



AFRICAN WEDDING at LUTHER-TYNDALE

There were few dry eyes in the congregation that worshipped at Holy Trinity Lutheran Church, Tottenham, London, that Sunday in 1938 when Jonathon Udo Ekong preached the sermon. As he told of the witchcraft, the polygamy, the superstition of his Ibibio people in Nigeria, and of how he, a chief's son, sent out by his tribe to America to seek out a church which preached the pure Gospel of Christ, had been ordained a Lutheran minister, every heart was touched. Ever since then E.L.C.E. Lutherans have followed the progress of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Nigeria with very special interest. In the quarter-century since Jonathon Udo Ekong preached in London en route to his homeland as the first ordained Nigerian pastor, the African church has grown to 33,433 baptised members with 194 churches and 87 primary schools. It has its own hospital with three doctors and six nurses, a seminary which has already trained 18 pastors, and has opened new missions in Ogoja Province and in Ghana, 450 miles west.

There was real joy in the eyes of the largely-African congregation that gathered at Luther-Tyndale Memorial Church, Kentish Town, London, on April 21, 1962, to witness the marriage ceremony of Mr. Donald Efion Udo Ekong and Miss Afiong John Akpan, conducted by the Reverend Norman Heintz. Donald is the nephew of Pastor Jonathon Ekong and has come to Europe to study chemical engineering at Heidelberg University, hoping to earn a doctor's degree. Miss Akpan, from the same village in Nigeria as Pastor Ekong, is at Norwich in training to become a State Registered Nurse. What was more natural than that they should solemnise their marriage vows in a Lutheran church in London? And what more natural than that their parents' place at the reception should be taken by Mr. and Mrs. Charles Lawton, at whose home their uncle, 24 years earlier, had found hospitality?

Pentecost and Christian Giving

(K. W. Haessler)

On the last day which our Lord visibly spent on this earth He called together His disciples and commanded them not to leave Jerusalem but to wait there for the promise of the Holy Spirit which He made to them on the evening before His death. Our Lord reminded His disciples that they would receive strength from above to enable them to be effective witnesses for Him by preaching His kingdom and the message of salvation. This great assignment was to begin in Jerusalem, extend to Judea and Samaria and ultimately to the uttermost parts of the earth.

On the day of Pentecost the disciples, in a miraculous manner, received the Spirit in a special measure. These men, erstwhile timid and fearful, now became courageous and fearless preachers of Christ. As a result of Peter's powerful sermon three thousand souls were, that day, won for the Church and the first Christian congregation was established.

The Glorious Work Of Pentecost Must Go On

When we celebrate the festival of Pentecost we commemorate the birthday of the Church. We latter day believers have the same call and commission as those early saints. We too are to carry the Gospel of salvation to all corners of the world. This great and glorious work is to go on to the end of time, until the last soul that is to be saved is gathered into the kingdom of Christ's elect. Let none of us underestimate the magnitude of this task. There are about 3,000,000,000 persons in this world and for every one of them Christ has shed His blood. It is said that less than one third of the world's population can be counted as Christians and the classification of some of these as Christians is very doubtful. On the assumption that the average person's expectation of life is sixty years, approximately 95 persons every minute pass from time into eternity. About 70 people therefore die each minute without a saving knowledge of Jesus Christ and consequently pass on into eternal perdition! What a harvest for the prince of darkness! What a challenge to the Christian Church!

As we reflect upon the miracle of Pentecost let us resolve anew, with God's help to support the extension of His cause ever more fervently with our prayers and dedicated offerings. The programme of the Church, particularly the missionary programme, can only be carried as far as the money received permits it to be taken. And every pound withheld from the Church limits its glorious work by that amount. Let us never forget that nothing offers so practical a test of our love for Christ and His kingdom as does our attitude to money and possessions.