

### Pastor's Post Card From Germany

We are writing you this Pastor's Word from Germany. I am very thankful to be living in the technological age that allows me to be half way around the world and through the convenience of cyberspace; I can communicate with you virtually as easily as I can from my Houston office. We have just finished the Couple's Retreat and today missionaries from around Europe are arriving for the Missionary Men's Retreat. The retreat of the couples bore some fruitful results; continue to pray for them as you pray that God might revive the missionaries for this weekend.

Mrs. Pope and I have enjoyed being here. The scenery is breath taking! The food is hearty. We climbed up a mountain yesterday to an ancient church where the art and artifacts were circa medieval. Here we are in the land that gave us Martin Luther, the Huguenots, F. W. Krummacher, and George Mueller. The list could go on theologically, but as you well know, Germany made quite a musical contribution with the likes of Johann Sebastian Bach (and sons), Ludwig van Beethoven, Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart, Johann Strauss, Joseph Strauss, Richard Strauss, Johannes Brahms, Richard Wagner, Gustav Mahler, and Franz Liszt lived and composed music that changed the world. As I consider the contribution educationally, theologically, and psychologically, I am amazed at the good and the bad that were produced from this beautiful country. This is where Albert Einstein came from as well as Werhner von Braun. This is the land that gave us Sigmund Freud, who changed the way America, as well as the world, looks physiologically at people. This is where the reformation started that re-affirmed the Scripture as final authority and also the place that gave us higher criticism that in essence attempts to take away belief in the final authority of Scripture.

As I look at the people of Germany, I see the difference, but then I also see the similarity of the Germans to the Americans. I am reminded of a young man who loved to sing in his church choir and imitate preachers he had heard. He had a knack for drawing other kids to his make-believe church services and holding their attention as he delivered his make-believe sermons. Those who knew this youngster said he was so compassionate that one day he found a little bird in the park that had broken its wing and was unable to fly. His comrades were in awe of him as he very gently attempted to set the broken wing with tears coursing down his cheek. And who was this compassionate young man enamored with church and helping the fallen, even a fallen little bird? This young man grew up, became bitter with society and the world around him and while in prison, wrote a book entitled "Mein Kamp." It is amazing to see how the natural giftings of Adolf Hitler compare with the famous American evangelist, D. L. Moody. What makes the difference in a Moody and a Hitler? In a word, salvation through Jesus Christ! The young Hitler's life had "... a form of godliness, but (was) denying the power thereof.. (II Timothy 3:5). A certain Mr. Kimball found Moody as a youngster and confronted him with claims of a personal relationship with Jesus Christ. Moody believed and by the end of his life was responsible for millions being saved. The contrast is staggering. Hitler did not believe and was responsible for millions being killed.

As we meet and talk to Germans, I keep thinking about the holocaust where over six million Jewish people lost their lives and I am stunned. I keep looking into their faces wondering how did it happen? The rise of the National Socialist Party or Nazis happened under the watch of a democratic process. The Nazis won the 1932 election with only 37.3 per cent of the vote. Now keep this in mind - that means that 62.7 per cent voted for someone else or did not vote at all. Josh Billings has said, "All that it takes for tyranny to rule is for good men to do nothing." Militarily, many believe the famed Rommel tried to stop this mad-man and in the church-world Dietrich Bonhoeffer tried to stop this cruel regime, The Third Reich, but they both were put to death. Somewhere in Germany, it seems, there could have been wise people out of the 62.7 per cent or even others out of the 33.7 per cent that had their eyes open and realized the direction Hitler was taking them and tried to stop it. Well, it is a hard situation to call. I don't know that we'll ever have the answers to those questions that ask why on this side of eternity.

Of this I am sure. We need to be a witness where we are by life and by lip. How does a young man grow up to be a Moody rather than a Hitler? The answer is in the heart of a Sunday School teacher named Edward Kimball. If we will obey the simple promptings of the Lord, we, too, may be able to win someone who has potential for good or evil. If they get saved, the Bible is going to be fulfilled: *"Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new"* (II Corinthians 5:17). Of this I am also sure, we need to stand up for what is right. Let us be willing to be God's minority that activates the majority around us. My old friend Dr. J. B. Buffington often said, "The Church is the conscience of the community." Therefore, *"Let the redeemed of the LORD say so, whom he hath redeemed from the hand of the enemy"* (Psalm 107:2). Even as I write these words I am praying for these missionaries who are here ministering in the name of Jesus, that they will "seize the day" and make the difference in these old countries from whence many of the Americans received their genetic start.

Over five hundred years ago a schoolteacher entered his room full of nine year olds and would bow just before he began class. One day he was asked why he did this. The old teacher said, "Because I do not know whom God has placed before me. I do not know what great man may be in my class. Therefore, I honor that great man that God has placed before me, before I begin teaching him." One of those nine-year-old boys was Martin Luther. The old teacher, like Kimball, knew the potential difference. May God help us understand the task that is before us in our child rearing, witnessing, and living the Christian life on a daily basis. *"But be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves"* (James 1:22).

I know you will have a wonderful day today as our dear friend; Brother Jay Ross fills our pulpit this Sunday. I love you; I miss you and please know that your pastor and his wife are praying for you today.

- Pastor Pope -

**[Back to Pastor's Word](#)**