

The Story of the Churches of Christ in Central Europe
H. Godwin Grimm
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The history of the churches of Christ is the story of a small group of men and women united to Christ in a bond of obedience and mutual love, guided and inspired by His spirit. They felt themselves commissioned by the Lord to be His agent in the inauguration of His rule among all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost for the remission of sins, to receive the gift of the Holy Ghost. So they formed the living organism through which Christ made Himself known and continued His work for men, as formerly He had made himself known and worked through His physical organism. "And the multitude of them that believed were of one heart and soul: and not one of them said that aught of the things which he possessed was his own" (Acts 4:32).

This New Testament church was in no means denominational. The church of Christ was "His body, the fullness of Him that filleth all in all." (Eph. 1:23) There was no earthly leader to rule this organization, for Christ himself and Christ alone "is the head of the body, the church" (Col. 1:17) and His commandments had to be the rule of His church. Elders, bishops, or pastors of the local congregations did not exercise authority in the strict sense of the word, being only appointed to "feed the flock of God which is among you, taking the oversight thereof, not by constraint, but willingly; not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind; neither as being Lords over God's heritage, but being ensamples to the flock" (1 Pet. 5:2-3). The fellowship that existed between the members of the church was not a matter of human likes and dislikes but resulted from the work of the Spirit of Christ which overcame natural barriers and bound them together in the oneness of the undividing kingdom of God.

It was because Christians insisted on being different from all other people as children of their Heavenly Father, and that in comparison with the loyalty of their Lord and Savior all other loyalties lost their hold, that they were subject to a series of very severe persecutions. Faced with the threat of death, none but the most convinced and resolute in the first two centuries obeyed the gospel.

Nevertheless these true disciples of our Redeemer carried on widespread propaganda, for every Christian was bound by the Lord's last and greatest commandment for acting as a missionary to all with whom he came in contact. By teaching and chiefly by the witness of their community life, they spread their faith around the Mediterranean, covering the Roman Empire with a close net of independent churches.

But "the mystery of lawlessness doth already work," told Paul to the Thessalonians in early apostolic times. So it is not surprising to learn that the generations which followed saw a growing centralization of power in the local congregations in the hands of a single bishop and the constitution of church conventions, episcopal assemblies, ending with the claim of the bishops in the two capitals of the Empire, Rome and Constantinople, to be only authorized to preside over the councils of the church. When in 311 persecution stopped and the emperor Constantine made Christendom the official religion, people swarmed into the churches, having but a very little conception of the Christian faith and life. Looking upon the church as a state institution, they began to lower its spiritual and moral value. The worship of the church was gradually formalized and elaborated with the addition of Jewish, Chaldean, Persian, and Egyptian elements. The two directions of our Lord concerning His Supper and the Baptism of the remission of sins became a sort of magic rites, executed by an organized priesthood claiming to represent God on earth.

No wonder that all true followers of Christ began to sever their ties with the degenerated state churches of Rome and Constantinople. Persecuted by the Roman and Oriental Catholics as they had been persecuted by the heathen emperors, they continued to try to serve God in simplicity and truth in the deep of the woods of Armenia, in the deserts of North Africa, and in the valleys of the Alps and Pyrenees. From these countries some heroic missionaries of New Testament Christianity penetrated into Central Europe, eager to restore the great fundamental truths in the churches.

We do not know if the companions of the Spanish Elder of the church of Christ, Priscillianus, who had been brought in chains from his homeland to the West German city of Trier to be decapitated there as a "dangerous heretic" in 385, could establish on German territory the first church of Christ, neither can we prove that the Irish-Scottish preachers of the fifth and sixth centuries who are said to have baptized many people in the countries along the river Rhine succeeded in building Christian congregation. But it is very probable that there have been churches of Christ long ago, when we get the first written sign of their existence in 1025. In this year, the Roman Catholic Archbishop of Cambrai admits in his church some "repentant heretics" of Lorraine, who avowed to having been taught some years ago by an Italian missionary Gundulf, that the original church of Christ did not believe in purgatory, magic sacramentalism, hereditary sin, children's sprinkling, instrumental music, or the worship of images, saints, and the virgin Mary. Gundulf told them also that there existed small congregations of "true Christians" in the German Rhineland, in Alsace, and in Switzerland.

In 1052, a network of churches of Christ in Central Germany was in existence. Some of the most ardent preachers of the Gospel were burnt at the stake in this year by order and in presence of the German emperor at Goslar, singing the praise of the Lord amidst the flames. These missionaries were distinguished from their fellow believers only by the austerity of their lives, their zeal and knowledge, and by the modest title of Elder Brethren. While the Christian world, as it has been the fashion to call it, seemed to cover the earth, and gross darkness the people, it is pleasing to contemplate a ray of celestial light darting across the gloom.

Half a century later we are apt to recognize that two countries in the German western borderland are strongholds of the church of Christ in Central Europe: The Netherlands, where as early as 1146, imprisoned believers in Christ's redeeming power told their henchmen that they were in regular connection with other independent Christian churches in Greece, Macedonia, and Bulgaria, and Alsace-Lorraine, where the first report of Christian martyrdom by the papal and imperial powers is the account of the death of Gregorius Grimm at Ensisheim. Standing before the tribunal he solemnly declared: "If there is here a heretic, not I can be called heretic, for having been buried with Christ in the water of rebirth, I also have had by this baptism remission of my sins. I have been raised by Christ from spiritual death. I received Him and He gave me the power to enter the realm of God to become a happy child of my heavenly Father." Interrogated on his teachers he answered that already his grandfather had been baptized in the little river Fecht by an Italian missionary, and that he supposed that the majority of his fellow believers are inhabitants of Macedonia. But neither the breaking of his arms and legs by the torture nor the flames of the stake where he was burned alive in 1118 could make him tell the names of the little group of Alsatian Christians he belonged to.

From this remarkable year of 1118 we can trace the story of the little church in Alsatia to our days. In the records of the Roman Catholic inquisition they appear as "Ortlibarii," "Runcarii" or "Beghardi," whereas the people called them "Christ's poor disciples" ("Arme Junger Christi") or "Good People" ("Gutleute"). But they themselves never used another name for their congregations but

"Christengemeine" ("church of Christ") and for the members of these churches as "Christen" ("Christians") or Brethren and Sisters in Christ. And these little flocks had not only to defend against the heretic-hunting Roman Catholic church, but also against the many errors of sectarian denominations, which, though also persecuted by the ecclesiastical and secular authorities tried to merge with the true followers of Christ: Cathares, Spiritualists, and Libertines.

While the Roman Catholic Church and the German Emperor emulated in suppressing the original church of Christ (from 1118 to 1518, at least 4,000 Christians in Central Europe had to suffer a dreadful death of God's sake), the evils of the so-called Christian churches, Roman and Oriental, appeared in blatant form. From 1307 to 1378 the popes had to flee from Rome and live in France, where they became willing tools of the French kings. And from 1378 for nearly half a century there were two rival popes, each claiming to be the true one and excommunicating the other, each supported by half the nations of Europe. To maintain the luxury of their courts, both popes began to levy increasingly heavy taxes on those who acknowledged them, thus enlarging their already vast properties. It was estimated by John Wycliffe, one of the most courageous clergymen of this era, who arose in England to deny even the authority of the Catholic hierarchy and the false doctrine of the transformation of bread and wine into the body and the blood of Jesus Christ by the magic power of so-called priests, that the pope drew out of England nearly double the revenue of the king. The moral condition of the Roman Catholic clergy dropped to its lowest ebb. Nationalism and religious conscience combined rose in rebellion against the organized pillage of the nations by the Roman priesthood, especially in England (Wycliffe and the Lollards) and in Czechoslovakia (Hus and the Taborites). By military power, crusades against the heretics, the popes and their secular auxiliaries tried to extirpate this return to the original Word and will of God and this restoration of the church of Christ, pure in life and true in teaching. In Bosnia and Italy, in southern France, and in Frisia the forces of the Antichrist seemed to prevail, but Bohemia and Moravia stood. From this stronghold scores of New Testament preachers swarmed out to Poland, the Ukraine, Austria, and Germany. Most of them were caught and had to give their lives for the glory of Christ. In our country the names of these heroic missionaries-- Gruneisen, Heinrich von Schlieben, Friedrich Reiser, Anna von Weiler-- have always been held in high esteem, not only by the remnant church of Christ, but also by many other pious men and women in Alsace-Lorraine.

The horrible death of these witnesses had not been in vain. In the beginning of the sixteenth century burst upon Europe the force of a powerful personality who was to make a breach in the wall of Catholic supremacy: The German monk, Martin Luther. Under the influence of the writings of German mystics like Toulér and the Deutschherr of Frankfurt, always suspected by the popes to be in close connection with the "heretical" churches of Christ in Alsatia and the Rhineland, he had come to the conviction that salvation was to be attained only by following the unadulterated words of the Scriptures. His three greatest objections to Catholicism were the selling of indulgences for a remission in whole or in part of the temporal punishment due to God on account of sin after the guilt and eternal punishment had been remitted (and you could buy this remission for the moderate price of one to fifty dollars) then the authority of the pope, and last but not least the prohibition of marriage for the priests. After much criticism and many trials, Luther was excommunicated from the church. Nevertheless he continued to preach and began to build up a new church, not according to the apostolic pattern, but according to the so-called Creed of Nicene, worked out by the monarchical episcopate under the oversight of the Roman emperor Constantine in 325. Luther succeeded in the formation of this church, which took his name, the name of a pious but sinful man, instead of the only name in which salvation is promised (Acts 4:12), only with the support of the most German and all Scandinavian princes, which was given to Luther to enable these princes to confiscate the properties of the Roman Catholic church in their countries without remorse. The close involvement of the Lutheran church with the affairs of secular government in the following two centuries became the source for all the inconveniences which the true followers of Jesus Christ in Central Europe had then to endure. Let me only tell you, that also the influence of the French reformer Calvin and his Alsatian friend Bucer on the ecclesiastical affairs in Germany did nothing to change this disastrous condition: The complete supremacy of the secular government over the different denominations-- Lutherans, Calvinists, and Evangelicals. Since the Reichstag session at Augsburg in 1530 the principle of the relations between churches and government has been: "Cuius regio, eius religio," that is: "The religion of the sovereign has to be the religion of his subjects."

Here one example is given for many. The unfortunate country Palatinate, on both sides of the Rhine River, always one of the regions where the scattered little churches of Christ counted many followers, stood under the sovereignty of Prince-Electors. When the reform movement began to rise, Prince-Elector Ludwig V took his stand as a fervent Roman Catholic against what he called "a blasphemous revolution." His successor, Friedrich II, adhered to the confession of faith of the Southern German independent cities of Strassburg, Konstanz, Memmingen, and Lindau, an essay of mediation between the standpoints of Luther and the Swiss reformer Zwingli-- and so his subjects had to do. But his son, Ott Heinrich, the builder of the famous Heidelberg Castle, changed his politics and became a follower of the Lutheran doctrines. The Palatinate was now a Lutheran country for about ten years. Ott Heinrich's successor, however, Freidrich III, a stubborn Calvinist, expelled from one day to the other all Lutheran pastors, shut their schools and churches, and introduced with force of arms the Calvinistic church in the Palatinate. His son and successor, Ludwig VI, educated by his Lutheran mother secretly in the faith of the German reformer, restored in 1576 the Lutheran clergy and transformed the Calvinistic Heidelberg University to a Lutheran spiritual center. Ludwig VI died, and in 1583 the trustee of his underage son, the Marquess Johann Kasimir, compelled the unhappy people of the Palatinate to change once more their church membership and to become Calvinists again.

During the Thirty Years War between the Protestant and Roman Catholic powers in Germany (1618-48) the Palatinate was occupied by the soldiers of the Catholic League, and converted by cruel persecutions to Roman Catholicism. In 1649 the occupation ceased, the Catholic armies left the country, the Prince-Elector came back and the inhabitants of this wonderful German country were re-converted to the Calvinistic confession of their sovereign, only to become Catholics again when, half a century later, the Palatinate was incorporated into the Duchy of Julich.

It is not difficult to imagine what an impression this continual changing of creeds left in the souls of the German people. The indifference against any sort of faith or worse, the mockery on all things which concern "true faith," is quite evidently the result of such sinister proceedings. No wonder that in our times the red "free thinkers" and Communist atheists could so easily convince the people of Central Europe that all religion is a fraud of princes and an opiate for the people.

But even in these dark ages the churches of Christ did not only hold their ground in their strongholds in Alsace-Lorraine, Switzerland, and the Netherlands, but from 1518 to 1538 they succeeded in multiplying their congregations in the Palatinate, Austria, Moravia, and in the center of Germany. In 1524 there were approximately 12,000 baptized Christians in Alsace-Lorraine, over 5,000 in the Palatinate, more than 2,500 in Frisia, almost 2,000 in Salzburg. Under the influence of their Gospel preachers, a new religious movement sprang up almost spontaneously: The Anabaptist revival, soon numbering more than 500,000 men and women.

The Anabaptists rejected infant sprinkling as baptism, they taught that the holding of political office was wrong, they repudiated any connection between church and state, they regarded the Bible as an invaluable guide for their lives, they declined to take an oath. In all these things, as also in the molding of their congregations according to the apostolic pattern, they resembled our own churches of

reformation origin. But there were things in which they differed seriously from the teachings of the New Testament.

Their conviction that all men (Christians and non-Christians) are endowed with a certain measure of God's spirit, which they called the "inner light," and that this light was a sufficient guide for all who followed it in sincerity led to enthusiastic "revelations" and dangerous visions, and finally to the belief that the Scriptures could easily be replaced by the personal messages of the Holy Ghost to sinful men. Their premillennialism, their ardent desire to realize God's kingdom on earth by the restoration of the so-called apostolic communism, brought them in connection with social revolutionaries who attempted to overthrow all secular authority together with the unchristian claims of the Roman Catholic church, and to root out all the foes of God and the people.

When in 1525 the great rebellion of the oppressed farmers burst out in Germany, Alsace-Lorraine, Switzerland, Austria, and Yugoslavia, most Anabaptists backed the revolutionary movement, but naturally no member of the true churches of Christ participated in this outbreak. Nevertheless, too happy to have found people pretending to follow the precepts of the Bible concerning baptism for the remission of sins involved in this disastrous event, the Roman Catholic hierarchy bound its membership to denounce heretics, convicted them before a spiritual court, and if they refused to recant were delivered up to the civil authorities, tortured and finally burned at the stake or drowned. The secular power inclusive of the princes of the so-called Protestant nations was at the command of the Popes in this affair. The German Diet recognized that all who rejected infant sprinkling had to be considered as dangerous foes of all spiritual and secular government and therefore had to be condemned to the stake.

The result of this decree was the almost total extermination of the churches of Christ in Alsace-Lorraine, Switzerland, the Palatinate, and Central Germany. With about 100,000 Anabaptists, more than 42,000 followers of Christ were given their choice between revocation and mounting the pyre. By far the greater number chose the latter. Under the witnesses for the gospel truth were four of my ancestors: Agustine and Adolf Grimm in 1525, Godwin Engel in 1535, and the young Gregor Cron in 1536.

Perhaps it is important to point out that not only the Roman Catholics but also the Lutherans and Calvinists emulated in killing heretics at that time. Melancthon, reputed as one of the most lenient Lutheran theologians and scholars, backed with theological reasons burning at the stake, drowning and decapitation of over 1,000 baptized members of our churches in Thuringen and Saxony. Calvin, the cruel dictator of Geneva, and his predecessor Zwingli in Switzerland, strove to be not inferior to the Roman Catholics in persecuting the followers of the apostles' teachings.

Little by little from 1525 to 1595 the churches of Christ ceased to exist as congregations in Germany. A little flock, hidden in the highest valleys of the Vosges Mountains in Alsace-Lorraine or in the swamps of Frisia, counting some 1,000 souls, was the remnant of the 100,000 Christians in the twilight of this horrible sixteenth century. Some congregations in Hesse and Tyrol succeeded to escape immediate extermination by having recourse to the protection of some Husite noblemen in Moravia, but in 1621, after the defeat of the Czechoslovaks by the German emperor, they had anew to leave the country and to seek a resort in Hungary, Poland, the Ukraine and the Crimea. In the beginning of the nineteenth century the policy of the Russian Czars banished the descendents of the martyrs of the sixteenth century to the Kawkas Mountains, Central Asia, and Siberia. Here most of them perished in the Bolshevik revolution.

The small churches in Alsace-Lorraine had to endure their last persecution during the Great French Revolution (1789-99). Here died the last three martyrs, beheaded as "anti-revolutionists" at Colmar under the terror reign of the former Roman Catholic priest Eulogius Schneider. They had refused to take arms for the cause of the revolution. But when the Civil War in France ended, the new government of the Emperor Napoleon gave to all cults equal rights. The dark centuries of smoking stakes and blood-stained torture tools were passed. But what they could not achieve, the destruction of Christ's church, the so-called tolerance and complacency of modern times brought it near to accomplishment. Young people intermarried, at first only with Mennonites and Baptists, who did not believe in infant sprinkling, but as the peaceful years passed, also with Protestants of all denominations. Their children grew lukewarm and fell away. So when World War I began, only three small churches with a total of seventeen families remained in France and Germany, especially in Eastern Prussia.

The small congregations of the church of my ancestors in Alsace-Lorraine and the other scattered churches in Poland, Ukraine, and Siberia, which remained through the centuries in close connection with one another, claimed to be the true church of Christ. But even if we should succeed in tracing their origin from apostolic times to the present, has the creed of this people ever been identical with the teaching of the New Testament?

When I asked to be baptized in 1916, my father, one of the last Elders or Bishops of the Alsatian church (commonly called by the civil authorities "Altevangelsche," which means "people of the old-time gospel"), told me that no written witness of the principles of this age-old church has ever been formulated for fear that such a document might become a church creed. What I give here is, therefore, only an attempt to put in words the essence of these congregations, not willing to have any other creed than the whole New Testament.

The remnant churches of Christ believed in the deity and sufficiency of Jesus Christ, that he was sent by God from heaven to live, suffer, die and rise again for the redemption of mankind, that he ascended to heaven and will return! The New Testament, written by holy men, inspired by the Holy Ghost, was accepted without any reserve as the revelation of God in the spirit, the words and deeds of Christ. They believed the church of Christ to be founded on Pentecost in Jerusalem. They insisted in calling themselves only "Christians," "Brethren and Sisters in Christ," "Believers in Christ" or "Saints" and declined any other name, though they could do nothing to prevent magistrates, historians, henchmen of the Roman Catholic inquisition, and theologians from calling them according to some prominent members of the churches or some peculiarities, such as "Ortlieber," "Marbecker," "Winkler," "Hochselige," "Dumpler," "Altevangelsche."

To become a member of the church of Christ and, by that means, a child of God and a citizen of the Kingdom of God-so they told to their persecutors-you had to change your mind and life, to confess, and to be baptized for the remission of your sins by immersion in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.

The only other ordinance taught by Christ was for them to celebrate the Lord's Supper each first day of the week, generally in the evening twilight. The Brethren believed that Christ instituted these ordinances as teaching and worship techniques to enable man to grow in grace and to perform his way of salvation.

They did not at all believe in miraculous healing, but they ordered their Elders to take care of the sick Christians, by praying over them and-if they insisted-- by anointing them with oil in the name of the Lord.

In their congregational organization these churches followed only the example of the churches of Jerusalem, Antioch, and Corinth, as

recorded in the Acts and the Epistles: Each local church had at least three elders, three deacons, and one evangelist. These "servants," as they were called, had been appointed for life-time after having been chosen by lots out of the number of all those brethren who corresponded to the requirements of the letters to Timothy and Titus. An elder had, immediately after his appointment, to wash the feet of all the Brethren in the business meeting, to show that he would not be a lord of God's heritage, but the most humble servant of the church.

The church of my ancestors committed itself to the way of brotherhood. The Brethren did not believe in violence; they renounced war and its associated evils and sought to have peace with God and to live in peace with their fellow men. This meant also that they did not follow the way of litigation in the courts. They refrained from excesses and luxuries, they regarded the body as the temple of the Holy Ghost and that as such they desired to keep it pure and healthful.

It is my sincere belief that this church handed down through the dark ages of the so-called Christian world from the times of the first apostles and their followers to this twentieth century the fullness of the gospel of Christ. It could not satisfy their members to "do a peep into eternity on every Sunday morning." They stood for the fact that their entire life had to be illuminated with a faith that gives strength and orientation above and beyond the daily tasks. They saw that throughout the centuries the different so-called Christian denominations had burdened themselves with a heavy cargo of heathen superstitions, unchristian obligations against civil authorities, and dogmatic teachings. Their unscriptural emphasis has impressed upon millions of earnest seekers the conviction that such worship, such support for an anti-Christian government, such theological opinions are not at the core of Christ's teachings. Therefore the old churches of Christ endeavored to comprehend the life and teaching of and by Jesus himself. The life and teaching of our Savior are unmistakably a call for dedication to God's will. No ritual or creed can ever be a substitute for this truth. Christ's teachings can never be comprehended in their fullness by study alone, nor can they be caught in theological systems and handbooks. The knowledge of God is always the fruit of a new life, a life in the Kingdom of God after having received as a child and heir by our heavenly Father: "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God" (Matthew 5:8).

The testimony of these little churches has always been centered around the redeeming power of Christ's love. They knew by experience as well as by the Scriptures that love is the essence of His message to us. Their history is a record of continuous attempts to apply Christian love and faith to the problems of various periods. Our ancestors accomplished astounding physical and mental labors for the message which they carried according to the great commission of the ascending Redeemer. Their sufferings appear to us almost incredible. They were able to stand for Christ because they were in unity with the Father. To follow Christ's way in dealing with others has always been their endeavor. When they refused to take an oath, this attitude sprang into loyalty to the word of Christ: "You have heard that it was said to the men of old, You shall not swear falsely...But I say unto you: Do not swear at all...Let what you say be simply Yes or No" (Matt. 5:33-37).

Many a dramatic incident pointed the dangerous road through the wilderness which the churches of Christ in Europe and Asia Minor had to travel: Imprisonment and putting to torture and death, banishment and separation from wives and children were the criteria of this Christian pilgrimage through the dark centuries. And always the ocean of light and love was mightier than the flames of Satan and his Antichrist who tried to destroy the church of Christ. Just in the moment in which it seemed to become evident that the little remnant of these old-time churches of Christ could no longer survive in Europe, the Lord showed that He stood for the prophetic word once told to Isaiah: "A bruised reed shall he not break, and the smoking flax shall he not quench: he shall bring forth judgment unto truth" (Isa. 42:3).

Seed of a certain plant will produce the same plant in other parts of the world and at other times. The word of God is it the seed of the Kingdom (Luke 18:11). When it is sown in its purity and falls into sincere and honest hearts, it can produce nothing but Christians and churches of Christ. In the beginning of the nineteenth century, when the churches of Christ in Central Europe, not prevailed by the gates of hell in times of persecutions and sufferings, began to weaken under the influence "tolerance" and modernism, the Restoration Movement burst out in America.

The Restoration was not, like the Reformation in Europe, an effort to correct errors in the fallen church, but an earnest trial to restore and bring back the church of the first century. The Methodist O'Kelly, the Baptist Jones, the Presbyterian Stone and the two Campbells decided to put away all human creeds and all theological dogmas to go back to the Bible to rebuild the church of the New Testament. They all would have no creed other than the word of God and sought to follow it in loyal obedience to Jesus Christ as Lord. Their plea found a ready response in the minds of many people. Numbers of denominational ministers accepted it and often entire congregations left their former affiliation and joined the New Testament Christians. So thousands had been won in some years to the movement, and the unity of Christ's followers could be achieved by re-organizing the church upon the simple pattern of apostolic times.

Thus the church of the first centuries, the little remnant of which seemed to dwindle away in Europe and Asia, was again brought into existence in the United States of America. And, though separated by centuries of a particularly tormented history as well as by thousands of miles, the church was the same in the Old and in the New World.

And now let us see how the Lord provided that the few faithfuls of the old-time church of Christ in Central Europe could join their brethren and sisters of the Restoration Movement in the States.

As a consequence of the proud arrogance and eagerness of power of Nazi leadership, World War II left Central Europe in the deepest abyss of despair which these countries had ever known. Epidemic diseases, most of them mentally conditioned, famine, an existence without shelter in the ruins of almost annihilated and yet, by the refugees from the Communist occupied territories, overcrowded cities, need of fuel and clothing made life there a continuing torture.

Young Christians on duty in the American forces in Europe, moved by that which they had seen, brought the news of this disaster to the States. In the fall of 1946 the first packages of food and clothing were sent through CARE to Germany by American churches of Christ. They prepared the way for the preaching of the gospel in these countries, making known there that Christian charity was effective in spite of all the wrath and hate aroused by the cruelties of the Nazis.

In 1947 the first evangelists of the American churches of Christ tried to enter military governed Germany. In Zurich, Switzerland, where 420 years ago martyrs of old-time religion died so gloriously for the truth's sake, they had to wait some months, till in April 1949 permission came to work in Germany. The revival of religious concern in famine-stricken Germany did at first help a great deal in starting the first churches in Frankfurt, Hanau, Wiesbaden, Karlsruhe, Heidelberg, and Kaiserslautern. But when famine died out, also religious feeling began to die out. The CARE-parcel Christians separated from the gospel-touched Christians, and conversions became rarer, despite the

efforts, the prayers, and the revival meetings of the American brethren.

When an attempt was made to render the work of the evangelists more effective by centralizing the education of native preachers and the administration of the funds collected for the purpose of promoting the new established churches of Christ in Germany, there arose considerable opposition to this kind of organization not specifically mentioned in the New Testament, and had therefore to be abandoned. And, indeed, the Lord did not let the incessant efforts of the hard-working evangelists and the contributions of faithful people in the States and in the GI congregations here in Western Germany go without reward. After a short setback, the number of baptisms increased again, and the newcomers were people not attracted by the possibility to overcome their material difficulties with the support of the American brethren, but by the truth of the gospel, revealed to them for the first time in all its splendor.

Now we have German congregations, established by American missionaries, in Frankfurt-Bornheim (self-supporting church with elders and deacons), Frankfurt-Westend, Frankfurt-Sachsenhausen, Frankfurt-Niederrad, Nahau, Kassel (perhaps the smallest of the German churches), Hamburg, Berlin, Wiesbaden, Heppenheim, Heidelberg, Mannheim, Kaiserslautern, Pirmasens, Karlsruhe, Stuttgart, Augsburg, Munchen, Munchen-Laim. You do not find many well-to-do people there, but rather the kind of men mentioned in the first letter to the Corinthians: "Not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble...but God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty; and base things of the world, and things which are despised, hath God chosen, yea, and things which are not, to bring to nought things that are: that no flesh should glory in His presence" I Cor. 1:26-29).

If now I have to speak of myself so this results only from the fact that the Lord used my feeble forces in serving as a link between the remnant of the European churches of Christ and the brethren and sisters of the American Restoration movement.

Born in Sablon-lez-Metz (Lorraine) January 23, 1899, I am the son of a managing railway clerk, who in the year before my birth had just been appointed bishop (elder) of the last small congregation of the Alsace-Lorraine church of Christ, called by the civil authorities the "Old Evangelical Church of Immersed Believers." Five of my ancestors have given their lives for the truth of the gospel, but the little flock of which God had set them elders, deacons, teachers or preachers vanished from year to year.

In 1852 there had still been eighteen families in Alsace-Lorraine, but in 1867 twelve of them emigrated to Eastern Prussia, Poland and Lithuania to prevent intermarriage and, in consequence, fusion with denominational so-called Christian churches. In 1914 we numbered only one church with twenty-eight baptized members of my Alsatian homeland. But these last true faithfuls of the old-time religion continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers. Every Lord's Day found them in the old mansion of the ancestors in the valley of St. Gregory, to worship God by comforting themselves, and edifying one another by Bible study, song, and prayer, breaking the bread and taking the cup of the New Covenant in remembrance of the Savior. It was customary for everybody to sit after the evening service around the fire in our parlor and sing the songs of Zion. We could each choose a hymn or two, and this singing in the twilight held a warm place in my heart for all the years. Such a homely hour after worship may not appeal to folk in these modern days, but I would like them to know that since I have reached manhood, I have thanked God thousands of times for the training I received as a boy among-as I believe with much regret-the last Christians of Central Europe.

March 18, 1916 was and will ever be the most important date of my life. It was a sunny morning with all the beauty which spring brings in our country when I became a Christian, immersed by my uncle in the icy water of the White Lake in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost for the remission of sins and to receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. I can see the old stump near the steep bank of the lake amid the dark Vosges Mountains where I took off my clothes and knelt before the baptism. I can look to the old oak, where after my rebirth by water and of the spirit, the fire of old-time religion seized me to consecrate all my life to the service of God. It has been a wonderful experience, but it is more wonderful to me to know that the fruits of this experience also today did not cease to ripen. How glad I have been this day and all the following weeks, and months, and years for the rain of blessings God has poured out upon me!

Trained in Metz and Strasbourg Colleges, and at the universities of Strasbourg, Koenigsberg, Riga, and Montpellier I finally earned my livelihood as a newspaperman, tutor, and lecturer. Imprisoned by the Nazis for preaching the gospel truth in the face of a blood-stained and blasphemous government, I had to suffer for almost two years in the concentration camps of Hammerstein and Lichtenberg, suffering hunger, thirst, and the uninterrupted thrashing on arms, shin bones, and head like all the other prisoners. When I had been released, deaf in one ear and with crushed kidneys, I continued preaching like my ancestors did, in our small congregations in oriental Prussia and in crowded meetings of the Anti-Nazi "Bekennnisfront" (i. e., "front of the believers"). Bound by the Gestapo to report three times a day to the police station, and with strict interdiction to be employed in offices, plants, or even as a handyman, I had to sell all my furniture to be able to manage to live.

Nevertheless, when World War II began I was commissioned as an interpreter and had to serve in France. It was only in March 1945 that I, strictly controlled in the meantime as very suspicious, succeeded in deserting the Nazi army. I contacted Canadian tankists in the surroundings of Hamburg and was allowed to go home Xmas 1945. Back in Leipzig I learned of my father's death and of the almost total extermination of the two little Christian churches in East Prussia and Lithuania by the advancing Communist armies. Some survivors reached Central Germany and succeeded in contacting me in Leipzig. Having preached and lectured to the people of Christ about 10,000 times in the preceding years in Germany, Latvia, Lithuania and Poland, they insisted on appointing me one of the bishops of the last flock of the Savior in Europe, as we believed. Immediately I took up the task of rebuilding the destroyed church; without any support-all of the eighteen members of the small congregation (seven old brethren, six old and five very young sisters) had lost all their property in succeeding to escape from the Reds, and only eight of them did find a poorly paid job-- I had to work hard as a public lecturer, reporter, and proofreader in printing plants to earn a living not only for me, but also for my spiritual brethren and sisters in a famine-stricken, Communist ruled, and ravaged Central Germany. Truly I could say with the apostle: "These hands have ministered unto my necessities, and to them that were with me" (Acts 20:34).

Little by little the Lord added to the church 96 people, but just at the beginning of a remarkable revival of young people in the environs of Leipzig, three months after my marriage, I was arrested October 9, 1948 by the Communist authorities and for four years imprisoned in the ill-famed jails of Leipzig, Waldheim and Graefentonna.

In spite of all the sufferings of jail life, in spite of the bitter separation of my dear wife, I wouldn't miss these years in my life. The Lord gave me the power to resist all the attacks of Satan and his followers and the opportunity to preach the gospel of the salvation by faith, repentance and baptism even behind the prison walls. Three of most active co-workers in the church behind the Iron Curtain of today have been baptized by me in a bathroom of Graefentonna penitentiary.

Released in the fall of 1952, I followed my wife to Western Germany, deprived of all worldly goods (house and garden, library, furniture, beds, linen, clothing, etc.) because the Soviet military authorities asked again for my re-imprisonment by the German Communist government.

Arriving in Free Berlin, the privations of the past four years made themselves perceptible by infectious jaundice, which made me bed-bound for four months.

In the beginning of May 1953, my wife and I could settle in the Hesse town of Sooden-Allendorf, for the first months only thrown upon the unemployment benefit for the refugees. Then my wife, daughter of a well-known Academy principal and a trained chief-nurse, found a job working with delinquent girls in a reformatory. About Xmas 1953 the Relief work of the Protestant State Church asked my help in lecturing on refugee problems and mutual aid. I agreed in stating that my lectures might not be censored by the ecclesiastical authorities, and that at the beginning of each lesson the chairman should be bound to declare that I was no member of this denomination and that I declined to be made responsible for non-scriptural teaching of this church.

The work among the refugees showed very successful and promising. Under the pressure of public opinion, most clergymen of the Protestant State Church in Hesse invited me to preach also in the church buildings, but naturally I refused to do this. So, in March 1955, the Bishop of the Protestant State Church asked me formally to take over the office of President of the Seminary for Social Ethics with a fixed salary of Dmk. 1200.00 (about \$300.00) a month, free housing, and free board, under the only condition not to teach or to write against the doctrines of the State Church. My answer could only be no, but with this answer all the contacts with the State Church people had to cease.

In this same month of March 1955, I met for the first time of my life Brother Albert Knies of Frankfurt, a member of the restored church of Christ. What he had to tell me was the message of the old-time religion I had learned of my ancestors and practiced all my life. But the fact that the Lord had built up his church beyond the Atlantic in the time when His last followers in the European congregations dwindled hit me like a thunderclap-and still today I am considering this fact as one of the most wonderful proofs of heavenly providence. How happy my wife and I felt that night of March!

The first thing to do was to inform the believers in the Communist ruled countries of Germany of this great joy. To communicate with these brethren and sisters behind the Iron Curtain has ever been a very difficult work. All of them were strictly controlled by the red authorities, especially by the SSD (the Communist Gestapo or GPU of East Germany), because they were known for their firm resistance against party policy and military service. But in the meantime I had succeeded in establishing a more illegal than legal network of communications across the borderline, and in some weeks all members of the congregation under the oversight of Elder Petsche (Dresden) and myself answered my message with enthusiasm. We had to handle this work now with still more caution than before, for the Communist rulers consider each connection with people in the USA as high treason. And high treason is threatened with capital punishment. Now we have contact points in Soviet Germany at Vellahn, Bornim, Markkleeberg, Riesa, Meissen, Dresden, Halle, Duben, Kaltenlengsfeld and Eisenach, and to care for about 250 Christians. Only in the summer of 1956 could we receive the first direct report of these faithful believers behind the Iron Curtain by a Christian couple coming to Kaiserslautern to be baptized for the remission of sins. Since this happened, we could state that the work is growing from month to month.

I myself began preaching and teaching with the church of Christ of the Kassel area in April 1955. I then did mission work in Wiesbaden, Heppenheim, and Frankfurt-Niederrad (where I had the privilege to baptize a dear sister), and in October 1955 I answered the call of Bro. Hans Nowak to replace him at Kaiserslautern during his trip to the States. At Kaiserslautern, the Sodom and Gomorrah of Western Germany, I found a very hard soil. Among the population of about 72,000 Germans there were four baptized Christians as the result of three years of labor in the Lord's vineyard. Without the financial support and the spiritual help of the GI congregation I believe I would have desponded, for hearts are far more open to the truth of the gospel where Christianity is oppressed than in countries where so-called Christians are living a life only consecrated to vice and debauches.

Nevertheless the Lord added to His people in a year I had to spend at Kaiserslautern and simultaneously at Pirmasens (here I met a small church with four members)-19 souls. Intervening I had to speak in revival meetings in Mannheim (March 1956), Konstanz (June 1956) and Zurich (September 1956). Zurich gave the best results. In spite of the faithful and indefatigable work of the McKinney family and Brother Blum, no church could be formed there in the industrial center of Switzerland. God blessed my efforts, and three precious souls became children of God, immersed for the remission of sins and so constituting the first church of Christ in Switzerland.

Since November 5, 1956 I have cared for the Lord's flock in Mannheim, one of the "chemical" cities of Germany with about 300,000 inhabitants. Here the Brethren Loyd Collier, Hugh Mingle, Knoebel and Dieter Alten succeeded in the gathering of about 37 Christians in the fall of 1949. The following two years saw an increasing of membership in an astonishing measure. But with the cease of the CARE parcels relief, the number of the people attending the worship dropped to about thirty. From some of the so-called CARE parcel Christians, the church had to withdraw publicly.

In November 1956 there were yet 26 baptized faithfuls in Mannheim. I was so glad to meet here with pious, earnest, and Scripture-searching people, willing to make sacrifices for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints. In their outward life, they are poor people with an average monthly income of \$30.00, but their inner life is rich in Christian experiences. Therefore it is not astonishing that they tithe themselves voluntarily for the benefit of the Lord's cause. In the past months I baptized two men and restored one sister and one brother. Mannheim church of Christ takes care of twenty families in eight towns in the Soviet Zone, providing them with tracts, mimeographed circulars, gospel outlines, food and clothing. For the current year we are planning systematic preaching in Refugee and DP camps, especially for the Hungarian refugees of last November.

You all, dear friends, know the story of what happened at the great feast given by Belshazzar, king of Babylon, for a thousand of his lords. "In the same hour," tells the Bible, "came forth fingers of a man's hand, and wrote over against the candlestick upon the plaster of the wall of the king's palace: and the king saw the part of the hand that wrote." As Belshazzar's drunken, bewildered eyes saw the hand moving across the wall, the effects of alcohol died in him. He sobered up that very moment. He stood face to face with the Living God. God was writing his doom on the wall of that banquet hall, and this is the writing that was written: "Mene, mene, tekel, upharsin!" And it was the Jewish captive, Daniel, who read the message spelling damnation for Babylon: "Mene-God has numbered thy kingdom and finished it. Tekel-Thou art weighed in the balances, and art found wanting. Upharsin-Thy kingdom is divided, and given to the Medes and Persians." And then follows the report of God's book: "In that night was Belshazzar, the king of the Chaldeans, slain and Darius the Median took the

kingdom."

Let us go back from Belshazzar's times to our twentieth century after God's revelation in Jesus Christ. A sinister struggle in these days is waged for power. It is, alas, not a struggle between the armies of hell on one side and all the Christian nations on the other side, but it is the fight of a seemingly hopeless minority of faithful followers of the Lord and an overwhelming majority of faithless Christians under the leadership of scientifically educated atheistic Communists.

For this let me state: The so-called Christian part of the world is not at all Christian in the true sense of the word. It is undermined by godless evolutionists, modernistic preachers, pagan philosophy and psychology, trade unionism, liquor interests, tobacco companies, radio and television opiates, and the corrupt elements in all political circles. Apostates and false prophets, faith-healers and lunatic clairvoyants are administering their deadly poison to a sin-sick crowd, styling themselves Christian denominations.

God has given warning enough that in the last days, prior to His coming, all this will happen. There will be those "having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof," writes Paul to Timothy. "Evil men," says Isaiah, the prophet, "have chosen their own ways, and their soul delighteth in their abominations."

And all who love the Lord rightly look to the churches of Christ as the champion against wrong and as the defense of the right. The church of the twice-born is the only potent enemy of evil. God has His remnant whom He can depend upon to make His commandments known, and through whom he can reveal His grace, mercy, and redemptive power. Christ has ever had His faithful few. You and I belong to this church. Therefore for us the service of God is a serious business, neither an advocacy, nor a hobby. It is our life duty, our life's labor.

Our primary motive is to fulfill to our uttermost possibility the injunction of the Word of God, to draw nigh to him and be fully equipped and made strong for the tasks ahead. God has placed a burden upon all of us who are really born-again Christians by the baptism of the remission of our sins; and that is to evangelize the world insofar as it lies within our ability. To come to the rescue of a languishing and morally bankrupt Germany there is only one God powerful enough and our churches holy enough. There are churches, but only one church of Christ—a company of redeemed souls, born-again souls, baptized souls, accepted children of their heavenly Father—the Kingdom of God, proclaiming the Gospel of Christ as the Gospel of Love. It cannot be a message of hate; but when it comes to compromising the truths of the Eternal Word, we Christians have to take our stand and hate iniquity and every false way.

We cannot afford to compromise the Gospel and its truth with any modern delusion, or sophistry, or philosophy. We cannot lay aside a single part of that armor of the Word of God and be fortified against the enemy when he comes in like a flood.

There are those who believe that shaking, foolish manifestations and fleshly demonstrations are the work and power of the Holy Ghost. One who knows the truths of the Word of God will have no part or lot with them. Many in the world today have a tongue that operates like a machine gun, and can almost make one believe that black is white and that white is black. Unless one is on guard, ever alert, eternally vigilant against the deceptions of the last days, it will be easy for the enemy to swing him into line with false delusions. In Switzerland, last year, American so-called faith healers did so excite the population of the large cities of Basle and Zurich, that the civil authorities had to forbid all revival meetings of "American sects," and by this mark they characterized not only Pentecostals, Mormons, and some occultist movements, but also the churches of Christ.

It stands to reason that the Protestant State Churches of Germany and Switzerland used this occasion to display a powerful campaign against our slowly growing congregations. Yet the most gentle attack was the assertion of the leading apologist of the Protestants, Lic. Hutten, in a widespread book that the "Campbellites" would be "perfectionists" and without the possibility to sin against their Lord. Other Protestant pastors marked us as "a disguised kind of Mormons" or as "destroyers of ecumenical unity." They all could and would not understand that the foundation of truth which God has put into our heart is of infinitely more value to us than a mere glad hand. A handshake of friendship and fellowship with something that is contrary to the teachings of God's word will ultimately defile our soul.

One factor must be borne in mind in connection with this attitude of the "big" Protestant State Churches: They embrace in Germany more than 96% of all non-Catholics! The civil government supports these churches with the taxes of all citizens, pays the salary of their ministers (monthly average of the salary of a non-married Protestant pastor: \$250.00 and free housing) and builds churches, seminaries, and colleges. No wonder that the majority of non-Catholic inhabitants of Germany adhere to this Church, which asks neither tithing nor offering from them, and where, when they happen to attend the worship one rainy Sunday, they generally give only a quarter of a cent (0.10 Dmk.) "for the poor." Church attendance is, using the phrase of the Protestant Bishop Lilje in 1956, "the real cross for the State Church." Only 3% of all adult members of this so-called church attend the worship more than 3 times a year! Only 0.2% come one time in a month. Of these adult churchgoers 87% were women! The upper classes and the lowest classes furnish the worst percentage. In the well-known Protestant "Christuskirche" here in Mannheim they counted an average of 11 churchgoers on Sunday—the number of "communicants," i.e. full admitted members of this single church amounts to 2,547!

You can easily imagine the significance of these facts. A poll of a pro-governmental institute of public opinion showed that of 1,000 German teenagers, only 70 were able to name more than 2 Gospels, but that 823 could not name any Gospel! With adults it was not quite so bad: 215 knew at least 3 Gospels. Indeed, we are living here among Gentiles, disguised as Christians for the benefit of the State Church.

But do not forget: In spite of the fact that 51.2% of the population of The Federal Republic of Germany (Bonn) are members of the Protestant State Church and only 45.2% Roman Catholics, the leading class is almost exclusively Roman Catholic. Roman Catholicism in Germany is the same as in any other country of the world: Unscriptural and superstitious, immoral and pagan, flattering and hypocritical where it is not backed by the civil authorities, but ruthless and utterly tyrannical where it is in full possession of the power. In the pronounced Roman Catholic territories of West Germany (Upper Bavaria, Rhenania, Westfalen), where Protestants are a small minority, the name "Protestant" or "Lutheran" or "Evangelical" even provokes a real mania. Protestant who happen to enter a Catholic town or village when a procession on occasion of any calamity moves through the streets, are forced by the populace to bow their knees before the graven or pictured images of so-called saints and their relics, and the local policemen never try to interfere with such events.

The zeal of the Roman Catholics is acting against Christians! You know what happened in Italy in the last years: Riots before and in our church buildings, stoning of our young native evangelists, thrashing of the visitors of our First Day worships and the partakers of the Lord's Supper, etc. But I suppose you do not know that all these things—though in a somewhat less violent way—happened last year also in West Germany when Bro. Fausto Salvoni of Italy toured the country. But even in cities far off from his lecturing route, e.g. at Kaiserslautern evangelists and members of the church of Christ got a lot of threatening letters, of course anonymous letters! Nevertheless there are

even Roman Catholics who furnish a large percentage of the convinced members of the Lord's church in Germany. Considering the fact that the conversion of Roman Catholics to the Protestant State Church is a rare thing, I have to thank God for the privilege He gave me in baptizing five Roman Catholics in one small congregation in 1956.

Catholicism is a menace for the re-Christianization of Germany, but Nazism is a far bigger threat. For Nazism, even though the official papers deny the fact for political reasons, is not at all dead in Central Europe, and with every passing year the monstrosities of Hitler and his fanatics seem less monstrous to a youth educated by teachers who had been fervent disciples of the satanic totalitarianism of the Third Empire. And in the same proportion in which the re-armament of Non-Communist Germany progresses, Nazism spreads and progresses. This cannot be demonstrated by the number of voters in the elections (the Nazi party being forbidden and the bulk number of pro-Hitlerists are strictly opposed to "parliamentary democracy"), but every man who does not close his ears and eyes before the realities of daily life in the Federal Republic knows that a very considerable part of the youth believes in the slogans of the Nazi regime, and that another considerable part of the nation at least looks on Hitlerism as a valuable ally against Bolshevism.

But, you are asking, what have these political aspects to do with the proclamation of the Kingdom of God by the German Christians? Unfortunately, very much! Nazism means hatred against all the so-called enemies of the German people-- first in line, naturally, the victors of World War II: Russians, Americans, Britons, and Frenchmen. To collaborate in public with these people is regarded by Nazi-educated people as high treason. A German who worships in an "American" chapel (and so Protestants, Roman Catholics, Nazis and Communists are designating the meeting places of the churches of Christ) is treated by his countrymen as, I beg your pardon, a Yankee in Ku Klux Klan times trying to live among colored people. He is an "outcast" and has evidently "lost his face." Do you now understand why the work in the Lord's vineyard here in Germany is so enormously hard? To win one of the former Nazis over to the church of Christ is a victory only due to incessant prayer and with complete and total surrender to the Lord by an infatigable evangelist.

But the capital danger, friends in the States, is the Communist menace in Central Europe. Here Christianity has not only to face Catholic superstition and spiritual tyranny, or Protestant modernism and shortcomings, or Nazi paganism and militarism, here is not only a conflict between two basic philosophies of life, here the foe of God is raging his shock brigades to destroy the free world in which only we are allowed to search the Scriptures, to call for a revival of religious power, to worship publicly the Lord our God. And here in Central Europe you may meet in all streets the recruiting officers of the devil's army and air force: clever and capable agitators, using every opportunity to sow the poisonous seed of distrust, atheistic materialism, and envious desires. The most dangerous of these agents of the Moscowite Anti-Zion are not at all foaming speakers in strike meetings (you shall soon discover them if you have the experience of a six years' sojourn in Soviet Zone "liberty" and KZ like myself) disguised as Catholic Professors, Ministers of the Protestant State Church, as Jehovah's Witnesses, or as pro-Nazi Reserve Officers. Their public organization, the Communist Party, is suppressed as illegal, but that does not stop them.

The years of the "economical miracle" in Germany are fading. A recent report of the government confirms that the standard of living in West Germany lowers from year to year. What an opportunity for the red agitators! The church of Christ does not support the idea that material concerns have no bearing on the spiritual. The cases of the young man with great possessions (Matt. 19:16-22), of Ananias (Acts 5:1-11), of the pious Pharisees who devoured widows' houses (Matt. 23:14) and the soft voice of our Savior to His disciples, "Give ye them to eat" (Matt. 14:16) show how certain material motives and economical practices can be fatal obstacles to spiritual achievement.

The individual's concern for livelihood and possessions colors his motives and acts. His economic behavior affects his relationship to his neighbor and his eternal destiny. Thus, the two great commandments-to love God and to love one's neighbor-obligate the Christians to give guidance to men in their economic affairs in emphasizing the supremacy of the spiritual.

The threat of Communist world-conquering forces us to an attitude more conforming with the Sermon on the Mount, the Golden Rule, the twelfth chapter of Romans, the letter of James, and in fact, the entire New Testament, rather than to the attitudes of the denominations toward economic perplexities, and not to be slow and even too fearful to speak on these larger issues.

This attitude obliges us to emphasize: That Christian love constrains us to be concerned for the entire welfare of all men, that the Christian must testify for the principles of the gospel in whatever groups he is a member; that every worthy vocation is a form of Christian service; that Christians are stewards of the knowledge, skills, and wealth which God has given to them. Communism could grow and develop because the so-called Christian nations and governments did not act as followers of Christ. They did not see and would not see the misery of their fellow men, like the priest and the Levite on the way from Jericho to Jerusalem. They answered God with the words of Cain, "Am I my brother's keeper?" Communism will cease to be a mortal menace for the world when Christians begin to be responsible for their fellow man's welfare or misery, each one of the church of Christ in his house, his street, his quarter, his township, his country, regardless of risks or penalties.

On one occasion in an ancient day when the enemies of God's people had come up against them, they were given explicit instruction from the Lord as to how they should meet the problem of the hour. "And let it be when thou hearest the sound of a marching, that then thou shalt bestir thyself: for then shall the Lord go out before thee, to smite the host of the Philistines" (2 Sam. 5:24).

"When thou hearest the sound of a marching." Surely we are hearing a sound of a marching today. In the world we hear the tramp, tramp, tramp of millions of feet-the marching of armies around the world preparing for the final struggle between freedom and totalitarianism. We hear the marching of millions of youth and of men and women in their pleasure-mad dance of death to the raucous music of Rock 'n Roll bands, not knowing that they are dancing over the trap door of hell and underneath is the abyss. We hear the marching of vast ragged armies of refugees and displaced persons. We hear the marching of the slave gangs in the labor and concentration camps of the Communist ruled countries. We hear the marching of whole populations of hungry, famine-stricken people who with hollow eyes, hollow stomachs, and hollow voices plead for bread. We hear the marching of millions in their quest for fame and fortune.

But at this time we also hear the marching of the armies of the Lord. We hear the marching of true Christians around the world as they go forth to feed the hungry of heart and of body, and to give the truth to the world before it is too late. God is urging us forward. God is calling us-all of us. He is pleading with everyone to participate in this great task.

The focus of the decisive battle between the forces of Satan and the hosts of God is in these years, no doubt, in Central Europe. Here all the powers of hell unite to stop the forward movement of the church of Christ. Roman Catholicism and Nazism, Communism and Denominationalism unite their attacks against the rock on which Christ built His church.

But we are not in a defeated cause. There is nothing more sure than the triumph of God's eternal truth and His church, for "the gates of hell shall not prevail against it." Victory is certain because Christ is our leader. He has never failed; He has never been defeated. "He went forth conquering and to conquer," even in the darkest ages of His church in Europe and Asia, when the stakes shone in the night and their smoke darkened the light of the rising sun.

With fear in their hearts the reasonable part of the inhabitants of Germany look upon the day, perhaps nearer than all of us think, when the American occupation forces have to leave this country. They know too well that all hopes built upon a Germany army as a bulwark against their comrades in the Communist-led German forces in the East are vain. Brethren, let us build therefore a mighty fortress in Central Europe, a fortress of the truth, the majesty, and the love of Christ. Who is ready to give the material we need so badly for this enterprise?