

# The Need of the Hour

How can we accomplish the job God Gave us—taking the Gospel to an enslaved world?

DAWSON TROTMAN

*More than twenty-five years ago, in one of his last messages to staff members and trainees before his death, Navigator's founder Dawson Trotman (1906-1956) drove home what he saw to be the need of the hour:*

## WHAT IS THE Need Of The Hour?

For a beggar with a tin cup, it's a dime. For a woman being taken to the hospital, it's a doctor.

But what is it in Christian work? I started to list the things we often feel are the need—those things which, if supplied, would end our troubles.

Some say, "If I just had a larger staff . . . Many a minister would like to have an assistant, and many a mission would like to have more missionaries.

Others say, "We don't need more workers, but better facilities. If we just had more office space and more buildings and a bigger base of operation, then we could do the job."

In some parts of the world they say it's better communications we lack, or better transportation, or better health care, or literature.

Many feel the need is an open door into some closed country. But the Bible says, "My God shall supply all your needs."

If we need an open door, why doesn't God open it—"he that openeth, and no man shutteth; and shutteth, and no man openeth"?

Some say, "If we just had more time," or "If I just weren't so old, if I were only young again." People have said to me, "Daws, if I had known when I was twenty years old what I know now, I could have done a hundred times more for the Lord. Why didn't I?"

Often the biggest need seems to be money. Money is the answer to a larger staff, more facilities, better communications and transportation and literature. "If we just had more money."

What is the need of the hour? I don't believe it is any of these. I am convinced that the God of the universe is in control, and he will supply all these needs in his own way and in his own time, all else being right.

The need of the hour is an army of soldiers dedicated to Jesus Christ, who believe that he is God, that he can fulfill every promise he ever made, and that nothing is too hard for him. This is the only way we can accomplish what is on God's heart—getting the gospel to every creature.

In 1948 in Europe I met for three days with a group of twenty-five German fellows. I talked to them every evening for three hours, laying before them the great commission and the idea that not only did Germany need to hear the gospel, but that Germans themselves needed to obey the great commission by sending out missionaries.

Every once in a while a hand would go up. One of them said, "But Mr. Trotman, you don't understand. Some of us right in this room don't even own an Old Testament. We only have a New Testament." But I pointed out, "When Jesus Christ gave these commands, they didn't have even a New Testament."

Later another spoke up. "But Mr. Trotman, we have very few good evangelical books in this country, like you do in America." I asked, "How many books did the disciples have?"

Scattered through our nine hours together were other protests: "In America you have money." "You have automobiles, we have bicycles." "In America you can hear the gospel any day." Every excuse was brought up. Each time I replied, "But the twelve apostles didn't have that either, and Jesus sent them out."

Finally, near the end, one fellow who was a little older than the rest, and who had an almost bitter expression on his face, rose and said, "Mr. Trotman, you in America have never had an occupation force in your land. You don't know what it is to have soldiers of another country roaming your streets. Our souls are not our own." I responded by reminding him of the Roman soldiers who occupied Palestine at the time Jesus Christ and his disciples lived.

Then it dawned on me that when Christ sent out his men, they were in a situation so bad that there could never be a worse one: no printing presses, no automobiles, no radios or television, no telephones, no church buildings.

He left them with nothing except a job to do. But with it he said, "All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. Go ye therefore ..."

What does the therefore mean? It means, "I have the power to give you the order, and I have the power to back you to the hilt." Christ has all power. Not just in heaven, but also on earth. Not part of the power, but all power, which means power over the Romans, and power over Communists, and power over every nation on earth.

Jesus Christ had said earlier to this same little group, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, he that believeth on me, the works that I do shall he do also; and greater works than these shall he do."

Do you believe this? Or does it make you stop and wonder? Could it be true that the Son of God would say to human beings, "The things I do, you shall do, and greater things than these you shall do"?

With all my heart I believe the reason so many wonderful Christians don't accomplish more in their lives is that they don't believe Jesus meant what he said. They've never come to believe that the all-powerful One who commissioned them could enable them to do these greater works.

The last thing Christ told his disciples was to go and teach all nations, and to see that every created being hears the gospel. What do you think the early disciples thought about that?

Paul was able to tell the Romans, "Your faith is spoken of throughout the whole world." And he said to the Thessalonians, "From you sounded out the word of the Lord not only in Macedonia and Achaia, but also in every place."

How did the message go? Not by telephone or television, but by tell-a-person. That's the only method they had.

Everyone was to tell someone else. They could not help but speak the things which they had seen and heard. This was the impelling force. That's how the gospel spread.

Today more people than ever in the world know about Jesus Christ because of radio, literature, mission societies, evangelistic meetings, and so on. But they only know about him. They don't know him. Maybe our greatest problem is that we try to put on radio or in printed form that which should go from lip to ear and heart to heart. Tools by themselves are useless.

We don't need anything that God can't supply. Is it knowledge? Is it strength? God can do more through a weakling who is yielded and trusting than he can through a strong man who isn't.

Do you have this thought securely in your mind: "God, I'll never let the lack of anything persuade me that your work is being hindered"? I would rather you went away with this in your hearts than with any methods or materials or ideas we could share with you, because I know the potential of the man who can say hour after hour, day after day, week after week, year after year, "My God reigneth."

You have an excuse if you want one. You have hundreds of them. But what holds us back is that we don't live and preach the fact that God is on the throne.

The need of the hour is to believe God is God, and that he is a lot more interested in getting this job done than you and I are. And if he has all power to do it, and has commissioned us to do it, our business is to obey him and trust him to enable us to reach the world for him.

The Lord could easily have said to the disciples, "You fellows are only eleven men, and you lack facilities and transportation, so all I want you to do is start the fire in Jerusalem." But the believers in southern India say they are glad the apostle Thomas believed and obeyed Jesus Christ when he commanded them to go to the uttermost part of the earth. I understand that the Mar Thoma Church, the largest in southern India, traces its origin back nineteen hundred years to the work of this disciple. Aren't you glad Thomas didn't say to Jesus Christ, "I don't have a DC-6 yet."

"All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. Go ye therefore ..." This is not only a privilege; it's an order. "Go ye into all the world." God doesn't want you to take an island. He wants you to take the world.

Jesus said, "Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men." No man ever followed Jesus who didn't become a fisher of men. If you aren't fishing, you aren't following.

You have to start with a few. You have to win one before you can win five, and five before you can win five hundred. But the world is before you. How big is your faith? The need of the hour is men who want what Jesus Christ wants, and who believe he wants to give them power to do what he has asked. Nothing in the world can stop these men.

Do you want to be one of them? You may, but you will have to ask. "Call unto me, and I will answer thee, and show thee great and mighty things which thou knowest not." That's the way he has promised it will be. So when you call, ask big!