

Colleges - Eastern Nazarene (1951)
Commencement address.

HISTORICAL MATERIAL
Nazarene Headquarters

CHANGED MEN - A CHANGED WORLD

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About the turn of the century, the late Dr. David Starr Jordan of Stanford University published a lecture entitled, THE CALL OF THE TWENTIETH CENTURY. In that lecture he ventured to prophesy. The new century, he said, was not only the threshold of great scientific advances, it would also witness the establishment of the era of universal peace and prosperity.

But we are living in mid-twentieth century days. The easy optimism of the Victorian era has been smashed to bits by the startling events of ^{modern} present-day world history.

Albert Camus, the French author, writing in "Common Sense" calls this century "the century of fear." And E. B. White writing to the editor of the New York Herald Tribune, begins his letter by saying, "I am a member of a party of one, and I live in an age of fear." Dante's "Divine Comedy" began with a sentence that is starkly realistic in describing our tottering world. "In the middle of the journey of this life," he said, "I came to myself in a dark wood, where the direct way was lost." Our civilization seems to be turning a corner, perhaps on two wheels, and it remains to be seen if it can right itself.

But the conflict that is raging in many parts of our world, is largely symptomatic. It is the resultant of forces growing out of the "conflict of ideas" which tug at the hearts and minds of men; ideas which grow out of the Christian philosophy of life or ideas which stem from the godless pronouncements of atheism. Jesus said to His disciples, or rather of them, "They are not of this world, even as I am not of this world." That is another way of saying that life's values for them were not to be based on the levels of life, but rather on the heights

of eternity. It is this other "worldness" that comes into sharp contrast with the "earthiness" of our time. It is these deep abiding values of which the Master spoke - unmistakable certainties - that make your work on the campus of this college of significant import.

I ^{would} call your attention to the [?] words found in Holy Writ, "Lord, what wilt thou have me to do"? We are challenged by those words. They fell from the lips of a man whose life was being changed, and who in turn changed his world. And so we take up the thread of our theme: CHANGED MEN - A CHANGED WORLD.

Let us be clear at this point. Christ leaves no man in doubt. If you are sincere; if you want the truth; if you want to know life's way, and will honestly ask the question, "What wilt Thou have me to do"? Christ will answer. He will show you the way - make no mistake about it.

Christ goes one step farther. He leaves no man or woman without adequate equipment whereby he can make the journey of life successfully. "To them gave he power to become - -," Those are ~~the~~ matchless words, ~~of the Savior of men.~~ ^{Christ} ~~He~~ intends to carry them out if you and I are willing to pay the price for such leadership.

But one more patent fact ^{remains} stands out. Christ leaves no man without work to do. "Go therefore, and make disciples among the nations." That imperative is sufficient in scope to keep every man stretching for the goal as long as life lasts. Life never need become a drab, colorless interlude if you meet the challenge of the Man of Galilee.

Let me, then, call your attention to a brief review - a sort of running commentary - of past moments and events in world history . . . moments when changed men changed their world!

I. A HISTORIC REVIEW

1. The time: 34 A.D. - Stephen

A man of faith and full of the Holy Ghost flashes across the years of the early church. He sought to preach God's Word, empowered by the Divine spirit, irrespective of the consequences. Immediately he raises the anger of the traditional religious leaders of his day. They drew him before the council and there in classic defense he preached the gospel of Christ until they were pricked to the heart. And true to form, where sin and disobedience lie wait in the human heart, these *pseudo-* pious leaders threw Stephen out of the city and stoned him until dead. But this was not the end - it was only the beginning of the great dispersion. A changed man - changed the world.

2. The time: 37 A.D. - Saul of Tarsus

Saul, ^{of Tarsus} enroute to Damascus to quench the burning hatred in his heart for the Christians of his day, is stricken at midday by a light beyond the brightness of the glowing sun. In humility he falls to the dust. He hears a voice. He raises a cry. He submits his haughty will to the God of all the earth; and life for this man - and for the world, is changed.

Who knows but that the patient suffering and love-freighted testimony of the man Stephen, a few years before, paved the way and left its imprint upon Saul's heart and mind. The witness of a man who himself had been changed by the power of God, was coming to fruition in the salvation of this mighty man of the world - but who became a mighty protagonist for God. A changed man - changed his world as well as ours.

3. The time: 156 A.D. - Polycarp

An elderly man of 86 years is led from his prison cell. Roughly he

is handled by armed guards on either side. Out in the clearing stands a martyr's stake. And so the aged Christian father, Polycarp, was pulled against it and his hands tied with thongs behind his back. After beating with whip-cords he was asked to recant and give up his new faith. But only would he shake his snowy white head and say, "NEVER". Live coals were placed in tongs and pressed against naked portions of his body. Amid the taunts of the jeering crowd, this question was asked again, "Now, will you recant"? But in quiet fortitude of soul, the answer was always the same. Finally, fagots were placed around his weary feet and piled up to his knees. The fire was struck and while flames licked at his body, the flesh began to redden, sear and then burn. The question was asked ~~again~~ ^{Once more} "Well, Polycarp, will you now recant"? Even though amid indescribable pain, this man of God looked up toward heaven and said, "All these years, oh God, Thou hast been with me. I have known only Thy love and mercy. I will not fail Thee now. I count it an honor that Thou dost deem me worthy to suffer for Thy sake." The flames leaped higher. His aged body writhed under the torture of his burning flesh, but his spirit winged its way to realms of eternal peace. The flames died down. There lay the ashes of a man who died a martyr for his God, but not the ashes of the Christian church which his persecutors tried to stamp out, for from the fagots of that martyr's fire a thousand Christians leaped to their feet to carry the gospel of the Son of God to all the world. A changed man - changed the world.

4. The time: October 31, 1517 - Martin Luther

On this date Martin Luther nailed his 95 theses on the door of the cathedral at Wittenburg. It was his protest against the sale of indulgences by the popes. But it was more than that. It marked the beginning

of the Reformation - out of which grew the Protestant movement which was ultimately to sweep the world and to help break the shackles of economic and political slavery from millions of the world's people. It was Luther's declaration, "The just shall live by faith", which raised men's conception of God and brought again the priceless virtue of Christ's atonement near to the heart of man's supreme need. A changed man, changed his world.

5. The time: 1526 A.D. - Tyndale

After years of devoted and painstaking study, a man came forth from his secret hiding place on the Continent of Europe, probably Munich. He was carrying precious parchments to the printer. It was the first edition of the New Testament in the language of the people and William Tyndale was that man. His presence was not wanted. He was hounded and tracked down like a wild animal from city to city and province to province. Yet, he kept his faith in God and would not be denied. He, together with his contemporary, Luther, laid the foundation for the Reformation and the Renaissance. A changed man brought change into his world.

6. The time: 1738 - John Wesley

It was at Aldersgate Street in London. The heart of a young Anglican clergyman was "strangely warmed" by the Spirit of God while listening to the reading of Luther's comments on faith. And from that Aldersgate Street meeting house, a life was changed; a movement was born; the kingdom of God was extended around the world. John Wesley was misunderstood. He had to leave his own communion. His "method" was not suited to the formality of his times. England was reeling like a drunken man

amid her own power, vice and sin. She was almost on the verge of collapse. Then, like some mighty giant shaking the empire, the revivals under the Wesleys broke forth. Revival fires leaped across the Channel to Europe and invaded the new country, America. This message of "freedom from all sin" had much to do in the early years when our beloved nation was being formed. What was it? It was the story of a man who surrendered his will to God and was changed - and thus empowered, He changed the life of a nation and the world!

7. The time: 1840 - David Livingstone

David Livingstone was commissioned as a missionary by the London missionary society. He intended to go to China, but because of uprising in that country, he turned his steps toward Africa, having met the veteran missionary, Robert Moffat. He explored the terrain for his government. He tracked down the source of rivers hitherto unknown. He braved the disease-infected jungles. He faced wild and savage beasts. But above all else, he charted a course of missionary activity for his eternal Sovereign, the Lord Jesus Christ, and hundreds of black-skinned natives came to know the "Christ of Every Road." A few years ago I stood in the home of David Livingstone at Blantyre, Scotland. There on the wall of one of the rooms, I saw his favorite motto, an accommodation of the words found in holy scripture - "THE LOVE OF CHRIST COMPELS ME." And then in Westminster Abbey, I saw the place where his body had been buried and the inscription over the tomb which stated that David Livingstone's life had been given "to heal the open sore of the world." A man, changed by the power of God, again changed the world.

8. The time: 1895 - Phineas F. Bresee

Phineas F. Bresee, mighty statesman of God, believed and preached

that men could be saved from sin upon the conditions of repentance and faith. He followed Bible teaching and taught that saved men could be sanctified holy, being made perfect in love through consecration and faith. His contemporaries would not permit such "free interpretation" of the scripture - so "out under the stars" went Dr. Bresee to preach and promulgate the blessed gospel of full salvation. But from that canopy overhead, pencilled with the stars of the firmament, there came a movement, a church - the Church of the Nazarene, of which you and I are a part. This changed man changed his world and we are in turn changed by his obedience!

9. The time: 1906 - Harmon Schmelzenbaugh

The place: Peniel, Texas. The occasion: The preparation of a report to give in a missions class. Harmon Schmelzenbach read these words from Livingstone, "I have seen the smoke of a thousand villages where Christ is not known." These words burned like fire in his soul. Soon he must be gone. And for twenty years, he labored unceasingly in the depths of Africa, without a furlough, that gospel light and life might come to those pagans lost in the night. In 1928, he came home to the General Assembly. But he could not rest - the burden was too great. I stayed in the same room with him at the Nebraska Assembly. In the midnight hour, he would rise from his fitful sleep and cry out: "They are lost in the night." But when he laid off this mortal life, one year later, he left behind him three-thousand souls who had found and accepted Christ. This man changed the world.

10. The time: October 2, 1919 - H. F. Reynolds

The foreign missionary anniversary of the Church of the Nazarene was in progress. It was the evening service of the General Assembly in 1919.

Seated on the platform were the general superintendents, members of the General Foreign Missionary Board and representatives of the Woman's Foreign Missionary Society; while the choir loft was entirely filled with our own missionaries.

As a lad in high school, I sat in that great audience and listened to the soul-stirring, world-challenging address of General Superintendent, H. F. Reynolds. Dressed in oriental costume himself, he set forth with unmistakable clarity the task, the opportunities and the privileges of the Church of the Nazarene as she faced her ~~responsibilities~~ of world *Mission* evangelism.

As the pledge offering for the new quadrennium was being taken, district after district responded and many individuals added their own personal contribution. As the tide rose higher and the blessing of God descended upon the assemblage, General Superintendent Reynolds offered his oriental costume, piece by piece - coat, slippers, helmet, walking-stick, shield, spear and Japanese Bible, in rapid succession as the amounts grew. Before that service had ended, more than one million dollars had been pledged by the representatives of the Church of the Nazarene - a denomination formed only ten years before. It was the leadership, vision consecration and challenge of our beloved leader, the late General Superintendent Emeritus, H. F. Reynolds, who set the Church of the Nazarene to her world-wide task. This man, changed by the spirit of God, changed his world.

II. QUALITIES OF CHANGED MEN

As these scenes pass before us in review, there are three qualities of changed men that stand out in bold relief.

1. They had convictions - convictions by which they lived and died.

Daniel

Moses possessed that high quality. He came ~~up~~ to the point of his "great refusal." Although he was brought up amid the wealth, culture and honor of Egypt; although he was the adopted son of Pharaoh's daughter, yet he himself refused to adopt the court's customs and standards. ~~The Bible tells us,~~ "He chose rather the afflictions among his people" than to stand in top rank with nobility alien to his teaching and his God. A life like that has power behind it because it has depth and meaning.

2. These Changed men possessed convictions which were focused on worthwhile and eternal goals. The apostle Paul put it this way: "Endured as seeing Him who is invisible."

It is the convictions we possess, ~~that~~ focused and channeled that makes life worth living. May the trend of your life be not like a slow, meandering stream that easily follows the lay of the land and snake-like wends its way to the sea. Rather, let your life be deep and strong, powerful enough to cut a gorge across the sin and wickedness of our time. While such a life may entail suffering, it will eventuate in service.

One biographer of John Calhoun, the great southern statesman, makes this short but meaningful comment, "He was a man possessed with a great mind devoted to a little idea." As far as your life is concerned, are you building a cabin or a cathedral?

3. These changed men possessed channeled lives that eventuated in sacrificial service. Not long after Henry Martyn landed on the sun-baked beaches of India and saw her teeming millions, in sheer desperation he cried out, "Let me burn out for God." Nothing short of that would have established the missionary cause in disease-infested, prejudice-ridden Indi

It was that same spirit which launched the Christian church in a vassal state that was occupied territory and under the iron dictatorship

of Rome. Men and women in that early day established the Christian church and laid the foundations for our modern civilization because they dared to believe in God and act like it. Watch them as they go to the center of Rome's Colosseum to be torn asunder by wild beasts - and yet they went as if they were going to a banquet. See them as they climb scaffolds, ~~which were~~ designed for their torture, as if they were mounting thrones. I repeat it: It was the spirit and dynamic of these changed men and women that have given us our heritage - that have given us the Christian perspective, that have given us all we hold dear *in our democracy*

These men and women of the early church without wealth, without prestige, without social position, without anything to which Rome gave the palm, so changed their world that within three short centuries they seized the throne of the Ceasars and placed a Christian monarch there'.

IN CONCLUSION:

Once again let us note the time 1951. The ~~place~~ ^{occasion:} A college commencement. Never in the history of mankind have the brute forces of oppression laid such a heavy hand on the peoples of the world. Never in the history of mankind ^{our time} has there been such vast demonstration of military might, bringing to utter ruin towns, cities, peoples, empires. Never has the struggle for human liberty been so pronounced as it is at this moment. And perhaps never has this age-old ^{Conflict} ~~struggle~~ continued with so narrow a margin on the side of human freedom.

Just What appears to be the voice of thunder turns out to be the belching of cannon. What seems like lurid lightening in the sky is but the flash of bursting bomb and screaming shells. If you listen closely you can hear above the drone of bombers in the sky, the groans of the dying and the cries of little children. Six years ago Europe had its baptism of

fire and blood, and now it is Korea.

Yet with all of this, those of us at MID-CENTURY have a day of opportunity, perhaps unparalleled in human history. Opportunity to live dangerously, but sacrificially; opportunity to be expendable, but to CHANGE THE WORLD! God is looking over the battlements of Heaven for men and women - Christian soldiers who will stand in every walk of life and DO, AND DARE, AND DIE but by so adventuring CHANGE THE WORLD! Can God find MEN and WOMEN like that in THIS GRADUATING CLASS? You may be in the minority but let it be a dedicated minority. There ~~you will find~~ ^{in lies your} the power to change your world!

Class of 1951, can you say with the converted Saul, "Lord, what wilt Thou have me to do."

If you dare ask that question, God will surely answer: "Go, make disciples among the nations." And ~~with~~ ^{to} that imperative command He will add: "And lo, I am with you alway, even to the end of the age." That is God's answer to the darkness and confusion of our time.

God has set before each one of you an open door. I trust you will not miss the challenge of this high hour. Although there is great uncertainty, it can be matched with a mighty faith in God. Though there is great ignorance in our world, it can be overcome with the power of truth. Though there is great sin on every hand, it can be cleansed by the power of purity. Though we find a world waging war, there is still the Prince of Peace.

Graduates of '51, as you face life today and tomorrow and the day after tomorrow, face it with Christ by your side. Face it with a passion for truth. Face it with a dynamic based upon purity. Remember as you

labor to change your world you will not be alone - you will be on the side of final victory. For we must remember that the world will ultimately be won, not by a crown, but by a cross. CHANGED MEN AND WOMEN CAN CHANGE THE WORLD!

Commencement Address
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