

Navigator History

Jim Downing

I. Introduction.

- A. The speaker met Dawson Trotman in 1943 before he was a Christian.
- B. The speaker met Trotman again as a Christian and became a close friend with him for twenty years until the Lord took him home.
- C. Trotman was always amazed that God was using him because he felt like his own testimony disqualified him from being used.
- D. Trotman told a famous athlete Elroy Robinson that he was convinced that if God used him in his weakness, everyone would know that the accomplishment was from God and not from him.

II. Background.

- A. The second phase dangers of an organization:
 - 1. The original thrust of a movement tends to diminish.
 - 2. There is a tendency for the movement to attach things that hang on.
 - 3. There is a tendency for a movement to fail to deal with success.
 - 4. There is a tendency to scatter instead of focus on the basics.
 - 5. There is a tendency to scatter personnel and lose strength of close fellowship.
 - 6. There is tendency to rely on fellowship and slacken the pace.
 - 7. There is difficulty in transmitting the original vision to the second generation with the same enthusiasm.
 - 8. There is a tendency of too much complexity.
- B. Focus: the original thrust and the transfer of the same enthusiasm.
- C. When God raises up a man for special service he first works in him the principles necessary to be the means for widespread blessing to the church and to the world.

III. The principles experienced.

- A. Trotman journal extracts.
 - 1. Major principles: world vision, prayer, God speaking through the Word, memorizing the Word, holding true doctrine, maintaining focus in the home, etc.

2. These are in some sense peculiar to the Navigators, but they are principles worked out in the other organizations of Trotman.

IV. The principles expressed.

A. The article of Davenport concerning the early Navigators.

1. One of the changes in the Navy in the 1930s was the Navigators - Trotman was having an effect on all the ships.
2. Trotman originally worked in a lumber yard living a life of sin until he was converted and began missionary work among sailors that started "a new way of life."
3. While there were no written rules for the early Navigators, they were very restricted in what they did or did not do.

B. One Navigator had 6,000 men come through his house in the 1940s - a testimony to the growth of the movement.

C. An early Navigator - Charley Hayes.

1. He would witness during the movies shown for the servicemen.
2. When a visiting chaplain visited with the message on why the Bible was not the Word of God, Hayes handed out pamphlets on why the Bible was the Word of God. The visiting chaplain's message went flat because of it.

D. Another Navigator - John Prince.

1. In trying to get his ministry underway he was threatened by another man.
2. The man threatening him strangely died on shore.
3. Prince got appendicitis and led many to Christ during that process.

V. The principles expanding.

A. Why are not these in the Navigators today?

1. There was so much request for advice that this special service had to be inaugurated.
2. The movement was not originally moving among civilians, but many sought the tools of the Navigators.

B. Where did the original members go?

1. Many Navigators got involved with International Students Incorporated.
2. Others went to the Officers Christian Union.
3. Others formed and partook in other ministries.

C. The greatest test a Navigator's work has had - when something happens to a family member or one's reputation. Trotman was willingly tested in both for the sake of maturity.

D. The need for a distinguishing symbol: an arch.

1. The foundation for the Navigators became the Word, discipline, evangelism, and follow-up. (1 Corinthians 3:11)

2. The most important stone in an arch is the capstone - without it the arch will collapse. For the Navigators this was reproduction.

a. This was crystallized in 1948 and this made the Navigators differ from other Christian organizations more than anything else.

b. The Navigators is a follow up organization.

E. Trotman died saving a girl from drowning. His life echoed a movement that has spread throughout the world.

Application questions.

1. What is the distinguishing capstone of the Navigator movement? How was this shown in the life of the founder.

2. At the beginning of the message the speaker explored the question of how to keep the second generation of a movement moving. What do you find the solution to be in light of the message?

3. What principles have stood out to you in this message? Explain.
