

SEEK THE LORD

Putting Faith into Practice

Good old George came out of his house one Sunday morning just as his neighbor came by carrying his golf clubs. The golfer said, "George, it's a gorgeous day. Come along and play golf with me." With a look of self-righteous horror on his face, George replied, "Henry, this is the Lord's Day and you know I always go to church. No, I won't even consider it!"

After a moment of embarrassed silence, Henry said quietly, "You know George, I have often wondered about your church, and I have admired your faithfulness. This is the fourth time I have invited you to play golf with me. Why is it you have never once invited me to go to church with you?"

It was George's turn to be embarrassed, and after an apology, he cordially invited Henry and his wife to come and see what was so great about his church. Now they play golf on Saturday, and attend church together on Sunday.

How often we take our church for granted. We forget the power and influence the church has for good in the lives of individuals and nations. We need to support our churches. If our churches are weak and their influence dwindles, what other influences will take over? I am not sure what takes over, but I know it isn't good.

Henry VanDusen tells a story of the difference the Christian faith makes in his book, *They Found The Church There*. An American airman was shot down and landed in the sea near a South Sea Island to which he made his way. He crept into the bushes to hide. And no wonder. Within living memory he would have been captured by

savages, boiled and eaten. But not now. He was found and cared for, his injuries treated, and he himself nursed back to health. He wrote home to his parents of his find.

The airman had an interview with the chief, who told him there had not been a murder during his lifetime. There was no jail. There was no poverty, no drunkenness, no divorce, no venereal disease, no brothels, and practically no disease. There was one doctor, "but," said the chief, "he spends most of his time fishing."

This is no made up story. The name of the airman is given. But there is a point: when the airman asked the chief how he accounted for the wonderful state of affairs, where not too many years before the island was cannibalistic, sorcery was practiced, dirt and disease abounded, and people lived like animals; the chief responded: "Your ancestors sent us missionaries. We are Christians. We have taken Christ seriously."

When we take Christ seriously, we will find many opportunities to tell people about our faith and our church. We can start many ways, even with a discussion about golf.

Prayer: Our Lord, help us to appreciate and put into practice the faith you give us. Amen

Rev. Dan Safarik is pastor at St. Luke United Methodist Church, Lincoln, Nebraska