

LIFE OF BISHOP ONE OF GREAT SERVICE AND TIRELESS ENERGY

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Carolina means that he has been most active. It reads: He was pastor of the Home Moravian Church from 1877 until 1908; principal of Salem Female Academy from 1884 to 1888; was elected to membership in the Provincial Elders Conference in 1880; received the honorary degree of Doctor of Divinity from the University of North Carolina, 1880; consecrated a bishop of *Unitas Fratrum*, 1891; was sent five times as a delegate of the Southern Province to the General Synod at Herrnhut, Saxony, between 1879 and 1914; relinquished pastorate of Home Church to devote more time and effort to the development of Salem congregation and the province, in 1908; received the honorary degree of Doctor of Laws from the University of North Carolina, 1922.

Bishop Rondthaler was one of the best known churchmen in the South, and his activities in Moravian, as well as all religious interests, have brought to him country-wide recognition as an outstanding man of God. His entire life was devoted to the service of his church and his unflagging energy and inspiration has been the means of bringing uncounted numbers of persons closer to Christ.

Just a few days before he suffered his final illness, Bishop Rondthaler was proclaimed Winston-Salem's most outstanding citizen. The distinguished community service award was voted to him and was to have been presented in a public ceremony within the next few weeks.

The problems which Bishop Rondthaler encountered in accepting the call to service in the South is revealed in an interview which he granted local newspapers several years ago.

"Bishop de Schweinitz first interested me in the work at this point. I had no intention then of coming South, but in 1877 a strong personal appeal from him proved irresistible and changed all my plans in life.

"I came to Salem just at the change in things, when utter discouragement and reconstruction were passing into the dawn of a new hope. The Southern people had suffered greatly from the war's effects; men and women of means had been reduced to abject poverty. Homes built up through the efforts of years had been wiped out in those dark days of 1861-65 and now, after undergoing the disheartening experiences of reconstruction, things were looking brighter and those who had almost ceased to hope had begun to feel that perhaps all was not lost.

"I shall ever be grateful that circumstances so shaped themselves as

to bring me to this community at such a time."

But the inspired and ambitious minister recognized in these conditions the opportunity for unlimited service and entered into his new field with an enthusiasm that never knew a slackening. He was always to be found in the midst of any activity that had for its purpose the advancement of the Kingdom and the increasing number of years, though slowing his step just a little, brought only increased faith and desire to serve his Maker.

To the general public, not only of Winston-Salem but all the State and in many parts of the nation, Bishop Rondthaler's leadership of the Easter Sunday morning services and the Christmas love feast gatherings probably was best known. In practically every year during his residence here, with the possible exception of one or two occasions when he was attending church gatherings out of the United States, he conducted these services and his inspired messages brought joy and new vision to thousands that composed these various congregations.

Bishop lived under a simple rule, an age-old rule that he recognized in early life as the fundamental basis of Christianity and which he expressed in these words: "If you deal kindly with people, they'll deal kindly with you."

His optimism as a philosopher of life he summed up: "The right is always going to win. It may encounter a long and difficult course, but it will certainly prevail in the end. And I've noticed that there always will be more kindness in the world than we expect. We may not meet with kindness from the folk of whom we expect it, but we will encounter more than we are expecting."

The talk of "modernism" failed to impress the bishop. He termed it a "recurrent thing." He had great hopes for the next generation. "Every year I teach young women from over all the South," he pointed out, "and every year I find them just as eager for the wholesome truth which is to be found in the Bible as have been any of the many who have gone through the courses here years ago. The young women and, I presume, the young men, have different customs from those which were observed in the past, but at heart they are much the same."

The aged minister was always interested in young people and through close association with them was able to keep in touch with their problems and their thoughts. His advice on all matters was eagerly sought and throughout the world today are thousands of women who, as students at Salem College, learned to know Bishop Rondthaler as a true friend. He was instructor in Bible at this

aged institution for many years, continuing to meet his classes until his final illness.

The up-building of the Southern Province has been due in large measure to the initiative, perseverance and inspiration of Bishop Rondthaler. Always alert to the religious needs of his people, wherever they might be, he was untiring in his efforts to help them and the organization of churches throughout this section was one of his happiest duties. Not only did he assist in establishing these centers of worship, but he kept in closest touch with each and his periodical visits were always occasions of joy—to him and to the congregations.

A close student of history and always with a watchful eye upon happenings throughout the world, Bishop Rondthaler was never out of touch. He was well read, keen to adapt to the conditions of life all that could be learned. Each year, he prepared and read, at the New Year's Eve service at Home Church, the memorabilia which recorded the outstanding events of the year in the church, the community, the nation and the world. In the preparation of these records, the Bishop found unusual pleasure.

In all of his reading, Bishop Rondthaler made copious notes, which were thoroughly classified and became source material for his addresses, sermons, editorials and other literary work. It was his favorite theory that as a minister his knowledge should be as varied and as accurate as possible, seeing that he had to deal in public speech with every variety of technical information and of distinctive interest.

Included in his readings was a constant and intimate study of foreign maps and even a detailed examination of foreign railroad and steamship schedules. In this way, he kept alive and vivid his extensive travels on three continents, these travels having begun on foot when he was twenty-one years of age. At the age of eighty-three years, he mastered the Arabic alphabet, a feat he had found impossible at the age of twenty-three.

Always a quiet worker, but an accomplicher of good and useful deeds,

Y. W. C. A. TRIBUTE

Jan. 31, 1931.

Dear Dr. and Mrs. Rondthaler:

We members of the Y. Cabinet want you to know that we are thinking of you all day today. We feel that we have lost a dearest and most inspiring friend in Bishop and we are glad that we had the privilege of being here while he was still with us. Our lives have been enriched for having known him and his influence will always be with us.

We sympathize with you in the loss of your father, but we feel that Bishop is happy in a higher service with his Master.

Sincerely,

Matilda Mann; Elizabeth Marx; Lucy Martin Currie; Lenora Riggan; Zinaida Vologodsky; Thelma Storts; Irene McAnally; Wilhelmina Wolfford; Eleanor Idol; Ida Baker; Williamson; Martha H. Davis; Margaret Skidmore; Mary B. Williams; Margaret Johnson; Frances Caldwell; Katherine Schlegel.

The members of the General Alumnae Association of Salem College wish to express to you their deepest sympathy and love in the loss of our "Dear Bishop."

Miss Adelaide Fries, President. Edith Witt Vogler, Secretary.

Bishop Rondthaler's memory will never fade. The good he did will live after him, and the achievements of his long and active career will always be evident in the community he adopted as his home fifty-three years ago.

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