

Brother Andrew and Dan Wooding Interview

by Brother Andrew

Brother Andrew shares his journey of faith and ministry in the Middle East, emphasizing the need for support and understanding of the church in that region.

Duration: 20:01

Scripture: Matthew 28:19-20, Mark 10:27, Luke 1:37, Acts 1:8, Romans 8:31, Ephesians 3:20, Philippians 4:13

Topics: "Interview"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker emphasizes the importance of the church growing, being encouraged, trained, and prayed for in order to fulfill its role in the end-time scenario. The speaker also discusses the need to understand and reach out to terrorists, putting a human face on them rather than simply labeling them as such. The speaker shares a personal experience of meeting with a leader of the Islamist jihad and emphasizes the importance of reaching out to individuals like him. The sermon concludes with a call for self-reflection and deep spiritual involvement of the Church of Jesus Christ in order to bring about change and shine light in the darkness.

Transcript

We're talking today with Brother Andrew, who has just released a new book, a very dramatic book, called Lightforce, with Al Jansen. Andrew, you're known as God's smuggler, and yet all of a sudden you switched in midstream to the Islamic world. What caused you to switch? How is it that you suddenly saw that that was where your ministry was going to be? I'm not a smuggler.

I take the gospel where it's not allowed, and then when the people there ask me for Bibles, I cannot take them in officially, so I do it unofficially. I never tell a lie. I bring the Word of God in dark areas.

And when my first book came out, God's smuggler, that was in 1967, I couldn't go back to the communist countries, so almost at once I switched over to going to the Middle East because I expected the next crisis to originate there, and as it happened, indeed. So I'm very much involved in almost every Muslim country in the world, and it's simply because there's a church that needs us, that needs encouragement, a church that we know very little about, therefore we don't pray for them, and that's why I work there. What did you find when you first went to the Middle East? Did you find a very discouraged church? I did indeed, and when I probed a little further, I found that the real source of discouragement was our failure in the West to stay in touch with them, whereas millions of Christian pilgrims go to the so-called Holy Land, they all go to see, it seems, the dead stones, and nobody was looking for the living stones.

They felt neglected. They even felt betrayed. That's the word they used, we feel betrayed because nobody comes to look after us, to ask how we're doing, or even to worship with us.

They have their own meetings, those Christian pilgrims, they never go to either Messianic churches or Palestinian or Arab churches, there are plenty of them, Baptists, the Lions, everything is there, but they don't come, so we are building that link, that bridge, and you build a bridge for people to cross the bridge, so we bring them together in that way. We in the West, and they who live there, different tribes and religions and nationalities, they cross the bridge to find each other. How did you first get involved with Yasser Arafat? Oh, that happened in The Hague, in my own country, when an old gentleman, the former headmaster of the Christian school in Nazareth, was dying, and we couldn't find anybody to visit him or eventually to bury him.

But there was a Baptist pastor from America running the Baptist church in The Hague, and he was asked to come and visit the sick man, but he asked me to come with him because he didn't know the way, so we both went there, it was a very profitable visit. We prayed with him and read scriptures, and I think we even had a communion service. But then the gentleman in the house was so helpful, so in the end I said, well, who are you? He said, I'm Arafat's right-hand man.

I said, oh, interesting, can you get in touch with your boss? He said, only one phone call away. I said, make that call. And a few days later I was with Arafat, and from there, of course, I've been many times both in Algeria and Tunisia, and in Gaza with Arafat.

What can people do to pray for Arafat? That I don't know. He's a politician. I don't even know how to pray for politicians over here.

It's hard to say. I think when we pray specifically for people in difficult or responsible situations, we should first have a prayer to God, asking God how we should pray, because God only can influence their hearts. We cannot, I cannot, and then God will tell us what to do, how to pray, send a book, or go and give a Bible like I did, or even give a God Smuggler Arabic.

It's one of Arafat's favorite books, incidentally. He always asks for more copies. Bring a dozen more, Andrew.

I want all my officers to read God Smuggler. So he's one of my distributors. That's funny.

Now, during the time where Hezbollah had the hostages in Beirut, you made a rather unusual trip to the leader of Hezbollah and offered yourself as a hostage replacement. About that? What can I tell about that? I felt it was his time to go home to see his wife and children. He had been over four years chained to a radiator in a dark cellar, and I thought it was time for us to switch places.

So I prayed about it. I put my house in order. I bought a nice big Arabic Bible in West Beirut, and I went to see the Hezbollah leader, and I told him my plan.

I first said, I don't know what the Koran says about hostage taking, but I know what the Bible says. Here is the Bible. Read for yourself.

God wants you to release them all. Oh, he didn't want to hear that. So then I said, well, at least that one is a brother of mine in Christ.

I want to take his place. Let him go, and I'll take his place. His eyes almost popped out.

Andrew, how can you say that? I said, well, that's the spirit of Jesus. He gave his life on the cross to let me go free and enjoy life, and that's why I'm here. Well, he did not follow my suggestion, my request, but we became friends, and because of our acquaintanceship, I was able to visit the front line with his brother Israel in the south of Lebanon.

He gave out lots of scriptures, carloads of scriptures we took there, and always surrounded by these little boys with big guns and very proud. Me, Khomeini. I said, me, Jesus.

I gave scriptures, and we made lots of friendships, and even recently I was with him again this year. Many times I visited him. Now, one thing that really has amazed me, I remember going into Gaza with you once, and you were greeted by one of the leaders of Hamas, and you've had an amazing opening there at the university, but how did you first get involved with Hamas, and then what have you been doing at the university? I was involved with them since they were deported in December 1992, and I saw on the television an official Israeli statement that these people have no blood on their hands, otherwise we would not have deported them.

I said, well, that sounds strange to me. If they're not terrorists and not criminals, they have no blood on their hands, then they still need Jesus. So I just packed my suitcase and took lots of Bibles and the Gospel in Arabic and Corrie ten Boom books, yes, and I remember walking up to Dr. Rantizi, the one that was murdered recently, liquidated they call her there, and I gave that book to him and said, now here, read also Corrie's book and see how you can become famous for saving Jewish lives instead of destroying them.

Well, he accepted the book, and later, you know, I visited him in his home and other places and gave him scriptures and books. So now he eventually opened up the university for you? That was the other guy, Zahar, who is presently the leader of the Hamas, but when I had meetings, I began to have meetings with them in Gaza, big meetings, three, four hundred Hamas men in one meeting. I would open a New Testament, read and explain and give my testimony, and then he said, Andre, this is also very new.

Could you come to the university? We make a special event, and could you then teach us on the subject, what is real Christianity? Then the thought occurred to me, these guys don't know what real Christianity is. All they see is an official church body that supports Israel, which is the big enemy, and therefore that church is also the enemy of the Muslim fundamentalists, but what does that have to do with Christianity? So when he asked me to do that, with fear and trembling, because I'm not a very courageous guy, and I'm not very knowledgeable, I don't speak Arabic, all I do is drink Arab coffee, but I was scared to face there the faculty and the board of the Hamas University. It's the most fanatic Islamic university in the world, and all the students, and then speak.

But the Lord gave me such grace, I was not nervous at all, I gave them the whole message, and some people got up, some students, they were angry, they left the room, and the staff were afraid that they would all run off, because they'd never heard the gospel preached that way. So one stood up and he locked the door and they couldn't get out anymore. And so we had a good time overall, a very good time.

Wow. Now Bethlehem, last time I saw you, you were staying in the Smugglers' Inn at the Bethlehem Bible College, you have this private room there. Why are you so supportive of the Bethlehem Bible College? Because whatever our view and beliefs are about the Bible and prophecy, if prophecy is going to come

true in our time, if this is the end time that we live in, as many people believe, then there has to be a church.

But the way it is going, there are no training places, no Bible schools, no seminaries, this is the only Bible school, evangelical Bible school in the entire Middle East, and if we do not train Palestinian Christian leadership, they will all become fanatical and political and violent. We can prevent that and we have to do that. So we are heavily supporting, as Open Doors, the Bethlehem Bible College.

I make it my base, and as soon as I get there I make my phone calls, I make a phone call to the Rabbi in Jerusalem, to Hamas leaders somewhere else, I say, come together, have coffee with me. The Bethlehem Bible College, they come. That's when we open the scriptures, and I got to bring people together, and I have to teach them how they should do it.

That's why I never go alone on those trips, I bring people with me and show them you can approach Muslims, you can speak to fundamentalists, you can give scriptures, and that in the end, I hope I'm not jumping ahead of your questions, but we got permission from Arafat to open a Bible shop in Gaza, and hundreds of Muslim fundamentalists, especially Hamas because they know me, come to the shop, get scriptures and get a Jesus video. And hundreds, probably thousands have already heard and seen the gospel because of that post we have there. Wow.

Now why did you write the book with Al Jensen? Because nobody here seems to know what I'm talking about. Yeah. And I reach a lot more people through a book, from the pulpit or in a conference like we have here, how great it is, but we have to spread the message, there is a church, that's the first question I want to answer, there is a church with the Palestinians, there is a church with the Jews, the Messianic congregations, there is a church in Beslan, there is a church in Grozny, there is a church in Iraq, there is a church in Iran.

What are we doing for that church? And that's my concern, we don't know enough. So I wrote a book with Al, he's the best writer I know in America, and we want to open the eyes of the people to see that the remnant of the church must grow, must be encouraged, must be trained, must be prayed for, and then the church can be really the church so that in this whole end time scenario, the church can play its role for which it was placed there by Almighty God. When we hear about these terrorists in Iraq who are beheading people, and you believe that everybody is reachable, how do you reach people like that? Unfortunately for the people who were beheaded, that was the last time they reached them.

How we reach them, by first trying to get into their skin, into their thinking, why do you do that? Don't condemn, don't judge before we have walked in their shoes. Is there any reason that the West has given for their hostility? I think there is. We are creating more terrorists actually than we eliminate.

The change has to come on our side. I hesitate. I hate using the word terrorist because a terrorist is not born.

A terrorist is made by constant neglect and persecution, being displaced or being made a refugee, no education, no job. Then in the end they decide, if there is no reason for living, let's first take revenge on those who take away from us those things that we think are our eternal rights. If there is no solution, then we will kill those that cause us to be so desperately unhappy.

That is the root of terrorism. I want to go back to what causes them to be what they are like. That's one thing we do in the book.

We put a human face on people that we flippantly call terrorists. I hate that word. Yet I use it myself.

When I was with the leader of the Islamic Jihad in Gaza, we had a conversation. I said, I want to have a picture taken with the biggest terrorist in Gaza. So I stood next to him.

He laughed. So we made a very nice picture. Wow.

It must be very depressing at times for you because you started off where there was a lot of persecution. It never seems to die. In fact, it seems to be getting worse.

How is this happening? It is getting worse. But what keeps me going is, apart from the things I already mentioned, if we can reach them, we can win them, therefore we have a chance to change the world. But the most important question to me and it also relates to all those decades that we worked in the communist countries is, what if I had not done it? To that question, there is no answer.

But it keeps me going because if we don't do it, how much worse will it be? How many more people will get lost for all eternity because nobody shared Jesus with them? That's what I pray and it breaks my heart. Sometimes it makes me cry when I see people blowing themselves up. And I think, did anybody go to that guy and tell him about Jesus? Has he ever had the chance? We are so easy in our condemnation.

But have we prayed for him? Have we prayed for Bin Laden? Have we prayed for Sheikh Yassin? Have we approached him and given him scriptures? We should really start searching our own heart and motivations. Then there is hope that things will change but that will not change without the deep spiritual involvement of the Church of Jesus Christ. That's why this book is called Light Force.

Light does not fight darkness. Light shines and the darkness is gone. That's what I so much hope will be the result of this book that we will bring a lot of light in the darkness of the Middle East.

Two more questions. One which always makes me laugh. Many people think you are very successful but you once applied to be the chaplain of the Not Terribly Good Club of Great Britain.

And you wanted to be a failure. And I actually wrote an article Why I Want to be a Failure by Brother Andrew. Can you tell us why you wanted to be the chaplain of this club? Well, this was... We all thought a small club would never get much publicity.

But then they published that they were going to have a conference with all the people that thought their own lives were terrible failures. I said, hey, that appeals to me because who am I? I didn't make much of a success. I still see in the write-ups about Brother Andrew that I graduated from Bible school.

I never did. I never got the diploma. I don't have any diploma.

And I thought, well, that was a failure. My trip to England was a failure in the beginning because I didn't speak the language. And they all thought, what's this strange chap doing here? And when I walked through that gate at the WAC Bible school in Glasgow there was this arch, Have Faith in God.

The moment I walked through it, I lost all my faith. And, you know, I didn't have money, not much. And I was in very weak health.

I was a wreck, and I was even worse so when I left college because the director in Parting said, Andrew, you don't have to apply for membership. You're too weak to travel. So I was written off even by the mission.

And then I thought, well, hey, not so terribly good club. Hey, they need a chaplain. They need somebody to tell them that there is one who was a failure.

They crucified him. All his ambitions in the eyes of his disciples were all smashed. There was no king, no leader there.

They crucified him. What a failure. And I thought, ah, this is my club.

So I wrote and I said, I want to be your chaplain. And so then they organized this congress, and it was such a huge success. And they wrote that book.

The Book of Heroic Failures. Yeah, Book of Heroic Failures. And it was such a success that according to their own principles they had to disband and the whole thing disappeared because it was a success.

So you never became the chaplain then? No. It doesn't exist anymore, but I still exist. Final question.

What would you like as your epitaph on your tombstone? Uh-oh. I don't think too much about that day, but now I know. He did what he couldn't.

Could you explain that? Yeah, because with God nothing is impossible, the scripture says. And we all, no, I don't want to generalize. Most of us arrange our Christian life only according to what they think they can do, what they can achieve, how far they can go, and we don't go any further.

We've drawn a line there, and faith jumps over that line, does not accept the status quo, and gets further with God. That's where the life of faith begins, and everybody says, You're crazy, you can't do that. Okay, I can't do that.

That's what my director of study said to the director, You can't do that. But I said, Well, sorry, I just did it. That's my life story.

Just do it, and then you'll see if God before us who shall be against us. He did what he couldn't. Brother Andrew, thank you very much.

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