

# **“The Fabulous Journey”**

(Pastor Immanuel Albrecht’s account of his journey into  
southwestern Nigeria as part of the Synodical Conference survey  
team in 1935 based on his personal diary)

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## Forward

In 1934 the members of the Synodical Conference resolved to send a survey team to Nigeria to determine the potential for starting mission work there. The primary task assigned them was to investigate an invitation that came from the Ibesipko people in Southern Nigeria. The Ibesipko had been served by an interdenominational mission group called the Qua Ibo since 1887. In 1927, frustrated by the leadership and teaching of their parent body, 16 of the Qua Ibo congregations decided to send one of their own people to be trained as a pastor in the USA. They chose Jonathan Udo Ekong, a descendant of a chief, and a bright young student from the city of Nung Udoe. In 1928, he sailed to New York with the instructions to further his education and to seek out a church body whose theology and management style would be agreeable to his church body.

In 1930, the churches actually seceded from the Qua Iboe to form the “Ibesipko United Church.” After overtures to a number of church bodies including the Lutheran Church in America fell through, Jonathan Ekong came into contact with the Synodical Conference through the colored missions<sup>1</sup> on the East Coast. These missions had been contemplating the idea of work in Africa, and this seemed an answer to their prayers. After discussions with Udo, the members of these missions proposed the aforementioned survey team to investigate the possibility of work in Nigeria. Missouri Synod Pastor Otto Boecler of Des Plaines, IL; Dr. Henry Nau, an LCMS professor at Greensborough, NC; and Immanuel Albrecht, a Wisconsin Synod pastor from Fairfax, MN; were selected for

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<sup>1</sup> The Synodical Conference had established missions to serve black people not long after the civil war

the journey. Pastor Albrecht kept a detailed dairy of that journey from Jan 1 – May 18<sup>th</sup>, 1935. The following is a summary of their trip based on his record

### **The Journey to Africa**

“If with God you plan your journey’s way  
God protects and guides you on the way.”

With these words, Pastor Immanuel Albrecht begins the account of his trip to Nigeria as a member of the missionary survey team designated by the Synodical Conference to explore a group of villages near the Cross River. Indeed these words proved true as the Lord guided the team of three on a remarkable journey into the bush country of Africa.

Pastor Albrecht departed for Africa on January second, 1935. In order to facilitate the journey, his congregation at Fairfax had granted him a six-month leave of absence. The Synodical Conference provided Pastor F. Zarling to serve in his absence. Albrecht was also the Minnesota District President at the time, and as such had to delegate much of his work, although he still did his own statistical report on board ship. He gave careful instructions to his oldest daughter Norma regarding financial matters in his absence, packed his things in a new “steamer trunk.”<sup>2</sup> and was off.

After a visit with his youngest daughter Lorna, in nurses’ training school at the time, he boarded the Pioneer Limited train at Minneapolis and headed for Chicago where he made his connection to New York City. On the train he met a nurse from Wichita, a woman from Minneapolis, and a German tourist (He spoke German fluently), who even asked him to pay her mother a visit in Germany. It is plain to see already in the first pages of his diary, a sociable and approachable quality in Albrecht which he frequently

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<sup>2</sup> Sideways trunk used as a chest of drawers on a ship (steamer).

employed to make new friends and acquaintances at every turn. His daughter Lorna recalled with a grin his tendency to talk to anybody and everybody, “That was his life,” she said. As the trip progressed, it is truly amazing to see how the Lord blessed the team with vital information and accommodations by means of the connections Albrecht made through such conversations. He was also quite gifted in mathematics, and was assigned the duty of keeping the team’s financial records and statistical information.

In New York, he met up with Pastor Boecler and Dr. Nau. There they purchased their travel documents and booked passage for the first leg of their journey: across the Atlantic to Germany. The Synodical Conference, desiring the team’s report by its June convention, provided the three with the funds to book passage on the luxury liner “Europa”. Europa, the pride of the Norrdeutsch Lloyd Line, was one of the fastest, and largest ships of the day, holding up to 2,400 passengers and covering well over 200 nautical miles in a day. Word of their journey to Africa spread quickly about the ship and provoked the interest of many aboard. One lady after listening to Albrecht describe the trip’s itinerary entitled it, “The Fabulous Journey.” Even the ship’s captain was intrigued. One of Albrecht’s first records was of an invitation to the bridge for a personal chat with him and a subsequent tour of the ship’s “marvelous” inner workings.

Since the ship was of a German line, the conversations on board frequently centered around the rise of Hitler and conditions in Germany. Albrecht, of German ancestry, was naturally interested. He recorded a number of newspaper quotes and personal discussions regarding the political scene. While on board, he even went to a

meeting of the people from the Saar region where a member of the Reichstag<sup>3</sup> was the guest speaker.<sup>4</sup>

While politics was a curiosity, this did not deter the team from seeking opportunities for interaction on the spiritual level. The three gathered for daily meditation on the book of Second Corinthians, inviting others as they had opportunity. They also witnessed while on board through casual conversation about religion and by conducting Sunday services, drawing a group of about 40-50. One of the more curious encounters was with a devotional group led by an ex-Benedictine Monk. Apparently the words of God spoken by the three to this group made a lasting impression on their leader, so much so that he left a message on Albrecht's bed expressing his gratitude for what that they shared.<sup>5</sup>

Six days on the Atlantic upon unusually calm seas brought the three within sight of Ireland, and after a stop at Cherbourg, France, they arrived at Bremerhofen, Germany. There the passengers were met by a jubilant "throng of bands, choirs, and Nazi soldiers waiting to welcome the Saar people." Once on the mainland, the three met Pastors Willkomm and Naumann of the German Free Church of Saxony (a sister church body). While there, they caught a sobering taste of postwar Germany. Albrecht reports lagging church attendance, beggars on the street, and the like. Sadly, this paled in comparison to what he would observe upon his return in May.

The three booked passage on the "Usaramo" at Hamburg, and set sail for Lagos, Nigeria. The Usaramo was a smaller, slower vessel, but Albrecht relished the

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<sup>3</sup> German legislature

<sup>4</sup> The Saar land was a region between France and Germany that had been confiscated by France during WWI. They were about to vote whether to remain part of France or return to being a German land.

<sup>5</sup> A copy of this letter can be found in the Northwestern Lutheran (1935) V. 22 pg. 39&40.

opportunity to rub shoulders with what turned out to be an eclectic group of fellow travelers. There was Mr. Kemner, a German officer and plantation owner living in Cameroon and an active member in the League of Nations.<sup>6</sup> He eagerly shared his satisfaction with Hitler and his disdain for Roman Catholic priests. There were Mr. & Mrs. Chirm. She was a nurse, he an English lawyer who had just lost \$700,000 in a trial at the international tribunal in the Hague when a 6-6 deadlock was ended by one of the justices taking ill! There were Mr. Selvyn, the Englishman “jokester,” Miss Pfivomann, the African missionary nurse, Mr. Wenk, an adventurer who had walked around Lake Chad<sup>7</sup> in three months time, often up to his shoulders in cold water. There was Captain Bueford, eager and excited about Hitler, and his policies toward the Jews and commerce. There were Mr. and Mrs. Studebaker, the talkative missionary couple, and many more. These contacts provided valuable information about medical precautions, political temperaments, and the general social climate in Africa. A passenger of particular note was a Greek named Logios, Pastor Boecler’s table mate. It just so happened that he owned a store in Aba, Nigeria, a stop along the way to the team’s destination. His friendship would prove valuable in a very concrete way.

This unique group made their way down the coast of Europe, through the Bay of Biscay, along the northwestern coast of Africa, and down around the Gold Coast to Lagos, Nigeria. Along the way they stopped at such exotic places as Rotterdam, Antwerp, and the Canary Islands. Albrecht soon realized that this new climate would have an effect on his health, reporting of the coast of Sierra Leone, “Had first bad headache, to bed

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<sup>6</sup> A post WWI version of the United Nations. Although it was Woodrow Wilson’s brainchild, the USA never joined.

<sup>7</sup> Large freshwater lake in the country of Chad.

early.” As the Usaramo wound its way down the African coast, past Takoradi<sup>8</sup> and Secundi, the temperature gradually increased. On the advice of a fellow passenger, they purchased pit helmets at a whopping \$1 a piece to shade their heads from the blistering sun.

The three first set foot on African soil at Freetown, Sierra Leone on January 28, recording the historic incident on film. They witnessed there a place of contrast – natives rowing out on dugout canoes came to meet them, singing, smiling, and diving after coins or cans thrown from the boat. Further inland however, they saw a country that was “Not so modern, not so clean.”

The ship arrived at Lagos, Nigeria’s capital city on February 5. At Lagos, they bought climate appropriate clothes - white suits - for \$3.12 a piece. Amid a touch of illness and the pains of homesickness, Albrecht continued to record his observations of the new culture. He made a note about the window of time enforced for schooling. (If boys didn’t enroll by a certain age, they could never be schooled.) He made the acquaintance of the local diplomat, frustrated with the conditions in Nigeria, and on his way to a new post in Riga, Latvia. Albrecht also took time at Lagos to do a bit of reading on Nigerian culture and customs.

On Feb 7, the three boarded the “Sir George,” a “quite dilapidated” river vessel, for Port Harcourt on the Niger River. On board, Albrecht experienced his first close contact with natives. He was fascinated as he observed a family taking turns on a hand sewing machine while the father read aloud to his wife. He later saw the mother bathe her child in the same wash basin out of which the family had eaten and was quite shocked as the father shaved “simply with a knife, no lather.”

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<sup>8</sup> Gold Coast

Once they had landed at Port Harcourt, Logios, their Greek acquaintance, was “a Godsend.” He took them on one of his trucks to his home in Aba. The next day, one of his hired men served as their chauffeur. As they drove through rural Nigeria, Albrecht was taken in by the scene in the African bush country: “Bicycle being used quite a little; even by children attending S.S. . . .see many missions. . . . native teachers not well trained!?” – See so very many children- (naked) – their bodily nakedness to me a picture of native’s spiritual nakedness; saw children’s navels are size of half a lemon!” The team passed through the villages of Ikot Ekpene and Uyo before reaching their destination, the city of Nung Udoe.

There they were welcomed by “hundreds of people, with masses of parading children” crowding round them. Albrecht records the unsettling spectacle of the crowd being kept back “with a whip!” After the welcome, they unpacked their belongings at the house of one of Jonathan Ekong’s relatives. There they were surprised to see Jonathan’s picture clipped from a Walther League Messenger<sup>9</sup> hanging on the wall. This house in Nung Odoe was their center of operations for the next month and a half as they went about the task of visiting the churches and schools of the Ibesipko.

Geographically, the area which the team explored was quite small. Most of the churches and schools which they visited lay within a sphere about ten miles in diameter. While not an urban area by any means, it was densely populated. In this rather small area, there were about fifteen churches with a combined membership of about 5,000 baptized, as well as fifteen church run schools.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> The youth magazine of the Missouri Synod.

<sup>10</sup> Statistics recorded in “A short history of the Lutheran Churches of Nigeria” 1936-86 pg. 23.



At first they thought that they would be able to travel by bicycles, or “wheels” as they called them. This, however, did not last long. Albrecht was the first to bow out, remarking, “I tried a wheel; having not been on a wheel for 35 yrs. and never on a coaster; it was not so easy.” Nau and Boecler were casualties not long after – “B & N. have had enough of riding wheels in the heat of the day.” The three ended up hiring a driver which enabled them to go out to a church or group of churches in the morning, and to return to their quarters at Nung Udoe before dusk.

Albrecht, a man with an eye for detail, conveyed through his pen the distinct flavor of life in the small villages. Among the “little things” that caught his eye: a man “carrying a hog on his bicycle,” the frequent gifts of yams, goats, chickens, and eggs, women “carrying benches to church with their children on their backs, or slung on their hips,” people – “adults and children- running after our car” when they drove around, a ½ year old boy “walking six miles to school every day.” While each day brought the survey team new insight, the natives discovered some “unexpected” truths about the Americans among them as well. On Mar. 17, at a meeting in one of the more remote villages, Albrecht observed, “Quite a surprise to learn that everybody had expected us to be black people; since they thought all Americans were of one blood & color with them, as descendants of slaves from Nigeria sold to America; hoping also that America would join them in war vs. Eng. Gov.”

While immersion in this new culture proved fascinating and intriguing Albrecht was also a witness to the fact that it could at times prove quite frustrating. It seems that the “slow pace” and laid back time orientation was at times too much for the punctual-minded German. Drivers were often late. Post offices had no real schedule. Letters

didn't get sent out on time. People arrived late for meetings or church. On March 17, he writes, "When services opened at 9:50, 25 people were present...when sermon started at 10:10 – 65 present...at close of service 112 present...preacher no tidy appearance: no cloth –overhanging dirty shirt, barefoot."

The living quarters and sanitary conditions eventually got to them as well. On March 7: "Find lambs hair in soup & meat; - quit eating; let boys have it all; Nau finds meat outdoors covered with ants and flies! Enough of it! Sell the goats!" On March 15, "Some things are getting on my (our) nerves; rooms here never really been cleaned, scrubbed or washed; chickens & goats entering & passing through room: go into bedroom..." March 23, "...getting on our nerves; table boy's dirty stinking shirt; we gave him money to buy a new one; the open court between this & old house – with goat barn; goats through house; smoke into windows."

Thankfully, many of these frustrations were minor inconveniences, and in retrospect quite humorous, but the team's interaction and conversation with the natives also uncovered aspects of the culture that would prove to be grave obstacles to mission work there. One of these was the problem of literacy. On Feb 20 concerning his visit with the teaching staff of one school Albrecht reports, "Read three chapters of Sommer: The Truth That Makes us Free,<sup>11</sup> Read with greatly varying ability. Admit that they do not understand what they read. Great crying need for competent leaders painfully manifest and openly admitted and deplored..." On Feb 12 he writes about the church at Nung Udoe, "about 295 adults; 185 + in church last Sun.; almost all consider themselves belonging to this church; only a few at central school yesterday. 60 men can read; 8 women can read."

This touches on another big problem. It seems that the women were especially ignored when it came to education and religious instruction. At almost every turn, Albrecht reports low female literacy, and at a few places generally poor treatment of women within the church. He reports on March 10 at Mbik Pong, “only the men were given attention by teachers, women & children entirely ignored.”

Related to this was the problem of polygamy. Considered normal in Ibesipko society, preaching against polygamy and the exercise of church discipline as it applied to polygamy was a serious challenge. It was apparent just how divisive an issue this would be based on the team’s conversations with other missions, and in their encounters with many of the natives. On Feb 22 a Scottish missionary reported about his church, “many left on account of polygamy.” On March 1 a man from an African church came and “asked that we take them under our control because they expect that we would allow polygamy.” On March 4 a Qua Ibo teacher came “representing one village asking us to teach God’s word better.- African delegation stating they think it not fair that their preacher permits some to have many wives etc.” The three also became aware of the practice of fattening houses. When a bride was about to be married, she was sent to a “fattening house,” to eat until she became fat, which was considered sexually desirable. Another problem encountered was the practice of arranged marriages that were tantamount to enslavement.

Spiritually Nigeria was still very much a pagan and animistic country, especially noteworthy were their death and burial customs. On Feb 13, Albrecht’s night was disturbed by “pagans at some distance singing and tom – toming over a dead person.” On Feb 20, “The shouting we hear this morning indicates the death of a big man, & is to

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<sup>11</sup>Basic Church Doctrines text.

drive away the evil spirits.” On February 28, “B<sup>12</sup> was greatly disturbed again, from 2-5 AM by people coming passed<sup>13</sup> singing etc, in honor of death of a big woman.” March 14, “Another Big man died: usual shooting & playing, Mr. Udo holds it is good for heathen to follow old funeral rites, widow must remain indoors unwashed, unkempt until funeral rites are over, may be up to 3 years; eating of big man’s food part of rites. – Murdering of Big man in order to get in on feast.” From the last quote, one gathers that there was a great fear of foul play, and a fear of “angering the spirits” that often led to physical harm and even murder. Striking evidence of this was revealed when the church strove to intervene in another lamentable native practice, the killing of twins.

Twins were thought to be bad luck. If twins were born, they were simply killed. Those who dared to interfere with this practice were at risk as well. Albrecht reports on March 22, “Twins Born during the night in Ikot Ikot congregation (Udo’s home town) the father’s brother present reports to Udo at once. Mother & twins taken to uncle’s home. Nau goes there in afternoon, B. sends money... Mother is in great danger for life of twins no twins have grown up in Ibesipko so far. Poisoning people still en vogue here; even clerk Udo is afraid after certain council meetings to eat, drink at the feast.”

Along with difficulties presented by pagan customs, the team found that in order to do mission work, one would have to contend with some touchy political situations as well. Each village in the Ibesipko region had its own headman or chief.<sup>14</sup> That chief, although technically under the controlling British government, wielded tremendous influence within the community. In order to function within a community, one needed to be in good graces with these chiefs. The team quickly found out how important it was to

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<sup>12</sup> Boecler

<sup>13</sup> Passed is spelled as is in the diary.

meet with them so that they would not feel slighted. They had to constantly attempt to placate the chiefs while not compromising their goal as missionaries.

It is also apparent that there was a bit of a political misconception on the part of some about the coming of American missionaries. Albrecht reports on March 4, "Stories about our coming: Natives say Gov. is now quickly putting stakes in the land (surveying) because Gov. fears America is coming to help natives keep land!!" On March 13: "(a) delegation from Annuu came to greet us, and wanted to attend meeting of us & chiefs, latter did not want them. It appears, they wanted help vs. Gov. which sent notice of expenses to be pd. by taxes due to police protection for topographical survey."

This put the team in the precarious position of having to be sure the colonial Government didn't suspect them of political treachery, and dealing with the possibility of disappointment on the part of the natives. Thankfully, this turned out to be less trouble than anticipated. In fact, by the hand of the Lord, the native political leaders seemed to be more of a help than a hindrance. Albrecht remarks, "Chief Edano, the head chief, a remarkable able, wise & intelligent man...as in days of Israel's exile, God used Cyrus, Artaxerxes, and in fullness of time Caesar Augustus, - so it seems he would use some of these men. (Udo & chief Edano)."

The initial visit of the team, in spite of the challenges discovered, were enough to convince them of the potential in this area. Satisfied with the group's prospects for becoming a Lutheran Mission, the three began considering the practicalities of doing such. On Feb 24 Albrecht writes, "Mentioned to B & N<sup>15</sup> plan for happiest solution of

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<sup>14</sup> Also called "Big Man"

<sup>15</sup> Dr. Nau

problem, by making Q.I.<sup>16</sup> become Lutheran – or join with us on basis of true unity & faith practice.<sup>17</sup>” As it turned out they became a sister church body, and changed their name to the Lutheran church of Nigeria.<sup>18</sup>

The team also began discussing the matter of schools. Part of the native group’s request was that the schools that had been run by the Qua Ibo would be taken over by the Lutherans. There were deep practical questions involved here. Would a potential mission seek the government’s help in running church schools (a common practice in Nigeria)? While he never states it outright, it seems that Albrecht was in favor of not seeking taxes to run these schools. Boecler and Nau seemed to be for it. At one point Albrecht writes (Discussion with B & N on Church & State they stood for asking state tax for church schools.” In subtle ways, Albrecht seems to reveal his leanings in this matter. He reports in a couple of instances in a positive light, reports of mission groups that did not use government money to run hospitals in spite of severe financial difficulty. Interestingly enough, if indeed this was Albrecht’s opinion, he saw the writing on the wall. The schools were subsidized, but turned out to be an administrative nightmare.

The team also began to lay the guidelines and groundwork for relations with the plethora of non-Lutheran church bodies that were doing work in the area, especially when it came to proselytizing. On a frequent basis, they were approached by individual churches, or groups of people from missions of other denominations asking that the Lutheran church would “take them over” or “help” them. Often they came with stories of poor leadership or “cheating” within the church. In some instances it was apparent that

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<sup>16</sup> the 16 Qua Ibo break off congregations

<sup>17</sup> The point he is making is whether or not this will become a sister church body, or will join the Synodical Conference as part of one of its missions.

<sup>18</sup> See “A Short History of the Lutheran Church of Nigeria” for more details.

these malcontents were simply looking for a church which wouldn't have such harsh rules, especially in regard to polygamy, yet at other times, it seems that their complaints were legitimate. The group made a practice of stating their intentions not to proselytize, but also told those who came to them to go back and try to change the teaching and practice of the churches and only after that, to leave. Albrecht records his answer to a man accusing his present church of unfair practices: "tell their preacher & tell him they would leave if things don't change...."

The team met with many representatives from the Christian missions in the area to get a handle on the religious climate. They gathered information about the locale of current missions, problems with government or societal practices, medical care, confessional stance of the present mission groups, and the like - information that would prove invaluable for the future work of missionaries in Nigeria.<sup>19</sup> These visits also provided them with some interesting company. Albrecht records the following experience at a Catholic Mission: "We were given choice of beer, even whiskey & tea, Father Duffy, Father Kirkpatrick on a visit...After beer, they also serve us tea. Father Duffy says 'God bless the man who invented the Cigarette & the bed.'"

After four and one half weeks doing survey work, Albrecht and Boecler departed Nung Udoe, leaving Dr. Nau to begin mission work immediately until permanent staff could be sent. The two began the journey overland back to Port Harcourt, making some last minute visits to other Christian missions along the way.

The beginning of the journey home proved an unpleasant time for Albrecht. On March 20 after a sustained period without water, he developed a headache that became a

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<sup>19</sup> More complete information regarding these meetings can be found in the official Diary of Dr. Nau located in the Archives of the Lutheran Church Missouri Synod in St. Louis, MO.

high fever that lasted until April 3. During this time the Lord watched over him through the care of Pastor Boecler, and Dr. Ross, a fundamentalist Presbyterian mission Doctor from the city of Etinan, and his wife. At the home of the Rosses, not only was Albrecht provided with excellent medical care, he had ample opportunity to learn more about mission work and medical practices in the bush country. During this time, he also developed an affection for Ovaltine milk - about the only thing he could keep down!

On April 2, Boecler and Albrecht boarded the “Wadai” at Calabar and set sail once more for Germany. Along the way they stopped at the Basel Mission, gleaning what information they could about the prospect of mission work in Eastern Nigeria.<sup>20</sup> As they continued on their journey, again Albrecht’s amicable nature surfaced. On April 4<sup>th</sup> he writes, “talk with Captain Schmidt, who rejoices and appreciates our German talking. Even also the First Engineer, Grotman, who could hardly believe that I was not born in Germany.” He also met up with a Dr. McCracken and his wife, veterans of the African mission field. Here too, he picked up a good piece of advice as the Dr. warned, “ ‘no young unmarried man should be permitted to enter African mission’ – His brother in Pavisier Mission unmarried for five years – must return, is broken man.<sup>21</sup>” Mrs. McCracken also provided him with much information on home life and medical mission work.

On April 9, the Wadai reached Lagos. There the two were greeted with the good news that Dr. Nau’s briefcase, stolen in January, had been found with all its contents except the cash that he had placed there. April 11 brought Albrecht’s fever to Boecler for whom the ordeal was quite serious, so serious in fact that at one point the ship’s doctor

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<sup>20</sup> A fundamentalist mission endeavor in the eastern Nigerian province of Basel.



advised that he stay in the Canary Islands while the ship went on. On Apr 27<sup>th</sup>, Albrecht writes, “B. prepared a radio letter to his wife about improving from serious illness and asking the continued help of his substitute upon his return, I induced him not to send it.” Boecler even felt his condition serious enough to discuss matters with Albrecht “if something should happen.” Thankfully, the Lord restored his health in mid May.

It seems that the Lord used even the illnesses of the two as a blessing. Albrecht writes, “Consider it a special blessing in various ways to have been ill with symptoms very much like B.; - and able to be of service to him.” Another common bond the two shared was the loss of a child. Albrecht losing his son Fredubert to a car accident, and Boecler losing his 19 year old daughter to illness. The two maintained ties after the trip.

Albrecht also continued sharing the Gospel as he had the opportunity by leading services on Good Friday and witnessing person to person.

It is quite evident that politics were in the air on the return journey as well. Albrecht’s records once again yield a flavor of the times. He displayed quite a curiosity concerning Hitler and what he stood for. He read various political books and articles as well as Hitler’s manifesto, “Mein Kampf,” making notes of his impressions along the way: On April 23: “- on parliamentarianism, - appears to be extreme vs. majority in parliament – ‘always silent and cowardly.’” On April 25: “surprised to find his statement that Amer. & Eng. war propaganda were psychologically correct; propaganda is for unthinking mass; arouse to action not so much upon understanding by reason but on sentiment...” April 26: “Hitler takes definite stand for dogma in confession as the *sine qua non* of religion and basis of worthwhile faith; also opposes free masonry...” Apr. 27: “aim of education

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<sup>21</sup> In many regions of Africa even to this day, a man is not respected and considered a real man until he is married with children.

(Hitler), especially by State, not purely knowledge, science, but 'character & health; purpose, will, responsibility;...1.Body 2.Soul 3.Mind.' Purity of race & blood highest duty & consideration of State & Gov..." Reacting to another article he writes, "It appears that churches in Germany have nothing to fear from Hitler's policies quote 'For the Politicians, the religious doctrines and institutions of it's people have to be inviolable. Otherwise there would be no politicians, but there should be reformation if he has the discipline for it. Another opinion would certainly lead to catastrophe in Germany.'"

As he reached Germany on May 1 however, he found that the situation did not was not as good as it looked on paper. Albrecht writes about a movie he saw on May 3: "The 'Triumph of William' gave me a surprisingly clear picture of the movement of the N.S.D.A.P.<sup>22</sup>, popularity and power of Hitler. - Until late at night groups of young men march up and down in goodly numbers, always singing." On May 4 he writes, "Hear about sad condition of confessional pastors many as prisoners in 'concentration camps' doing prison labor; spies present in public services of church." On May 8 in Koeln, a train passenger tells his, "Hitler Jew policy extreme." On May 9, "I was amazed at the Anti - Jew posters: 'The Jew is the enemy. Anyone who buys from a Jew is a traitor.'" He even reported seeing "Herr Goehring"<sup>23</sup> and his newlywed bride at RR station at Koeln. He later found out from Boecler, that even Prof. Willkomm at the Lutheran Seminary greeted his class with "Heil Hitler." Albrecht considered his observations important enough to write an addenda to his official diary expounding on the church conditions in Germany, unfortunately it has been lost.

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<sup>22</sup> Nazi party

<sup>23</sup> Infamous Nazi leader one of Hitler's inner circle.

On a lighter note, he was able to find the time to take a tour of Lutherland, and a trip down the Rhine, stopping at the castle church, Erfurt, Eisenach, Smallkald, Wartburg, the house where Luther died, the church of J.S. Bach where he heard a “marvelous” concert by the St. Thomas Church Boy’s Choir. He also saw Lucas Cranach’s, and Philip Melancthon’s houses as well as many Cathedrals.

On May 10, he reunited with Boecler at Hamburg, and the two boarded the “Europa” once again for an uneventful and unusually smooth trip back across the Atlantic. On May 16, they landed in New York, and Albrecht boarded a train home.

The Lord certainly used the many talents of Pastor Albrecht on this trip for the benefit of the church. His friendly demeanor made him a virtual pipeline of useful information and a wonderful source of useful contacts. He was a willing witness of God’s message to many of the passengers he encountered, and his mathematical prowess enabled the team to come back with good records of the trips finances, and useful statistics concerning the churches in Nigeria, yet Albrecht himself attests to the fact that the Lord provided him with infinitely more than he could ever give to the church. Day after day in the words of his diary amidst statistics, records of conversations, and cultural observations are words of praise – praise to God for the opportunity to serve, praise to God for the smooth seas, praise to God for restored health, praise to God for those ministering to him, praise to God for his colleagues, and praise to God for his Son. Surely a fitting close to Albrecht’s record of this trip are his words recorded on board the Wadai on April 17. “The Lord’s goodness & mercy continues, unworthy though I be ..

Lord help, strengthen & preserve my faith & 'Joy in the Lord'<sup>24</sup> that in home, congregation, Synod, and Missions I serve him anew & better."

### **Epilog**

On March 10, Albrecht records these words in his diary, "Four weeks ago we came to Nung Udoe; we have learned by seeing & hearing African Conditions." While the list of difficulties was long, and the conditions sometimes harsh, the team did not have to look hard to see the awesome opportunity that God had provided for the spread of his word among the Ibesipko peoples. The following words taken from their report and recommendation to the Synodical Conference bear evidence to that fact, "We have believed and after much prayer and consideration believe it more than ever that we should answer the call coming to us from Ibesipko. The people are worthy of our help. They are willing to heed instruction and are hungry for spiritual help. They want to be directed by God's word only. Unsuitable and unfit men are now leading them and teaching them. At this time there are also false prophets harassing them. They are shepherdless."<sup>25</sup> A motion to send missionaries to Nigeria was passed, and the work has continued there ever since.

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<sup>24</sup> A reference to the theme of their trip "The Joy of the Lord is our Strength" Neh. 10:8

<sup>25</sup> From the Proceedings of the Thirty Fifth convention of the Ev. Luth. Synodical Conference of North America, Indianapolis, India, August 6-11, 1936 pg. 100.

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