

Our Heritage

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I. Introduction.

- A. Scripture memory lead Dawson Trotman, the founder of the Navigators, to Christ at a young age.
- B. His work with young people gave him experience on how to train people in the Lord.
- C. He trained a young sailor to who to share Christ and he taught him to teach others. This was the beginning of the Navigator work.
- D. From the work with the military two significant programs arose.
 - 1. The Navigator missionary program.
 - 2. The collegiate program.

II. The testimony of Jim Downing.

- A. The military heritage of the Navigators goes back to early Christian history.
 - 1. Christians in the military were those who suffered the greatest persecution.
 - 2. Many died because they refused to take oaths to the emperor.
- B. The testimony of Lester Spencer—the “first” Navigator.
 - 1. He watched Dawson Trotman witness to a police officer and asked him to show him how to do the same.
 - 2. When he came upon another man who needed help, Trotman told Spencer to show that man himself.
- C. There was great growth during World War II. The first public exposure for the Navigators after some growth came from an article titled “Onward Christian Soldier.”
- D. Trotman was not originally concerned with growing the Navigators after the War. Instead he was focused on missions and aiding missionaries.
 - 1. This gave great momentum that brought in many laborers.
 - 2. Someone said there was hardly a Christian leader that had not been influenced by the Navigators.

3. God has used the military in a tremendous way through the Navigator work.

E. Foundational things in the development of the Navigators.

1. Trotman was determined that no person would be the same after meetings.

2. Trotman would work in groups until he found a deficiency in each man. He would then speak to them so that they could grow and move forward.

F. The military provided a good laboratory for discipleship and evangelism.

G. The clear and simple objective of the Navigators: to increase the number of people through evangelism, not just to do evangelism. The method is to make laborers through laborers.

III. Question and Answer.

Application questions

1. How does the Navigators have its roots in the military?

2. What influence did the military have on the shape of the Navigators?

3. How does the military person have an important place in Christian history, and what lesson can be taken from his sacrifice?
