

Champion City, Missouri

Dear Brothers:

I, Geo. Leopold Zocher, was born the 16th. of August 1872 in Dresden, Kgr. Sachsen. The following month I was dedicated to God through Holy Baptism. Later, I received from my beloved Mother, through the best of her knowledge, my first introduction into the Christian Life.

At the age of six I was accepted into the public school and eight years later fulfilled the prescribed courses. Was Confirmed that same Easter by Pastor Buerger in the Evangelical Lutheran State Church.

After that I entered the Carpenter School for which I wanted to prepare myself. At the same time I visited the Immungs School in Dresden - Altstadt, which was held certain evenings a week and Sunday Mornings. Those were very serious and hard years, and yet I lived through them.

It was during these years when the good influence and experiences, as well as the Christian training which I received from my Mother were advanced. With my co-worker, Religion had to give way, to a great extent, because of the Spirit of Rationalism which undermined Altar and Crown with them. Under these circumstances, it did not take long when my young heart opened up to these influences and the spiritual atmosphere of my surrounding shortly accomplished its purpose. The existence of God degenerated to some extent into a rabel. Yet my attitude and thoughts were not that of a great and exalted God. Without a better knowledge of what I had, I wanted to be convinced in this land of something better, yes, thank God for a personal experience.

At the time of my past undertaking, I did not realize nor know the wonderful guidance, and have often wondered and thought, yet as I thought in retrospect, it became clear to me, and I cannot but with a humble heart say: "It was the Lord that lead everything so wonderfully. On the other side of the sea, according to God's plan was the place where for me a new morning should arise.

And so it was that in 1889 I took my Pilgrims Staff, said good-by to my loved ones and sailed the 10th. of August to America, hoping to find here my luck and material success. I arrived in San Francisco, California the 1st. of September and shortly upon arriving, I found work that tied in with the profession I was preparing myself for. While in San Francisco, I became acquainted for the first time with the Methodist Church. This was the first Church in the new land that I visited. Brother Steinbach was there only a short while after I arrived. Then Brother Geo. Guth became his successor.

2

At that time it was my intention to go to my own church. The arrows that came flying from the Methodist Church were too sharp and that did not appeal to me. They caused deep wounds in my heart. God did not allow me to carry out my intentions. There was a higher power which pulled me steadily towards that Methodist Church, and when I stayed away on Sundays, my conscious punished me. Later I joined that Church and it was through brother Guth's powerful sermons that I was stirred up, yet, I did not give my inner voice a hearing. I tried for a long time to subdue the convictions of my heart. To a certain degree I succeeded. Yet it was very hard for me to kick against the pricks. The faithful Shepherd's voice of Jesus kept knocking stronger and stronger on my heart as never before. His love for me kept knocking at the door of my heart and life, seeking entrance in and since I could no longer withstand Him, I began to seek the Lord.

To rid myself of my old associates and to pay more attention to the one I needed so desperately, I soon left San Francisco. My destination was Oakland, California. From here I was, by letter asked to work in a Furniture Factory. I took that as God's sign, pointing with His finger, for so often before, I pleaded with God to help separate me from my old associates.

It was here in Oakland that I met our beloved brother Irmsher. He discovered, by my dialect, that I was one of his country men. In the course of our conversation, a conversation which he began, he asked me the question among other questions: "What is the condition of your soul? Have you found Jesus? He was the first one who ever asked me personally about the state of my soul, my relationship to Jesus. Have you met Him? I answered: NO, but I am still seeking. Brother Irmsher encouraged me to keep on seeking, to which God granted me grace.

For a long time my Spirit was seeking, but Satan kept whispering into my ears: Its useless. Brother A. Lemkan, my previous minister did his very best to lead me to Jesus. One Sunday I was especially discouraged. The power of the Kingdom of Darkness kept whispering: It is useless, give up the seeking. But was this God's decree? No; I was strengthened through God's Word which brother Lemkan preached that Sunday morning. His text was: Psalm 27:14: "Wait on the Lord!" That was just what I needed. Renewed, my soul waited for the Lord's help and thank God, it was not in vain because one evening when I came home from work, I closed the door behind me, fell on my knees and as Jacob of old, wrestled with God. The power of doubt broke, darkness was changed to light and the heavy burden of my heart was gone. O, what a blessed hour. I could sing: "Jesus, you have saved me!" My salvation from my sins was sealed through the blood of the Lamb.

I came to America in search for money and material blessings, but I found a much greater treasure. Something more precious than Gold, Rubies or Diamonds is Jesus. My heart found Jesus.

Shortly after my Conversion, I felt in my heart God's call to the ministry. In my earlier years, the thought of becoming a minister was never my intention nor even entered my mind. In fact, just the opposite. Before my Conversion, I had a natural antipathy towards that office. It happened quite often that I called those that held the ministerial office in a contempt sense titulary parsons, and now I am myself taking God's call, obeying God, and become one in His service. It is true that I felt myself too weak and inadequate, and even today, I feel so unworthy to go into such a holy, earnest and responsible office, a duty that was laid upon me by God himself.

A new struggle developed. My present relatives were opposed to my entering the Christian ministry. What mattered now more than anything else was that I had to obey God rather than my relatives.

In a sense, I laid myself upon God's Altar in order to obey my inner convictions. I gave up my business and thank God, he opened a door to the University for me in which I entered as a student. In my spare time, I earned some money, doing Carpenter work, which helped me with my expenses, and that all served a profitable purpose in that I was able through the goodness of a professor at the University of the Pacific, to continue my studies and tutor students, until, on account of my health, I had to give up my studies.

After regaining my health, I had the pleasure to take private lessons from brother A. Lemkan until I left the State of California, and then was asked to serve as assistant in one of our Churches that was recommended to me by our honorable senior Elder, brother Roeder.

God was with me. The fact that some souls were won for eternity and heaven, assured me that God used me and blessed my efforts. Praise and Honor belong to Him. It is my prayer that my lips may proclaim God's honor and glory, and that I, wherever it might be, become a blessing and the saving of souls and may always be found a useful tool in his vineyard at all times.

Requesting your brotherly intercessory prayers, I remain your humble brother in Christ.

Geo. Le. Zocher

P.S. Daddy helped build the Church at Champion City Mo + it was dedicated on Apr 28, 1895. He pastored this Church. This letter was written at this time.