

Navigator Folklore

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I. Introduction.

II. The profile of the Navigators through an article in *Collier's* magazine by Walter Davenport.

A. In the 1930s the military in the US was in great disrepute so reporters were invited to give the military better rapport. Davenport reported on the Navigators.

B. The Navigators were described as always working on the wicked, converting sinners, holding revivals and praying with lost souls. Every ship in the Navy had a group of Navigators on the West Coast.

C. Dawson Trotman like Paul quit living in sin and was converted suddenly becoming the head of a new way of life.

III. The testimony of Time magazine in 1956 concerning the death of Dawson Trotman.

A. He gave his life saving a girl from drowning in 1956.

B. He was converted by attending Bible groups of a young girl he was courting.

C. He purchased a plot of land in Colorado Springs as headquarters for the Navigators.

IV. The character of the founder Trotman.

A. In trying to correct an incident that occurred on the grounds of the headquarters, he dually emphasized the mistake. Seeing that people were no longer listening, he told them that if he was not a perfectionist the Navigators never would have been started.

B. Trotman was convinced that the message of the gospel was to be taken to the whole world. He concluded that Christ never would have commanded his followers to do something that was not possible to accomplish, so someone must have not been obedient to the command.

1. His motivation was to find out how what Christ commanded could be accomplished.

2. Instinctively, he knew that would require people who had a similar heart interest as he did, but he could not find anyone like that.

3. In analyzing his own life, he saw an intake of the Word, prayer, and witnessing as essential to comprise this kind of life. Therefore, he sought to develop men around these principles.

V. The formation of the Navigators.

C. Trotman began mobilizing Christian men to go to an evangelistic meeting.

1. But he found that these men were not experiencing the vital relationship that was in Christ. Consequently, he imposed harsh discipline on them that caused them to fall away from the group. Discipline without desire is drudgery.

2. He began praying with a man in the group as a result of the group's fallout that would pray for the men in the group. Their prayers began to extend to other men outside the group until they were finally praying for the nations to come to Christ.

D. Dawson Trotman was encouraged to meet up with a young sailor needing spiritual discipline. They met and Trotman began witnessing to a police officer who was converted through the process.

1. The man with him asked Trotman to give him what he had, and Trotman trained him with what he had.

2. Eventually, the man came across another for Trotman to teach, but he refused to teach him saying that his own disciple should be able to train another disciple otherwise his own training had not been effective.

E. The conviction was after God had so blessed the Navigators that they must have been doing something right and therefore something Scriptural. The best way to get what Christ wanted done is through man to man discipleship. (2 Timothy 2:2)

VI. Questions.

A. The character of the all night prayer meetings was breadth.

B. Trotman's original vision was not to produce an organization like the Navigators. But when a lot of people were ministered to through his home it only made sense to build a formal organization.

Application questions.

1. Retrace the major events in the development of the Navigators. Which ones stand out?

2. How is the Navigators a reflection of its founder Dawson Trotman?

3. What is unique about the Navigator movement? What is important about these principles and how will you carry them out in your life?
