

TOUCHDOWNS

For The Lord

The Story of
“DAD” A. J. ELLIOT

by
Glenn Clark

“A Macalester Park Publication”

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MACALESTER PARK PUBLISHING CO.

Saint Paul, Minnesota

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TOUCHDOWNS THAT COUNT

THE ball went soaring upward and the powerful Indiana team went hurtling down the field, bowling over the Northwestern blockers as though they had been high school freshmen, and downed the receiver in his very tracks. This was to be Indiana's great day. The only question was, what would be the size of the score?

The Northwestern team lined up for their first play quickly.

And then something happened.

Suddenly there emerged from a new trick formation a lithe, powerfully built figure carrying the ball at tremendous speed. As he dashed down the field, eluding and outrunning his baffled opponents for a touchdown, his face was a study. A fighting nose above a fighting chin, and a tight-set jaw in between! That was all the shouting spectators saw. But out of that gladiatorial face shone a pair of eyes that were gentle and kindly --- eyes that were always seeking a higher quest. That was the paradox in A. J. Elliott.

The Northwestern team fought like fiends to hold that lead that their doughty end had secured but it seemed that fate was against them. Indiana tied the score but Northwestern never let up. Late in the game the powerful Indiana team came sweeping down into Northwestern territory. It seemed certain she would score, but Northwestern held and Indiana had to kick. Just as the ball left

the toe of Indiana's fullback, the fighting left tackle of Northwestern broke through and blocked it. Under the falling ball dashed Elliott. He gathered it into his arms and was pounding down the field for sixty yards and the final and winning touchdown.

The next morning the Chicago papers came out in screaming headlines, "Dad Elliott wins the game in a surprising victory for Northwestern." From that moment A. J. Elliott ceased to exist. The nickname "Dad," given him by his younger fraternity mates, whose needs he looked after, was fixed upon him for life. Even the professors at Northwestern, with few exceptions, called him "Dad."

When the season was over, Dad was chosen as the All-Conference End. A great banquet was prepared at a swanky hotel to do honor to this fighting team. When the waiter started to fill the wine glasses, Dad quietly turned his down. The rest of the team, noting what he had done, one by one followed suit.

These were small incidents in a college boy's life, but they were very significant ones. In these two incidents the entire character of Dad Elliott, the man who was destined to be associated with one of the most significant movements in the religious life of the United States, was revealed.

The movement that I refer to was best

appraised by Julius Richter, whom Dr. Mott regarded as one of the greatest authorities in the world on foreign missions, when he said, "The Bible evangelistic movement in the colleges of the United States, particularly those in the Upper Mississippi Valley, in the last part of the last century and the beginning of this, was the greatest spiritual movement that has been seen in the history of the Christian Church."

I had the good fortune to attend one of these colleges in the middle west when this movement was at its height. I was a student at Grinnell College during the first five years of this twentieth century and can verify the truth of what Julius Richter said. For instance, the Christian Associations at Grinnell held vital meetings every Thursday, well attended by the student body. Every Saturday evening each college class held a prayer meeting of its own. A fifteen-minute chapel service was held every morning, attendance at which was entirely voluntary and yet every student attended. Bible classes conducted by students met regularly every Sunday. I myself had the privilege of leading a class in the Life of Christ for three years. The discoveries I made in that united quest for the deeper meaning of Jesus' life and teachings have had a profound influence upon me all my life.

Grinnell undoubtedly was typical of scores of other colleges in this section of America. For instance, over 150 thousand students in the colleges of the United States were enrolled at this time in

voluntary Bible classes such as I just described, conducted entirely by students. In the Upper Mississippi Valley alone one hundred and forty-eight deputation student evangelistic teams went out in Christmas recess to hundreds of cities and villages. Each of these teams was made up of five college men who sacrificed five days of their Christmas holidays to carry an evangelistic message to the boys of the communities visited. During this period over six thousand student volunteers actually sailed for foreign lands.

What was the secret of that movement? And why is it lost today? Is there not something that we can recapture out of that period that can serve us now? In trying to answer that question I found myself led to a man whose place was at the very center of that movement and whose life touched its peaks. Find the secret of his life, I thought, and the methods that he used to foster that movement, and we might be able to salvage some precious blessings that will help us today. Some great souls closely associated with that movement were Mott, Speer, McDowell, Eddy, Weasterford and Elliott. The first four became world figures in the religious field and their fields of service carried them afar. Dad Elliott stands alone among them as most singularly and exclusively wrapped up in the work in the middle west, specializing in the work in the field of college and camp. Therefore I propose that we sit down before this man and find what it was that made him “tick,” as the saying goes.

The courage and devotion of Dad Elliott that

enabled him to stop opposing teams in their tracks and make touchdowns in football, and led him to turn down the wine glass at the banquet table, were the same qualities that made his influence so far-reaching in the religious life of the boys and men of America.

To get a full-length view of this man we should go back to the roots and soil from which he came. To begin with, his evangelistic blood comes directly from Eliot of the Mayflower, apostle to the Indians. His father was a farmer-saint who settled with his English-lineage, Irish-born wife in 1872 on raw Illinois prairie. She was wise, witty and devout; he was sterling in honesty and sobriety, and could pitch more hay and shovel more corn per hour than any other farmer in the country. Every morning after breakfast he would read a chapter from the Bible and lead the family – and any guests – in prayer. Stern, too, in discipline; gunning for rabbits came *after* chores, not before.

Five grades of country school were enriched by the sturdy little Sunday school to which a Presbyterian preacher came every two weeks. In due time Dad and a score of his companions joined the church. More education, said his parents, so at Grand Prairie Seminary, he assailed “percentage, fourth reader, geography and how to talk grammar.” In this venture in learning he bargained for his favorite horse that he might ride home weekends. Five years more at Northwestern Academy and University made him a Bachelor of Science. Sports

blended naturally with study; varsity baseball, captain of track, and All-Conference end in football.

With growing zeal Dad traced the sides of the Association Triangle – Mind and Body rising to enthusiasm in the Spirit. He had been captured by Christian Endeavor in his first Sunday school. The Student YMCA in the Academy sent him out in a team to a small town for a ‘Young Men’s Sunday’ – his first taste of evangelism. From cabinet officer in his freshman year, he rose to the presidency of the University Association when junior and senior.

Lake Geneva opened up new vistas. The words of Mott, Spear, McDowell, Beaver, Brown, and Messer, the singing of C. B. Willis, turned him from the farm. Thoughtful, he watched Willard Lyon set out for China. Came then the Western Student Secretary, C. C. Michener, with a challenge to enter the Association Secretaryship. He surrendered.

“Having majored in sociology,” says Dad, “I wanted a field where theory would be knocked out of me. I got it in five years as religious work director of Brooklyn Central, organizing weekly meetings in forty-odd shops and factories, feeders to the big Sunday meeting in the Orpheum Theater, followed by Bible Classes and fellowship groups at the Central YMCA and in homes.” This fixed his pattern – *personal dealing with men*.

And then came his great work, by which he

is best known. For twenty years he was the “student bishop” of nine central states, his seat, Lake Geneva, whose annual conferences under his touch rose to nine-hundred attendance of high potential. From these annual conferences at Lake Geneva there went forth inspired and inspiring men whose influence reached all over the world. Bishop McDowell after a world-circling journey in which he constantly ran into evidences of this wide-spread inspiration said in opening the Geneva Assembly one summer: “Gentlemen, I stand at the very heart of the world’s greatest religious influence.” And speaking of his own world tour after retirement, Dad asserts: “From Italy on to San Francisco we were never in a hotel – always in the home of some friend met on a college campus or in a student conference.”

His last eight years in service were spent as Secretary of the Spiritual Emphasis Department of the Student Division. Upon his retirement in 1935, college presidents, laymen and ministers formed a corporation, “Christian Evangelism Among Youth,” and sent him once again on the road with college and high school youth. After Pearl Harbor came an urgent call from army and navy camps. To these ripe fields Dad gave himself with his usual abandon. In these fifty years he has no record of the number of meetings he has addressed, but he knows that he has talked with thirty-five thousand students, one by one, on spiritual problems. And the record is not yet closed.

COURAGE IN THE CRISIS

HIS has not been a life of ease. At times it was rough going. Once as the whistle blew a 220-pound workman gripped his hand. “What you say, Elliott, don’t amount to a damn, but the way you say it gets me.” This startled Dad. He had worked ten hours on that ten-minute speech, only to hear it cast aside like that. But – “the way you say it!” How did he say it? That power came out of deeper disciplines and practices, that will be worth our while to contemplate.

“In the first place,” said Dad, “I can’t overestimate the value of the Morning Watch in my life. This was my great discovery at the first Geneva Conference I ever attended. The opening of the first session by Dr. Mott made a tremendous impression upon me. The opening hymn was ‘Spirit of God, Descend upon our hearts.’ The singing of this hymn was followed by five minutes of silent prayer, which was an entirely new experience for me. Following this time of silence, Dr. Mott gave his masterful address on the Morning Watch which made an indelible impression upon my mind. However, I wondered whether he practiced what he preached, so I made up my mind that I would find out. Early the next morning I was up before there was a stir in camp and found my way to an advantageous spot where I could unobservedly have a view of his tent. I waited in expectation but did not see him come out of his tent. The breakfast bell rang and with a feeling of disappointment I was about to go down the hill to the dining hall when I heard a cracking noise behind

me and I looked back and there was Mott coming down the side of the hill. I had been out there early but he was there before me. I then and there made a resolve that the Morning Watch should be a lifelong practice of mine.

“The next great discipline in my life has been Bible Study. I am still thrilled by an experience in my freshman year at Northwestern when a freshman, John Springer, now a retired bishop of South Africa, came to me and said, ‘How would you like to join with three or four others in an intensive study of the life of Christ with me chairing the group?’ I replied, ‘I would be very glad to be in such a group for I know little about the life of Christ.’ He then said, ‘Each of us in the group is to have the books for the study course, Sharman’s *Life of Christ* and Stevens and Burton’s *Harmony of the Gospels*. The two books will cost \$1.50. Some of us will want to have reference material so we have made an arrangement to secure Edersheim’s *Life and Times of Jesus the Messiah*, two volumes, over seven hundred pages each, for \$1.50 for the two volumes.’ Then I said, ‘But that will be three bucks for the books!’ I was working my way through college and the wage scale was 18 cents an hour and I thought of the seventeen hours of labor to pay for those books, but I said, ‘Well, if I am going into it, I might as well go into it right,’ and so I ordered the books. Then he said, ‘One thing more. Each of us to agree to keeping the Morning Watch by spending at least twenty minutes each day in the study of the lesson, being sure, first, to discover what the Bible lesson for the day says;

second, what is the implication for me; and third, what am I going to do about it? Then when we get together each week, we will share the results of our study.'

"There were five of us, including the leader, enrolled in that group at the beginning of the year. There were five of us in the group at the end of the year. I got so much out of that course that the next year I took a group of freshmen myself, and the following year I had a group of freshmen, and the year following as well. When I graduated and went into Industrial YMCA work, I had such a conviction about the necessity of Bible Study being at the very heart of the program that when I discovered that there was no course in print on the life of Christ for industrial men, I labored long hours in preparing such a course which was used by the leaders of the classes for men in the shops and factories."

"You have spoken," I said, "of the influence that the Morning Watch and Bible Study had upon your inner life. What is the third and final secret of that inner strength that has helped you to bring blessings to others?"

"I believe it is the courage that I learned in football – not to let the force of numbers, the indifference of the masses or the inertia of group mores, block me.

"This power of minorities was graphically illustrated in an experience I had in World War I. Some months before our entering the war I had read

a book that undoubtedly influenced my thinking more than any book I had read up to that time except the Bible. It was Benjamin Kidd's book on *The Science of Power*, with an introduction by Dr. Giddings of Columbia. The author proved to me conclusively that there is a group mores that is so powerful that it often compels action on the part of the members contrary to the conviction of individual members within the group and in many groups this mores is created by a small minority or even an individual. I am grateful that this principle was enunciated so powerfully in my early training.

“When I was called to organize religious work in the shops and factories of Brooklyn the task seemed impossible. But Gus Nash of Cleveland fired my soul and gave me courage to take this principle into the shop and factory groups, which principle I knew had worked in college in fraternity life and in football and other athletic teams. I dressed as a working man and mingled with the men at the noon hour. On one of these scouting tours in one of the great factories I discovered a closely knit group of men with their heads close together, from which at intervals there came uproarious laughter. With others I made my way to the group and listened. At the center was a story teller whose language was profane and shockingly vile. My heart sank and I had a strange feeling at the pit of my stomach when I thought of the possibility of leading a meeting with that type of a man in it. However, permission was secured and arrangements made for me to speak to the group the following week. The crowd was there. A solo was

sung and a demonstration short talk was given. At the close I asked, 'As many of you as would like to have a meeting like this each week, stick up your hands.' The vote was almost unanimous.

"At the close of the meeting the following week, I followed my accustomed practice of suggesting the election of one of their number to serve as President to cooperate with me in carrying on the meetings. This proposal met the approval of the group. Ordinarily when I asked for their nominations there was a silence after which I would make a suggestion, but this time the proposal had scarcely been made when someone nominated Brown, the story teller. When I asked, 'How many of you would favor Brown for President' there was almost a unanimous vote followed by hearty laughter. My only response was, 'Good for you. Brown is a great fellow and we are going to have a fine time together.' I dismissed the meeting and made a bee line for Brown to congratulate him on his election. He was terribly embarrassed and a little resentful of what the boys had put over on him. I quickly brushed this aside and as I grasped his hand said, 'Put it there, Brown. Congratulations! We are going to have a great time together. What are you going to do tonight?'

" 'Oh, I guess I will be home with the old woman.'

" 'Do you suppose she would object to your spending an evening with me tonight?'

“ ‘Oh, I guess she will be d - - - glad to get rid of me.’

“ ‘I said, ‘Brown, do you bowl?’

“ ‘I’ll say I can,’ he replied.

“ ‘Brown, I can lick you.’

“ ‘The hell you can.’

“ ‘Come down to the YMCA tonight and I will show you.’

“The words were not out of my mouth when I saw I had made a mistake in mentioning the YMCA. I backed up and came up with another challenge and a dare to meet me at 602 Fulton Street. He accepted the challenge. We shook hands and I went back to the YMCA and reserved an alley.

“Exactly on the minute of the appointed hour Brown came walking in the front corridor, dressed in his best Sunday clothes. I greeted him heartily and we went immediately to the bowling alley. The first ball he threw down the alley had a sharp hook on it and knocked a strike. I knew I was up against it. We battled through the game but he beat me by several points. We had time for but two games. As we began the second game I said, ‘Brown, the man who wins this game is the champion.’

“ ‘Right you are,’ he said.

“If ever I prayed I surely did pray all through that game that I might have the control of that ball that would give me a score that would command Brown’s respect. It was a battle royal. He did far better than he did in his first game, but I won a decided victory by bowling 235, the highest score I have ever bowled before or since. The great victory, however, was not in my bowling score but in what happened in the life of Brown. After the game we went to my office. We were hardly seated when Brown broke into tears and insisted that he was not the man for the place, that the boys at the factory had put one over on him. When he had control of himself I said, ‘Brown, you and I are going to have the greatest time of our lives in putting over the best shop meetings in the city. We need each other and it can’t be done without you.’ I then outlined the program. The next week when I went to the shop everything was in readiness. A platform had been made and was in place. When I got up to speak, Brown was there and stood right beside me. There was no laughter on the part of the men.

“A month later at the close of the great Sunday afternoon evangelistic meetings in the Orpheum Theater, for which the meetings in the shops and factories were the ‘feeders,’ when the invitation to accept Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord was given, among the more than forty who came forward was Brown. I can see him now as he looked up at me with eyes shining and face radiant.

The grip that he gave my hand spoke volumes. Later a Bible Study class of shop men was organized in Brown's home and I had the privilege of placing the first Bible in his hands that he had ever held. He began living in fellowship with God as he understood it and expressed his life in the field of his immediate opportunity and responsibility. He became the center of organized goodness.

“Several months after that historic first meeting with Brown, I made bold to call upon the president of that great transportation company. After warming my feet in his outer office for nearly an hour, I was given an audience. After scrutinizing my card carefully he said, ‘have you had anything to do with Brown in ----- factory?’ I knew I was on the spot and I did not know what was coming, but I replied, ‘Yes, sir,’ and I gave him a brief report of my experience. He was visibly deeply impressed and said, ‘The superintendent tells me Brown is no longer a problem but that he has brought about a big change in the morale of the factory. You must have been to some expense in carrying on this work. We want you to know that we appreciate greatly what you have done.’ He then gave me a substantial check to cover the expenses for more than a year. A creator of a ‘group mores’ had been won and a devil’s minority had become a creative influence in the corporate life of the factory.”

“Dad,” I said, “you have struck at the very heart of the problem of changing social groups. Can you develop it further?”

“It is very true,’ he replied, “that in considering the active corporate life of school, college or community there are certain groups that have a disproportionate influence in creating the morale of the whole. Not that their souls are more precious in the sight of God than others, but that in bringing the Kingdom of God to the lives of the whole group, they do possess greater influence.

“A notable example of this in days past has been the influence of the football coach and football squad. In all my experience in visiting colleges and universities for forty years, I have yet to find a college or university where the Christian life has risen any higher than the Christian life of the football coach and the football squad. In some places it has not risen as high, but in no college or university have I found it to have risen higher. That opportunity for the college athlete has probably passed. It may be that the GIs now have that opportunity. Their influence cannot be ignored. Like it or not, the GIs will run this country for the next twenty-five years. Whether athletes or GIs, or both, or some other class, these men can become spiritually creative only as they are influenced to be the center of organized righteousness within their respective groups. I was once called to Camp Logan at Houston, Texas, to give a series of evangelistic messages to each regiment in that camp. The first regiment I addressed was made up of the toughest, most hard-boiled men I had ever faced with one exception. This regiment had a colonel who was a very appropriate type of colonel for that kind of a regiment. Believe me, he was

hard-boiled, and he had many words in his vocabulary that are not in the dictionary. I knew that I was up against the stiffest proposition that had ever confronted me. If I did not win the men of that regiment and they turned against me, I might as well pack my grip and go home. Word travels fast in a camp and a man's opportunity in other regiments he is to address depends largely on the impression he had made in his previous talk. Naturally I gave the men everything I had. My mind was charged with what I had read and the application to these men. I had not spoken long until the men were responding magnificently and I could feel the pull of their interest. I challenged them to take Jesus Christ as their Savior, example and helper and enter into fellowship with God and to stand for the best that they knew and not to be carried away by the influence of a devil's minority. At the close there was a tremendous ovation.

“When the men left the hall, the colonel came to me and, with a lot of emotion for a colonel, emphatically exclaimed, ‘Elliott, it beats hell the way that idea works!’

“ ‘Yes,’ I said, ‘but give me the application.’

“ ‘Why,’ he said, ‘I have taken men from my regiment out on the rifle range who were strangers to each other and knew nothing of each other's habits. If there were three crap shooters in the group they would get together within twenty-four hours, and you did not have to send anyone around to organize them, either. But the trouble

with the average goodness is that it is so damned good that it isn't good for anything and it takes a powerful stimulus to get that goodness to function.'

"The words of the old colonel have stayed with me through the years. You don't have to send anyone around to organize deviltry. Those birds quickly get together, but it takes a powerful stimulus to get those who are good to be good for something.

"Christian leaders everywhere are blocked again and again by forces within groups where men live, play and work. Influences in many cases are so subtle and strangling in their power that individual members within the group find themselves doing what they never would have done if they had been alone.

"Unfortunately too few Christians have been prepared to withstand these influences, and we have witnessed the moral and spiritual collapse of lives that had the potentiality to become great leaders of their generation. We have seen this collapse in barracks life in the army; in the life of the navy; in dormitory and fraternity life in colleges and universities; in clubs and lodges; in shops and factories; and in political organizations; in fact, in every phase of life where men live, play and work together.

"It is a sad commentary on the church, Protestant or Catholic, that comparatively few church members are really Christian in all their

group contacts and frequently stand by and let a devil's minority create the mores of the group. All too often they are first shocked by evil; then they tolerate; then they embrace. Their sense of values seems to be confused and maladjusted. 'It takes a powerful stimulus to get goodness to function.'

Wise is the religious leader who discovers and wins the leader within the natural grouping of youth, and influences him to come into a fellowship with God through Jesus Christ."

STREAMLINED EVANGELISM FOR A STREAMLINED AGE

“I begin to catch the secret of your life,” I said to Dad. “But the problem today is, how can we get our coming generation to acquire those qualities that the spiritual leaders of your generation possessed? The swing of this gadget-age has carried them away from the Morning Watch and Bible Study; the propaganda over radio and in the movies and press has caught us up in a herd instinct that is carrying our young people toward destruction and disaster.

“The world wars have torn many away from the old mores. Clever advertising and propaganda has made drinking respectable and smoking by both men and women a social necessity and a national habit. The church finds itself in competition with a thousand distractions unknown in the days of our youth. Religion, and above all evangelism, has gone out of fashion. Indifference greets one on every hand. How can we reach the youth today?”

“Yes,” said Dad, “you are putting the problem mildly. The church and all its contributory agencies are confronted with the staggering problem of how to reach the disinterested person. The rank and file of its members are no longer challenged by the appeal to do the work of an evangelist. In fact the majority are repelled by the mere mention of the name, and, as far as the multitudes to be won into a Christian fellowship are concerned, to be announced as an evangelist is to place a great

barrier between the messenger and the persons to whom he desires to minister.

“Some years ago I was invited to lead the Spiritual Emphasis Campaign at a leading university in the east. Some forty Christian student leaders from colleges east of the Mississippi were invited to be associated with me in this evangelistic effort. When I arrived on the campus I was amazed to see that some well-meaning students had made a great streamer over forty feet long with lettering over twelve inches high, announcing, ‘Great evangelist coming. Get right with God.’ No one questioned the motive, but it took me more than half my time there to break through the prejudice and mind-sets created by that banner announcement. The use of names closely associated with evangelism also creates prejudice and mind-sets. The title, ‘Christian Evangelism among Youth’ was carefully and prayerfully selected by a committee for the name of the corporation under which I have the privilege to serve. With older people whose cooperation is desired, the name is a great asset, but with the youth whom we desire to serve, the name is a great liability. To be introduced as the Executive Secretary of Christian Evangelism among Youth is to place a very definite barrier between me and the persons I desire to help. It was noticeable in the service to the men of our armed forces in the training camps. The use of the words ‘mission’ and ‘missioner’ not only made little or no appeal to the men but put the speaker in the position of having two strikes and no balls on him when he came to bat at the first meeting.

“This alienation is not due to a lack of spiritual interest. Prejudices and mind-sets are built up on past contacts and experience and are carried over into present relationships. Right or wrong, the church is not always a fellowship of those who have been born again – members whose carnal nature has been changed by the power of an indwelling Christ. It may be a defense mechanism, but the world expects the life of the church member to be lived on a higher plane than its own. When people see evangelists, ministers and church members with compartments of their lives which never have been made Christian, with moral and ethical standards no higher than the rank and file of the world, giving no evidence of a motivation of life that is any different from what they themselves possess, the foundation for their prejudice is laid.

“Hard as it is to admit, we must face the fact that in the minds of those outside the church, the greatest hindrance to the work of the church is not in opposition from without, but in low moral standards in the lives of those within the church and particularly in the lack of sincere effort of church members to influence persons in the groups where they live, play and work to become vital disciples of Jesus and to pervade those groups with the ideals and with the spirit of Jesus Christ.”

“How can we meet and overcome these handicaps?” I asked, “What steps would you suggest as the fruit of your life experience?”

“The first step in winning the leaders of the groups,” he replied, “is the adoption of a clear-cut spiritual objective. There must be no confusion or sidestepping here. The objective determines the personnel, and the objective determines the program. The beginning is a person who is fully surrendered to Jesus Christ and is experiencing His saving power. To illustrate: I had been invited by the President of a college YMCA and his cabinet to discuss their objective and program for the year. We faced fearlessly the spiritual need of the men on the campus and the need of a great spiritual awakening. The cabinet was made up of the most outstanding student leaders on the campus. They faced realistically the challenge to confront every man on that campus with the claims of Jesus Christ on his life. There was no mistaking the presence of the Holy Spirit in our hearts and minds.

“At the close of my address the student president arose and said, ‘There is but one thing for us to do and that is to pray. I shall lead in a brief prayer and then I suggest that each of you as you feel led, take to God the burden that is on your heart.’ After a moment of silence the president prayed as only a man moved by the Holy Spirit can pray. Everyone of us was deeply moved. One after the other prayed. The last to pray was the most prominent student in the college. He had been given practically every honor that was within the power of the student body to give. He was bowed in prayer just beside me. I could feel the depth of his feeling and never as long as I live will I forget that prayer, when his very soul cried out, ‘Oh God,

send a great revival to this campus and begin it in me now.’ He got up and left the room and went out into the night to be alone with his God.

“I had to leave immediately to motor thirty-five miles to catch a late train to my next appointment. I was not back to that campus for over a year. When I saw the secretary I said, ‘Whatever happened to that student whose prayer moved us all so deeply?’ He said, ‘Oh, Dad, there is nothing in Acts more thrilling than the experience of that boy for the past year. He went back to his fraternity and organized a prayer group. He went out on extension work for the university during the summer. I heard of six young people’s church societies that he organized or reorganized, and of many young people that he led to Christ. When he came back to college the next autumn he heard that there were one hundred students who had come to college whose stay was dependent on their having jobs to pay their way. They had been turned down at the administration office. When he heard that, he made a bee line for the dean’s office and was closeted with him for over an hour. When he came out he had a plan and all of those students are in college today. He has been the spiritual sparkplug for the cabinet and our most triumphant Christian.’ He had an objective. He gave himself up to it. He gave Christ a chance to use his life.

“The second step is winning the bellwethers. For more than thirty years I have made it a practice in beginning a Spiritual Emphasis effort on a college campus to request the coach, athletic

director, dean or college president, whoever has the widest acquaintance with the men on the campus, to invite to his office the five to seven most outstanding men of the college who are not known to be interested in religion and have no responsibility for organized religious life in the college or in the community. After giving me a personal introduction to each man, he excuses himself and leaves me alone with the men for a period of two hours if the men desire to remain that long.

“When alone with the men I have said, ‘Men, this is a put-up job. I asked the coach to give me the privilege of meeting the five to seven most outstanding leaders in this college who have assumed no responsibility for religious leadership on or off the campus. I have many opportunities to meet those who are interested in religion, but so little opportunity to get the point of view of the disinterested leader!’

“I then tell them of an experience many years ago when at the close of a visit one of the students who had been known to have little or no interest in religion, came to me and said, ‘Dad, I am sorry that I did not get to know you sooner and to understand what you are trying to do. I am sure that there are others like myself who feel the same way. May I make a suggestion? When you go to a college get the coach or someone who knows the leaders in college life who are not interested in religion to invite the five to seven who are most influential to sit down with you in a secret bull-

session to talk over the plan and give you the lowdown, and also give them a chance to know you.’ “ ‘Great Idea,’ I said, ‘I’ll try it.’ That was over twenty years ago. I have been following the suggestion in every college I visit from Maine to California and from Canada to the Gulf. There is immediate interest as I share with them some of the problems that confront a man in my position, the prejudices and mind-sets, and their causes. I then have told them how I was invited to the campus, the object of my being there; what I propose to do; the messages I propose to give, even giving an outline of the major addresses; the time to be given to personal interviews, and the results we hope to obtain.

“I then ask, ‘Do you think there is any need on this campus for such an emphasis?’ There has always been an immediate, affirmative response. I then say, ‘Boys, I am not going to ask you to do anything but there are ways you can help if you wish to do so.

“ ‘First, there will probably be a lot of discussing of the questions that I raise, and probably some cussing and a lot of misunderstanding. Now you have the lowdown and you can give your interpretation in your respective groups.

“ ‘Second, while there are some questions and problems that are in every college, there are some that are uppermost in this college. You know what they are and you can help me hit the bull’s eye.

“ ‘Third, you can hear me through and give me your reactions.

“ ‘Fourth, if there are any questions that you would like to discuss with me personally, I will be glad to talk with you anytime, day or night.

“ ‘Fifth, you can share with me what you think are the biggest moral and spiritual problems on this campus that are keeping students like yourselves from religious leadership.’

“The fat by this time is in the fire. I learn more about inside problems in a college during the next hour and a half than I ordinarily would learn in a week or a month. The men are slow to leave. Quite frequently one will remain till all have gone to give information or ask questions that he did not wish to discuss in the presence of others. It is the exception when all do not cooperate fully and come for personal interviews themselves. I have never revealed the information given to me by these men. The experience has been most rewarding. There are literally scores of men in service as missionaries with whom I had my first contact in such a group. Those men have had a large part in initiating invitations to speak to athletic teams in locker rooms or on the field, to have an entrée to fraternity and inter-fraternity groups, and to bull sessions without number.

“Again and again we have witnessed the fruitfulness of the spiritual effort of those possessed with a dynamic spiritual experience rooted in a

oneness with Jesus Christ that carried them over all barriers between an intellectual assent and an unconditional surrender of life to Christ and an abiding fellowship with Him. Such a fellowship knows no barriers and possesses one with such a love and passion to share his experience that he will not give up hope and effort. To be sure, we have many times seen expressions in which there was much to be desired, but serious as the lack of knowledge and of method has been it is easier to direct those who desire to do something significant than it is to accomplish worthwhile objectives through those who have no concern for the welfare of their fellow men.

“The task with this group is no more difficult and no more hopeless than the motivating of those who in the words of Bishop McDowell, ‘become such thorough students of the soil that they lose courage to sow.’ It is possible to become more interested in the method of procedure than in the person to be reached. I will never forget how heartsick I became when in the midst of a significant college spiritual effort I discovered that an associate was more concerned about writing up the response and reaction of the students he had observed in meetings and their reactions in personal interviews, than he was in their spiritual welfare.”

DISCOVERY AND TRAINING OF LEADERS

“WHAT would be your formula for developing leaders in this new generation?” I asked the question knowing that I was but voicing a query that is in the hearts of people everywhere. Dad’s reply was characteristic. It was his habit always to refer to the experiences of others whenever he could rather than to himself.

“John R. Mott had the key,” he replied. “Wise indeed was his strategy in the discovery and training of leaders. Regardless of demands for executive administration, he never let a year pass but that he accepted an invitation to lead an intensive evangelistic effort in several colleges. In each event he sought to multiply his leadership by inviting to be with him for leadership in special groups several younger men whom he believed to have potential evangelistic leadership. During a visit he was sure to call out for some specific service those workers who were prominent in university life who had shown potential spiritual leadership. Few were the exceptions when on a Sunday morning of his visit he failed to invite to breakfast with him the most outstanding Christian student leaders. He wanted them to hear his challenge for spiritual leadership in the vicarious callings at home and abroad. During his entire service in student work he always made sure that in every conference an hour each day was set aside for personal evangelism and another hour for foreign missions.

“I myself was one of the fruits of this extensive training. It was in carrying out this policy, that after being graduated and established in my life work in Brooklyn, New York, in the YMCA, he invited me to lead a course in personal evangelism in the Southern Student Conference. I did this for two years and then for three years following I was I was invited for the same service at the Lake Geneva Student Conference. At the end of the third year he called me to be his associate. Would to God that earlier in life I had caught the full significance of his teaching and example in making the maximum use of the young men in colleges and seminaries and professional schools. I surely would have had a much greater multiplying influence in leadership. It was his vision to seek out the most outstanding dynamic Christian students in the seminaries to lead Bible Study groups at the summer conferences. His expectation was that they would be leaders or teachers in years to come.

“This has been more and more my policy as the years have gone by. And the results have been exceedingly gratifying. Out of many experiences I might cite one. A few years ago I was invited to lead the Week of Prayer in a denominational college in North Dakota. I asked the president of the college if they had two or more outstanding graduates in whom the students and faculty had full confidence who were upper classmen in a theological seminary. He assured me they had one, indicating they had few if any graduated who were held in higher esteem than he. When I returned to

Chicago I sought out this graduate and laid before him a plan for him to accompany me and, with some other upper classman whom he would select, take the responsibility of setting up the visit in his Alma Mater in accordance with the plan of the Irreducible Minimum. I explained that it would be a decided advantage if his companion were a prominent athlete, providing, of course, that he had the spiritual qualifications. He said, 'I know the man. He was All-Conference football and stands high with the students here.' As soon as he received his friend's consent to team with us, I wrote to the president suggesting that he invite these men to cooperate with me in the Week of Prayer. I received an affirmative reply by return mail, enclosing copy of invitation he had mailed to them.

“At the first opportunity, which was some three months before the date set for the Week of Prayer, I had two hours with these theological students and went over carefully every point in the Irreducible Minimum with particular emphasis upon the selection and enlistment of the personal work committee and its duties. I insisted that the first step was to secure the key faculty man, the most outstanding Christian girl, and the most outstanding Christian boy on the campus. They should know the attitudes and habits of the largest number of students. These in turn should select the fifty or sixty strongest Christian students as possibilities for the committee which would have full responsibility for the Week of Prayer. The first step was not difficult because the graduate I was working with knew the faculty and upper classmen.

“Then I outlined the plan, to select the list of students and faculty, and personally to interview each one about the objective and plan of the Week of Prayer and the preparatory work as outlined. I insisted that no one was to be on the committee who would not wholeheartedly enter into the plan and pay the price in time, devotion and effort.

“It was a challenge beyond their expectations but they accepted it and went to the college at the appointed time. They followed the outline to the letter. When I met them on their return to Chicago there was an appreciation of their task which was not in evidence before. They felt they had not completed their work and wished to go back again before the mission was held. This they did. Before we departed for the special effort, I gave each his special assignment for group meetings and interviews. They were to meet with the general committee each day for prayer and check-up. The athlete was to have the responsibility for the athletes and the graduate was to have the work with the girls. (We had not been able to get a woman for our party.) On the third day the graduate came and asked for the privilege of including the resident trustees in his assignment.

“Seldom if ever have I had a more fruitful experience. The faculty reported it the most successful Week of Prayer in their experience. To me the greatest known result was what happened to those theological seminary students. Something transpired in their lives that changed them, even their desires and motives. They had become

flaming evangelists. They came back from deepening the spiritual life of the North Dakota college on fire to deepen the spiritual life of their theological seminary. The prayer meeting at the seminary that was all but dead was revived and became vital. As a direct result of the leadership of these students the faculty and students met in a spiritual retreat at Lake Geneva and have continued to do so each autumn since.

“The one is a pastor of a growing church in Montana and the athlete is the pastor of a live church in Wisconsin. He was given a leave of absence at the outbreak of the war and was used wonderfully as a chaplain in the Navy.

“If the leaders of the voluntary religious life of the college will show the initiative, tact and statesmanship of an Alonzo Stagg in the discovery, selection and training of students, the religious life of students will be greatly enlarged and deepened and there will be a steady flow of consecrated, able personalities offering their lives for Christian service at home and abroad. Men are called by God, but one way in which God calls men is through His living Presence working through the lives of men in example and teaching until they feel compelled to enter a calling to serve Him. One of the acid tests of a man’s service through his profession is the number of men who desire to enter the calling of their leader. There are no shortcuts for such service. If our objective is clear, we will secure the training that will best prepare us to realize the objective.

“In the period referred to by Julius Richter there is little question of the fact that the Bible Evangelistic emphasis in youth conferences, conventions, deputations and retreats was a major influence in leading youth to give their lives in Christian service at home and abroad. Who can number those who have gone to the ends of the earth in all walks of life with an unconditional surrender of their lives to Christ to give Him His maximum chance to work through their lives to make this world what He wills it to be?

“The Gospel Team work of that era was also a powerful instrument in influencing boys and young men to accept Jesus Christ as their Savior and Lord. Of equal significance was the power of that movement to give the student leaders a vision of the service they might render as ministers at home or abroad. My participation when a student on such gospel teams planted seeds in my life that grew into a major decision to give my life to the Christian ministry.”

“There was a great athlete at my own college,” I said, “one of the toughest chaps I ever knew, a great poker player, a track man and All-Conference football player who led my college to championship after championship. He had the reputation of being little interested in religion. Under your influence he became one of the outstanding spiritual leaders in the world. I happened to be one of the judges when in his last year in college he won first place in the most important oratorical contests of the year.”

“This,” said Dad, “illustrates as well as any incident I could cite, the value of sharing team work with the students themselves. There happened to be a training conference for student leaders that year at Grinnell, delegates coming from other colleges all over the state of Iowa. Arrangements had been made for each delegate when he registered to accept the assignment of one student, at the college entertaining the conference, who was not interested in the religious program of the college with whom he would make a personal acquaintance and seek to win to Christ before the conference ended. A prominent athlete and a class friend at Grinnell College was given the name of this man you refer to as his assignment. He did an unprecedented thing. He brought him to every session of the conference. The last meeting was an open session to which all the men of the college were invited. It was a demonstration decision meeting to help the delegates to conduct a similar meeting in the closing meeting which they were being trained to lead.

“After a period of prayer at the close of the meeting I asked all those who would accept Jesus Christ as their Savior and Lord to so indicate by standing. The words were hardly out of my mouth when this great athlete was on his feet and came stalking down the aisle like he was charging off tackle, and gripped my hand like he would break every bone in it. After the instruction to those who had accepted Christ, and the meeting was dismissed, this athlete came to me and said, ‘Dad, I want to go out on one of those gospel teams.’ I said, ‘but you publicly accepted Christ less than

twenty minutes ago.’ ‘I know,’ he said, ‘but I have been at all the coaching meetings. I want to get into the game.’ My reply was, ‘Stant, you have a great beginning. It is now December 6th. The teams go out after Christmas. If you continue the beginning you have made, of course you can go.’ He went on the team after Christmas. When they met in the little town with the local leader to make up a list of non-Christian boys in the town to make the assignments, there was one tough college guy in town that the more experienced men on the team did not wish to take. Stant spoke up and said, ‘Give him to me. I have been in more that one poker game with him. I’ll take him.’ He did take him and he won him over to Christ. Not only was that man won, but many others. Both Stant and his first convert went back to college and did a most outstanding religious work on the campus and in the community. After graduating from college, both went into YMCA work and have rendered significant service. Stant Turner is now the National YMCA Secretary of the YMCAs of the Philippine Islands. His Christian leadership began in gospel team work as did hundreds of others who today are leaders in the work of the church at home and abroad.

“I received a letter from Stant just the other day. He writes that while ‘our movement in the Philippines suffered almost total material loss...yet the YMCA work did not stop for a single day. My retirement,’ he writes, ‘was due last January 30th, but I have agreed to remain another two years to help see through the rehabilitation of our movement

in the Philippines, which I was privileged to pioneer and to which I have given my life for the past thirty-one years. I wish to do my part in seeing that it has the opportunity to live and serve again with essential facilities available which belonged to it before the war. I have not regretted for a single day the decision made in December 1910 in that meeting you led. Mrs. Turner and I would go through it all again, even the hazards of the war period, if we were given the same opportunity of being of service and to a high cause. I live on borrowed time, for in many experiences normally it would have been my last on earth. This was even true on one occasion after our release from prisonhood during the battle of Manila when I was with some Filipino secretaries caring for the few civilians who remained alive after the massacre of 150,000 on the south side of Manila as they came through our front lines. I was taken to the hospital supposedly dead.'

"This is Stant Turner and his spirit reflects the spirit of thousands of others whose lives were committed to the Lord in those days."

"Another dear friend of mine whose life was influenced by you is Walter Judd," I remarked. "What he has accomplished for the Kingdom both at home and abroad can never be measured. Can you tell how that came about?"

"That opens another chapter in my life," he replied, "one that is not very generally known. But

to answer your questions I shall have to tell you a little about that field.

“Fruitful as has been my ministry to college students, I have found more carry-over from my ministry to high school students than in any other field notwithstanding the fact that I have given much less time to this field than to colleges. There is no question but that the idealism of the students in high schools is higher, there is less sophistication, and they are more responsive. It is there that the great advance in the work of the Kingdom must be made.

“I know of no more fruitful opportunity for a vital, creative Christian ministry than in the older boys’ conferences, retreats and summer camps. The experience to which you refer had its beginning in an older boys’ conference at Lincoln, Nebraska, where I had the privilege to be on the program and to lead the Sunday afternoon decision meeting. There had been much preparation for this meeting in prayer and personal interviews.

“At the close of the meeting I extended an invitation to all those who desired to accept Jesus Christ as their Savior and Lord who would, with His help, seek to be loyal disciples cost what it might, lead them where Christ wills, to indicate that decision by coming forward and taking me by the hand. Some forty boys came forward. The last to come was a boy who seemed to me to be the most unpromising boy in the group. I recall distinctly the thought that came to my mind when I took him by

the hand – ‘If you ever amount to anything God has a big task on His hands.’ After a few words of instruction and a dedicatory prayer and making sure I had the name and address of each one, I advised them to return to their respective leaders.

When I returned to the office I sent a personal letter to each one. Some two weeks later I received a most remarkable letter from the teacher of this boy I thought so unpromising, stating that the most remarkable thing had happened in the life of this boy that she had ever witnessed in all her experience in teaching. She told me he had always been into mischief, and had been in so many pranks and scrapes that he was blamed for those with which he had no connection as well as those with which he was identified. Although very bright he would not apply himself to his studies and spent much of his time in school bothering other pupils. She then related the great change that had come into this boy’s life and implored me to get in touch with him. Well, I had already written him, but her letter inspired me to have a closer contact.

“It was not long until this boy became the most influential member of his class. His deportment promptly jumped from 75 to 95. He organized a Hi-Y Club and became the most ardent, effective personal worker I have ever met in a high school. During that year, after reading the life of David Livingstone, he decided to become a medical missionary. After graduation from high school he entered the state university; he was soon on the

YMCA cabinet and became one of the most effective workers.

“At that time I had the responsibility for organizing and developing YMCA work in the Student Army Training Corps. When I visited the state university in which this boy was enrolled as a sophomore, I found them without a secretary. So outstanding was his work that his services as a secretary were requested and I asked him to accept the appointment. He at first hesitated but finally agreed and his record is one of outstanding service in that period.

“In his sophomore year he went to Lake Geneva Student Conference and in his senior year to Estes Park. They had a profound effect in broadening his thinking and deepening his spiritual experience. On graduating from the university he entered medical school. He discovered there was not a prayer group nor a Student YMCA in the medical school. Within two weeks he had organized a prayer group which, within a few months, developed into a full-fledged medical college YMCA. On entering his internship he discovered that not in the memory of any of those present had there been a prayer group among the interns. He organized a group, small at first but it grew steadily, and became a powerful influence in the lives of the interns.

“On completing his internship he accepted the call to become a traveling secretary of the Student Volunteer Movement. At the end of a year

of effective service, he went out under the American Board as a missionary to China and worked in the medical mission at Shaowu in South China, where he was used in a most amazing way through bandits, wars and revolution. On his first furlough he spoke at the Student Volunteer Convention on how the love of Jesus Christ works in changing lives. His message was used in such a significant way that in the years following I discovered in visiting the colleges more carry-over from his address than from any others given at the convention.

“His health was so impaired from repeated sieges with malaria that he was advised he could not return to China. So he sought and received appointment to a fellowship in surgery at the Mayo Foundation. His work there attracted the attention and admiration of the leaders, but when he regained normal health and an urgent need developed in China, he resigned and went back to China, this time to Fenchow in a non-malarial area in North China. When the Japanese attacked China he spent so much time removing American scrap iron from the bodies and brains of Chinese victims that he could not stand up under the injustice of it all, so after five months under the Japanese occupation he returned to the United States, resigned his position with the American Board, and toured the country to tell the story before luncheon clubs, chambers of commerce, church groups and legislative bodies, until his influence, together with that of Mrs. Fitch, finally led to government action – too late – preventing the sale of scrap iron, gasoline and other

war materials by the United States to the Japanese. He of course, was not able to return to his field which was then under Japanese control, so he took a medical practice in Minnesota, and soon was asked by the citizens of Minneapolis to represent them in Congress. He was elected. The story of Walter Judd, representative in Congress from Minnesota, now entering his third term in Washington, is now well known to the country.”

SECURING PUBLIC COMMITMENT

“PROBABLY more questions and criticism center about the methods used in securing public commitment that in any other field of Christian activity,” said Dad in conclusion. “The Christian life calls for constant day-by-day commitment. Where behavior patterns are deep seated, an about-face will generally be accompanied by deep emotion. In some individuals the commitment may not be an about-face but only a conscious awareness of God’s presence and a desire to do God’s will. There may or may not be any sense of this dedication being cataclysmic.

“There is real ground for questioning the process of asking individuals to ‘surrender to God’ without making very clear what such surrender involves in terms of personal conduct in the field of one’s immediate responsibility; especially in basic relations between people, and above all in basic relations with God in such a way as to put God into the center of life. Jesus grew in wisdom and stature and in favor with God and man. His decisions were always made in the light of God’s will for Him in the particular issue confronting Him.

“We must also realize that many who have alienated themselves from real fellowship with God, even when knowing the facts and consequences, will have little or no sense of their guilt and their responsibility for the welfare of others until they have made a complete surrender of their wills to Christ and have entered into fellowship with God

and experienced a change of nature, or in the words of Scripture, have been born anew and have experienced sufficient grace to remove preconceived ideas and mind-sets and have had taken away the scales that have blinded their spiritual vision and have become possessed with a sincere love for persons, regardless of race, color, social or economic position.

“Between the practice of depending solely upon imparting information with no invitation to call forth decision and action and the variations of the ‘sawdust trail’ there are legions of methods. For those who rely on both Scripture and psychology for their authority in such matters, there is almost universal agreement that a choice must be made and this choice should be registered in a definite commitment of the will. The question, therefore, centers largely about how that choice and its profession shall be made.

“Paul said, ‘If thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved.’ (Romans 10:9) The noted psychologist, William James, said, ‘if you have an impulse and wish to make it permanent, seal it with the hardest, most difficult physical expression that is within you power to make.’

“Too often these admonitions have been applied to a very limited area of life experience with no application to other areas of life. Also that in seeking this response, the exercise of other

psychological laws have been overshadowed and have all but nullified the good of the exercise of the former. This may be illustrated graphically by the act of a certain traveling salesman who contracted his customer and got the order, but after he departed there was such a reaction in the customer that he lived daily with the expectation of the salesman's return when he would have the satisfaction of kicking him out of the office. An extreme instance, to be sure, but illustrative of the reaction, in different degrees, to the efforts of many good-meaning people in the field of evangelism, which explains in part the prejudices and mind-sets I referred to previously (Chapter II.) However, we can't get away from the conviction that 'the abundant life' demands that a choice must be made and action must be taken. Intellectual assent is not enough.

"But *how*? At no point in method have I made so many changes and I still find myself seeking a better way. The following represents the best I have been able to discover.

"1 The speaker must be *absolutely sincere* and *speak* entirely in the realm of his own experience. No one detects insincerity more quickly than a student.

"2 The student must feel the burden of his individual and social guilt and his need of salvation.

"3 He must be brought to sincere repentance for *all* known sins; confession,

forgiveness, assurance of salvation and full restitution of all that is within the power of the penitent to make, are absolutely necessary. 'Christ must be Lord of all or He cannot be Lord at all.' (Lamb.)

"4 Those principles, enunciated by Paul and William James are sound and fundamental. A choice has to be made, action has to be taken.

"5 Each person is so human that he needs the help of someone in whose religious life and Christian experience he has complete confidence, to whom he can go and lay all the facts before him, leaving nothing hidden, and have his counsel and abiding friendship.

"I have for years used a blank card on which to register decisions, for the reason that I have never seen, nor have I been able myself to frame a decision statement that would express fully the actual decision made by each person. To me this is most important.

"The following procedure is, for me at present, the most fruitful method of expression:

"The chairman of the meeting should be the person in whose religious life those likely to make decisions have the greatest respect and confidence. The decision meeting is intended to be a climax – of what has gone on before, and is intended (1) to arouse in the student a feeling of guilt and sin and a

discontent with his present state of life; (2) to create a desire to come back to God and live a victorious life; and (3) to impel a decision to begin now.

“At the close of the service I state frankly, ‘The extent to which this service will be meaningful depends on each individual’s choice and action. The choice and decision rests with each one of you and the following procedure is solely for your help for well do I know how deep is the gulf between an intellectual assent and letting go and saying yes to God and sealing your choice and decision with a positive act. First, we will suggest a minute of absolute silence when each of you will take what to you is your most reverent attitude before God. Try to forget the person next to you and be sincerely alone with your God. Then choose and decide in the minute of silence what your relationship to your God shall be from this day. After one minute of silence I will lead in a brief prayer of commitment.

“ ‘Then as we remain quietly in an attitude of prayer, I suggest you take the blank card that you will find in the book rack and write on one side, “My Covenant that this day I make with my God.” Then write out the actual covenant you have made and sign it with your name and address and date.

“ ‘Then on the other side of the card write the name and address of the person in whose spiritual experience you have the greatest confidence, to whom you will go (or write) within twenty-four hours, to talk over with him frankly all

the implications of the decision you have made, and seek his help and counsel. It may be your pastor, it may be your favorite professor, it may be your college pal. You know. I only suggest that you be sure it is the one in whom you have the greatest confidence. When your covenant is made and signed, place it in the envelope, *seal the envelope* and address it to yourself. Then I suggest that you come forward and place your envelope containing your covenant on the altar and stand here in the presence of God for a prayer of dedication.

“ ‘This covenant is between you and your God. No other person will see it. When I return to my office I will write you a letter and enclose your sealed envelope which I hope you will put in your Bible as a daily reminder of the covenant that you this day made with your God. I trust you will be adding to it the record of other covenants that you will make as you ‘grow in wisdom and stature and in favor with God and man.’ I want to help you right at that point to lick forever that temptation that will arise as to whether or not you did the right thing. “Whatsoever the Spirit saith unto you do it.” Now is that clear? Is that square? I am not concerned about what you think of me, but when I am through I hope they can say of me – he spoke his convictions fearlessly but he never was known to have taken advantage of a person in public or in private. He never hit below the belt.

“ ‘Now let us have our one minute of absolute silence during which you make your covenant to your God. Then take the blank card

and write out your covenant with your God, sign it, giving your name and address and date; then on the other side write the name and address of the person to whom you will go (or to whom you will write) within twenty-four hours and tell him of the covenant you have made. Place your card in the envelope, seal the envelope and address it to your self and hold it until I indicate that you come forward and place your covenant card on the altar. Now let us all pray in our minute of silence, each in his most reverent attitude toward God.'

"There have been few experiences in life when Christ has seemed nearer than in that minute of silence, and when I say silence I mean *silence*, no interruptions whatever.

"There are other details not to be overlooked, such as the availability of cards and envelopes, lead pencils and arrangements for an opening service that creates an attitude of spiritual expectancy.

"Much depends upon the personal interview and the depth of the friendship begun. The spiritual emphasis can be a very vital influence in an on-going program for the year. It can be all caught up in a larger interpretation of the objective. Each participant can know the thrill of being the center of a Christian cell in associating with himself at least one other person who through prayer, Bible study and sharing their Christian experience, seek to influence persons in the groups where they live, play and work, to become vital disciples of Jesus

and to pervade those groups with the ideals and with the spirit of Jesus Christ. We should never lose sight of the fact that we live in a home or a group, we live in a community; we live in a state; we live in a nation; we live in a world; but we begin in the place of our immediate responsibility.

“In this hour of trial and tribulation it is well for us to recall the lessons of history and be reassured of the relevance of our Christian Faith. No age has been so dark, no hour so pagan, that God has not preserved a minority through whom He has worked. The blood of the martyrs has indeed been the seed of the church. New life has sprung up.

“It surely never has been the Will of God for any generation to hand over to another generation what our generation has handed over to this generation, but let us not forget that the youth are our youth. They are the product of our homes, the product of our schools, the product of our civilization. Our God has been the person or thing to whom or to which we have given our first allegiance. We have seen our false gods crumble before our very eyes.

“We have the fruit of our labors but God still has a minority through whom He is working. His Word is reassuring. ‘But when these things begin to come to pass, look up, and lift your heads; because your redemption draweth nigh.’ (Luke 22:28) The relevance of our Christian religion is unshaken. The roots of our Christian faith still lie

in the life, in the death, in the resurrection of Jesus and in His living presence in the lives of His children today. Call that living presence Grace, Holy Ghost or Living Christ, it is in that we see the Character and nature of God. It is in Jesus that we see how we should live in relation to our fellow men. It is in His atoning death wherein lie the roots of our salvation. It is in His resurrection that we have our hope of immortality, and it is in His living presence that our carnal natures are changed and are no longer *I* but He that liveth in us to sensitize conscience, purify motive, give power to become and to give joy and peace and eternal life and eternal Fellowship with Him."