

A PORTRAIT OF EARLY AMERICA

arranged by

Donald P. Tarno

Northwest College  
of the  
Assemblies of God

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To: Pope Memorial Fund Committee

From: Donald P. Tarno

I would like to express my sincere appreciation to the committee for granting to me \$500.00 for the purpose of gaining some information and experience in script writing, directing and producing of Christian drama material.

I used the money to pay for part of the cost of a Reader's Theater Workshop at San Diego State University last Summer. It was a high quality six-week workshop on all aspects of the dramatic genre: script writing, performing, evaluating, and directing of plays. I participated at least twice in every phase of the work. The knowledge and experience that I received while I was in the workshop will be of great benefit to me in future ministry in Christian drama. One of the more tangible results of the workshop was the arranging of a bicentennial script titled:

"<sup>K</sup>PO<sup>T</sup>TRAITS OF AMERICA"

We were able with the help and cooperation of several students and Dr. Swaffield to present this dramatic musical message in our own chapel last Fall. What was even a greater blessing than presenting the message at N. C. was the exciting opportunity we had to present it at the Lutheran Bible Institute this Quarter. Brother Millard made the arrangements for the L. B. I. outreach. It is my hope that both as a College and I personally will be able to utilize this medium of communicating our Lord's message as we prepare ourselves for the future.

Sincerely,  
His and yours,



A PORTRAIT OF EARLY AMERICA

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(Opening) Guitar: (Battle Hymn)

ANN: (Standing) A portrait of Early America. A dramatized presentation of how the preaching ministry influenced and shaped our nation.

Choir hum softly  
NARR. #1: The story of America, from its perilous beginning as a nation, as told by the men and women who have preached, prayed, spoken, and written the literature of our country.

NARR. #2: Why did people come to America? Chiefly because they saw a chance to make their own world. Many came from countries where they were not permitted to worship as they wished, where they were not allowed to take part in government, where there was no economic opportunity and little educational opportunity.

NARR. #3: Many came from countries where information was censored.

NARR. #4: Where they never quite felt safe.

NARR. #1: They came with a dream of a country where there would be opportunity for their children, a fair chance and freedom of worship.

NARR. #4: And somehow their dreams of freedom and mutual respect fused into a way of life, into a free country.

NARR. #1: The story of America begins with a few ships nosing distrustfully into an unfamiliar harbor.

ANN: (Standing) After landing on the rugged shores of North America, they founded a colony in 1607 near Jamestown in the present state of Virginia.

NARR. #2: Thirteen years later another settlement was founded in "Northern Virginia", which we now know as New England--at Plymouth, Massachusetts.

NARR. #4: They came late in autumn to New England--November 20, 1620. Their first act in reaching land--("The stern and rockbound coast")--was to kneel and give thanks to God. (1st Verse & Chorus)



ANN: Soon the colonists founded Harvard University in 1636 for the purpose of training men for the ministry.

NARR. #1: This classic statement is the opening paragraph of the original Harvard commencement program entitled, New England's First Fruits, the splendid words which are now emblazoned upon a gate in the Harvard Yard, and officially invested with a meaning that must cause shudder among the shades of the founders:

NARR. #2: After God had carried us safe to New England,

NARR. #3: and we had builded our houses,

NARR. #4: provided necessaries for our livelihood,

NARR. #1: reared convenient places for God's worship,

NARR. #2: and settled the Civil Government:

NARR. #3: One of the next things we longed for and looked after was to advance learning and perpetrate it to posterity, dreading to leave an illiterate ministry to the churches, when our present minister shall lie in the dust.

ANN: Preaching the Word of God and exalting Christ were paramount in the colonial ministry, as exemplified in Roger William's sermon. The influence of the sword of the Spirit was mighty.

ROGER

WILLIAMS: (preaching with script) "I have been formerly, and since I landed, occasioned to take up the two-edged sword of God's Spirit, the Word of God.--I desire to know nothing, and profess nothing, but the Son of God, the King of souls and consciences..."

ANN: "How beautiful are the feet of those who preach the Gospel of peace and bring glad tidings of good things".

NARR. #1: It was a characteristic of John Eliot's preaching, "that there was evermore much of Christ in it; and with Paul, he could say, I determined to know nothing but Jesus Christ..."



ANN: The first book in English printed in America was the Bay Psalm Book written by ANNE BRADSTREET. The first 1700 copies were well worn in seven years. Many early settlers found comfort and strength as they read aloud from the Bay Psalm Book of the Puritans:

(All stand to read, hold a manuscript)

The Lord to mee a shepherd is,  
want therefore shall not I./  
Here in the folds of tender-grasse,  
doth cause mee downe to lie;/

To waters calme mee gently leads/  
restore my soule doth hee:/  
He doth in paths of righteousness:  
for his names sake leade mee./

Yea though in velley of deaths shade  
I walk, none ill I'll feare:  
because thou art with mee./ thy rod,  
and staffe my comfort are./

For mee a table thou hast spread,  
in presence of my foes:/  
Thou dost annoynt my head with oyle,/  
my cup it over-flowes./

Goodness and mercy surely shall  
all my days follow mee;/  
and in the Lords house I shall dwell  
so long as dayes shall bee./

ANN: Some of the most powerful sermons and effective preaching were to come from New England ministers, two of the most famous of whom were Solomon Stoddard and Jonathan Edwards.

NARR. #1: Stoddard felt keenly the injunction to preach repentance and conversion of all--and in this faith be the first American evangelist with great harvests of souls from 1679-1718. He believed that ministers should be sons of thunder.



NARR. #2: "Reason will govern men in other things; but it is fear that must make them diligently seek salvation".

NARR. #3: For 60 years Stoddard preached from the pulpit in Northampton and dominated the churches and life of the Connecticut Valley. He preached often at Harvard University--teaching other ministers his goal and his methods of evangelism.

ANN: Stoddard's grandson, Jonathan Edwards was to carry on the mighty preaching in New England. Before we hear excerpts from his most famous sermon let us hear a little of his family's devotion to God.

NARR. #1: From the journal of Edward's nine year old sister, Esther Edwards:

ESTHER: January 9, 1742. Mrs. Edwards was 33 years old today. That seems very old. I wonder if I shall live to be thirty-three. She died when she was 23. Mrs. Edwards seemed very serious all the day long; as if she were inwardly praying, "Lord

MOTHER: "Lord, so teach me to number my days that I may apply my heart unto wisdom".

ESTHER: Indeed, this she said to us girls when we were trying to practice some birthday frolics on her. And when she came from her devotions her face actually shone, as though, like Moses, she had come down from the Mount. I do not think we girls ever will be so saintly as our mother is. At any rate, we do not begin so. I do not know as I want to be.

February 13. Have just come tripping upstairs from morning worship and the song of the service still follows me. I have been thinking what a singing family the Edwards family is. Mother's voice we have heard in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs ever since our early babyhood. She sang us on our pilgrim way when we were in our cradles. And to all the house her voice is always uplifting like the lark's, as though her soul were mounting up to heaven's shining gate on wings of song. If



father ever gets low-spirited from his "humors", as he calls them, her voice is to him like medicine, as David's harp was to King Saul. And when she once begins, there is Sarah and Jerusha and myself, like the ascending heights of an organ, ready to unite in making a joyful noise to the Lord, all over the house, (so that our home is more like an aviary than the dwelling of a Colonial parson.

Increase  
Volume

May 1. I have just come back from a wonderful ride with my honored father, Mr. Edwards, through the spring woods. He usually rides alone. But today he said he had something he wanted to show me. The forests between our house and the full-banked river were very beautiful. The wild cherry and the dog-wood were in full bloom. The squirrels were leaping from tree to tree, and the birds were making a various melody. Though father is usually taciturn or preoccupied--my mother will call these large words--even when he takes one of us children with him, today he discoursed to me of the awful sweetness of walking with God in Nature. He seems to feel God in the woods, the sky, and the grand sweep of the river which winds so majestically through the woody silences here.

Battle Hymn (2nd verse & chorus - Lillies)

ANN: Early New England ministers brought the heritage of common ideals; they were molded by similar environment. They were providentially separated for the working out of the new and higher type of character. They came to found a godly commonwealth. Religion was the prevailing tone of their life. The minister was the accepted leader. Education was to form a capable and godly ministry. So the pulpit of New England was the distinct and distinguishing feature of their life. No pulpit ever developed such distinct types, or more dominant ideals.



NARR. #1: To know the American pulpit, our habits of thought and worship, our ideals and opportunities of service, one must look at those preachers.

Jonathan Edwards represented one of the distinguished clergy of the mid 1700's. As a philosophical thinker, students of Locke, Plato, the church fathers, Latin, Greek, and Hebrew, and with considerable reading in history, he reasoned and proclaimed the gospel mightily as one will notice in:

NARR. #2: "Sinners

NARR. #3: In the Hands

NARR. #4: Of an Angry God".

NARR. #3: Sermons were very long in the early colonies. After quoting Deuteronomy XXXII, 35: Edwards warned,

EDWARDS: "Their foot shall slide in due time",

NARR. #3: Edwards developed these four points.

EDWARDS: One. That the Israelites were always exposed to destruction...

Two. That it implies that they were always exposed to sudden unexpected destruction.

Three. That they are liable to fall of themselves, without being thrown by the hand of another, and

Four. That the reason why they are not fallen already, and don't fall now is only that God's appointed time is not come. (pause)

"There is nothing that keeps wicked men at any one moment out of hell, but the mere pleasure of God--By the mere pleasure of God, I mean his sovereign pleasure, his arbitrary will, restrained by no obligation..."

NARR. #3: And he went on to say--and to develop at length--each of these considerations: One.."

EDWARDS: "There is no want of POWER in God to cast wicked men into hell at any moment".



NARR. #4: Two...

EDWARDS: "They deserve to be cast into hell; so that divine justice never stands in the way, it make no objection against God's using his power at any moment to destroy them.

NARR. #1: Three...

EDWARDS: "They are already under a sentence of condemnation to hell".

NARR. #2: Four...

EDWARDS: "They are now the objects of the very same anger and wrath of God, that is expressed in the torments of hell".

NARR. #3: Five...

EDWARDS: "God has laid himself under no obligation, by any promise to keep any natural man out of hell one moment".

NARR. #4: And, after developing at length each of these ten "considerations", he discussed their application. This excerpt illustrates the "hell-fire and brimstone" sermons of Jonathan Edwards and other preachers of the Colonial Period:

EDWARDS: "The use of this awful subject may be for awakening unconverted persons in this congregation. This that you have heard is the case of every one of you that are out of Christ. --That world of misery, that lake of burning brimstone, is extended abroad under you. There is the dreadful pit of the glowing flames of the wrath of God; there is hell's wide gaping mouth open; and you have nothing to stand upon, nor anything to take hold of; there is nothing between you and hell but the air; 'tis only the power and mere pleasure of God that holds you up". O sinner! Consider the fearful danger you are in: 'Tis a great furnace of wrath, a wide and bottomless pit, full of the fire of wrath, that you are held over in the hand of that God, whose wrath is provoked and incensed as much against you, as against many of the damned in hell. You hang by a



slender thread, with the flames of divine wrath flashing about it, and ready every moment to singe it, and burn it asunder; and you have no interest in any Mediator, and nothing to lay hold of to save yourself, nothing that you can do, to induce God to spare you one moment. Therefore, let everyone that is out of Christ, now awake and fly from the wrath to come. The wrath of Almighty God is now undoubtedly hanging over a part of this congregation: Let every one fly out of Sodom: "Haste and escape for your lives, look not behind you. Escape to the mountain, lest ye be consumed".

NARR. #4: After Edwards finished reading this sermon in a deliberately unsensational manner, dozens of men and women called upon God to spare their souls-- to rescue them.

NARR. #1: George Whitfield, a contemporary of Edwards, spread the gospel of love and peace among the Colonies.

NARR. #2: His preaching was perhaps unmatched in quantity. For many years he preached at least forty hours a week to huge outdoor crowds.

NARR. #3: In effect, the pulpit was the classroom of early America.

NARR. #1: New England was settled mostly by Englishmen who followed the Puritan **faith**; Virginia, mostly by Englishmen who were members of the official Church of England. The middle colonies were settled by persons from many countries and many religions.

NARR. #2: Immigrants from Holland founded New Amsterdam--which became eventually New York--1623.

NARR. #3: The Philadelphia area was settled mostly by the Quakers, beginning in 1681. William Penn was their leader, and, after him, the new colony was named "Penn's forest", or Pennsylvania. Because they believed in "brotherly love", they named their chief city "brotherly love", which is what Philadelphia means.



NARR. #4: Most important of all, they were the first of the American colonies to establish real freedom of religion.

ANN: From that small but significant beginning an exciting and powerful church emerged.

NARR. #1: The nineteenth century was marked by great preaching. Men such as Charles Finney, and Dwight L. Moody mightily influenced their generations with the Sword of the Spirit.

NARR. #2: A new beginning, the early and the latter rain came at the turn of this century. As God had promised:

NARR. #3: In the last days saith God

NARR. #4: I will pour out My Holy Spirit upon all mankind

NARR. #1: and your sons and daughters shall prophesy,

NARR. #2: and your young men shall see visions,

NARR. #3: and your old men shall dream dreams.

ANN: Yes, the Holy Spirit shall come upon all My ~~se~~rvants,

ALL MEN: MEN

ALL

WOMEN: And women alike

ANN: And they shall prophesy.

NARR. #1: Hundreds of Bible Colleges were established in this century to train men and women to preach the Word.

NARR. #2: In this century, thousands of missionaries have gone from this land to take the gospel to every nation on earth.

NARR. #3: In the 1930's, our own Northwest College was started for the purpose of training ministers and missionaries.

NARR. #4: Hundreds of its alumni have gone to every region of this globe with a message of deliverance and peace in Christ.

ANN: This bicentennial year we have seen an important growth at Northwest



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College of those who want to usher in the coming of the King of Glory  
with a greater number of young people training for the ministry.

NARR. #1: Christ continues to say to the Church of this land: "Go ye therefore  
into all the world

NARR. #2: and preach the Gospel to every creature

NARR. #3: lo, I am with you always...

NARR. #4: The portrait of America is still being etched upon hearts by the faithful  
and anointed preaching of the Gospel. Preaching heard around the  
world.

Music: (verses 3 & 4 of Battle Hymn--through last chorus and finale.)

THE END