

personal but institutional action. Institutionalized evil requires institutional action for change. We recommend study of the life and work of William Wilberforce and Lord Shaftesbury, who in their time promoted individual and institutional action, and even combined the two. We acknowledge these ventures without expecting or seeking to build utopia this side of the return of Christ.

We stress the importance of the resources entrusted to us. They require stewardship, particularly in view of the fact of waste and inflation. Wealth is entrusted to us in order for us to distribute to the needy, particularly to support them in basic needs of human existence, and is not for selfish advancement. Teaching the underprivileged to use their resources is important; e.g., it is better to teach people how to catch fish rather than to give them fish. We alert Christians to their responsibility to counter the exploitation of disadvantaged groups such as migrant workers, cheap labor, and disabled workers. We urge Christians to be associated with programs that create work for the jobless, particularly in the Third World. We encourage Christians to further education, housing, credit unions, consumer and production cooperatives and land reform.

We dissociate ourselves from any form of racism.

Sex is ordained of God in the context of love, which is essentially a spiritual factor. Christians must not underestimate the damage caused by over-emphasis on sex by adultery and promiscuity to the individuals involved and to society itself. Over-emphasis on sex goes together with the loneliness of the young. There is a preoccupation with physical sexuality and this tends to heighten the loneliness felt by young people. Christians must not let go unchallenged the flood of pornography, which involves the exploitation of the weaknesses of man and the corruption of his spiritual and moral nature. By attacking man in this way he is made an object of lust rather than a person made in the image of God. Pornography in attacking the image of God in man, is an attack upon God himself. In short, pornography is a destructive dehumanizing trade which exploits the weaknesses of consumers.

In observing the breakdown of marriage in many places, we record that in revival on the mission field, renewal of the homes is often a feature. Difficulties are still experienced in understanding the cultural backgrounds of polygamy. We urge further studies in the biblical response to polygamy.

The ideal Christian would do two things: He would promote social betterment in government councils; and at the same time, he would preach the ideal situation. Social engagement is a divine imperative with great opportunities today if only we remain under the control of the Bible.

PRAYER IN EVANGELIZATION

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We all believe, we all are sure, many of us have often said, and maybe some of us have often preached that prayer plays a vital part in evangelism. It is impossible to think of an evangelical rally without preparation in prayer, without a prayer secretary, without special prayer-meetings. There is no missionary going out without asking those that stay behind to pray for him.

The vital question, however, which I want to put before us is: *What part does prayer play in evangelism? Is it just one of many other activities that are necessary to bring about what we call "fruitful or successful evangelism?" Or is it the activity on which all others and the final results depend? In other words: Is prayer fundamental in evangelism or is it supplemental? Is it essential to evangelism or is it complementary? Is it the primary task in evangelism or is it just one of many others? Is it the decisive factor determining the course and results of our evangelistic efforts, or is it one of many factors which will bring about what we want to see?*

I am sure there are many who will be inclined to agree right at the beginning, that prayer is fundamental in evangelism. If this is so — and I will have to try to prove this in my paper — then let us start to examine the foundation on which our evangelistic efforts are built. Is our foundation sound and good? If not, should we not stop building on it? What is better, building a house on a shaky foundation, or postponing building till something has been done to the basic structure? We may all agree here today that prayer is fundamental in our work, but are we also willing and prepared to take the consequences?

What do our activities in evangelism look like today? Is not the primary thing to secure a good speaker? Then there must be good and widespread publicity. Then we have to choose a good location for the meetings. Now we can form our committees and appoint our secretaries for music, prayer, finances, etc.

When we think of "missions today," what comes foremost into our minds? Finances? Well-trained personnel? Open doors, by which we mean countries with political and economic stability? Or is it first and foremost prayer? Prayer that clings to the promises of God and gives him the glory?

I have three headings to our theme.

1. *Prayer implied, though not mentioned*

If prayer is so important in evangelism, why then is it not mentioned in the Lord's command which we call the Great Commission, "All power is given unto me, go ye therefore and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Ghost, teaching them to observe all things, whatsoever I have commanded you, and lo, I am with you, even unto the end of the world"?

Why did not our Lord include prayer in this command to go, teach, baptize? Where does prayer come in? Is it not sufficient that the Lord

has said, "All power is given unto me in heaven and on earth, go ye therefore"? Is it not for us to go and to prove and experience that all power does belong to Christ? Is this in fact our daily experience in evangelization and mission-work, that we are working together with an Almighty, All-powerful Lord? Or does it look much more that all power is given unto the Lord in heaven, but on earth other powers are ruling and determining events, against which we are absolutely powerless?

The Greek word for power in our passage means authority or right (*exousia*). Christ says, "All authority is given unto me in heaven and on earth". Christ has the absolute authority and right to send his disciples into all the world. They and we have the authority and the right to go where he sends us. No authority on earth has the right to forbid us preaching the Gospel! But is this truth and the knowledge of it sufficient to carry out what the Lord has commanded us?

In Acts 1:8 we find another word about power, "Ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you and ye shall be my witnesses. . . ." The Greek word used here (*dynamis*) means power to accomplish and fulfill something. Paul calls the Gospel the "dynamis" of God (Rom. 1:16). The preaching of the Cross, which is foolishness to the world, he calls the "dynamis" of God. He writes in the same letter (I Cor. 2:4-5), "My speech was not in enticing words of men's wisdom but in demonstration of the spirit and of power (*dynamis*) that your faith shall not stand in the wisdom of man but in the power of God." Further he says in I Cor. 4:20, "The kingdom of God is not in word but in power." If we would keep this last passage well in our minds, then many discussions about the priority of word or deeds, preaching or helping, evangelizing or social action would be superfluous. These are not the biblical alternatives, at least as Paul puts it, but rather "words" and "power." One is something from man — "word" no matter how much doing goes with it; the other is something from God — "power", working through words of preaching and through the lives of transformed men and women.

Christ has not only given us authority to preach the Gospel but also the power to do it, and to do it in a way that this power will be manifested in the lives of the believers. Has this anything to do with prayer? Is prayer implied in Matt. 28:20 and in Acts 1:8?

What was the reaction of the disciples after they had received the Great Commission? Christ had said, "You shall be my witnesses," but first of all they became his intercessors. He had said, "Go ye," but first of all they stayed in the upper room. He had said, "Wait ye till ye receive power," but we see them, not sitting and waiting, but kneeling and praying. Who had told them that now was the time for prayer? Did they know what they were in for? We know of course that that prayer meeting lasted just ten days. We also probably would manage, if we really tried, to spend ten days in prayer. But did they know? Yet they were determined to pray till . . . till what . . . till the power would be given. They did not speculate that it might be on the day of Pentecost, and if they did, they still did not know if it was going to be that year or the next. They were set for prayer, not only for ten days, but if needs be, for twenty, thirty or more, till the Lord would fulfil his promise.

What would have happened to them — to the world — to us, if they had not prayed these ten days? What would have happened if they had done what we evangelicals so often do saying: God has promised to do it anyway, we have no part in it, it will come when God's time is fulfilled! They knew they had authority to preach, but they were praying for the power to come.

We can thus assume that, though unmentioned, the Lord implied that only through and by earnest and persevering prayer could there be a fulfillment and experience of what he had promised his disciples in their lives and in their work.

When we look at the life and work of our Lord himself, we see on the whole that prayer is much more implied than mentioned in the Gospels. I can never but marvel at the fact that our Lord did pray and that he should have needed prayer in order to live the life he lived and to fulfil his task. This is no deviation from our theme. The Lord, though not an evangelist as we know such today, was sent from God to fulfill a task as specific in relation to the world and its needs as ours is today: His whole life was geared to the fulfillment of it. Was prayer fundamental in his life and work or was it just one of his many activities? We have no doctrinal statement about this in the New Testament, but from some passages we can conclude that our Lord not only needed prayer, but that all his words and deeds, his miracles and teachings were answers to prayer and grew out of his continual and perfect inner prayer life.

Matt. 26:53, "Thinkest thou that I cannot pray to my father and he shall presently give me more than twelve legions of angels?" Was it needful for him to pray? Could he not just command and the angels would come?

In John 11:14 we find, "Jesus lifted up his eyes and said, Father, I thank thee that thou hast heard me, and I knew that thou hearest me always, but because of the people that stand by I said it, that they may believe that thou hast sent me."

Who was at work at the raising of Lazarus? Jesus himself said (John 5:19-20), "Verily, verily I say unto you, the Son can do nothing of himself, but what he sees the father do . . . for the father loves the son and shows him all things that he himself doeth." The raising of Lazarus was an answer to the Lord's praying. An answer to his asking, "Father I thank thee, that thou hast heard me!" In his inner prayer life, the Lord was constantly seeing the Father, hearing his word, seeing what the Father was doing. And he did the same. He knew what he could ask according to the Father's will, and he knew that the Father would give it to him. Does this not remind us of I John 5:14, "If we ask anything according to his will, he heareth us, and we know that he hears us, whatsoever we ask, we know that we have the petitions, that we desire of him."

Is it implied, though not mentioned, that every word, deed and miracle of our Lord was the result of his inner prayer life, of his seeing the father at all times and his asking of him according to his will. If this was the way the Son was sent by the father, what do these words mean to us? "As my Father has sent me, so send I you." Is then prayer fundamental in our task of evangelizing the world?

We find in the New Testament an unmentioned link between the fact that we have the authority to be or to do something given to us by our Lord and the power to live out what we are and to accomplish what we are authorized to do. This all-important link is prayer. Has it become the "missing link" in our lives and work?

We find this link also in the life of Paul, the greatest missionary of all times. According to Acts 9 he received his call through Ananias right at the time of his conversion in Damascus. In his own words he recalls this experience in Acts 26, "For I have appeared unto thee to make thee a minister and a witness, delivering thee from the people and from the Gentiles unto whom now I send thee to open their eyes and to turn them from darkness to light, from the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins. . . ." How many of our candidates and missionaries have been called and encouraged to go to the mission field by these words, spoken by the Holy Ghost! Yet is it sufficient to receive a word like this from the Lord as a personal call for going out as a missionary? Paul did not wait long to fulfill in his way what he had been asked to do. In Damascus "he preached Christ straightway and he confounded the Jews, proving that this is very Christ," and in Jerusalem we find him "disputing against the Grecians" (Acts 9:29). From Jerusalem the brethren brought him down to Caesarea and from there sent him to Tarsus. Now Paul vanishes for at least seven years. What happened in these few years that are between his conversion and call and his first missionary journey in Acts 13? What happened to his call? Ten full years in Arabia and Tarsus. We read of no converts, of no churches founded by Paul during that time. On his first missionary journey Paul's next stop after Derbe could have been Tarsus had he continued on that road, but he did not. He turns back and visits the newly established churches and returns to Antioch. On his second and third journeys Paul must have passed through Tarsus. We read of no church or converts in that city where Paul had stayed seven years. Is it implied in Acts and other records that these silent ten years were marked by what the Lord told Ananias about Saul of Tarsus: Behold, he prayeth?

Was there any need for Paul to find that link between his call and authority to preach to the Gentiles and deliver them from the powers of evil and to receive the power from on high to do so? And if Paul did, what about us and our work?

2. Prayer exemplified and taught

a. *The example and teaching of Jesus* — It will always remain a mystery how the Lord Jesus himself should be an example for us of what prayer means in the life and work of a servant of God. Luke seems to have observed this side of the Lord's life in a special way. He mentions at the baptism of Jesus, "It came to pass that Jesus also being baptized and praying, the heaven was opened. . . ." Was it essential for Christ to pray in this moment? Would that which followed have happened anyhow? "The Holy Ghost descended in a bodily shape like a dove upon him." When we look at the prayer life of our Lord we can ask again and again: what would have happened if he had not prayed

in a certain situation, at a certain moment?

Luke 4:42-43, "And when it was day he departed and went into a desert place." Crowds of people had been listening to the Lord's message, many had been healed and freed from demons. Many were still waiting for him, but he departed and went into a desert place. Can we imagine a doctor leaving his patients and going off to pray? Can we imagine a preacher leaving those who want to hear going away into a desert place to pray? Jesus shows clearly what has priority in his life and service: prayer and then preaching — "for therefore am I sent." Jesus was not sent — as many want to make us believe today — to just live the Gospel. He was sent to preach it (Luke 5:15-16), "Great multitudes came together to hear and to be healed. And he withdrew himself into the wilderness and prayed. What priceless opportunities for mass evangelism he missed! He went off into the wilderness for prayer. Maybe he needed it just at that point. Is it perchance that in the next verse (17) we read, "And the power of the Lord was present to heal them"?

Then comes the time when he has to choose the twelve disciples from those who followed him (Luke 6:12), ". . . He went out into the mountain to pray and he continued all night in prayer to God." Is it not astounding that the Son of God should have need to do this? "And when it was day he called unto him his disciples and of them he chose twelve. . . ." What does it look like when the Lord tells us, ". . . pray ye the Lord of the harvest that he may thrust out laborers into the harvest"? Does it mean that we take every and any young man or woman who is interested enough to spend three weeks, three months, or two years on a mission station, preferably at the other end of the world so that we might not have to close a clinic or a hospital? The Lord Jesus had to pray a whole night before he knew whom to choose and whom to send. His prayer was answered. Never did he doubt that he had chosen the right people, even in the case of Judas, even after Peter's denial.

Luke 9:18, "He was alone praying. . . ." Out of this prayer comes the first announcement of his suffering, death, and resurrection, on which we cannot touch today. But one thing should be clear from this brief study: Jesus gave prayer the absolute priority in his life. Prayer to him was like breathing is to every one of us. We do not need to exhort ourselves not to forget breathing! I feel in many instances the Holy Ghost treats this matter of prayer in the same way. I say again: the life and work of our Lord Jesus were the result of his prayer life. It is unperceivable what would have happened if Jesus had failed in his prayer life. We can only thank him on our knees that he did live as he lived and follow in his steps, even in the steps of prayer.

It is almost unbelievable, that we should have today the same means and ways to accomplish our task as Jesus had to do his. "As my father sent me, so send I you." We are called to live that same prayer life in constant communion with our Father in heaven, who is prepared to give what we ask. Before Jesus left his disciples, he puts them with regard to their prayers into his own place (John 16:23-24), "Verily I say unto you, whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in my name, he will give it to you"; "in that day ye shall ask the Father in my name and I say not

full"; "in that day ye shall ask the Father in my name and I say unto you that I will pray the Father for you, for the Father himself loves you."

Praying in the name of Jesus means standing in his place, having the same open door, the same opportunities, the same listening heart of the Father. It is all ours for the asking. Jesus continues his teachings about prayer (John 14:12, "The works that I do . . . and greater works . . . because I go to my Father and whatsoever ye shall ask in my name that will I do . . . If ye shall ask anything in my name, I will do it.") Jesus had taken great pains to make clear to his disciples that the Father was dwelling in him, doing the works, giving the words. Now he extends this relationship to them. The Lord does not look at the task of his disciples to be just telling what someone else had done. In order to accomplish our task we will have to do the same works as he did, indeed we will have to do even greater works than his! This is what he promises us if we would only make the basis of our life and work asking and receiving.

What will happen in the world after this Congress? All what we plan, discuss, decide? Will it all happen, — what we have the money, the skills and the personnel for, or what governments and authorities will allow us to do? Or will the outcome of this Congress be: What you will ask! I will do!

In one of his parables, recorded by Luke only, the Lord shows that there is no other way to fulfill our task than by asking. Luke 11:5 — the parable of the importunate friend. Here is a man in his home at night. His cupboard is empty. A knock at the door at midnight. His friend asks for shelter and food. Now in our culture it would be perfectly all right to tell him, "Dear friend, you did not tell me that you were coming, and you arrived at the most unsuitable time, you will understand that I haven't anything to offer you." But not so in the culture in which Jesus lived. I have lived long enough among Arabs to know that if a guest comes — he need not even be a friend — he has to be entertained, he has to be fed. No matter if you will have to give him your last sugar or tea or how much you have to pay to get something. Let us learn one thing here: If the world stands at our doorsteps in utter need, there is one excuse which we just cannot make, "I have nothing!" And the second one also is not valid, "I cannot rise and give thee." Looking at the world in its tremendous need and overwhelming demands on the church, we find two excuses which we cannot use, "I have not" and "I cannot!" Why? Because we have a friend to whom we can go and ask. And if we go and ask, how much will he give us? The Lord says, "And he will give him as many as he needeth." What are our resources for the evangelization of the world? The Lord says, "You have nothing at all that will satisfy the need of the world." Not a thing. Yes, we have lots of things: money, machines, medicines, skills, knowledge, good evangelicals who carry the whole Bible with them. Yet we have to give, we have to feed, we have to satisfy the need of others. We can only give by receiving and we can only receive by asking. The Lord has bound himself to give according to the need of the man at our doorstep, "He will give him as many (or as much) as he needeth."

b. *The example and teachings of the Apostles.* Did they have regular prayer times? Acts 3:1 — Peter and John on their way to prayer at the ninth hour. Acts 10:9 — Peter, climbing onto the roof at the sixth hour to pray. And while he prayed we read he saw . . . he had a vision. Out of this prayer-time and out of this vision there sprang the evangelization of the Gentiles, his visit to Cornelius, the conversion and baptism of his whole household. How does he remember this incident? "I (Peter) was in the city of Joppa, praying" (Acts 11:5). And then it happened. Might we ask here, what would have happened if Peter had not kept this hour of prayer.

There is not time for us now to have a close look at the prayer life of the Apostle Paul, but who can fathom the meaning of all his statements in his letters to different churches, "I am praying for you without ceasing, I am always praying for you, thanking God always on your behalf . . . I cease not to give thanks for you . . . I thank my God always in every prayer for you all . . . we give thanks, praying always for you . . . for this cause we do in prayer . . . we give thanks always for you, remembering without ceasing . . . we are bound to thank God always for you . . . wherefore also we pray always for you . . ." To his "son" Timothy he writes, "I thank God that without ceasing I have remembered you in my prayers night and day" (Rom. 1:9-10; I Cor. 1:4; Eph. 1:15-16; Phil. 1:3-4; Col. 1:3, 1:9, 4:12; I Thess. 1:2, 2:13; II Thess. 1:3, 1:11; II Tim. 1:3). Are these words just phrases which Paul used to start his letters with? Empty words, or was it true that this man spent most of his days and nights in prayer? Was he condemning himself when he exhorted others to pray, as we so often do, or did he confirm his own practice when he wrote to Timothy, "I exhort therefore that first of all supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks be made for all men, for kings and all that are in authority . . . for God will have all men to be saved and to come unto the knowledge of the truth" (I Tim. 2:1-4). Has this anything to do with world evangelization? "God will have all men to be saved and to come to a knowledge of the truth!" What comes first of all, when it comes to fulfilling the will of God for this world, for all men? "I exhort therefore that first of all supplications, prayers, intercessions . . . be made for all men." What comes before prayer if prayer comes first of all?

Paul also covets prayer for himself, because he knows that he can't find the words, he cannot minister as he should, if the Colossians and other churches were not praying for him. "Withal praying also for us that God may open unto us a door of utterance . . ." (Col. 4:3).

We have seen the examples of our Lord and the apostles, we have heard their teachings and exhortations: pray always, pray without ceasing, first of all, prayer should be made. Let us now look briefly at prayer typified and illustrated in the Old Testament.

3. *Prayer typified and illustrated*

Can we find any command in the Old Testament that people should pray? Why did Abraham pray? Why his servant on his way to Laban? It was like breathing to them. They could not live without it. Moses on one occasion was definitely told to pray. The armies of Amalek tried to prevent the children of Israel from fulfilling the task which God

had given them: to march into the promised land and occupy it. What was the decisive factor in this battle? The prayer of Moses on the mount, with Aaron and Hur holding his hands. We often think that lack of prayer will just slow down or hinder God's work. This Old Testament type of New Testament prayer for the advance of God's kingdom and for the overthrow of the enemy tell us a different truth: when Moses' arms sank down, Amalek prevailed. Amalek had the victory, Amalek was able to advance. Is there an answer in this truth for many of our problems on the mission fields today?

Let us look at Joshua and the conquest of Jericho: Jericho is the type of a closed land, "Shut up from within and from without" (Josh. 6:1). What about Albania, what about Saudi Arabia, Afghanistan? Which is the decisive moment in this unequal and hopeless battle of Israel against Jericho? Joshua meets the commander of the Lord's army. He tells Joshua, take off your shoes! There on his knees on holy ground Joshua receives God's plan, God's strategy for the conquest of Jericho. Seven days of marching around the city, on the seventh day seven times, till the fullness of God's time has come and the walls tumble. Have we given up marching round the closed lands in faith and prayer? Maybe on the sixth day! Maybe just before God's time has come!

Let us look at Gideon: was there prayer in his life? He had an impossible task before him; he was alone, and yet he should deliver the Israelites out of the hands of the Midianites who were spread out in the valley of Jezreel — 120,000 men. Do we blame Gideon for asking signs of God? What were these signs? He wanted to watch the dew in the early morning hour. He had to get up pretty early, because there is no chance of seeing where the dew has fallen after the sun is up in those lands. In the early morning hours, when in the quietness and stillness God's heavenly dew was falling, Gideon got his assurance that God would be with him and that he would give the enemies into his hands. Do we know this hour of the day before the battle? In this same hour, when the sleep of people is lightest and most dreams are dreamt, God was working in the army of the Midianites: he was giving them dreams, spreading fear and discouragement. Gideon hears it while spying at the enemies' gates. What happens? Judges 7:15, "When Gideon heard it, he worshipped." This is the decisive moment in the battle against the Midianites, who had come upon Israel "like grasshoppers for multitude and with their camels without number as the sand on the seaside." Gideon worshipped. Prayer had turned into worship. The victory was in his hand. The stage was set for God to do for Gideon what he had asked him to do: to deliver his people from their enemies. Did it matter that he had only 32,000, and later 10,000 and finally only 300 men to combat against 120,000? Have we ever seen the multitudes that are like grasshoppers and like the sand of the sea in numbers: in Calcutta, in Tokyo, in Sao Paulo, or the masses in Mecca and Medina during pilgrimage? Uncounted thousands and millions? And each individual of these should — or is it shall — or is it must — hear the Gospel and understand it!

There is only one fitting parallel to Gideon and the host of the

Midianites in the New Testament: Eleven men on the Mount of Olives. They had just come out of their hiding places, they were just recovering from the shock of the execution of their leader and of their own failure to stand by him, remembering their flight and denial. His last words still rang in their ears, "You" . . . Why? "You eleven men" (to be quite sure Luke gives us the names of those eleven men in Acts 1). "You shall be my witnesses in Jerusalem . . . and to the ends of the earth." Now they were alone, just by themselves. The voice had gone, their master had gone. They were left alone, with an unbelievable, impossible task: the evangelization of the world. What was the best they could do? Form a committee to decide who would go where? Take a collection and see how far they could book their tickets? Arrange for prayer meetings for those that were staying behind?

We read, "Then they returned and went up to the upper room, and with one accord devoted themselves to prayer." The upper room, with one accord, devoted to prayer! This is the humble inconspicuous birthplace of world evangelization. And this is its foundation: by prayer!

Is our foundation firm? Are our priorities right?