanese or German, Catholic, Protestant, or Jewish.

Religious Work

The religious work among the American personnel was carried on in the same manner as in any other army camp. I conducted regular Protestant services in our little camp chapel on every Sunday morning for the entire American personnel. These were of a general nature, although the sermons preached were strictly Lutheran. That, however, does not mean that all the men attended them. Only my Lutheran men and such Protestants that were interested in religion attended these services. The Catholic boys attended their own services, which by special permission were conducted by a neighboring priest, and the Jewish boys were served by a neighboring rabbi. Holy Communion for our Lutheran boys was celebrated in a private service conducted by me while the Protestant boys attended Communion in their respective town churches. Then I also conducted Bible and confirmation classes, carried on mission work, performed marriages and burials, and the like and especially did I look after the spiritual welfare of our Lutheran boys.

But not only was I responsible for the religious work among our own men, but also for the religious work among the prisoners of war, both Japanese and German.

The religious work among the Japanese prisoners of war was certainly very difficult in view of the fact that I was not at all familiar with their language. I could not speak nor understand their language, and they could not speak and understand mine. And the few interpreters available were barely capable of speaking and understanding the simplest English. All that I could do then was to obtain and distribute Bibles and various religious literature among these prisoners. As for conducting religious services for them, I was fortunate in securing the services of an American chaplain from one of our neighboring camps, who not only was born and reared in Japan, but who also served as a missionary there for over twenty years, and who, therefore, was capable of handling the Japanese language. He was a fine Christian man of the Presbyterian faith and his preaching was very fundamental. Under my supervision and direction he conducted services for these spiritually blind Japanese once a month and also took care of their other spiritual needs.

But different it was with the religious work among the German prisoners of war. I could speak and understand their language and they mine. And so from the very beginning of this camp in June of 1943 I did carry on the religious work among these prisoners. For about a year I conducted three regular German services for them on every Sunday morning in the recreation-halls of the three different compounds. Regulations of the camp did not permit me to conduct one joint service. The first service was held at eight o'clock, the second at nine, the third at ten and then my regular English service for our American personnel at eleven o'clock. To give me ample time

to converse with the boys after the service and to go from place to place for my next service, these services naturally were short, lasting only about thirty-five minutes each. The German Lutheran Hymnal published by our Concordia Publishing House was used for the singing of the hymns and the sermons preached were strictly Lutheran gospel sermons. I, furthermore, distributed hundreds of German Bibles and New Testaments, prayer-books and other religious literature, such as Der Lutheraner, German devotional booklets and tracts of various types to them. This reading material was also placed in great quantities in public places, such as the hospital, library and reading-room, where they could be easily found and read by the prisoners. I also made regular hospital visits and on such occasions distributed religious reading material. Realizing the great need, I also tried to carry on mission work among these prisoners. I tried to gain new and regain old souls for the kingdom of heaven. Holy Communion was also celebrated from time to time, but given only to such, who were previously examined and who had fully subscribed to our Lutheran confessions. Burials of the prisoners were also conducted by me -- seven in all. Marriages, of course, I performed none, yet numerous marriages did take place within the confines of the prisoner camp. These were marriages by proxy and were generally performed by the highest ranking Nazi present. On one day alone there was a mass marriage performance of twelve individual prisoners with their German Fraeuleins at home. Legal papers made out and signed by the girls at home binding them to their future husbands were on this particular day publicly presented to the twelve respective grooms, the usual question: "Wilt thou have --- to

be thy wedded wife" was asked by the officiant and answered by the individuals, the papers binding them to their wives thousands of miles away were signed by the grooms in the presence of witnesses, and then the master of ceremonies would pronounce them husbands and wives in the name of Hitler and the German Reich. During the entire ceremony, however, no reference was made to the religious side of matrimony binding husbands and wives together "till death do them part", no prayers were spoken and no blessings of God pronounced. It was strictly a civil affair, as practised at home among the Nazis. At the same time that these twelve marriages were being performed in the quiet of the prison camp, a similar legal procedure was in progress across the ocean in the presence of witnesses and in the homes of the various brides living in Germany. And at the end of the day twelve more couples were happily married and were now looking forward to the time when they would be reunited and permitted to live together in the bond they had made betwixt themselves some years before.

Such was my religious work among the German prisoners of war during my first year in their midst. In the second year my work was slightly different due to certain changes that had been made in the spring of 1944. Acting upon my request, the War Department had now sent me two German prisoner of war chaplains, one a Catholic and the other a Protestant, to assist me in my religious work among the German prisoners. These were two fine Christian young men, well trained in the scriptures, brave soldiers of Jesus Christ and bitter enemies of Nazism. And from that day on till the closing of the camp, I worked among them only in a supervisory capacity, while these two chaplains carried on the actual

work. I made all the necessary arrangements for their services, supplied them with all the necessary material and equipment for their work, censored their sermons by request of our camp officials, held regular meetings with the chaplains and discussed religious work in general with them, helped them solve difficult problems that arose in the camp and served as a go-between between them and the proper authorities. It was purely supervisory work on my part, while the two chaplains held the services, conducted Bible classes, administered the sacraments, did the mission work, distributed religious literature, buried their own dead, in short, they performed all the ministerial functions of a fully ordained clergyman. And thus we worked together in close harmony until the closing of the camp on December 31, 1945.

Military Work

Besides the religious work, I was also expected to take part in the military work of the camp, but that, of course, on a much smaller scale. Just as any other chaplain in an American army camp had to spend some of his time with his men in the camp and out in the field, so I, too, had to be with my men part of my time and attend to paper work in the office. And then, when after the final defeat of Germany and Japan our government instituted a re-education program in all our prisoner of war camps, showing them the error of their way and trying to change their way of thinking and living, I in a small measure assisted in this work. The chief work was done by specially trained American officers and men, who were of German descent and knew the language and the nature of the German people, while I served only in the capacity of an advisor, especially in the field of religion and Christian ethics. Films and pictures of the crimes and

atrocities perpetrated by them in their concentration camps, especially German, were shown to them, magazines and papers showing and describing the same awful scenes were distributed to them in wholesale lots, lectures on American history, our form of government and the American way of life were given to them, open forums were conducted at which time various things of national and international importance were discussed, and occasionally religious services were held by their own chaplains over a loud-speaker system so they could be heard by everyone. Also some of the anti-Nazis and leading advocates of a democratic form of government took an active part in this program of re-education.

Thus I, as chaplain of the entire camp, for over two and a half years carried on the religious and military work among the American personnel and the prisoners of war, both Japanese and German. And the results - the fruits of our labors? Of that I will speak in the next chapter.

CHAPTER V

The Fruits of Our Labors

Speaking of the actual results achieved will be most difficult, as I had no way of judging what we accomplished. All that I can do is merely express my opinion on the visible results.

American

The religious results achieved with the American personnel seemed not any too encouraging. Not being confronted with any immediate danger of death, as were our boys on the front lines, many of our officers and men were not very much interested in religion and in our religious work in the camp. Even though repeatedly invited to the services and urged to attend, not only by me but also by the officers of their respective units, the majority of the men remained away from the services. Seemingly they were too preoccupied with the things of this life. Whether or not they read their Bibles and the religious magazines and tracts that I handed out to them from time to time, I, of course, cannot tell. Judging from remarks heard here and there, I am inclined to believe that at least some of the boys read them. However, there were a number of officers and men of various denominations that did attend the services quite regularly and showed their Christianity in their daily life. And especially was this the case with our Lutheran men. I am happy to say that they not only attended my services regularly, but also partook of the Lord's Supper with due frequency. They also did some mission work by bringing others to the services. Reclamations and confirmations I had some and religious interviews I had many. Quite a number of the boys came to me and privately discussed their religious problems with

me. Baptisms there were none.

Japanese

The results of my religious work among the Japanese prisoners of war were very encouraging. And here again I must speak only of the visible results. The monthly services conducted by Chaplain Wm McIlwaine of the prisoner of war camp in Huntsville, Texas, were very well attended. Out of the 500 Japanese prisoners, present in the camp, we had an average attendance of about 300. However, that does not mean that they were all interested in the true religion. As pointed out in the second chapter, approximately 95% of these were Shintoists, while only about 5% expressed their preference for the Christian religion. It could, therefore, not have been their great desire for the preaching of the Word of God that brought them out to these services in such great numbers. In my opinion it was mostly curiosity on their part. But may that be as it will, while at the services everyone present listened very attentively to the sermons and it appeared that the preaching of the gospel made a profound impression on the majority of them. And while sitting there and watching the expressions on their faces during the services, I often could not help but think of the words of the apostle Paul in Romans 1, 16 that "the gospel of Christ is a power of God unto salvation unto everyone that believeth", and was fully convinced that the Word preached "shall not return unto Him void" (Isa. 55,11). Some of it certainly will take root, grow and "bring forth fruit meet for repentance" (Matth. 3,8). Those that could read, diligently read the Bible and other religious literature. They also read it to others, who could not read. On several occasions I even found them discussing the things that they had read. I am mention-

ing all these things to show that there was a certain amount of hunger and thirst for the gospel of Christ evident among the Japanese, who had never had an opportunity before to hear it, and that this fact should move our church to send missionaries to this spiritually blind and religiously ignorant people.

Since the Japanese prisoners of war were in our midst only a short while after the unconditional surrender of their home-land, it will almost be impossible for me to give any kind of an opinion on the military or political results achieved by our program of re-education. It seemed, however, that many of them were quite favorably impressed with our democratic form of government, our freedom of speech, our system of education and with things American in general.

German

The fruits of our religious labors among the German prisoners of war were somewhat discouraging. Of course, here again I can speak only of the things that I have observed. And what have I observed in my religious work among the Germans? First of all, I observed that the attendance at our services at the very beginning was much better than later on. When the German prisoners of war first arrived at our camp and I first conducted services for them, the attendance was exceptionally good, in fact, it was far beyond my expectations. Out of the 5000 German prisoners at the camp -- and let us remember that about half of them were Catholic -- some 1500 attended my first services in all three compounds. This unusually high attendance was undoubtedly due to two things, first, they had not been in church for many years and secondly, they were anxious to hear what American chaplains had to say in religious things. As was ex-

pected, this high attendance gradually began to dwindle. From Sunday to Sunday there was a noticeable decrease in attendance. Yet -- and that was remarkable, I thought -- the attendance for quite some time did not drop to below 800. For a good many months we had an average attendance of about 1000. But then all of a sudden, in fact, in a week's time, the attendance dropped from 1000 to a mere hand-full of men, 20 to be exact. Why such a sudden change? At first I could absolutely not account for this very sudden and enormous drop in attendance, but upon close investigation of the matter, I soon found the reason for it. The first prisoners we had in the camp were the older ones, the anti-Nazis, and such that were "brought up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord" (Eph. 6,4). They naturally were still quite spiritually-minded and interested in religion, while the Nazis were not. They were enemies of Christ and of the Christian religion. Now during that particular week a mass transfer of prisoners took place. Approximately 3700 of my anti-Nazi prisoners were transferred to another camp, and in return we received about that same number of dyed in the wool Nazis. When the following Sunday came, these Nazis and enemies of Christianity naturally did not attend the services and they also threatened the others not to go. Being fearful of the consequences, many of the anti-Nazis naturally did not come. Only a little handful ignored the threats and came. To me this sudden turn of events naturally was very discouraging and disheartening. Undisturbed, however, I went on and worked even harder than before. Regular services were continued as usual. I visited the boys, spoke to them of things spiritual, and kept on inviting them to attend my services. And I am happy

to say that at the end of my first year's service in the camp, the attendance gradually rose to about 35 per Sunday. The same thing happened in the Catholic services.

Then in the spring of 1943 came the two German prisoner of war chaplains and the bulk of the religious work among the prisoners was turned over to them. And the fruits of their labors? Although they both worked very zealously and untiringly in the Lord's kingdom, the results at first were about the same. The attendance at their services improved slightly and the Protestant Bible class, conducted by their own chaplain, was attended a little more faithfully, but, in general, there was no noticeable improvement. Baptisms and confirmations there were none during the entire time that I was at the camp. The reason for that, however, was obvious. It was the practise in Germany that practically every child born was immediately baptized and later confirmed, either Protestant or Catholic, and so we had no occasion of baptizing nor confirming anyone. Reconversions and reclamations there were a few, comparatively speaking. The Bible might have been read a little more and also the religious tracts that were handed out to them periodically, but otherwise there was not much of an improvement noted in the life of the prisoners after the chaplains had taken over the work. They seemingly were not interested in the Christian religion. And so it went until May 8th when Germany surrendered unconditionally to the allies. Then, all of a sudden, there was a marked difference in the attitude and behaviour of the prisoners. Church attendance improved greatly, more interest in the Bible class was shown, there was a greater demand for Bibles and other religious literature. The reason? Germany was beaten, the dream of Nazism crushed, the spirit of the

Nazis broken, anti-Nazism rejoiced and regained the upper hand, and a great many of the boys, both Nazi and anti-Nazi, again began to think more earnestly of God and the Christian religion. The anti-Nazis no longer feared to go to church and some of the Nazis, with all their trust in Hitler gone and their hopes of world domination shattered, were again willing to put their trust in God. The rest, however, remained just as bitter against God, if not even more so, than before. God again, they would say, has turned against them and, consequently, they refused to have anything further to do with Him. But still, trusting in God's promise that "His Word shall not return unto Him void" (Isa. 55,11), I am confident that the religious seed we sowed among the German prisoners of war, whether Nazis or anti-Nazis, publicly in our sermons and privately in other ways, has brought forth at least some fruit unto eternal life, perhaps even a great deal more than I imagine. Eternity alone will reveal that.

What about the fruits of our military or political labors among the German prisoners of war? And when I say OUR military or political labors, I am not thinking so much of the small part I played in helping in the re-education program of the government, but of the work done in general by the officials of the camp in that respect. Considering the fact that this program was carried on only for a few months, I am of the opinion that the results were surprisingly good. When the films and pictures of the atrocity camps in Germany were publicly shown to all the German prisoners and when they were given descriptions of them in magazines and daily papers, many of the German prisoners, including a great many of the Nazis, were simply horrified and speechless at the terrible crimes and inhuman treatments committed by Hitler and the leading advocates of the Nazi party

at home. The greatest number of the prisoners -- and I talked to a great many of them concerning this matter -- had absolutely no knowledge of such brutal treatments in the various concentration camps. They knew of the existence of them, but not of the nature of these camps. And the result? Hundreds of them turned against Nazism and resolved to rebuild post-war Germany on entirely different principles. Post-war Germany was to be built on a sounder and a more humane foundation. And to that end hundreds of the German prisoners, including many of the Nazis, regularly attended the re-education classes and the open forums to study and discuss the future Germany. And I am sure that many of them went away from the camp with definite ideas and opinions in their minds as to what part they hope to play after their return home in the creation of a new and a better Germany. Others again remained arrogant and nazified to the very end, filled with anger and hatred against us, and still imagining themselves to be a superior people.

These were the fruits of our labors, both religious and military, at the prisoner of war camp in Hearne, Texas, as I observed them.

CHAPTER VI

Conclusion

Now the camp is closed, the prisoners of war have returned to their home-land, and I am out of the service and back home with my loved ones. And as I am sitting here and am leisurely thinking of the work I as well as other chaplains have done among the prisoners of war in this country and abroad, the thought naturally comes to me: "What possible effect may our work have on a post-war Japan and Germany"? And of that I would now yet like to speak briefly in the conclusion of this thesis.

Post-War Japan

Personally, I feel that the religious work done by us chaplains among the Japanese prisoners of war should have a great deal of influence on post-war Japan. Japan proper was and still is not a Christian nation. For centuries the people of Japan have been groping about in spiritual darkness and were told to worship the Emperor as their God. Now the emperor no longer is the sole ruler of Japan and the God of their nation, as formerly believed. In fact, Hirohito even admitted to his people recently that he was not a God. Naturally the people are confused and disillusioned at the present time, wondering who their God is. Now here at our camp as well as in all other Japanese prisoner of war camps here in America, these prisoners have heard and read about the true God and of Jesus Christ as the Saviour of the world. And when these prisoners get home, religious matters will certainly also be discussed. And when they are, I feel confident, that some of these prisoners will come out boldly for Christ and advocate the Christian religion. They may serve as a leaven, which in the course of time may leaven the

whole lump. Great things may come out of the little religious training these prisoners received here in America during their imprisonment. Out of the little mustard seed sown here, God, in due time, might develop a large tree with branches extending throughout the length and breadth of the Japanese empire. And, I believe, that right now when religious conditions in Japan are at a stand-still, we could greatly assist the cause of Christianity in that land, if we could and would send a great many missionaries to that country. To me that country seems to be ripe for a bountiful harvest at the present time, when the people of Japan know not which way to turn religiously.

The same thing also seems to be true in political matters. Politically, too, she is standing at the cross-roads, and the little training we have been able to give these prisoners in democratic principles and in the American way of life is bound to bear fruit and bring these democratic ideals to the attention of their people at home. Certainly, much good could come also of the political work we did among the Japanese prisoners of war in this country.

Post-War Germany

How about post-war Germany? My hopes there are not as great as with Japan. I am confident that the religious work we have done among the German prisoners of war was not altogether in vain, in fact, I feel that it may have a great deal to do with the re-Christianizing of post-war Germany. However, the religious conditions within Germany at the present time are different from that of Japan. Japan never had the gospel, while Germany did. And since Germany already had the gospel, I fear that she will not so readily accept it again. Their religious days

are over, I am afraid. Then too, the Germans are already blaming God for having lost both of the last wars and are, therefore, very bitter against Him and the Christian religion. Even in this country we had a very difficult time convincing the prisoners of the value of Christianity, how much more so will it then be in their home-land during the critical years that will surely follow her as a result of this devastating war. And in view of these things I do not believe that these few Christian men we had in our German prisoner of war camps will be able to accomplish much in religious matters after their return home. Of course, there are still millions of good Christian people left in Germany, who together with these prisoners of war will diligently foster the cause of Christianity in post-war Germany, but even then it seems to me that the odds are still too overwhelmingly against them. Nazism has already ruined too many German people spiritually. Yet, I believe, that some good will certainly come out of the religious work we did among the German prisoners of war. And especially will this be the case, if the American churches in general and our Lutheran Church in particular will put forth a concerted effort in helping them to reestablish Christianity in their country. I do not advocate sending missionaries over there, at least not many, for they will not receive them in the proper spirit. As former enemies, the Germans as such would look upon them with suspicion and would, therefore, not cooperate with them. I am here not thinking so much of the Christian people but of the rank and file of the Germans. But what I do recommend is, first, to befriend them in these difficult post-war years by sending them food and clothing and other materials and thus help them

get back on their feet, and secondly, to send them thousands of good religious and theological books and periodicals, especially to the clergy, and millions of dollars in money to help them rebuild and erect new churches, schools, seminaries, and publishing houses. Another effective way of helping them reestablish Christianity in their country would be by building a large radio station somewhere in Germany over which the gospel of Jesus Christ could then be preached unto millions of their people at one and the same time in their own language. This would undoubtedly accomplish much more for Germany spiritually than anything else we could do for her. May God in His mercy make our hearts willing to thus help Germany save herself from utter spiritual ruin!

And politically I also hold very little hope for post-war Germany, and that in spite of all our training and re-educating them in our prisoner of war camps. Surely, our work along those lines will not be entirely in vain, but what will these few, comparatively speaking, be able to accomplish against such overwhelming odds? True, Germany was defeated and Nazism crushed, but do not forget that the spirit of Nazism still lives in Germany. And I am afraid that in the years to come, Nazism will again raise her ugly head and gain the upper hand. If not Nazism, then some other ism that will be just as dangerous and detrimental to the peace of the world as Nazism was. My prayer simply is: May God in His love guide and direct the hearts and minds of the German people in the creation of a new, respectable, peace-loving, and Christian post-war Germany!

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