

# WORLD DOMINION

The World Dominion Movement advocates Informed Continuous Co-ordinated Evangelism to reach everyone at home and abroad. Its basis is belief in the Deity and Atoning Death of the Lord Jesus Christ, the World's Only Saviour, and in the Final Authority of Holy Scripture.

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# German Protestant Missions in 1936

JULIUS RICHTER

FOR many reasons the year 1936 has been memorable for German missions, and I am grateful to the Editor for giving me this opportunity of telling of our joys and sorrows to friends in other countries.

For three decades, 1887-1917, we had a wonderful increase in the home Church and on the field. All doors seemed to be open; missionary interest was spreading far and wide, and many millions of marks were willingly put at the disposal of missionary societies. Then came the World War; for more than two decades German missions have marched in the shadow of dark clouds, and it has needed more than usual courage and confidence not to lose heart. Nevertheless, in the year 1936, friends of German missions have witnessed three centenaries, two jubilees and one commemoration of seventy-five years of superabundantly blessed work. It was as if, by God's grace, the divine searchlight was piercing the clouds and shining on one richly blessed field after another in order to convince us that, after all, God's arm is not shortened and that He has ways and means of blessing even in the most unexpected quarters.

The first centenary was that of the Leipzig Evangelical Lutheran Mission, and our thoughts turned not only to the well-established Lutheran Tamil Church in the Madras Presidency, but to the beautiful slopes of the Kilimanjaro in the Tanganyika Territory where, among the different Chagga tribes, an indigenous Church is growing by leaps and bounds. Already in one district half of the native population, and in another, one-third, have been baptized; paganism is breaking down; even Islam is a dangerous competitor only in part of the territory. Almost thirty thousand Christians are thronging the chapels and churches, and, under the able leadership of men like the well-known Dr. Bruno Gutmann, a type of Christian life is developing which is indigenous to the country.

The second centenary was that of the North German Mission in Togo. Hardly any West African mission has

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had a harder time than this. For generations the country here was 'the white man's grave.' During the first fifty years the mission sent out 110 missionaries, 71 men and 39 wives. Fifty-four of this number, and thirty children, died for Africa, and forty were forced to return home with broken health. When the first natives were baptized in 1854 the laconic news was: 'Seven years—seven graves—seven baptized.' It did indeed need the patience and faith of the saints to stick to this work. It is a wonderful fact that in the centenary year there could be counted a harvest of almost fifty thousand baptized Christians, increasing by between two and three thousand neophytes every year. It is true that the difficulties have not yet been overcome. The country has been divided into two Mandates of France and Great Britain, so that it is difficult for the Ewe Church to unite as one body, and the financial depression here, as in many other countries, is a serious hindrance. Nevertheless, the outlook has never been more hopeful than it is at present.

The third centenary was that of the Gossner Mission in Chota Nagpur. Here, almost one hundred and forty thousand Christians have been gathered in among the primitive hill tribes of Bihar. It has been one of the most encouraging mass movements among the jungle folk of British India. Able leaders such as Dr. Alfred Nottrott and Ferdinand Hahn have been successful in laying the foundations of a well-established indigenous church in spite of race antagonism, difference of language, extreme poverty, the crushing competition of the Jesuit Mission, and other difficulties.

Of the two jubilees, the first was that of the Neuendettelsau Mission, in the Australian mandate of New Guinea. This is a country of many surprises. The Papuans and Melanesians are among the most primitive and ferocious people in the world. They are split up into numberless tribes and clans with widely divergent languages. Many of them are cannibals and head-hunters. Yet in this wild country, with high mountains, and an impenetrable jungle, probably the richest gold mines in the world have been

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discovered. Perhaps even more surprising than this, a population of some two hundred thousand natives have been found far away in the unknown interior. They had lived their isolated life probably for millenniums, without any contact with the rest of the race. In such perplexing circumstances the Neuendettelsau Mission has been able to build up a large work with eighty-nine German and 734 native missionaries. These hundreds of native agents form an army of lay helpers with a flaming enthusiasm to carry the Gospel to their benighted fellows.

The other jubilee was of the Bethel Mission in the Tanganyika Territory. This has always been a particularly interesting mission because of the striking Christian personality of Pastor von Bodelschwingh. It is closely connected with that great city of charity, Bethel near Bielefeld, where about twenty-five thousand patients are living under the self-denying care of hundreds of deacons and deaconesses. These poor people have sent out a fine group of pastors, deacons and deaconesses and willingly maintain them out of their poverty.

Last, but not least, we remember the seventy-five years of missions in the Batak country of Central Sumatra. This is the greatest consolidated indigenous church of Protestant missions in our time. Already 368,000 Bataks have been baptized, and about 15,000 are added year by year through baptism. The territory covered with Christian villages is expanding rapidly to the north and south of the island. The Christian movement is advancing courageously even into the Moslem districts.

It is an astounding fact that, in spite of the many disappointments and sorrows through which German missions have passed during these two dark decades, so many gleams of bright sunshine have gladdened our hearts, and so many tokens of divine grace have beckoned us on our uphill course : *per aspera ad astra*.

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There is far less done by Christians than ought to be done ; but most of what is done at all is done by Christians.

*Archbishop Temple.*