

HAVE WE FAILED

Acts 2: 1-14, 38, 41.

I came across a sentence some time ago that sounded as if it had been lifted straight from the Acts of the Apostles. But it was a report from a 20th century African, an evangelist. "We did not begin to preach," he said, "until we had called for the power of God... That power came; we took it and went forth to preach. People came confessing Jesus like the fish of the sea in number."

That is how we all like to think of the world mission of the Church of Jesus Christ--in terms of power, and witness, and overwhelming results, "like the fish of the sea in number". But how far do the real facts actually bear out that romantically optimistic picture of the mission field. That is what we would like; but is it what we've got?

I stand before you, I am afraid, as a depressing reminder of what may be the real facts of the case. After all, which is the truer symbol of the world Christian mission of our time: those African evangelists, incredibly successful fishers of men, reaping great harvests out of the human sea for Christ--are they the symbol of our times--or am I? I am a missionary on the run. I went out bravely to win China for Christ and in my own spectacularly successful fashion, within 14 months of my arrival we had lost China. I don't want to take the entire credit for that; but that is what happened. I'm sort of a perpetual first term missionary. I'm always in language school, first one, and then another. I'm always beginning, and never finishing. I'm a very poor object lesson in missions.

I don't mean to be facetious about this. It is too great a tragedy for that. Once we had 8000 missionaries in China. Now we have one--just released from five years of prison. That is not power; that is failure. We talk about the power of God, but how many of us, like those evangelists really ask for it. How many get it. *Some say we are not only under fire - we've already failed.*

Some say we are failing in Latin America. Not long before I sailed to Korea I talked to a missionary who had just come up from the continent below us. "Our mood," he said, "is pessimism and despair. There is no future for the mission there." Or take Colombia: 53 Protestant martyrs in 6 years, 43 chapels and churches destroyed by fire or dynamite; 120 Protestant primary schools closed by violence or government order. Isn't that failure? Aren't we being wiped out.

KOREA

Some say we are failing out on the frontier; that though it is true that we have built up tidy little mission centers, neatly organized, subsidized and institution-alized, they are no longer radiating, outreaching centers of the Christian faith. They tell us that we in the major churches have abandoned to the sects and the independents the great outer rim of the unreached places of the lost. Have we left the pioneering to ~~the~~ others.

I have a cousin in New York, an anthropologist and explorer. A couple of summers ago, with a holy, scientific zeal he set out alone on a one-man expedition for the Explorers' Club to track down an untouched stone-age tribe in the jungles of Brazil. Friends begged him to take a gun. He refused. He took only a bow and arrow which he didn't know how to shoot. When he found his tribe, he discovered somewhat to his embarrassment, that they didn't wear clothes, but he proved equal to the occasion; he promptly took off his own. "I didn't want them to think I was hiding anything," he explained to Suzy, his long-suffering wife. And after all, it was

More successful than total Africa. O.C. - 1000 people. 650 villages. has done

all, it was just as well not to take any chances. The last white man in there had been killed. Ed Weyer found his tribe, and lived with them for six weeks and came out with "his youth renewed like the eagle"--"most wonderful experience (he'd) ever had". As he told me the story, all aglow, one thing kept bothering me. He said he hadn't found any missionaries around there. I checked up later, and could find information about only one Protestant attempt to reach those particular tribes--and I read about it not in Presbyterian Life, or the Christian Century, but in the Moddy Monthly. If we have abandoned the geographical frontier to the scientists and the sects, then I say we have failed. Jesus said, "Go ye into all the world."

Some say we are failing at home. Once we Presbyterians, for example, were sending out 100 new missionaries a year. Last year we sent out, I think, about 60, and the year before that, 34. Once we had over 1600 overseas missionaries; today we have barely over 1000. What's the matter with the Presbyterians. The Evangelical Alliance Mission is sending out over 200 missionaries a year these days. We're the ones who are failing.

There is another curious charge of failure levelled against us. It is anti-climactic, in a way, because it is so insubstantial, but it is widespread enough to need mention. They say that we, with our new insights, our emphasis on ("the ecumenical") the rise of the younger churches, (on fraternal workers") are undercutting the mission of the church. They say that we, with our emphasis on the ecumenical are doing what the post-apostolic church did with its over-exaltation of the apostles, destroying the world mission by giving the impression that the mission has already been accomplished. You find it in Origen (Acts of Apostles, Syriac) and in Justin Martyr (Apology I, 39, ca. 150 AD) "From Jerusalem there did go out men, 12 in number, into the world, and these unlearned and with no ability in speech; and in the power of God they proclaimed (Christ) to every race of men". Nonsense. They didn't even begin to reach the world. But the early church thought they had and stopped trying. You're failing too, say the critics, because with all your talk about the rise of the younger churches you're giving the impression that the job has already been done. Already you're beginning to cut down your efforts.

*when the task is only beginning. India - was consumed then whole pop. of Africa - 700,000
Oil co. "light for 700,000 villages". Dis. light of world? Xd not
preached to 900 of 600 native states. 1000 miss. movements - each 650 mi.*

Over and over again the charge is hurled at us--we've failed, we've failed. And as I look back at the wreckage of my own hopes and dreams for my work in China, it becomes an insistent personal question that demands an answer. Have we failed: Does the heroic story of the modern missionary movement end with us, in disaster. Or if not disaster, in decline.

"This is the way the world ends
This is the way the world ends
This is the way the world ends
Not with a bang, but a wimper."

Is this our whimpering end?

Part of the answer came to me one day as I was listening to Mozart's Requiem Mass on the radio. The announcer told us some of the story of the composer's life. Mozart died young, in abject poverty. Five people came to his funeral. But there were 18 bodies with him in the grave, for his ~~body~~ body was dumped with 18 others into a common, unmarked pauper's grave. But was Mozart a failure?

Be very careful before you label any man or any movement a failure. Was Paul

a failure? His father thought he was as he saw him abandon a brilliant career to run away with a group of penniless fishermen and unemployed publicans. His teacher, Gamaliel, thought he was as he saw his most brilliant pupil turn fanatic with a group of rude country men who couldn't even write good Greek. His emperor, Nero, certainly counted him a failure, and beheaded him. But was Paul a failure?

The church has been built by failures like that: by a Christ who died on the cross, by the martyrs down through the ages, like Francis Xavier, dying broken-hearted off the coast of China, and crying "O rock, rock, when wilt thou open to my Lord?" By men like my own father, stoned in the streets but pressing on to preach the gospel, and living to see the church he had helped to build take its place in missionary history as one of the greatest in the world,--but he lived too long, he loved to see the conqueror force him out of the country after 50 years of missionary labor, the church he loved threatened and weakening, and himself, forced out of the country beloved, an old, old man, and a failure.

I'm very proud to be the son of a failure like that. He was not a failure, was he. And I am proud to be a member of the church of Jesus Christ, even when it staggers and bleeds from the hardest knocks that this world can give it. The Christian has no right to be discouraged. He can covet new power, and zeal for the church, but he dare not lose faith, for God's promise stands like a rock, "The gates of Hell shall not prevail against it."

Just how discouraging is the picture, anyway?

- 1. Thomas a failure? *Booked so - last Thomas Xmas.*
- 2. China?
- 3. Korea: *Major No "Alive or Dead" Nat. Party*

So they say we have failed in Latin America, do they? Why Latin America has some of the most rapidly growing churches in the whole world. The church in Brazil is reaching out so fast they can't claw landing strips out of the jungle fast enough for our missionary planes. Or take Colombia. You hear much of persecution there I know, and you should, but you should also hear this; persecution has not and cannot stop the rise of the evangelical church of Colombia. They closed our churches, and stoned our pastors, but during this same period of most intense persecution when 27% of the Protestant church and 38% of their preaching places were closed, Protestant church membership increased in Colombia 51%, and as fast as churches are destroyed, new ones are being built. (News Service, Ev. Confed of Col. Aug 17, '53)

So they say we are failing on the frontier, abandoning to the sects the pioneering with the gospel. Let me say this, with some Presbyterian pride, I don't dare talk about unreached areas any more. Every time I open my mouth to speak of one, it is smashed open by a Presbyterian. Traditionally we talk about the four last great closed countries: Mongolia, Afghanistan, Tibet and Nepal. But suddenly, if you keep up with missions you discover that Presbyterians are already at work for Christ in two of them: Christy Wilson in Afghanistan, and the Friederichs in Nepal. And for all I know they may be at work in the other two also, yes, even behind the bamboo curtain. I wouldn't put it past some of the Chinese Christians I have known to push on under the very noses of the communists into Tibet and Mongolia with the wonderful good news of the gospel of Jesus Christ.

I mentioned the currian experiment - emphasis on yoga club cutting name of mission. By what statistic is this in view of ch. & foundation.
And how can you look at India today and call it an example of the failure of the Christian mission? Why, they tell me the number of Christians in India is growing at the rate of 4000 a day. Incredible.

Phil.
S. D. his
Batala
India Baptist
India Meth.
Ind. Ch. in Korea.

Or take Korea.

Fred - "Boy, if he only knew how tired I am."

As you missionaries in Korea we must confess there are times when we echo those sentiments: - not at all the chin-up, face-forward, never-say-die promoters that missionaries are always supposed to be.

Just to look at Korea is to be discouraged, sometimes -

- ① $\frac{1}{2}$ cut off + given to communists
- ② 300 pastors killed - "Our leadership is 3rd team"
- ③ Divisions - Jesus x Christ Presb. Chks

→ More personal discouragements that come: -

① Decem -

② School - 500 students, only 60% dm, and always in debt. Is it worth it?

Is this the end of 170 years of the modern missionary movement? Have we failed?

II. Part of the answer - Mozart

Just how discouraging is the picture? - p. 2.

① Latin America - ~~the~~ p. 3.

② India - 400 churches a day

③ Korea - don't come to me + say the dm mission in Korea is a failure.

Decem - back at work - healed at the great Presb. hosp in Taejeon - 100 ^{now} churches

School - boy walks to school, for emphasis

- D Lok

It's the communists, not the Xns who ought to be discouraged about Korea. They threw everything they had at that indestructible little club, and it still stands. "Alone a dead I am Jesus Christ's man!"

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They say we are failing in L.A. Why L.A. has some of the most rapidly growing evangelical churches in the world. The church in Brazil, often called the fastest growing church in the world, is reaching out so fast, they can't claw landing strips out of the jungles fast enough for our missionary planes. Or take Colombia. You hear of much persecution there, and you should, but you should also hear this: persecution has not and cannot stop the rise of the evangelical church of Colombia.

They say we're failing in the frontiers — abandoning to the sects.
Listen — let me say this with sinful Presbyterian pride —
I don't dare talk about unreached areas anymore —
every time I open my mouth to speak of me — it's smacked
open by a Presbyterian. You saw that this morning — I talk
about the ~~three~~ ^{four} last corners closed to the gospel — the classic unreached
corners of the world — Mongolia, Afghanistan, Tibet + Nepal —
and you suddenly discover that there are Presbyterians already in
two of them. And perhaps in the other two also — yes, even
behind the bamboo curtain. I wouldn't put it just some
of the Chinese Presbyterians I have known to push on under the
very noses of the Communists into Tibet + Mongolia with the wonderful
good news of the gospel of J. C.

But right here my Presb. pride has caused me to fail —
I'm talking like an American Presbyterian — which is why I'm me.
Where will you find these great sects, is Presbyterian.

Colombia. But during this period, when 27% of the Prot. churches and 38%
of their preceding places were closed — Prot. church membership increased 51%. As fast
as churches are destroyed new ones are being built.

— News Service, Ev. Confed. & Col., Aug. 17, 1953

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and the defeats we suffer are not unique. We read the other day of an American business man who, when people come to him with their apparently insurmountable difficulties, points them to the notice he keeps pinned above his desk. It reads as follows:

"Failed in business '31; defeated for Legislature '32; again failed in business '33; elected to Legislature '34; sweetheart died '35; had nervous breakdown '36; defeated for Speaker '38; defeated for Elector '40; defeated for Congress '43; elected to Congress '46; defeated for Congress '48; defeated for Senate '55; defeated for Vice-President '56; defeated for Senate '58; elected President '60."

This the official explains, is his personal recipe for licking defeatism. It is a chronology of Abraham Lincoln.

Installment Buying

INSTALLMENT BUYING is one of the charac-

Failure - Success

Have We Failed

①

"We did not begin to preach..."

That is how we like to think of the mission... it's what we like, but is it what we've got?

Take me as depressing reminder... which is better support.

Too great tragedy. 1936-500 missionaries. 1955-3
In lifetime - ripped away 5 world.

Lat. America: - "pessimism + despair; no future"

In 6 yrs. 83 meetings vs churches; 20 Primary schools
lost in Colombia

At home: -

① We haven't applied gospel to life. Continues prophets preach vs. evil oppression + poor domesticity. Still poor good work + we're shocked when they revolt; still $\frac{2}{3}$ of world underfed..

② Even more serious accusations. J. never promised we could solve all evildoing. He did say there was one thing we could do for the whole world - go into it, in 1st. "Go ye into all the world...."

a) But people say we're failing in this. A few yrs ago -
100 new missionaries a year. Today 30. "What's the matter with Presb? TCSM - 200 a year.
Once 1000 - now 1000. Failure.

b) Even after we get our missionaries to the field - they say we fail. Failing out on the frontier -
Build up tiny little mission stations - neatly organized + institutionalized - don't rebel. Standard

brand denominations have abandoned to the sects, independent
the great interminable mess of the lost No. 10. 10.
Ed Weyer - but no Presbyterians.

At the Board - letter from Kenton. "Are with us" "evangelical
rise of your churches, paternal workers" - undercutting on
for mission? Doing with emphasis on evangelism, what
pat- apostolic club did with exaltation of apostles - You
find it in origin, Act of Apostles. This is what John
Martin (Apology I, 34) ca. 100 A.D. "from Jerusalem there did
go out men, 12 in number, into the world, and these
unlearned and with no ability in speech; and in the
power of God they proclaimed (Christ) to every race of
men." Nonsense. You've done it again they tell

over + over again - We've failed. As I look at message
of my own hopes in China - becomes insistent personal protest
have we failed? Does the mission end with us - in
disaster?

Part of answer -
Mozart Be careful about labeling people institutions when
Paul (father, teacher myself). Church built up by failures
like that.

Father - stoned - success, failure.
I'm proud to be the son of a failure like that
I'm proud to be a member of Ch. of J. X.

"As you are well aware, the First Presb. Church of ----- has sent many of her own sons and daughters to the mission fields of the world, some under the Board of Foreign Missions, and others under the various undenominational boards. We have others preparing for service and we are confidently expecting many more during the coming years. But what plans does our Board of Foreign Missions have for sending out these young volunteers for service for Christ... the Presbyterian emphasis seems to be shifting from missionaries to 'fraternal workers'. Must our young people look to the Evangelical 'Faith' Missions for their opportunities for service?"

--Letter, Jan. 2, 1955, to SHM

How discrepancy - picture, anyway?

1. Failed to apply paper to U.K. But missing - abstract medicine

~~was about the world~~ That's not mine

2. Failed to reach the world - abandoned & rest...
a) Latin Am. - fastest growing in comm. - Brazil
c) ~~Mexico~~ - ~~not~~ - don't dare talk
about unworked areas ^{missionaries} already there.

And is it failure that we no longer go in alone - divided -
b) ~~But~~ ~~United Mission; High - that.~~
~~Mission not of disunity; yes - but unity not of mission +~~

~~Japan new frontiers in Latin America~~
~~India~~

How look at India and speak of failure: - you a day
And of course there - the frontiers that
is everywhere - the human heart. This is always
the last unworked frontier. Crossed by J.X.; it
renews the church. And everyday he crosses
new frontiers + builds his church.

~~India Sunday~~
~~the~~
~~the~~
~~200,000 in 3 cent.~~
~~400,000 in 100,000~~

If you're still discouraged - listen open to words of
black evangelist.

This is the church and the world - the church with
a mission; the church that cannot fail.

I wonder how many of you are going to
be a it.