

The Challenge

by Hyman Appelman

The Church faces an open door of service, but it must overcome the opposing adversaries to service by relying on the offered allies for service.

Topics: "Evangelism", "Spiritual Warfare"

Description

Hyman Appelman preaches about the urgent need for the Church to embrace the open door of work and victory in spreading the gospel of Jesus Christ, highlighting the current state of the world's despair and the call for leaders to point the way to salvation. He challenges Christians to not be satisfied with mediocre efforts but to passionately engage in evangelism, missions, and purity, emphasizing the importance of surrendering to God's grace and power. Appelman urges believers to overcome the opposing adversaries of the world, the flesh, and the devil by relying on the allies of God, Jesus Christ, the Holy Spirit, the inspiration of past saints, and the power of consecrated Christian lives.

Transcript

NEVER in all the magnificent history of Christianity and the Church was Paul's challenging statement of the open door (I Corinthians 16:9) more true than it is today. The Church of the living GOD is facing an open door of work and victory that should send a clarion thrill through the heart of every soldier of the Cross. Wide as the far-flung six continents, open as the maw of eternity, is this door beckoning to venture and adventure for CHRIST and the souls of men. With yearning hearts the peoples of the world are waiting with bated breath for some leader or group of leaders to point the way out of the miasmatic corruption, the nightmarish despair that has swept across the affairs of a seemingly doomed earth. Science has failed. Diplomacy has crashed. Human reforms and schemes have but added to the ghastly turmoil. Popes, presidents, dictators, and so-called religious leaders have stepped in only to find the tinkling brass and the sounding cymbals of their suggestions but increasing the tempo of the dance of doom. We falter,

we fail, we fall, unless, by the grace of GOD, the Lord JESUS CHRIST is given the right of way in the hearts, souls, and activities of men.

This is the zero hour for the Church. This is the zero hour for the Christian. This is the zero hour for the preacher of the true gospel. We have a message the world needs. We have the panacea for all the world's ills. We have the constitution for a league of nations that will bring peace upon earth to men of good will. We know the way out. The terrible question is, Shall we be satisfied with our little piddling programs? Shall we be content with the routine round of things? Shall we congratulate ourselves upon our tiny triumphs while the devil and hell are winning greater victories? Shall we not rather rend our clothes, don our sackcloth of mourning at the thought that outside of the few connected with the immediate families and organizations of our churches, the vast non-attending multitudes are increasing in number, godlessness, indifference to sin, desolation, and death? Shall we let the devil have most of it his own way?

Was that the way of Paul? Was that the program of Wesley? Was that the procedure of Whitfield? Is that what Charles G. Finney did? Did Dwight L. Moody subscribe to such a pitiful puerility? Was Billy Sunday satisfied with such undertakings? No! A thousand times over. No! The very questions are an insult to the memories of these giants of GOD. GOD pity us if that is the limit of our vision, if that is the horizon of our faith!

Who were these men? Who were these Pauls, these Wesleys, these Moodys? Men of like frame with us, clay of our clay, earth of our earth - sinners every one of them, sinners saved by grace, sinners seeking grace, sinners surrendering to grace, sinners endued with the grace of GOD.

They were men. So are we.

They were Christians. So are we.

They loved the Lord. So do we.

They were baptized believers. So are we.

They were fundamental in their faith in the inspiration of the Book, in the virgin birth of the Lord CHRIST, in the efficacy of the atonement, in the resurrection from the dead, in the second coming of CHRIST. So are we.

They had the Bible. So have we.

They had the Church. So have we.

They loved the souls of men. So do we.

Why, then, could these emissaries of CHRIST do such mighty works, while we cannot even stem the tide of godlessness in our own churches? Is it because we have not their vision? But we know more about the needs of the world than they could have possibly discovered.

Is it because we do not have the Pentecostal unction, the enduing with the HOLY SPIRIT? But He is ours. We may have Him with all His cleansing, consecrating, conquering might.

Consider, then, with me, as I humbly press upon your hearts, first the open avenues of service; second, the opposing adversaries to service, third, the offered allies for service.

I. Consider first the open avenues of service.

There are open doors, open avenues of service for our country, for our nation, for these glorious United States of America. There is the avenue to sanity rather than savagery. The jungle has invaded the boasted civilizations of the world gone back to bestiality.

This is the opportunity for America. Under the aegis of CHRIST, in the way of the Bible, it is for us to maintain sanity, poise, love, impartiality in this tempest-driven earth. It is for us to set the pace of loving every race. It is for us to show that the things of the SPIRIT are eternally superior to the things of the flesh. Yes, there is an open door for America, sanity versus savagery.

There is second, the open door for the Church. There is the open door of conquest rather than compromise. The pressure is great. We must fight the world of politics, property, and pleasure. It is so easy to hear and to heed the siren voices of suggestion and forgiveness. It is so easy to borrow the plans, programs, and proposals of the world, incorporating them into our church activities to make them more attractive, to keep our young people and to interest people in general.

Oh, brethren, therein lies destruction. The Church has one purpose only, to preach the gospel of salvation to a lost and dying world, to bring men, women and children to a saving knowledge of the Lamb of GOD which taketh away the sin of the world. Not by one jot, not by one tittle, dare we retreat from the proposal of the Great Commission, or mix it up with the things of the flesh. No church has ever gained ground, no church has kept even the little ground it had hitherto gained, by compromising with the plans of the world.

There is the open door of evangelism rather than stagnation. The church lives by conquest and by the winning of souls. There is nothing in all the world that will revive a dead church as quickly as a passionate going after and winning the souls of men. Evangelism, soul-winning, travelling in prayer, witness-bearing - that is the way that leads to power and prosperity.

Challenge your people with that message! Burn into their very souls the thought that they are ambassadors for CHRIST. Your pews will fill. Your Sunday school will grow. Your finances will increase. Your mortgage will be paid. Your people will be happy. Your cities will be stirred. Souls will be saved. JESUS CHRIST will be magnified. Yes, evangelism as opposed to stagnation.

There is further the open door of world-wide missions rather than the selfish disposal of all the monies in the home land. Axiomatic is it that a missionary church is a pure church - a praying, harmonious, and soulwinning church. The challenge, the romance, the high adventure of the task of sharing the achievements of bearing the battle burdens of scarred warriors of the Cross in their far-flung engagements against the strongholds of sin, have a note in them that puts iron into the blood of every born-again church member. There never has been, there never will be, there never can be a conquering, victorious, CHRIST-honoring church unless its vision embraces the ends of the earth. Yes, missions as opposed to selfishness and to narrowness.

For us Christians there are doors open. There is the door of purity rather than intemperance. All about us men have engaged in a spree of wild living. There is intemperance in money-making.

Honor, love, loyalty, patriotism are offered in the open market to the highest bidder.

There is intemperance in money spending. From the government down to the poorest home, it is

spend, spend, borrow, spend, keep up the eternal round, forgetting that there is a day of balance and reckoning coming. The hard toil and the sacrificial self-denial which have made the United States the greatest nation in all the world are out-dated.

There is intemperance in pleasure seeking. This is a generation of sensation mongers pandering to the vilest tastes of sensation seekers. It is for us Christians to keep our heads, to refuse to be swallowed up in this terrible maelstrom of evil. Clarionlike the words of Paul demand of us, "Be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God" (Romans 12:2).

Also there is the door of purpose rather than indifference. That is the blight of all of our churches, of all of our activities. Not one out of ten, and that is very conservative, of our church members can be depended on to back up the program of the Lord in any given activity.

Indifference is the killing dry rot in the program of the kingdom of GOD. We need a passionate purposefulness that will enlist the very best in all of us, that will challenge and compel the depths of our souls, that will constrain us to an advance against the hordes and hosts of hell, to an attack for GOD and the souls of men. It is only a flaming, unflagging, unremitting purpose, based on the outline of the Great Commission, that will enliven our churches, enlist our backslidden, enthrone the CHRIST, enroll the lost and straying.

There is further, the open door of power rather than inadequacy. We are not militant enough. Our conquests are too meager. We are making too little impression on the world. Our religion is too soft. It is accomplishing too little. It has lost the respect of the virile man of the streets. It lacks drive. Yet, the promises of GOD are still in the old Book. The SPIRIT of GOD is still here upon the earth. Pentecost was meant for an example rather than for a finality. The dynamite of Heaven is still ours for the having, ours for the using. There is an open door to the flooding tide of the SPIRIT. There is an open door to the visitation of GOD's power which will make the whole world sit up to take note that there is still a GOD in Heaven, that His promises are still yea and amen in the Lord JESUS CHRIST.

II. Consider next, the opposing adversaries to service.

They are always the same, the unholy trinity of the world, the flesh, and the devil. Satan has nothing new to propose. He uses different means and methods, but the basis is always the same, the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life. With these he beguiled Adam and Eve. With these he has been fooling the descendants of that luckless pair. It is these that Paul had to face, and Peter, and John. It is these that Luther, and Wesley, and Whitfield, and Moody had to combat. It is these against which we are called to battle.

There is first the glamour of the world. In ten thousand and one siren forms it beats and drums its invitations on the hearts of a bemused world. By paper, magazine, book, movie, lecture, concert, drama, and by social, civic, fraternal, collegiate organizations, and the dulcet tones of some sweet-singing modernistic preacher palliating sin, girl pussyfooting hell, pushing out the blood, the children of men are lured away from the narrow path of repentance, reconciliation, regeneration, righteousness, rewards in eternity, to the broad highway of pleasure, prosperity and popularity.

There is second, the greed of the flesh. Success is not measured by honesty, honor, worth-while contributions to the weal of mankind, or upstanding character, but by gold, property, and possessions. Those churches are held successful who contribute the largest amounts to the treasuries of their respective denominations. Soul-winning, numbers added to the churches by confession, sink into insignificance alongside the co-operative contributions of the pastor-led peoples. Our conventions and associations are taken up with plans and programs for the raising of money. Gold is the standard, the criterion, the measure, the balance, the scale, the yardstick. The world has enthroned greed. The cheapest thing in the United States of America is a human soul. Greed has seen to that. Greed in high places! Greed in low places! Greed in politics, business, social activities, education.

There is third, the godlessness of the devil. By every evil suggestion, using every available means by misrepresentation and distortion, Satan has thrown doubt upon the Book, questioned the existence of the Lord, denied the divinity of CHRIST, minimized the importance of the Church, smashed the age-old foundations of a faith that has built up our nation to its present

exalted position. The Lord's Day has been desecrated, marriage vows defiled, claims of parental obedience denied. Godlessness, whether in the active undermining by the American Association for the Advancement of Atheism, or in the CHRIST-dethroning indifference of our own so-called church members, is undoubtedly the bitterest, the most widespread foe that we face as we stand before the open door of service. The dire tragedy of this enemy is that it so often assumes the fair visage and honey tongue of a friend and well-wisher. This is an adversary to be exposed and driven out into the bright white light of the HOLY SPIRIT's judgment.

III. But we must hasten on to consider last, the offered allies for service.

They are all about us, ready to lend their mighty support in the performing of the tasks facing us, and to aid us in the overcoming of the foes we face. These allies have never known failure, have never retreated.

Our first ally is the Lord Jehovah, the GOD, of hosts. "If God be for us, who can be against us?" We have His unfailing promises. There is nothing of which GOD is unaware. There is no incident that can meet us unknown to Him. There is no difficulty can befall us, no temptation assail us, in the myriad multiplied activities of our lives, but that the Lord has long since taken cognizance of them to set the machinery of Heaven in motion to obviate and overcome them. All of His authority, grace, wisdom, and deathless compassion guarantee these promises. They are ours to have, to claim, to hold, to use. The Lord is our ally!

Our second ally is the CHRIST of GOD,
the only begotten Son of the Father,
sent into the world,
nailed to the cross,
raised from the dead,
received up on high,
seated at the right hand of the Father,
endowed with all authority in Heaven and on earth,
interceding for us,

some day coming again to receive us Unto Himself in glory.

We have the CHRIST of GOD, who is able to serve us and to work in us, with us, through us; able to save to the uttermost all those who come unto GOD by Him; whose blood has never lost its efficacy, whose name has never lost its power. America is dying without Him; Europe is panting for Him; Asia is looking for Him. CHRIST JESUS is our ally.

Our third ally is the HOLY SPIRIT, GOD's vice-regent, CHRIST's representative here upon the earth. His power is beyond human computation and measure. His wisdom is limitless. He is omnipotent, omniscient, omnipresent. He can take, He has taken the weakest vessel, the humblest tool, the poorest instrument, and wrought wonders with them. It was He who

endowed Moses,

enrolled Joshua,

enabled Samuel,

ennobled David,

enlightened Isaiah,

emancipated Daniel,

encouraged Paul and Silas,

enlisted Luther,

endued Wesley,

enraptured Moody.

He is our Comforter also, ready to transform our lives into channels of blessings, making us mighty unto the pulling down of the strongholds of sin, unto the advancing and the upbuilding of the kingdom, unto the winning of multitudes of precious souls. Without Him we are helpless.

With Him the gates of hell cannot prevail against us.

He is the key to success,

the secret of victory,

the door to the impossible.

The HOLY SPIRIT is our ally.

Our fourth ally is the mighty inspiration of the past triumphs of the saints of GOD.

For nineteen hundred years, the world, the flesh, and the Devil has raised every kind of obstacle, thrown up every kind of barrier, and invented every kind of difficulty against the ongoing of the kingdom of GOD, against the upbuilding of the Church of CHRIST, and against the forward movements of the people of the Cross.

For nineteen hundred victorious years, under the banner of Prince IMMANUEL, the armies of Calvary have fought Satan. The Cross has reared its gory, glory splendor on every continent, in every country, in every clime. Myriads, multiplied mighty myriads of precious, immortal souls have been brought under the sway of the life-giving, beneficent Prince IMMANUEL. Women have been freed, children liberated, schools built, orphanages erected, hospitals provided. The Galilean has conquered in the past.

There have been setbacks, traitors, tragedies, bitter losses, disappointments, discouragements, and disheartenments. Oceans of blood have been shed. Men, women, and children have travailed in heroic venture and adventure, whose retelling makes the tales of chivalry, the stories of war valor, pale and anemic reading. Every step has been contested. Every forward move has cost sacrifice untold.

Our fifth ally is within ourselves. It is the power of consecrated Christian lives. "And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony; and they loved not their lives unto the death" (Revelation 12:11). That is still true, if anything more true than it ever was. We have examples of it all through the secular world. Who can forget the scene in the Roman Colosseum in one of the early assemblages of the Fascisti? Mussolini had delivered one of his most impassioned martial addresses for patriotism, for la bella Italia. A great concourse of the choicest of Italian manhood massed before him. He challenged them for the weal of his and their country. When he finished in a passionate burst of oratory, stirred to their depths, these tens of thousands of strong men lifted their hands in the Fascist salute, and as one man, in a voice that made Father Tiber to tremble, they cried out the ancient gladiatorial salute, *Morieur, te salutamis* - Death, we salute thee. These men, in the very prime, the very

vigor of their fine manhood, knowing they were face to face with war and death, laid their lives on the patriotic altar for Italy and their Duce.

What about our own country? Who, with a burning drop of American blood in his veins, will ever forget the sufferings of the Continentals in Valley Forge? Who, out of my own great state of Texas, will ever cease to be moved by the matchless, undying message of the Alamo? For country, home, liberty, and earthly ideals, these men dared, devoted, died. How much more ought we to dare, to do, to die for Him who first dared, devoted, and died for us?

Oh, my brethren, the Nazis, the Fascisti, the Bolsheviks shame us with their zeal. Who has a worthier cause than we? Who ever had or has now a nobler leader than this SAVIOUR of ours? Who, in all the annals of man's heroism, had or has a greater task than the one entrusted to us? Consecration - complete, final, obedient, unreserved, unhesitating, with all and everything on the altar of love, loyalty, and allegiance - will win the day, stem the tide, save the world, and prove our loyal, appreciative gratitude to Him who loved us and purchased us together with all that is ours in His own hallowed blood.

There is the story beloved! There is the message! There is the challenge of the open door for our nation, for our Church, for our own selves.

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