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III

Finally, a Christian preacher's faithfulness to his God must determine the limitations of his preaching. God has given to the preacher very definite, explicit instructions. When Jesus sent out His twelve disciples, He said unto them, "What I tell you in darkness, that speak ye in light; and what ye hear in the ear, that preach ye upon the housetops" (Matt. 10:27). Before ascending into heaven Jesus said to His disciples, "Go ye into all the world and preach the Gospel to every creature" (Mark 16:15). Again He said, "Ye shall receive power after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you; and ye shall be witnesses unto Me both in Jerusalem and in all Judea and in Samaria and unto the uttermost part of the earth" (Acts 1:8). Through the Apostle Paul, the Lord has given such explicit directions as these to the preacher: "I charge thee therefore before God and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick and the dead at His appearing and His kingdom: preach the Word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all long-suffering and doctrine" (2 Tim. 4:1-2); "hold fast the form of sound words, which thou hast heard of me, in faith and love which is in Christ Jesus" (2 Tim. 1:13). Preaching "repentance toward God and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ" serves the purpose of Christian preaching and has the promise of not being done in vain.

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The Development of Home Missions in North America

F. C. STREUFERT, Secretary of Missions

(Written at the Request of Synod's Centennial Committee)

As we look back upon the century of Synod's history that will soon be completed and think of the developments both in the history of our country and of our Church, we stand in wonderment. We marvel at the tremendous changes in every phase of activity, be it in the social, in the economic, in the political, or in the scientific field. It was a century that saw at its beginning the westward trek of the pioneer by oxcart

and by covered wagon and at the close the use of the streamlined train, the auto, the airplane, the radio, and television. But in the midst of this ever-changing panorama there remained the unchanging Christ with the eternal verities, firm and unmovable for all ages to come.

At the beginning of the century our forefathers, bereft of the pure ministry of the Word and Sacrament by faith, left their homeland in quest of religious liberty. They came to the shores of our country. Little did they realize the primitive conditions that obtained, the hardships and trials they were to endure. But they remained to pray, to labor, to preach the Gospel, to build the Lord's kingdom.

THE EARLY BEGINNINGS

As soon as the Saxons had settled in Perry County, Missouri, and the Franconians in Michigan, they immediately set about to build their churches and their schools. And they were not content to look after their own spiritual needs only. They immediately sought the spiritual welfare of others also. In this spirit they erected the first seminary at Altenburg, Missouri, for the training of pastors and teachers. Soon they extended their work into the near-by territory. Congregations and mission stations were opened everywhere. In a very short time the number of congregations was doubled. In ten years the number of pastors had increased from 19 to 86; the number of congregations affiliated with Synod, from 30 to 115; and the number of souls, from 4,099 to 20,501.

It is interesting to note that the Saxons reached out not only to the scattered Lutherans but also to the unchurched. Pastor O. H. Walther writes: "An important and very pleasant task for me was the instruction of sixteen adults formerly of the Reformed confession. . . . I received them into the Lutheran Church by confirmation on the Fourteenth Sunday after Trinity in the presence of my colleagues and the congregation." (*Ebenezer*, page 17.) The Christian day school was considered to be a necessity from the very beginning. The first legacy which Synod received was for the *Christiannen-Schule*. That the pastors and members of the respective congregations took such a great interest in the development of God's kingdom was to be expected since it was one of the chief purposes of Synod when it was organized. The

joint extension of the kingdom of God, the training of ministers and teachers for service in the Evangelical Lutheran Church, the distribution of Bibles, of religious periodicals, and of other books were mentioned as the main objects for the organization of Synod. In the very first Synodical convention, held in April 1847, Pastor A. Craemer brought missions to the attention of the synodical body. The matter was thoroughly discussed, and at the close of the convention it was resolved to elect a Mission Board to take care of heathen (Indian) missions. A committee was appointed to outline the instructions for the Board of Missions. In 1848 the following were elected to be the Board of Missions: Pastor H. Fick, chairman; Pastor A. Craemer, secretary; Mr. F. W. Barthel, treasurer. And that all be done in a systematic manner, the Board of Missions received detailed instructions concerning the work to be done. The chairman was instructed not only to supervise the mission stations within Synod but also to give attention to the organization of new stations, and this was to be done, if at all possible, through mission colonies. The secretary was instructed to carry on the correspondence with mission institutions in Europe and with friends particularly interested in the development of missions. He was instructed to submit an annual report, gather statistics, and prepare these for publication. The treasurer was to receive the funds sent by the congregations and he was to disburse these upon orders given by the President. He was instructed to enter all receipts and disbursements, to give receipts, and to prepare the necessary documents, and to report at the annual convention of Synod.

APPOINTMENT OF "VISITORS"

To improve the work of missions Synod appointed so-called *Besucher*. The duties of these "visitors" were to visit German settlements and to locate Lutherans that might be in these settlements. And coming to the various homes of these families, he was to inquire whether they came from Germany or from the eastern part of the United States, how long they had already been in this country, whether the fathers and mothers of those homes were really Lutherans, how many children there were, and how many others lived within these homes, and whether all were baptized, and how

many were already confirmed. They were, however, not to restrict their efforts to the German settlements. The "visitor" was also to visit the English-speaking colonies. He was to ascertain whether these settlements were visited by itinerant sectarian pastors, whether false preachers came to preach to them, and whether the Lutheran settlers also attended these services. The "visitors" were to make a thoroughgoing canvass. They were to inquire whether there were any of the Catholic, of the Reformed, or of the *Unierte* faith, and whether these were visited by pastors of their confession. They were also to inquire whether the Lutheran settlers had Bibles, Catechisms, prayer books, devotional books, and whether they used them. Then, in order that the "visitor" might conduct his work effectively, he was given a brief on missionary methods. He was advised how to make the proper approach when he visited the individual families. He should not create the impression that he was giving them a rigid examination, but he was to carry on a conversation and in this way ascertain their spiritual standing, admonish them, comfort them, and encourage them as it should be necessary.

The "visitor" was to encourage the Lutheran settlers to organize and to call a pastor, provided the number were large enough to do this. If the number were still quite small, the "visitor" was to encourage them to affiliate with one of the near-by Lutheran congregations. The "visitor" was also to admonish fathers and mothers to look after the spiritual needs of their children. And during his stay he was to gather the children and teach them the Catechism, Bible history, etc.

The "visitor" was to take with him literature for distribution. He was to make careful entries into his diary concerning the number of people in the settlement, concerning the surroundings, the personal attitude of such as were one in faith with us. He was instructed to report to the President of Synod at least every two months.

MISSION COLONIES

In 1848 the Board of Home Missions came before the synodical convention and made definite recommendations concerning the conduct of missions. All were agreed that special efforts were to be made to look into mission possibilities and to open such missions with so-called mission colonies.

Already in 1845 we read in *Der Lutheraner*, Vol. I, No. 23, that a mission colony landed on June 9 of that year. This group came from Germany. The colony settled in Michigan in order to open up missions among the Indians. Dr. Walther writes of this endeavor: "This is a very unique undertaking. Here the missionary does not go alone to the heathen people, but he is accompanied by a group of farmers and professionists, who by their conduct will give an example to the heathen Indians. In this way this group expects to support the preaching of the Word." Rev. Craemer was at the head of this undertaking. Craemer was selected and sent by Loehe, and four other young men (coming from the theological training school of Pastor Loehe) came with him as pastors and teachers to serve Lutherans that had settled in Ohio and in Michigan. Dr. Walther said: "Sie haben zwar keine gelehrte theologische Universitaetsbildung empfangen. Sie sind aber ohne Zweifel von dem gediegenen, rechtschaffenen Pfarrer Loehe in der christlichen Lehre so unterrichtet, dass sie tuechtig sind, auch andere zu lehren, und das ist die Hauptsache."

When in 1848 an extension of Indian Missions was brought to the attention of Synod, Oregon was designated as the place where such activities might be begun. An able candidate or an experienced pastor who could get away from his present charge was to be called. He was to live at St. Louis. St. Louis was chosen because it was the last point west, and because here the Government had its Commission on Indian Affairs. Then, too, it was stated that Indian chiefs came here quite frequently. It was for the missionary to keep in close touch with the Commission on Indian Affairs and to meet with the Indian chiefs in order to gain their confidence. In this way it was hoped that the missionary, together with a group of Christians, could eventually organize a mission colony and advance to the Oregon Territory.

It was deemed advisable to open a mission among the Indians by way of a mission colony. It was believed to be advantageous for the mission development if Christians with their Christian life could influence the heathen world about them and also counteract the evil influences of the sectarian churches, the questionable piety of some of the sectarian denominations, which had long ago been fostered among the

Indians. Not an Indian tribe near by was chosen for opening a mission, but a tribe in the far West, in the State of Oregon, on the shores of the Pacific. It was believed that if a mission could gain a foothold on the Pacific, it would be a stepping-stone for the development of missions on the many islands of the Pacific and of the pagan countries beyond the seas. In 1852 Pastor Loehe announced that Pastor Fleischmann and Mr. Bonetti were planning to bring a mission colony to California and to begin missions among the Chinese of that State. To enable them to carry on this great work, a plea for help was sent to the Mission House in Dresden. They were requested to send two missionaries. But finally, when there was much delay, they were agreed that little assistance for their undertaking could be expected from without. And they resolved that they themselves with the help of God must find ways and means to carry on this work. A Synod-wide appeal was therefore made. The Christians, one and all, were requested "to make this mission endeavor their own." *Missionsstunden* were recommended so that the Christians, being better informed on missions, might be found willing to fill the mission treasury (which at that time had a balance of only \$160).

Synod adopted the recommendations of the Board of Home Missions. But the hopes to take a mission colony and transplant it to Oregon were not realized. An Indian war made it impossible. In 1849 it was reported that the war with the Indians had been concluded in Oregon. The local office on Indian Affairs, however, decreed that there were no possibilities of opening missions among the Indians in Oregon, nor in Missouri, nor in the near-by territory of Iowa. The Kickapoo Indians, so it was reported, were altogether opposed to missions. In the convention of 1852 the *Besucher* reported on his activities in the eastern part of Wisconsin, in Northern Illinois, and in a few places in Indiana and Ohio. In Wisconsin he had found very few Lutherans, and many of those whom he had found were indifferent to the Lutheran Church. But he nevertheless had numerous opportunities to meet with brethren of our faith, to preach to them, and to baptize their children.

In order to take care of the Lutherans in widely scattered areas, particularly in the Western settlements, Synod

called additional "visitors." Pastors Buenger and Ernst were appointed, but at the next convention it was reported that they were unable to carry out the commission given them. New Orleans was also designated as a place that the "visitors" ought to survey. "Visitor" J. Graebner had little success in Michigan. When he came to Lansing, he found few among the professed Lutherans that took a real interest in the Word of God and the Lutheran Church.

EVANGELISTS

In 1857 Pastor Aug. Selle delivered an essay on the calling of evangelists into the service of the Church. The itinerant pastor attached to groups of congregations could not efficiently and with regularity minister to the spiritual needs of the families that settled in faraway territories. Vividly Pastor Selle described the wave of immigration that had literally flooded the country. He stated that in 1857 140,000 immigrants had landed in New York within eight months. The majority came from Germany. He stated that in Minnesota, where only a few years ago settlements had been opened, now one German settlement adjoined the other. Even so it was in Iowa. Of the immigrants many had gone to California, to Kansas, to Nebraska, and to Washington. Pastor Selle asked: "Whose duty is it to follow these settlers? Dare we leave it to the sectarians to serve these immigrants? Dare we postpone action only to come later and find but a scattered few? We believe that these people can be reached if we call evangelists. The evangelist shall not be tied to an individual congregation or to a group of congregations, but his duty shall be to go about to organize Christian congregations wherever this is possible." Pastor Selle, however, emphasized that the evangelist must be carefully chosen. He must be a man of robust health, a young man filled with love to his Lord and God and full of compassion and zeal to win sinners for Christ and His kingdom, a man who would cheerfully take over this work. It was considered a matter of course that he have the necessary theological background and be able to meet *die mancherlei Geister*; he must be tactful, able to adjust himself to conditions as they obtained and to the tasks before him.

With their minds set to gather the Lutheran immigrants

and to minister to their spiritual needs, a Church Directory was published in 1850. This directory contained also a word of warning against the dangers of sectarian churches. To extend the work of missions, Synod then resolved to send out two colporteurs, one to New York City and the other to New Orleans. The duties of these colporteurs were very definitely outlined. It was, however, impossible to carry out this resolution because suitable men to do this work could not be found.

After it had valiantly but unsuccessfully tried to establish mission colonies in different sections of the country, after it had failed to find qualified colporteurs and found that the itinerant-missionary policy did not work out satisfactorily, Synod pointed out that missions and mission expansion is the duty of every pastor, of every congregation, and of every member in its own midst, and that it is the duty of every pastor and of every congregation to extend the work particularly to the adjacent territory. It was pointed out that missions cannot therefore be considered the task of pastors only specifically called for this purpose; all must share in this work; and if all shared therein, the mission treasury would be very much relieved. It was further pointed out that this new missionary policy, however, would be in the interest also of the newly established mission congregations, inasmuch as these new mission parishes would then not be established in faraway, isolated places. It was believed that the young mission stations were in need of close communication with the mother church. This was the underlying reason for the policy that our missionaries in pioneer days did not venture out upon the endless prairies, but settled in woodlands and along water courses, where they found better shelter against the inclemency of the weather. It was the policy of our missionaries never to give up as hopeless any station, no matter how few their hearers were. This practice of being faithful in small things was wonderfully blessed by the Lord. In many localities where fifty to sixty years ago the itinerant preacher would gather about him a few hearers in a small room, there are today large, magnificent churches. (Pfothenhauer, in *Ebenezer*, p. 336.)

Already in 1851 all pastors in Synod were encouraged to direct their attention to the distribution of tracts and Chris-

tian literature. They were always to carry these with them. To encourage pastors to do this, Synod resolved that the missionaries get this literature and charge it to Synod.

ORGANIZING ENGLISH CONGREGATIONS IN 1857

"What measures can and should Synod adopt if the necessity arises to organize English congregations?" was the question ventilated at the synodical convention in 1857. Pastor Biewend delivered a long essay on this topic. The following resolutions were finally adopted: We are not minded to encourage the congregations to rush into the English language; we would rather admonish our German Lutheran Christians to do all in their power to teach their children their mother tongue with the means at hand (sending them to the German Christian day school and using the German language within the homes), so that they might know their mother tongue sufficiently to understand the Word of God in this language in public services and in the books of devotion which are offered by our Church. Yet we believe it to be our sacred duty to organize English congregations as soon as it is apparent that there is a sufficient number of members for the organization of an English congregation, members that understand the English language much better than the German. Synod also agreed that the respective mother churches ought to give real assistance to such newly organized English congregations. Parents and experienced members of a church whose children are in need of the services of an English church ought to join such a church even if they for their own person would not be in need of it.

SALARIES

It is strange to find that when we peruse the history of missions in the early days and of the following decades, no references are made to the salaries of missionaries. We hear of no complaints though the funds to carry on were not always available. It might be interesting to read how Synod in 1854 earnestly admonished the congregations to do their duty to support Synod and its work. We read:

Die Synode sah sich veranlasst, die Nachlaessigkeit und Traegheit vieler Gemeinden im Beitragen zu den Beduerfnissen der Synode ueberhaupt und unserer beiden Lehranstalten insonderheit ernstlich zu ruegen. . . . Es wurde wieder-

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holt bemerkt, dass die Schuld gewiss auch zum Teil auf die betreffenden Prediger falle, indem sie ihre Gemeinden nicht ernstlich und fleissig genug dazu ermahnten und anleiteten.

Mehrere Deputierte sprachen sich dahin aus, dass sie es auch als ihre Pflicht erkannten, ihren Predigern in der Ermahnung ihrer Gemeinden beizustehen, damit es besser werde. Einer derselben meinte, dass die Gemeinden wohl nicht wuessten, wie sehr es mangle, und dass sie daher mit dem wirklichen Bedarf besser bekannt gemacht werden sollten.

Der Praeses erwiderte, es lasse sich bei den vielen und mancherlei Beduerfnissen die Summe des Bedarfs so genau nicht bestimmen. Wem aber das Gedeihen der Kirche am Herzen liege, der koenne wohl wissen und erfahren, wie gross der Mangel ueberall sei. Es sei eine Schande, wie wenig manche Gemeinden beitruegen. *Waehrend einige Gemeinden fast ueber Vermoegen taeten, steckten andere in stinkendem Geize und zeigten eine unverantwortliche Gleichgueltigkeit gegen das Heil und Gedeihen der Kirche.* Diese ihre grosse Undankbarkeit gegen das ihnen so reichlich, lauter und rein dargebotene Wort und Sakrament werde Gott sicherlich damit strafen, dass er ihnen dasselbe wiederum entzoege, wenn sie nicht beizeiten Busse taeten. Die Gemeinden sollten bedenken, wer kaerglich saee, der werde auch kaerglich ernten; wer aber saee im Segen, der werde auch ernten im Segen.

CHANGE OF MISSION POLICY

Until 1853 Synod conducted Home Missions, but when in that year Synod was divided into four Districts, each District was called upon to conduct Home Missions in its respective territory. Then the policy that "every pastor be a missionary" was stressed to a far higher degree. And it spelled success. The pastors were now on the lookout more than ever before to advance to near-by fields. Let us only briefly look at the developments in some areas as pastors and congregations looked about in their community and opened a new mission. In many instances the beginning was made with the opening of a Christian day school. After a Christian day school had been established and the number of families increased in the vicinity, Lenten and Advent services were introduced for the families living in the area involved. Services were held at the schoolhouse on some evening during the week. Later services were held on Sunday afternoons, the pastor of the mother church serving. And when in the course of a year or two the mission developed, a pastor was called, often without the financial assistance of the District Home

Mission Board. Frequently, however, the mother church gave a helping hand. In this way our new missions in the larger cities, as Chicago, St. Louis, Milwaukee, Cleveland, Detroit, and in other places were privileged to see marked developments. Having the mother church sponsor the newly opened mission always proved to be a real incentive and encouragement not only to the members of the mother church, but also to the Christians and the unchurched in the new mission fields as well.

After the organization of separate Districts, Synod continued to carry on all other missions at home and abroad, such as the Deaf and Blind, the European, the South American, and the Foreign Missions in India and in China. Missions among the Negroes in this country and in Africa were and are conducted by the Synodical Conference. Home Missions, however, spread with marked rapidity to every State of the country, from the Canal Zone to provinces of Canada and to Alaska, from ocean to ocean, and to the Hawaiian Islands. And note the various phases of Home Mission developments. In 1932 Synod by resolution transferred the work of the Foreign Tongue, the Jewish, the Indian, the Immigrant, and the Seamen's Missions to the Home Mission Department of the respective Districts in which the work was done. The Foreign Tongue Missions are gradually disappearing. The younger generations speak the English language. The majority of our foreign-tongue churches are for the time being bilingual. For obvious reasons only in Mexico the Foreign Tongue Home Missions have a future. The triennial convention in 1932 authorized the Board of Directors to appoint a secretary of missions. As such he was to be an advisory member to the Board of Foreign Missions, to the Board of European Missions, to the Board of Missions to Deaf and Blind, to the Board for Home Missions in South America, and to the Board for Home Missions in North America. By resolution of Synod he was appointed executive secretary of Synod's Board of Home Missions and of the Board of South American Missions.

INSTITUTIONAL MISSIONS

Since 1896 missionaries have visited the institutions of mercy and the penal institutions in their respective Districts. More than 500 full-time and part-time workers and volunteers

were active in this phase of missions in 1944. — Summer schools, vacation Bible schools, part-time religious instruction, afforded added opportunities to teach the young. — Preaching missions were held in many centers in order to bring the Gospel of Christ to the masses. These preaching missions were usually held in our churches, but also in centrally located public halls or in tents. During the past war Trailer Missions were brought to the fore. The special purpose of a trailer mission is to bring the teachings of the Lutheran Church to the attention of the unchurched in a promising community where we are not represented. Or if we are represented in a given community, the trailer equipment may serve to bring the local congregation to the attention of the people of the community. Trailer missions may also be a means of bringing the Gospel to scattered Lutherans in isolated territories. The equipment of the trailer missions includes a tent, folding chairs, sound amplifiers, movie projector, sound films, strip film projector, mimeograph, camp stove, house trailer, an automobile, and a crew of at least two men. The radio through the Lutheran Hour, KFUD, and many other stations that granted time to our pastors has paved the way and opened many opportunities to lead men and sinners to Christ.

MISSIONS, COLLEGES, UNIVERSITIES

Missions are conducted in nonsynodical institutions of learning, in nurses' training schools, in colleges, and in universities. A vast program to reach out to thousands of students has been developed by the District Home Mission Boards under the guidance and leadership of Synod's Student Service Commission. Eleven colleges and universities, which have a total enrollment of more than 53,000 students, have full-time student pastors. In addition, 419 pastors give part-time service. Approximately 6,500 students and faculty members are being served. Excellent literature for the student pastor is offered. Profitable meetings are held annually by student pastors under the guidance of the Student Service Commission.

MISSIONS CONFERENCES

MISSIONARIES' CONFERENCES

Missions conferences are held annually excepting in the year of Synod's triennial convention. Representatives of the District Home Mission Boards meet to discuss their mutual

problems. Missionaries' conferences are held at regular intervals in nearly all of the synodical Districts. The discussions of practical topics referring to missionary methods and the problems of individual missionaries proved to be a real encouragement to all missionaries participating.

THE TIME OF DEPRESSION AND MISSIONS

Much has been said and written on the depression days of the thirties. But praised be the Lord, those were days for reflection, for a restudy and revaluation of the work done and for a careful survey of new fields and new mission opportunities. Numerous barren fields were closed; others were consolidated. And yet even in those days of stress the Word was not bound; the usual number of new stations were opened annually. We put our house in order and were then ready to do even greater things for the Lord. In spite of the depression there was no retrogression. No missionaries were discharged. But the number of graduates which could for financial reasons not be placed permanently mounted from year to year.

THE CANDIDATE SITUATION

At one time nearly 400 candidates stood idle in the market place for a longer period of time. Not that there was nothing for them to do. All about us souls were dying and going down to eternal perdition. We had mission opportunities everywhere. Realizing this stern fact, the Fiscal Conference established the Candidate Fund to aid District Home Mission Boards and congregations to support candidates in their midst. And what a boon this was to the mission expansion program! In 1938 alone more than 250,000 calls were made by candidates supported by the Candidate Fund and by the District Home Mission Boards. Never before were so many adults gained for membership classes. Never before was there such enthusiasm also on the part of the members to go out into the highways and compel them to come in. Never before were there so many house-to-house canvasses made. Many congregations took on a new lease on life because of the consecrated assistance given their overburdened pastors by the candidates. We realized anew that many of the fields already occupied offer the best mission opportunities, particularly in the populous urban and rural centers. The field fully equipped

with a church, a school, and a parish house, with the organizations for the youth, for men and women, with a day school and a Sunday school, offers an incentive to the unchurched to heed the invitation extended, while new fields far away can at the beginning offer little to attract the fancies of a stranger.

But as we just about emerged from the depression and its difficulties and were coming back to normalcy, on came the most serious conflict the world has ever witnessed.

WORLD WAR II AND HOME MISSIONS

We trembled. Nearly 400 candidates not permanently placed were awaiting a definite call. "Oh, ye of little faith!" said the Lord. We were dismayed. But soon we were to understand why the Lord gave such a large number of pastors and teachers. In the days of stress God quietly prepared his prophets that they might be ready to heed the call in the hour of need. And how quickly did the emergency come. More than 115,000 of our young men were called into the armed forces. 235 pastors entered chaplaincies in the Army and the Navy; 85 took up the duties of pastors in service centers. These together with a thousand key pastors followed our men serving under the Colors to the camp, to the battle front, to the hospital. One by one the candidates stepped into the fields vacated by chaplains and by pastors going to service centers, and into newly established mission fields. And the Lord in a most marvelous way provided the means to support them. Due to the war situation there were upheavals also at home the like of which none had ever experienced. Hundreds of thousands of our fellow citizens, among them thousands of fellow Christians, were suddenly uprooted and carried to the far-flung war-created defense projects, often into areas where our Church was not represented. The Board of Home Missions co-operating with the National Advisory Emergency Planning Council, which was created to advise in the many emergencies and developments owing to the war situation, followed with a staff of about 50 pastors, graduates, and student vicars to conserve and keep our members and their families with Christ and His Church. This wartime missions and conservation program made it necessary to erect chapels and places for meetings. In a number of areas this wartime

missions and conservation effort blossomed forth and advanced to permanency. There are still some that will follow. Others are destined to be abandoned after complete demobilization has been effected.

PEACE — POSTWAR PLANS FOR HOME MISSIONS

Plans are now being made for a progressive, systematic, nation-wide mission expansion program. Looking to the future, to the return of the chaplains and pastors in service centers to regular duty; considering the increased enrollment at our colleges and seminaries and the fields which are ripe unto harvest; and considering that the Day of Judgment is at hand, we dare not tarry, we must make ready that all of the men the Lord will place at our disposal will go out to possess the land also in the Home Mission field. For Home Missions are, after all, the most important, the very foundation, the very life line of missions everywhere.

Standing on the threshold of a new century, the Board for Home Missions in deepest gratitude gives all glory and honor to the Lord, and to the Lord alone, for the untold blessings He has placed upon his messengers as they individually and jointly carried out the Great Commission. The work, however, and the task placed upon us is not ended. There are still untold numbers about us without Jesus Christ, without hope, and without salvation. We must therefore continue.

The Board for Home Missions is therefore about to break ground and enter upon an intensive systematic nation-wide Home Mission expansion program. May it please the Lord to instill a greater zeal, an earnest passion, for souls, a live interest in missions in every District, in every circuit, and in every congregation. May the suggestions of the Board for Home Missions materialize. A careful systematic survey of every city, town, and hamlet, of every rural area, is suggested. The relative importance of the respective fields is to be established, and the fields for operation and for the expansion of the work of the Lord are to be judiciously chosen.

In order to unify the work of Home Missions, to strengthen and develop it, a technical, professional magazine, a trade journal, *Missions Magazine*, will be published. This magazine shall be the mouthpiece of Synod's Board of Home Missions, of the District Home Mission Boards, and of the missionaries.

Mutual problems, missionary methods, church publicity, church finances, and such other matters in which mission boards, missionaries, and mission stations are mutually interested may be discussed.

Once more looking over the past century in Home Missions, one cannot deny that it was indeed a century of progress, of development, of advancement. Our forefathers were by no means idle and asleep. They were ever up and doing and alert also in missionary methods, leaving nothing undone and untried to win souls for Christ and His kingdom. For the first half of the past century mission work was nearly exclusively done through the medium of the German language as the fathers looked after the spiritual needs of the vast throngs that migrated from German-speaking countries. But since World War I immigration from German-speaking countries ceased. Since then real efforts were made to reach out to the unchurched of the English-speaking groups, and today there is but a sprinkling of congregations using the German language only.

"Hitherto the Lord hath helped us." Praised be His holy name!

St. Louis, Mo.

