

“Reflections” on the World Mission Development in the Wisconsin Synod

By Edgar H.A. Hoenecke

You have kindly invited me to address you once more during this 19th Mission Seminar, although I had spoken my farewell to the Seminary community at our seminar over a year ago. In view of the definite date of my retirement next month you have asked me to present my remarks under the title *Reflections on the World Mission Development in the Wisconsin Synod*.

Much valuable material has been published recently on the history of our Wisconsin Synod and also on its mission history. I may be able to add very little that is new to you.

Be that as it may, I have been asked to present this paper and I will do my best to restrict myself to material that is of interest and value to you. To achieve this I have divided my reflections on Wisconsin's world mission development into three topics. They are:

- I. Reflections on the Struggle for Greater Mission Emphasis
- II. Reflections on the Important Inter-relationship between the Theological Seminary and World Missions
- III. Reflections on the Future of Our World Mission Program

I. Reflections on the Struggle for Greater Mission Emphasis

With no pretense of doing an exhaustively thorough piece of work on the subject, I would like to refresh your memory with a short summary of some of the highlights of this struggle for greater mission emphasis and some of the factors and forces which resisted its earlier implementation. This is important because I am convinced that the long lack of this Scripturally enjoined emphasis on sharing the Good News in Christ in our synodical program had an enervating and crippling effect on the development of our Synod. Who would deny that the emphasis during the past three decades on faithful obedience to God's Word, not only in matters of teaching, but also in sharing the faithful Word in all the world has had a rejuvenating effect on our synodical body, causing an astute observer, Dr. Hermann Sasse of Australia, to exclaim: "*Die Wisconsinssynode ist im Aufbluehen* (unfolding and flourishing)!" Bear with me, if I give way to the uncontrollable urge to draw a parallel between our Synod and Sarah, the wife of Abraham, when the Lord had promised him that she would have children, and Abraham exclaimed, "Shall Sarah that is ninety years old, bear a child?"

The Lord has performed this miracle in our Wisconsin Synod! God has led our Synod wonderfully from the beginning. Let us bear in mind that virtually all our fathers who were led by the Spirit to found the Synod in 1850 were *Zoeglinge* (trainees) of the pious German mission societies whose members were imbued with the spirit of missions. It was their zeal for bringing Christ to all the world that led them to send missionaries at great personal sacrifice also to America. The story of these dedicated pastors and lay people will always be of fascinating interest and inspiration to all who love the Lord and the souls for whom He died.

These mission house trainees brought the mission spirit with them to the new world and many made serious efforts to bring the Gospel also to the heathen Indians.

They had been assigned to certain American synods and localities also to gather the believers into congregations and to serve them as pastors. When the unrest of the "Indian Wars" in the thirties and forties frustrated their efforts to work among the Indians, these pastors found more than enough to occupy their time and strength in serving their congregations and in traveling, usually on foot, to outlying settlements to extend the work. Under these circumstances the concern for reaching the Indians and also those of other national origins, easily became a matter of secondary importance and was put off for a better day.

Still, there were those—Prof. J. P. Koehler calls them the “mission brethren”—who kept prodding the conscience of their brothers about the urgency of missions among the Indians. They could point out that the Indian mission work which had been begun in the Saginaw Valley of Michigan by pastors trained under Pfarrer Wilhelm Loehe at Neuendettelsau in the late 1840’s had by 1856 forged westward into the Minnesota Territory that achieved statehood in 1858.

It was customary for the Wisconsin congregations to send annual support to the German mission societies for work in other world areas. In 1868 this practice was dropped with the severance of relations, but \$500 was still sent annually to the Hermannsburg mission house. This also came to an end in 1876 when Pastor Chr. Drewes, the former mission director at Hermannsburg, was sent to America to work among the Indians. The Synod’s fathers asked him to explore Indian mission possibilities along the Pacific Railroad to the West Coast, giving him the \$500 normally sent to Hermannsburg. They also asked him to survey settlements of Lutherans on his journey. When Drewes reached California and found a number of such settlements, he decided to work there, and the first heathen mission enterprise of the 26 year-old Wisconsin Synod died aborning.

The founding of the Synodical Conference in 1872 within four years led to the beginning of a joint mission venture among the black people in the southern states to give active expression to the confessional unity. Even though this mission venture was not under the direct control of the Wisconsin Synod, it did offer an opportunity to carry on a type of heathen mission.

The “mission brethren” continued their urging for the Synod to undertake its own heathen mission, but the opportunity did not come until 1883 when President Johannes Bading included the suggestion in his presidential report that a commission be appointed to “look into the existing mission societies doing work among the Indians and to find one to which the Synod could lend its support.”

The commission returned with the report that no society of this kind had been found. Thereupon the Synod instructed the commission “to look for young men of true piety who would be willing and able, according to human judgment, to devote themselves to the service of the mission among the heathen.” Accordingly, three young men, John Plocher, George Adascheck and Paul Mayerhoff, were enrolled at Northwestern in the late ’80s and completed their seminary course by 1893. In the meantime, a field had also been found among the Apaches of Arizona and the first two tenderfoot missionaries were commissioned and on their way to remote San Carlos by October. “A rutted wagon road and the military telegraph line were the only avenues of contact with the outside world” (From *Continuing in His Word*, p 232).

It becomes quite apparent from the record and, more so, from the lack of records and reports, that the Indian mission venture did not meet with general acclaim in the Synod. Prof. J. P. Koehler reports this in his history:

There was something not entirely sound about Synod’s heathen mission endeavor, namely this, that it was said that a church is not living up to its mission unless it engages in heathen mission work according to the Lord’s Great Commission, “Go ye into all the world and preach the Gospel to every creature.” That idea is dogmatism with a streak of pietism, and it provoked the criticism of Prof. Adolf Hoenecke. And in distinction from the mission houses abroad, the tackling of the work in Arizona was unintelligent in that the prospective missionaries were not given adequate training at the college or the seminary. A further mistake was to train young men who were still unknown quantities in this inadequate way and then to put them on their own in strange surroundings which were equally strange to their superiors. These mistakes, outside of being a part of the general slipshod management, also arose out of the lukewarm attitude of Synod’s leadership that dreaded the added cost to the budget. But the constituency showed enthusiasm for the mission undertaking and so the “mission brethren” had to be given free rein.—As it was, the same “mission brethren” were the very ones who already did more than their share for Synod’s institutions! But their dogmatizing [sic] about the mission principle, to wit, that heathen mission is the best spur to the church’s home endeavors, remained only a pious slogan at best. (pp 198–199)

It is deplorable that the Wisconsin Synod thus sought to rationalize its indifference toward heathen mission, especially at this time when the negotiations with the Minnesota and Michigan synods had culminated in the confessional fellowship and the federation of the three synods just a year before the opening of the Indian mission in Arizona. Michigan had always been active in supporting heathen missions (*Continuing In His Word*, p 93) and when the proposal for an amalgamation of the three synods was submitted to the Michigan Pastoral Conference in 1892, “the determining factors for the Michigan Synod were the acquisition of a promising heathen mission field in the West, the inward and outward strength to be expected, the better training of pastors and teachers, and the more energetic support of charitable causes” (*Continuing in His Word*, p 95).

The men who had been sent out in 1893 were almost forgotten and the work was poorly supported. The *Gemeinde-Blatt* contains only meager accounts of the very difficult and colorful work being carried on with almost no guidance from the board. Not until the coming of men like Pastors Gustav Harders, Edgar Guenther, and Frances Uplegger was the Synod at large well informed on its only heathen mission!

Various explanations and extenuating arguments have been advanced to remove the stigma of this failure from the leaders for this lukewarm attitude and for branding the “mission brethren” in the Synod dogmatizers and pietists for advocating the cause of heathen missions.

It is a fact, however, that even a leading theologian at the Seminary who was well acquainted with the situation advanced such mitigating and rather philosophical arguments for the lack of mission interest.

We quote:

Another consideration: In outward matters the church is subject to natural developments like the rest of the world under God. (sic!) Not all groups or organizations have the same tasks. There are organizations, like peoples, that remain small in number and in that very fact have a token of their mission to do intensive, rather than extensive, work by which the world may profit even more. The Wisconsin Synod had a college that was off to a good start along fundamental lines. To maintain and develop that was mission enough for a while.

The same applies to the preacher and teacher seminaries and the whole educational system. The numerical growth of the organization ought to have come from within to assure the compactness of the body and the inward strength that grows from close identity and singleness of purpose, instead of having various heterogeneous elements thrown together and scattered units annexed that always required support which ought to have gone to the institutions and, besides, did not receive the proper supervision. (J.P. Koehler, *History of the Wisconsin Synod*, p 196)

Where do we find anything like this kind of thinking in the directives given to the church in God’s Word? To be consistent, this way of thinking should also fault the early church for sending the greatest theologian of all times, Paul the Apostle, on world mission journeys instead of keeping him at headquarters “to assure the compactness of the body and the inward strength that grows from identity and singleness of purpose, instead of having various heterogeneous elements thrown together and scattered units annexed.” Was it mere rhetoric that induced Paul to exclaim, “I am debtor both to the Greeks and to the barbarians, both to the wise and the unwise” (Ro 1:14)? What is the thrust of the Epistle Lesson for Reformation Festival? Is it merely concerned with the restoration of the Gospel? “And I saw another angel fly in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting Gospel—to preach to them that dwell on the earth, and to every nation and kindred and tongue and people” (Re 14:6).

Aside from the Great Commission, the Lord could not make any clearer the true scope of the church’s mission than He did in the word of Isaiah, “It is a light thing that thou shouldest be My servant to raise up the tribes of Jacob and to restore the preserved of Israel; I will also give thee for a light to the Gentiles, that thou mayest be my salvation unto the end of the earth!” (Is 49:6).

With the “lukewarm attitude of the Synod’s leadership” exemplified also in its defense by a seminary professor, it is small wonder that the Synod did not seriously consider or undertake another heathen mission

enterprise for the next forty-three years! The response to the German Lutherans in Poland in 1924 can hardly be considered heathen mission work.

Still, there were also others who prodded the conscience of the Synod about the urgency of reaching out to the heathen with the Gospel. Among these was President G. E. Bergemann (1917–1933). The frightful First World War was still raging when he took office. Because the work of the Synod was still predominantly German, the war had a traumatic effect on our Wisconsin Synod. Everything German was denounced and persecuted. Some of the congregations stubbornly refused to allow English services. “*In dieser Gemeinde wird nur deutsch gepredigt,*” was found in many church constitutions and enforced, as in my first charge! In 1926, seven years after the war, I had to arrange a private English confirmation service in defiance of the congregation! Almost an entire generation of younger people in my second congregation were lost to the Lutheran church, because my predecessor insisted on conducting his instruction classes only in German!

Professor August Pieper of Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary was also convinced that, without most careful preparation, the transition into English would seriously affect the sound teaching and preaching of the church, but he was also certain that this change would have to be undertaken after the war. The essay which he was asked to deliver at the 1919 convention is written in powerful German prose in a style which he might have acquired from his keen knowledge of, and constant contact with the lofty language of Isaiah. The topic assigned to him was “The True Reconstruction of the Church.” He scores the inroads of cant and hollow formalism in the worship and life of the church and exhorts to a return to the fountain of all life, the living truth of Holy Scripture, as the only hope for true reconstruction that is God-pleasing. Permit me to quote a few sentences in his incomparable German: *Dies, dies, die tote Handwerkerei* (tradesman attitude), *tote Maschinenarbeit* (machine-like routine) *im Lehramt in Kirche, Schule und Klasse, das ist der sichere Tod des Evangeliums!* (p 32). In my note book in an exegesis class is found the following:

Vor allem erfordert das Studium der Theologie eine wahrhaft heilige Herzensgesinnung, die sich aeussert in dem lutherschen ORATIO, MEDITATIO, TENTATIO, Gebet, Studium, Anfechtung, weil sie nichts Hoeheres kennt, als dem Herrn in seinem Reich dienen zu wollen.— Wuesste ich, dass ich Ihnen Geist, wenn er der rechte ist, gegeben haette, dann schliefe ich sicher, denn dann wuesste ich das Reich des Herrn wohlgeborgen.

In this spirit Pieper exhorted the Synod to share the precious Gospel with those of other languages and cultures, beginning with the many English-speaking people in the United States among whom the Synod had done almost no mission work. His further exhortation is worthy of our notice (I have the German text, but will quote it in English for the sake of those who may have difficulty in understanding the German):

Our mission work, until now our Indian mission, our *Reisepredigt*, even our educational institutions, has been but a miserable, pitiful bungling, a botchery lacking both fire and force. At every convention we seem to be asking ourselves, Do we actually want to do this work, or do we not? Half a heart, half a job, and half a result! We worked as though we were dreaming. Mary has become a pokey dreamer sitting at the Lord’s feet! She has developed a habit of only listening, until her hearing has become dull, her heart languid, and her feet and hands leaden and lazy. Wake up! Wake up, Mary! Rub the sleep out of your eyes, shake the lethargy from your limbs; it is time to get to work!

Don’t you see the vast throngs of English people milling about your house, crowding around your open door, the innumerable multitude of those who would also like to hear something of the glorious thing which the Lord has poured into your happy heart? Don’t you see the millions of children who are waiting for you to take them also on your lap in Christian schools to tell them, too, about this wonderful thing that has entranced and enraptured you? Oh, don’t you see the shining eyes of the thousands of dark-haired lads and the yearning in the glances of the thousands of blond-haired maidens who, enchanted by your own beaming face, are also eager to

learn the Gospel of God's grace and to place themselves into the Lord's service in church and school to shout it loudly to the multitude that is thronging about your house?
It is high time! The sun is still shining and the day is still with us; but it is toward evening and the day already far spent!

The effect of the essay on the convention delegates was profound. A resolution was passed to publish it in both German and English for free distribution to all the congregations and also to ask groups of churches to come together where Professor Pieper could read the essay in person!

As a result the 75th Anniversary of the Synod found a vigorous mission program under way to reach the unchurched in our country, 70 percent of the churches now carrying on their work also in English. It was the opportune time for the Synod to think also about sharing the precious Gospel with the multitudes in the heathen world. Instead, the support program in Poland seemed about all that the Synod wanted to carry, although this was the boom time before the Big Crash and fortunes were being made also in our Synod's membership. If the will had been there, if the prosperity had been shared with the church, the Synod might have avoided the big debt which was already hampering the work of the Gospel. As it turned out, many of the big profits and fortunes went down the drain when the banks were found closed on that fateful Monday morning! The Great Depression of 1930 also sent the income of the Synod plummeting to new lows. By 1933, when the Synod in convention observed the centennial of Dr. Adolf Hoenecke's birth, President G. E. Bergemann thought it imperative to have Professor August Zich present the convention essay on the topic "Defeatism in the Church." This essay was indeed needed to inject a new spirit of faith and confidence into the synodical body. President Bergemann reported that the salaries of the professors had been reduced by 36 percent and those of the missionaries by 28 percent during the past biennium! In the same report he announced the sad fact that most of the graduates of Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary and Dr. Martin Luther College had not been given calls!

This was one of the saddest periods in the Synod's history! Jesus had said, "Pray ye the Lord of the harvest that He would send forth laborers into His harvest!" (Mt 9:38). Although fields were white even unto harvest at home and in all the world in the early thirties, a number of fully trained workers had been turned away!

This constant shortage of funds, the growing debt, and the staggering annual interest payments had a depressing effect on the morale of many in the Synod. But it also firmed up the determination of many to do something to bring about a change and to move forward in the Lord's Kingdom!

I can report what happened in the Southeastern Conference of Michigan. A movement got under way among the pastors, first, to inform the congregations more fully on the work of the Synod, its administrative set-up, and its desperate need for greater financial support. One-page bulletins with drawings, graphs, and concise information were sent to all the pastors for their people. Large wall charts on budget performance were prepared and hung in the church entries. At pastoral conferences each pastor was held to report on his congregation's performance. The brethren then offered candid, friendly counsel for improvement. Another effective, evangelical practice was used with very good results: during the recess two of the older pastors would invite a fellow pastor with a poor performance record for a little walk. Then they would gently, but firmly, (*suaviter in modo sed fortiter in re*), give him the benefit of some fatherly counsel and return to the meeting. Almost invariably this resulted in a change of attitude and performance toward the synodical budget by the time of the next conference.

When President John Brenner, who had been elected in 1933, heard of this so-called "Michigan Plan," he saw to its introduction synod-wide in December of 1933. This helped to improve contributions in the next fiscal year by 14 percent! The mood of the 1935 convention was noticeably receptive to change. Mindful of the crippling debt of \$650,000 still remaining, of the interest payments still consuming precious money which might have put the idle candidates to work, of the vast world areas still waiting for the Gospel, the Bulletin Secretary submitted a motion on the last day of the convention to take steps to pay the Synod debt. The motion was passed, and the Synod got to work. [Ed. note—The Bulletin Secretary was Edgar Hoenecke.]

It took almost a decade to do the job. During this time the Second World War ravaged mankind, again sending millions to their untimely deaths without the comfort of the Gospel of Christ. Astronomical sums of money were spent for destruction and the constructive work of the Gospel missions was interrupted and brought to a standstill in many world areas.

Almost at war's end came the "happy" convention of the Synod of 1945 at New Ulm. The Trustees reported the debt paid and a surplus of \$350,000 in the reserve fund. Since this had been rumored several months earlier, it should not have come as a surprise when the Indian Mission committee, with the approval of the Mission Board, submitted an overture to the Synod that it redeem the unspoken pledge of 1935, earnestly to consider expanding the world mission program. The arguments which were advanced for it included the fact that the Lord was even then bringing the horrible slaughter to a victorious termination for our country's arms. Our weary men and boys were returning from the battlefields. Through our victory the military roads in all the world might now become paths of peace for missionaries of the Gospel of Christ. Therefore, out of deep gratitude to the Lord our Synod would do well to consider both its obligation as well as the opportunity now offered to explore openings for the expansion of our world mission program.

On the last day of the convention of 1945 "The Bomb" was dropped on hapless Hiroshima. But earlier that same week another bomb had been dropped on the mission expansion proposal with the declaration that it was out of order!

The convention, however, was not willing to submit to this judgment. After a lengthy, heated debate and with a large majority the delegates authorized the appointment of a "mission committee" to look into the matter of finding a field for the expansion of our world mission program.

Another bitter battle had to be fought over the scope of the committee's assignment which almost ruined the chances of survival of the mission thrust. Finally, the committee's report and a minority report reached the floor of the 1947 convention. As a result the Synod instructed the General Mission Board to explore promising fields and to report its findings to the Synodical Council for consideration.

Eight days after Easter of 1949 a two-man team was under way to Africa to search for a mission field on an exploratory safari which covered 7,500 miles of primitive territory. After four months the search ended with the discovery of a most promising field in Northern Rhodesia, now Zambia, in the Hook of the Kafue region. The convention of 1951 resolved not only to open this field, but also to send a missionary to Japan! [ed. note—One member of the two-man team was Edgar Hoenecke; the other was Arthur Wacker.]

The rest is history of so recent a date and of such amazing progress that it should be well known. To God alone be the praise and glory!

Another and equally great cause for rejoicing is presented briefly in the second part of my paper.

II. Reflections on the Important Inter-relationship between the Theological Seminary and World Missions

Our Synod has every reason to thank God for over one hundred years of almost consistently beneficial and inspiring leadership and sound theological guidance! This is phenomenal indeed in the history of the church! In the early years of struggle for confessional orthodoxy God awakened men to guide the Synod through dangerous, unionistic currents to a soundly orthodox course and God-pleasing associations. And in the last fifty years He has kept the Synod on this course when even formerly staunch fellow-confessors floundered and drifted off the course. It is not mere happenstance or coincidence that at almost the exact time when the Lord, according to His gracious counsel, directed the Wisconsin Synod into a course of greater emphasis in world missions, He provided also sound mission-minded leadership in the administration and theological seminary.

The Board for World Missions is deeply and sincerely grateful for the understanding and support which the mission program has received for the twenty-five years of President O. J. Naumann's tenure in office. We know that the entire synod under his mission-oriented leadership rejoices with him over the progress in all of our fields, and especially in the field in Central Africa which observes its 25th anniversary this year!

Still another anniversary will be celebrated this year which is very near to the heart of those on the world mission team. Professor Carl Lawrenz will have served as President of the Seminary for twenty years, since June of 1957.

During his entire administration he has proven to be a reliable advocate and counselor for the cause and the course of our World Mission program both in his capacity as head of our theological seminary as also in his office as chairman of the Commission on Inter-Church Relations. This relationship is of primary importance for the proper administration and development of our part of the Kingdom work, world missions.

Professor Lawrenz and the entire Seminary faculty have freely given of their time and concern in so many ways that it is difficult for me to enumerate them all. When we had special needs for the training of men from foreign fields, they consistently cooperated with alacrity, although we were well aware of the fact that this was done at the sacrifice of valuable time and energy. When we approached the faculty and seminary board with the request for annual mission seminars in 1960, we met with hearty cooperation, even though this involved an interruption in an already crowded schedule. When we began the series of world seminary and mission conferences, the seminary cheerfully freed a man from his scheduled duties to attend these meetings by assigning the class load to already busy colleagues. In several instances Professor Lawrenz himself attended these conferences to be with our world seminary instructors with his experienced counsel and with valuable, pertinent essays. This year, in response to a request from our mission seminary administrators three faculty members have agreed to give of their Easter recess time to read practical papers at our Fifth Seminary Conference at El Paso. When the confessionally concerned theologians in Sweden approached our Synod for guidance, the faculty made possible the very time-consuming cooperation of Dr. Siegbert Becker for a Swedish language course and for several highly important counseling and lecture trips to Sweden, the last one involving a full quarter year. President Carl Lawrenz accepted a similar request of the World Board for a three months' working visit to the seminary and church of Central Africa, thereby testing and inaugurating the valuable Seminary Exchange Program. Professors Lawrenz and Becker cheerfully agreed to give of their precious time to serve with President Naumann and myself on the "Sweden Committee" for the past five years to help in guiding the young free church movement toward self-sufficiency.

For these and many more services so faithfully and unstintingly rendered by the seminary faculty to the Lord for the advancement of the mission to reach and to nurture lost souls we are deeply grateful! Without this help and guidance, especially in coaching us in the theological disciplines, our worker-training program in the foreign mission fields would have been most difficult to establish and maintain at acceptable standards.

But above all else, our constant concern has been to achieve the prized objective that we all speak the same thing in keeping with the Word of God, also in the transmission of it into difficult foreign languages. To accomplish this in such a manner that we could answer for our work before God and before the church requires, first of all, a thorough understanding on the part of those that teach others, and loving supervision, patience and guidance from those who have been called to the Seminary at home as trusted professors and arbiters of Scriptural truth. In this endeavor also we have gladly accepted the help of the Seminary and for this we thank God!

As I formally leave my post of duty next month, I do so with the happy assurance that this relationship between the Seminary and the World Board will continue, even though there will be a change of leadership in both places. In both cases, we are happy to see that the work is being placed into the hands of experienced veterans, Professor Armin Schuetze and Pastor Theodore Sauer.

And that brings us to the future and our third major point.

III. Reflections on the Future of Our World Mission Program

What of the future? We are inclined to agree with Lord Byron, "The best of prophets of the future is the past."

What of the future? We have a more sure Word of prophecy than that of Lord Byron, whereunto ye do well that ye take heed: it is the Word of the Son of God, His last testament, as He was about to ascend to His

Father. He who gave us the Commission in His name to preach the Gospel to every creature, also pledged, “And, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world!”

Looking back on our labors and our accomplishments, we may be inclined to ask for a break to catch our breath, to rest on our laurels. Our accomplishments and laurels? Superficially considered, it is true, we have come a long way since 1945 when the world mission expansion program hung by a thread, when, statistically, we brought up the rear in offerings for the work of the church-at-large, when we had to face apathy and opposition. And we are indeed thankful to God for the change in attitude and response and for the Lord’s blessing on our efforts.

But we have no reason to rest on our laurels. We have come into the Lord’s mission vineyard very late, while others have borne the burden and heat of the day. During the past 25 years, since our first missionaries came to Central Africa, we have but served our apprenticeship, we have become acquainted with the tremendous job before us, we have learned to handle the tools of our vocation, and the Lord has graciously given us undeserved, early success, especially in some of His fields, to cheer us on.

This is no time to think of taking a break; the Lord has given us the assignment, “*Occupy till I come!*” If our flesh misleads us to think that this means to sit tight with the pound, the gifts and talents which He has entrusted to us, to take our ease and to enjoy the fruit of our labors at college and the seminary in a comfortable pastorate where we can without too much exertion carry on the routine duties of our office, then we are sadly deceived. “*Occupy till I come,*” means to carry on the Lord’s business as He did, when His disciples, beholding Him, cried out: “The zeal of Thine house hath eaten me up!” remembering that it was written of Him by the prophet (Jn 2:17—Ps. 69:9).

This is no time for complacency. True, we have missions and church supporting enterprises today on the five major continents and we have begun to carry out our assignment. But we have just begun! While we are indeed thankful to the Lord for the progress made, we also are in need of the sobering reminder that most of our foreign fields are held very tenuously; they are only beginnings, merely beachheads. In some fields we are supporting and guiding the work of single missionaries; in others the supervision is carried out by an itinerant counselor, in still others the work is so difficult that our faithful missionaries have been able to register only nominal gains in souls won for the Lord.

In an unprecedented response to our request, the last convention granted our World Board ten new men for our mission fields, but we will need more willing hearts and hands to bring in the harvest while fields are still accessible!

What is the future? YOU are the future, you who have been gifted with the love for souls, you who have been trained to handle the holy mysteries of God, you, whose eyes have seen the King and whose lips have been touched by the Spirit!

Be ready to serve, when the Lord’s call comes to you! Join the team and do your very best, whether you are called to serve at the front of the battle for souls or on the supply line!

Most of earth’s billions still lie in darkness and die without hope, not having heard of their redemption in Christ! Over one half of these people live in countries that have closed their borders to the world’s Savior!

To your strong hands and to your youthful zeal and enterprise the Lord has entrusted the means for bringing the water of life to the teeming, despairing, dying souls of men! Among the Africans there is a saying, “Worse than murder it is to know where the spring of water is, and not to tell him who is famishing with thirst!”

The need for help is urgent! The world’s time is running out! Our King’s business requires haste! If we dawdle and delay our help, it may be too late! What would we say to the young African who asked the missionary, “But why did you wait so long to come to tell us that Jesus died for us also? My father and mother are dead.”