

MISTE

Feb. 22, 1967

This morning we honor the work, the life, the service to mankind of Abraham Johannes (A.J.) Miste, a noble alumnus of Hope College of the class of 1905.

A. J. Miste's life was rooted in this campus. If you study histories of our college and read issues of the Anchor of some 65 years ago, you will read his name and see his picture many times. He was valedictorian of his class, editor of the Anchor, and a foremost orator. He met his beloved wife, then Anna Huisenga, here. Legend has it that he even became involved in a hassle with the Board of Trustees over the establishment of a Hope College football team.

Over the course of his 82 years, A. J. Miste was a preacher, a teacher, an author, a labor leader, an educational director, an Executive Secretary of the Fellowship of Reconciliation. For decades he was this nation's most articulate and most effective pacifist.

For more than a generation he labored full time and full energy with all his material, intellectual, and spiritual resources for Peace on Earth.

A. J. was born in the Netherlands in 1885 - moved with his parents to Michigan at the age of six - was graduated from Hope in 1905 - from New Brunswick Seminary in 1909 - and from the Union Theological Seminary in 1913. He served two churches, one in New York City and one in Newburyport, Massachusetts, but resigned under pressure during World War I because of his outspoken pacifist convictions. Mr. Miste then became part of the nation's blossoming labor movement. From 1919 to 1936, he worked with various labor unions and played a leading role in numerous strikes and organization campaigns. He served as General Secretary of the Amalgamated Textile Workers of America and later as director of the Brocton Labor College.

In 1930, Mr. Miste was Executive Secretary of the Fellowship of Reconciliation. After his retirement, he seemed to step up the tempo of his activities. Mr. Miste went everywhere and spoke to anyone who would listen. He furthered the cause of world peace. He carried his message to Western Europe, to Eastern Europe, to India, to all of Asia. Last year he was in South Vietnam - last month he was in Haiti. He gave everywhere for the cause of peace - firmly rooted in Christian love of all men everywhere. One of his biographers remarked that like the apostles of old he appeared upon an untrodden path and he was not in search of a path but on the point of creating it.

We have often said that a man is known by his friends. A. J. Miste's friends were legion. When he reached his 65th birthday in 1950, he was honored with a birthday party. Roger Baldwin, Reverend O. J. Young, Holmes, Norman Thomas, George Buttrick, Harry Emerson Woodberry, Herbert Goldhamer, Richard Niebuhr, William Smith, Dorothy Gaffney, Frances Johnson, and many others were present and will influence the political action of our world for many years to come.

At his birthday party, his friends gave him a check for \$2500, which he promptly signed over to the Fellowship of Reconciliation. His refusal to pay income tax for armaments caused no great concern at the Internal Revenue Office. Actually it made no real difference for he really never had enough material resources to make the filing worthwhile.

Wealth -- Fame -- Fortune -- Prestige -- all these meant nothing to this noble son of Hope College whose trademark was a pair of holy shoes - stuffed with newspapers.

In life and death his calling was to serve the Prince of Peace.

---C. A. VanderWerf

President, Hope College

Tribute Service for P. J. Waste  
Brimmington Memorial Chapel  
Feb 22, 1967