

MISSIONARY CORRESPONDENCE

Altona Mission,
March 16th, 1942

Dear Highway:

Seeing people convicted and going up to the altar, giving candidates the right hand of fellowship, baptizing new members and such like is a very pleasant side of mission work but not all mission work is as pleasant.

Yesterday necessity forced me to go to our school at Kipenyawo and examine reports that the teacher there was unsatisfactory. Things were as reported and the result was that she was sent home. It seems that she was headstrong and pretty much of a heathen. She would go wherever and whenever she liked without asking if it were right or not; she called the children bad names (perhaps swore at them), she was incapable, and so on and she even took part in a heathen ceremony that may interest you.

It seems as if this ceremony is an ancient one and not too well known, even among some natives. It seems a pity that there is now a revival of this and other similar customs among the natives.

When the gardens of the natives become infested with army worms they hold a council and decide they must be driven away. The work is delegated to the girls. They first go out and collect samples of army worms from each of the infested gardens and shut them up for a night in a gourd. The same evening of that night they go out and collect green corn and imfe (native sugar cane) and have a real feast. They then all sleep together in the hut of one of the neighbouring grandmothers. Early the next morning, perhaps two o'clock, after having discarded their own clothes and after putting on boys' beshus (boys' scanty skin coverings), they drive out all the cattle from the community cattle kraals and take them out on the hillsides and herd them; the gourd full of army worms go out with them.

The secret of getting rid of the offending army worms is to swear at and call the army worms in the gourd bad names. They call on their god to come to their aid and remind him they will soon be starving if the army worms eat up all their food. They may even fast to show their god that this food situation is really a serious one. The swearing, calling bad names, and pleading goes on until late afternoon when the cattle are driven home. In the meantime the cattle have not been milked that morning as usual so they go home lowing for their calves. Before leaving the army worms are let loose and are probably given a final warm cursing to scatter them far and wide. The knowing ones say that all the army worms will now leave the affected or doctored gardens—at least within the next few days, they add as an afterthought.

The girl we had teaching took part in this astonishing and superstitious ceremony; how could a girl like that help our church children and seekers and teach them God's word?

Surely these people need your prayers. They need to be enlightened. They need to be saved.

Yours in Him,

EUGENE A. M. KIERSTEAD

THREE KINDS OF CHURCH MEMBERS

Church members are a hundred or a thousand kinds. Suppose now we look at just three varieties.

First, there are those who are a distinct liability to the church. Some or all of the following things are the matter with them:

Their behaviour before the world is not good. Those who have business with them question their honesty. Or they are small in their business dealings—two by four or less. They do questionable things—perhaps they talk in such a way that the church is discredited, and perhaps by their stories our religion is in reproach. They profess one thing and live another. They do not keep their church vows. In the church they are faultfinders. They can see motes or beams in their brother's eyes. They know how the preacher and the church ought to do, but perhaps they misbehave worse than others. They are stingy, refusing or failing to give of their means for the support of God's work, leaving to others financial responsibilities which belong rightfully to all. They are unspiritual—they can talk about everything but vital religion. They lack personal testimony, and they lack interest in all that deals with inner religion. Their attitude is one of pessimism, discouragement and faultfinding.

Second, there are those who are more or less innocent but good for nothing. They will not stoop to some of the things which belong to the first class. But some of the following characteristics will be found in them:

They lack zeal for the work of God. They tire easily where there is only an effort for the souls of men. Though in normal health, they must stay home from the revival meeting often to rest. They cannot work in the Sunday school—perhaps cannot even attend—by their behaviour they vote for its discontinuance. They can attend social functions and business meetings for prayer and praise and worship. They give of their means, perhaps a little, but not according to their ability. They never definitely seek the salvation of any or ask one how it is with his soul. They mean no harm and do no good. Will they make it to heaven? God knows. He is wiser than we are. Anyway, it is too bad to be good for nothing while one is on the way to heaven—if heaven is at the end of the "do-nothing road."

Third, there are those who are distinct assets to the church. Some of them are men, some are women; some are aged, some are in the prime of life, some are young. Some are very bright and intelligent, and some are slow. Some know how to get on in the world, and some do not. Some are well-to-do, and some are poor. Some are fit for places of responsibility in the arrangement of church affairs, and some have no such fitness.

But they are alike in this: They are Christians in deed and in truth. Those who do business with them believe that they love and serve God. Out of their testimony, lived and spoken, the world is impressed. The godless may be compelled to say even grudgingly, "He does have a good religion. There are not many church members like that one."

In the church he is a good man or she is a good woman. He is not a faultfinder. He is not a hinderer of the work. He is not saying, "We can't do anything." As he is able he does attend the means of grace, where he can get good and do good. He gives his tenth

to the work of God, and perhaps he gives more. He gives his testimony to the church.

He orders his household aright so that the family conduce to the praise of the Lord. The kitchen of her house and the yard about the house recommend the religion which is professed. If the church does not recognize his gifts or elect or appoint him to the place he would like to serve, he humbly accepts the judgment of others as to what is best. He is the friend of every activity of the church.

He seeks the salvation of some individual. He seeks a place of service in the church, not for the honor's sake but to be good for something. He encourages the preacher, and his living is as ointment poured forth upon the church and upon the world.

"O Lord, help us to find ourselves; and not only considering heaven, which we may miss if we do not watch our step, but considering the great ends we may serve, help us to redeem these fast passing days and golden opportunities!"—The Free Methodist.

CHARLES G. FINNEY'S RULES FOR THE SOUL-WINNER

Rev. Charles G. Finney, the noted evangelist of a century ago, proposed the following rules by which his students in training for the ministry in Oberlin College might make their way into useful careers as soul-winners. He said:

See that you have a heart-call, and not merely a head-call, to undertake the preaching of the gospel. By this I mean, be heartily and most intensely inclined to seek the salvation of souls as the great work of life, and do not undertake what you have no heart to.

Being called of God to the work, make your calling your constant argument with God for all that you need for the accomplishment of the work.

Believe the assertion of Christ that He is with you in this work always and everywhere, to give you all the help you need.

Make the Bible your Book of books. Study it much upon your knees, waiting for divine light.

Beware of leaning on commentaries. Consult them when convenient; but judge for yourself in the light of the Holy Ghost.

Give your most intense thought to the study of ways and means by which you may save men. Make this the great and intense study of your life.

Beware of the error that there are no means of regeneration, and consequently no connection of means and ends in the regeneration of souls.

See that you have the special endowment of power from on high, by the baptism of the Holy Ghost.

See that you personally know and daily live upon Jesus Christ.

Spend much time every day and night in prayer and direct communion with God. This will make you a power for salvation. No amount of learning and study can compensate for the loss of this communion. If you fail to maintain communion with God, you are "weak as another man."

Watch for souls as one who must give account to God.

Be diligent and laborious, "in season, out of season" (2 Tim. 4:2).

Contemplate much the guilt and danger of sinners, that your zeal for their salvation may be intensified.—Selected.