

The Mission Central Meyer Minute

I'm sorry I don't remember all the specifics, but the story made a lasting impression on me. Decades ago, I was chatting with Rev. Arnold Schneider, then a pastor in Buffalo but earlier in life a missionary in Brazil. He told about a trip he made, a long journey through dangerous terrain, from one mission outpost to another. When he arrived, he was greeted with surprise. "We didn't think you would make it," they said, or I should say this is how I remember the story. "There were people who hated the work you're doing, they knew the route you took, and were laying in ambush to kill you." Missionary Schneider said he never saw anyone, the journey was peaceful. God's holy angels protected him.

"I believe in one God, the Father Almighty, maker of heaven and earth and of all things visible and invisible" (Nicene Creed). We depend so much on what we see, but how often we forget that His invisible angels are with our missionaries, and with us too.

Jacob on his journey saw angels ascending and descending a ladder reaching to heaven (Genesis 28:10-17). Elijah, a missionary of the God of Israel, was on the run, in danger for his life. He lay down and "slept under a broom tree. And behold, an angel touched him and said to him, 'Arise and eat'" (1 Kings 19:5). "He will command his angels concerning you to guard you in all your ways" (Psalm 91:11).

When we're in danger, the angels are there. When a hostile army was about to attack the prophet Elisha, his servant said, "'Alas, my master! What shall we do?'" He said, "Do not be afraid, for those who are with us are more than those who are with them.'" (2 Kings 6:15-16). When Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego had been cast into the fiery furnace, the king said, "I see four men unbound, walking in the midst of the fire, and they are not hurt; and the appearance of the fourth is like a son of the gods." An angel? Jesus? (Daniel 3:8-25). When Peter was imprisoned for his faith, "Behold, an angel of the Lord stood next to him.... 'Get up quickly.' And the chains fell off his hands. 'Wrap your cloak around you and follow me.' And he went out and followed him" (Acts 12:7-9).

"The angel of the Lord encamps around those who fear him, and delivers them" (Psalm 34:7).

Our ultimate deliverance: "Lord, let at last Thine angels come, to Abraham's bosom bear me home that I may die unfearing" (Lutheran Service Book, 708:3; cf. Luke 16:22). Thank you, missionary Schneider. For all our missionaries today, the eternal angels are also attending you!