

## “In the name of the LORD Jesus”

And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by him. (Col 3:17 KJV)

This concerns the decision to cooperate as Evangelical Lutheran Free Churches in the joint venture of heathen missions. Words and works are part of this service here and out there in South Africa. Yet will God’s blessing rest on our work? Will it bring forth lasting fruit? Will our cooperation succeed? Or will the devil put through his evil way and will? He wants to tear apart, what God has put together. He desires to destroy, what the Lord plants and builds. Will he achieve his goal? It all depends, whether or not we operate **in the name of the LORD<sup>1</sup> Jesus.<sup>2</sup>**

Was does this mean? According to the witness of Holy Writ the Lord’s name is the sure sign, that **God the Lord himself is truly present.** That’s why the name of the Lord is proclaimed. In this assurance he is called upon. Just as the pillar of cloud and fire was present as sure warranty of God’s abiding presence to the people of Israel on their sojourn through the desert, so also his name vouchsafes, that He is present amongst us in Word and Sacrament, in the divine service and in the little room of prayer in every place and at all times.

Going about missions “in the name of the Lord” thus means to go about ones saying<sup>3</sup> and doing<sup>4</sup> in his presence, under his watchful eyes, according to his command and on the foundation of his promises. It clarifies more and more, that it’s not **us**, who sustain the church nor build His kingdom, but that it is really HE alone who must and wants to do **all** and everything. HE corrects, whatever we corrupt and confuse. If there is something in our doing, that has eternal value it happens through his power, which proves itself mighty in our weakness. HE takes upon himself, whatever worries and terrifies us. HE cares for us and His cause.

Everything we **say** is to be in **Jesus’ name.** Therefore all sermons and reports about the mission amongst heathens, all requests and cooperation, all deliberations and plans about the best ways and means to go about things have to be subject to this standard. Money is not decisive – neither in its abundance nor in its absence. Nor is activism determinative. Not even the people, whom we train and send out are conclusive. Rather it is crucial that in all our words in mission, we proclaim the present Lord Jesus Christ and submit to him. This was the secret of the missional power of our fathers in the previous centuries. What did one hear from the mouth of a Louis Harms? What was the message of all mission festivals? What motivated the congregations to pray and sacrifice for the needs of those people, without Christ? It was always only the witness of the crucified and risen saviour of poor sinners, who does His work of salvation today also, whose love makes hearts willing, passionate and joyful in His mission.

Whatever we **do** is to happen **in Jesus’ name.** Without the deeds of faithful and obedient disciples of Christ there is no mission. Read the reports of the apostle Paul about his tremendous work load! There was no earthly rest for him, no interval, no postponement except when the hand of the Lord

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<sup>1</sup> Hopf used these capitalizations in the original and that has been kept up in the following too.

<sup>2</sup> Emphasis in the original as in the following too.

<sup>3</sup> Our words

<sup>4</sup> Our deeds

kept him imprisoned and thus waiting for a new workday and even there he was not inactive. In our times, when people are striving for worldly goals and even devilish purposes with enormous efforts, the congregation of the Lord may definitely not give up on great works. Even for the mission activity of our free Lutheran Churches works are required, deeds where we joyfully put our heads and hearts, feet and hands, means and abilities, money and possessions at the disposal of the Lord. Not only our dear missionaries are called to be “living sacrifices”. All of us, pastors and congregations, elderly, young and children even may compete in the works of mission. But beware if we should corrupt this into some form of “work righteousness”<sup>5</sup> to boast with before God and men! Then our reward would be lost und there will surely be no blessings of converting heathens either. Our works are to happen in the name of the LOrd Jesus. That means: Keeping focused on his “o sacred head, now wounded”<sup>6</sup>, acknowledging our terrible guilt, which HE alone deletes, doing all out of gratefulness and love for what he did for you and me. Our all and everything belong to you o man of suffering and pain.<sup>7</sup>

**And giving thanks to God and the Father through Him!** That’s the climax of our doing in words and deeds if they occur in Jesus’ name. We don’t praise people. We don’t complain or wail about people either. If our afflicted heart is torn between conceit and despair, we overcome both for our saviour’s sake, who loved us. HE lets our poor service be acceptable in His sight. HE abides with us until the end of the world. We experience in Missions especially, that the LOrd Christ builds His “everbiding Church” in a passing world, that HE gathers His saved congregation out of dying nations to be with him forever. Whatever we are allowed to do in words and deeds in Jesus’ name towards this blessed goal, makes us truly thankful so that we praise him with hands and mouths, thank God Father again and ongoing through Him.

May HE bless our mission and also this mission newsletter, so that one may hear the voice of gratitude and preach all His miracles and wonders!

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<sup>5</sup> “Werkerei”

<sup>6</sup> „O Haupt voll Blut und Wunden ...” translated as in LSB 450.

<sup>7</sup> “Unsere Leiber, unsere Herzen, gehören Dir, o Mann der Schmerzen...”