

The Rev. Cornelius Wainwright Twing Shepherd of the Pine Barrens of New Jersey

Shortly after his consecration in 1915 as the Fifth Bishop of New Jersey, the Rt. Rev. Paul Matthews became interested in that vast tract of land known as The Pines that covered the eastern and southern part of Burlington County and parts of Atlantic and Ocean Counties. Although sparsely inhabited the good bishop looked upon the area as a place of missionary work. He conducted a lengthy study of the situation and decided there was a real need for the Church to set up a work in this strictly rural area where the people lived either in complete isolation or in small hamlets of six to twelve houses. Although the Methodists had established several small churches in Chatsworth and a few other little places, by far the greater part of the field was unchurched. Into this ministry the bishop sent the Rev. Cornelius Wainwright Twing.

Twing was born June 19, 1860. Both Twing's father and grandfather were priests of the Church. His grandfather, the Rev. Alvi (sometimes found as Alvin) Tabor Twing, was the son of a blacksmith and was himself an accomplished smithie. In 1863 Alvi Twing was appointed national spokesman for the domestic mission field. After becoming the secretary of the Board of Domestic and Foreign Missions, he organized a domestic missionary army of many thousands of children as "Young Christian Soldiers." He also introduced the "mite-chests" which brought in many thousands of dollars for the mission field. His son, the Rev. Cornelius Leighton Twing, was born in Burlington, Vermont in 1830, and had a ministry that included parishes in Pennsylvania and New York City. He served in Brooklyn, New York, from 1885 until his death in 1905.

Cornelius W. attended St. Stephen's College, Annandale, and the General Theological Seminary in New York City, as did his father. He served congregations in Pennsylvania and the Newark Diocese before coming to St. Stephen's, Riverside, and Trinity Church, Fairview. He married Amelia C. Darrow and they had four children. Stricken with what was thought to be cancer, he was forced to spend a lengthy stay in the hospital. The bishop felt that he needed the clean air of The Pines for a good recovery and, as Twing had asked for the assignment, appointed him as the first Missionary to The Pines as well as Priest in charge of St. Peter's, Medford. His work there began on February 1, 1917.

Bishop Matthews and Twing forged a close relationship and by far the best recounting of Twing's life is found in the Diocesan Journal of 1927 (pp 69-73) as a eulogy at the beginning of the bishop's sermon to the Convention. A little background will add understanding to one description he gave of Twing's driving. There were only rutted roads of sand - really just paths - and over, or through, these he put between six and nine thousand miles a year. In his eulogy Bishop Matthews said, "It was a delight to take a trip through the woods with Twing; he drove like Jehu, furiously, and like St. Paul, by faith, not by sight. I never expected to come back intact, but I always did, though we would frequently hit a root of iniquity or a limb of Satan."

Twing observed that another missionary was needed for the Pines. Said Matthews, "You're right, and I am just waiting to hear of some good priest in one of our big city hospitals, who has been given up by the doctors, and I'm going after him." Evidently such a man was not to be found for Twing labored on, assisted by his wife and a Miss Anna Wickward. In addition, another helper was given him by the Diocesan Board of Religious Education, a Ford car that he nicknamed "The Episcopal Lizzie." In his first three months Twing traveled 975 miles while making visits at Friendship, Cross Keys, Four Miles, Pine Worth, Simm Place, Chatswood, Tuckahoe, Chairville, and Atsion.

He held services and Sunday School each Sunday at Atsion, Chairville, and Friendship. Atsion had an average attendance of 25. Chairville had a Sunday School of 20 and met in an abandoned School House. Friendship had three families and, since there was no building, Twing held services at each house. At the end of his first year Twing held 150 services, made 200 visits, and traveled 3,500 miles by auto. In addition he made 32 visits to Camp Dix and held three services there, adding another 2000 miles. He was planning to plant congregations in Jenkins and Dorothy the following year.

By 1919 his circuit included Giberson, New Freedom, Jenkins, and Burr's Mills. He traveled 80 miles each Sunday, leaving at 9 am and returning after 6 pm. By 1920 he was holding three services each on Saturday and Sunday. Services were started at Woodmansie.

On October 23, 1921, Bishop Matthews visited Atsion, among other stations, where he confirmed a small class, but not without incident. The good bishop put on the robes of his Office in Medford and sat in the passenger seat as Twing drove. Miss Wickward had the job of having all the children and adults posed outside the small church to greet the bishop. These good folk of the pine forest cut their teeth on stories of the Jersey Devil and other scary characters and so, when the bishop stepped out of the auto, robes and miter all in place, the congregation disappeared into the woods with shrieks and screams of fright. It took all of Twing's persuasive powers to get them back and to proceed with the services!

Twing's salary was to be paid from the Children's Advent Offerings and this writer remembers well the purple Mite Box that sat on our breakfast table and gobbled up a portion of every week's allowance. But remembered even more was the great mound of boxes that all the children brought at Christmas, destined for the "Children's Missionary" in the Pines. His grandfather's "Mite-Chests" of a half-century earlier were reborn in a slightly different guise.

A typical Sunday is described here in Twing's words:

"On Sunday mornings we pack our lunch in the old kit bag with the various other articles which go to make up a respectable Sunday school outfit, and head Lizzie for the woods. The first stop is Chairville, where we meet Miss Wickward. We are now ready for the trip and we start for the woods. The drive is most

beautiful, especially in the fall, when all the trees are dressed in their gay colors. If Lizzie is a good girl we reach Bozarthtown at 9:45, where we care met by the children and grown-ups, and we have our Sunday school instruction, and once each month we celebrate the Holy Communion. At 10:45 we start for Jenkins, where we have the same kind of services. At 1:45 we take up our journey of thirty miles to Atsion, which place we reach at 3 o'clock plus. We say plus advisedly. It is sometimes much after that hour when we arrive. It all depends on how many times we have to leave the ruts, either because we hit a root of iniquity or meet a car coming in the opposite direction. Arriving at our destination we find a beautiful church, where we hold our sessions of the school. We also have a service here every Wednesday evening, when an average of twenty people gather for service. When we reach Medford we have had three Sunday schools and traveled seventy miles."

Twing failed to mention that he then had services for St. Peter's, Medford, on Sunday evening!

Twing's ministry coincided with the very end of manufacturing industry in the Barrens and so his congregations were sparse and poor and too rooted in the Barrens to do anything but stay. It is to his everlasting memory that Cornelius Wainwright Twing ministered to them until his death on December 4, 1926. He is buried in the churchyard at St. Andrew's, Mount Holly.

II

A brief description of a few of these hamlets offers a clearer understanding of the ministry Twing undertook.

Atsion was a tiny community originally gathered for the bog iron needed for Revolutionary War armament and it stood on Axion Indian land. The Axions were a branch of the Delawares. Atsion had four revivals: iron forge, paper mill, cotton mill, and real estate, each revival shorter than the one before. Trains ran regularly to both the sea shore and Philadelphia on the tracks of the Camden-Amboy Line. A chapel had been erected for the use of the workers and their families and called the Union Church property. Twing obtained the building and called it St. Paul's. Twenty-five families were connected with St. Paul's, fifteen of whom were communicants.

Pasadena, was formerly known as Wheatlands. It is a deserted village just inside Ocean County, near Whiting, and on the old Jersey Central Railroad. The vast supply of clay gave rise to the Pasadena Terra Cotta Company. In the early 1900s a series of dwelling fires and the disastrous Tile company fire ended any prosperity there might have been. A large fruit farm was begun and, for a time, the area was called Fruit Farm.

Red Lion lies between Medford and Pemberton and consisted of about eight houses including the Red Lion Inn. Legend has it that its name came from an encounter between a Mr. Parks and a mountain lion. Mr. Parks shot and wounded the lion once but then his gun failed. Undaunted, he fought hand-to-hand with the wounded beast and soon both were covered with blood. Mr. Parks

prevailed and dragged the blood-covered carcass into town, giving the hamlet a new name.

Woodmansie was a village located just south of Toms River. The congregation there consisted of brickyard workers and their families. When the clay beds were exhausted all families, save one, moved away.

Burrsville was located just east of Lakewood and supported a forge that had been established in 1808. Barzillai Burr was the long-time owner, hence the name.

Four Miles was the site of the Colony for mentally handicapped boys, now known as New Lisbon. It lies midway between Pemberton and Browns Mills. Begun about 1914, Twing visited there and continued to do so until Canon Welles of the Diocesan Staff took it under his wing in 1923.

Chairville is about halfway between Medford and Friendship and so named for the chair factory that once flourished there.

Bozarthtown is located a few miles east of Medford. The small chapel was destroyed by fire and it was rebuilt mainly through the efforts of St. James' Church, then of Trenton. Interestingly, it is pronounced *Bozuretoun*, which makes it easily confused with the hamlet of Bozuretoun located south of Tabernacle.

Cross Keys was a hamlet on the Old Cape Road and a source of sand for the area's glass mills, thus supporting a handful of families.

Giberson's Mill was a village that, greatly enlarged, is now called Keswick.

A map of the Pine Barrens will be placed on the board on the wall of the archives and will offer a visual image of the life and labors of this "Shepherd of the Pines."