

SEEDS THAT WILL NOT NOT GROW IN OUR SOIL

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ancestry—a weakness that has not gone out of fashion to this day."

The Lutheran church, as an example, along this line of procrastination, proves the depreciable success attendant upon administering to the spiritual needs of the immigrant people in America in a score of foreign tongues and separate nationality synods. Efforts on the part of some Lutheran church organizations to bi-lingualize their work in order to check the trend away from the church because of the foreign languages, to which this particular church denomination has been devoted, have in a measure checked the accelerated pace with which the process of elimination has been going on, but it is a moot question whether this method will not eventually hasten the process of elimination rather than counteract this disheartening situation.

A bi-lingual church is like a bi-lingual newspaper, leaving much to be desired in the matter of a correct interpretation of the foreign colored substance, form and subject matter into a semblance of something American.

The Lutheran, a worthy preceptor of Americanization of the Lutheran church institution in America, is clearly out of patience with the foreign form and foreign language of the Lutheran faith in America, so far as its editorial writers are concerned. In one of its recent issues the Lutheran registers the following stinging rebuke of the Lutheran church divided into many unassimilable units in half a score foreign language synodical groupings, rendering this church denomination ineffective as an American Christian church:

We are more than a century in arrears in our home mission task. Instead of reaching out into the great pagan highways and byways of our country to help gather in the fifty two million souls outside of the Christian church, we as a church have not been able to win or to hold what rightfully belonged to us. Too many so-called Lutherans from so-called Lutheran countries have been driftwood. They have found their way into no church. They belong to the 52,000,000.

The early immigrant brought his faith and his Bible, his concept of God and his stern Christian convictions with him to the new homeland, but he left the old church and its attachments behind in the old world.

Later immigrants have in verity been bringing their old country church and its form, the old country language, community interests and other attachments with them, causing reactions indicating that they have left behind in the old world those very attributes which the ancestral immigrants brought along, planted and nurtured until it took root in this soil.

Reviewing some time ago in the "Lutheran" the tendencies away from the Lutheran Church of America on account of its complicity of foreign languages, Dr. Nathan R. Melhorn says:

Nothing we have seen so explicitly reveals the utter vanity of linguistic and international Lutheran entanglements. The too large valuation of fatherlands and mother tongues have too long beguiled sections of our North American church. We

have no prejudice against non-American forms of speech. We realize that people who know only one language must have their prayer and preaching in the language they know. But surely such figures as we quote show the entire separation of western from European Lutheranism. There is a fatherland but no grandfatherland. The emigrant who leaves his country can bring his Bible, his faith and his duty to God. But his church and his community of believers are not portable.

Too many preceptors of foreign persuasion have in the name of the church denominations they assay to represent, come into America to "organize churches among their people"—gullible immigrants, to have and to hold them for the foreign interests, spiritual and temporal, which they actually represent.

It is plain to the analytic mind that this is the chief reason that one-half of the population of America is today unchurched.

It is the American people's own silent repudiation of foreign alliances and foreign entanglements which they believe to be detrimental to freedom of thought and action for Americans in America.

Strife and intolerance, suspicion and hatred on religious ground, now current in America, is but a sequence to the attempted preservation in this country of foreign religious institutions in language, in form, in expression and in authority.

An American religious creed, with the soul of America in it; Episcopalian, Catholic, Lutheran, Jewish, Methodist, Presbyterian, Baptist, Unitarian, Christian Science, or any other denominational faith, will thrive in America to the extent it is an American institution, of, by and for the people of America and governed of, by and for Americans. Note the later day growth of some religious denominations in America that are held to be distinctly American, though they may not strictly be called Christian in faith.

America's throng of the unchurched is an undeniable result of the continuance of church government entanglements with Europe, maintained by the church denominations in America that have suffered the most severe losses as pointed out in the statistics made the basis for this review.

With the orthodox Christian churches wholly unwilling to Americanize themselves, the process of elimination is bound to continue, while in their stead the so-called liberal religious denominations are, by indications, due for some unbelievable growth and development.

There is no church denomination in America, orthodox or liberal, contending a faith that is detrimental to our progress as a nation, if such denominations are strictly American in their scope and free from all foreign entanglements.

America may rightfully continue to claim the title: a Christian nation, but the only way to do this is to make every Christian church denomination in America a distinctly American institution in language form and church government.

Automobile manufacturers in the United States produce a car for the French market especially designed for French needs, English cars for the British roads, and domestic cars adapted to American conditions. The latter car is found to stand the test of touring abroad better than either of the other makes.