

THE FISHLESS FISHERMAN

Lars Wilhelmsson

Now it came to pass that a group existed who called themselves "fishermen." And there were many fish in the waters all around. And the fish were hungry.

Week after week, month after month, and year after year these who called themselves fishermen met in meetings, talked about their call to fish, the abundance of fish and how they might go about fishing. Year after year they carefully defined what fishing means, defended fishing as an occupation, and declared that fishing is always to be a primary task of fishermen.

Continually they searched for new and better methods of fishing and for new and better definitions of fishing. They loved slogans such as "Fishing is the task of every fishermen." They sponsored special meetings and costly nation-wide and worldwide congresses to discuss fishing and to promote fishing and hear about new fishing equipment and whether any new bait was discovered.

These fishermen built large, beautiful buildings called "Fishing Headquarters." The plea was that everyone should be a fisherman and every fisherman should fish. One thing they did not do; they did *not* fish.

In addition to meeting regularly, they organized a board to send out fishermen to other places where there were many fish. All the fishermen seemed to agree that what is needed is a board which could challenge fishermen to be faithful in fishing. The board was formed by those who had the great vision and courage to speak about fishing, to define fishing, and to promote the idea of fishing in faraway streams and lakes where many other fish of different colors lived.

Also the board hired staffs and appointed committees and held many meetings to define fishing, to defend fishing, and to decide what new streams should be thought about. But the staff and committee members did *not* fish.

Large, elaborate and expensive training centers were built whose original and primary purpose was to teach fishermen how to fish. Courses were offered on the needs of fish, the nature of fish, where to find fish, the psychological reaction of fish and how to approach and feed fish. Those who taught had doctorates in fishology. But the teachers did *not* fish. They only taught fishing. Year after year, after tedious training, many were graduated and were given fishing licenses and sent to do full-time fishing, some to distant waters.

Some spent much study and travel to learn the history of fishing and to see faraway places where the founding fathers did great fishing in the centuries past. They lauded the faithful fishermen of years before who handed down the idea of fishing.

The fishermen also built large printing houses to publish fishing guides. A speakers' bureau was also provided to schedule special speakers on the subject of fishing.

Many who felt the call were commissioned and sent to fish. But like the fishermen back home they *never* fished. Like the fishermen back home they engaged in all kinds of other occupations.

One young fellow reported he had caught two outstanding fish. He was honored for his excellent catch and scheduled to visit all the big meetings possible to tell how he did it. So he *quit* his fishing in order to have time to tell about his experience to the other fishermen.

Is a person a fisherman if year after year he never catches a fish?

Is one following his Master if he isn't fishing?

--North Central Church of Christ Bulletin by John M. Drescher (via Bloomington, Indiana)