

Faith

It means wholehearted surrender to God as He has revealed Himself in His Word and in Jesus Christ. Faith is the starting point of our relationship with the Savior, and the reference point for all that follows.

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Dawson Trotman: Not Faith but a Great God

"Daws, I sure wish I had faith like you." The eager listener had heard Dawson Trotman tell of God's work in the lives of U.S. servicemen and women.

"It's not my faith." The listener felt Daws's eyes upon him and heard the quiet but firm refusal to take credit. "I have a great God who has given me a Book full of His promises—*and so do you.*"

With that statement Daws acknowledged his source of power and challenged his hearer to claim the same benefits. Through 30 years of walking with Christ it was Daws's practice to drink deeply of the reality of God through diligent use of Scripture and prayer, and to urge everyone within reach to do so as well.

Born in 1906 in Arizona to an English immigrant father and a New England mother, Dawson spent his early years asking questions. At age 20 he asked the most important question of all. God answered with two of 20 verses of Scripture he had memorized—Jn. 5:24 and Jn. 1:12. Walking to work at the lumberyard, he committed his life to Christ and was launched on a nonstop, 30-year journey of faith.

Sometime after his conversion Daws persuaded a friend to meet him early each morning to pray. They prayed for the junior high boys Daws was teaching to memorize and study Scripture. They prayed God would use them in the lives of boys in the next county, in the whole state of California, then in each of the 48 states. Later they began to put their fingers on tiny spots on a world map—*islands like Okinawa and Peleliu—and ask God to use them there.*

Twenty years later Daws would send ex-Marine Bob Boardman to establish a Navigator discipling ministry in Japan. Boardman had been wounded in battle on Okinawa. Another Marine wounded on Peleliu, LeRoy Eims, would spearhead the Nav collegiate ministry in the United States and encourage seminary graduate Bill Bright in the founding years of Campus Crusade for Christ. Yes, the Marines were from two of the 48 states Daws and his buddy had named in prayer. "God, let us reach young men in Iowa . . . in Ohio. . . ."

For Dawson, the flames of faith were fed by God's promises. Promises like Is. 43:4–7: "I will give men for you, and people for your life. . . . I will bring your descendants from the east . . . from the west . . . the north . . . the south. . . . Bring My sons from afar, and My daughters from the ends of the earth." And Is. 45:14: "Thus says the LORD: The labor of Egypt and merchandise of Cush and of the Sabeans, men of stature, shall come over to you . . . saying, 'Surely God is in you, and . . . there is no other God'" (NKJV).

Such promises gave Daws boldness to ask God for men and women who would take the gospel to far corners of the earth. God answered, and now Navigator staff of 50 nationalities labor for Christ in more than 90 countries. And uncounted thousands influenced by Daws's faith are missionaries, Bible translators, pastors, and lay professionals working with many other agencies.

But Daws also memorized God's commands. Finding that God wanted the good news of His love and grace to reach every person in the world, Daws dedicated everything to getting it done. He asked God to give The Navigators a thousand-acre conference center in Colorado as a place to train young men and women to take His Word to the world. Within a few months Glen Eyrie was in operation.

Billy Graham said it this way, "When our God is big, the world looks small—and Dawson saw the world as conquerable for Christ."

—Betty Skinner

Charla Perea: Springs of Faith in a Desert

When Los Angeles homemaker Charla Perea and her husband, Chuck, embarked on a vacation to Mexico in 1966, she had no idea it would change her life and the lives of thousands of children.

Architecture buffs, Charla and Chuck had read about an abandoned gambling resort in the Baja desert built by a rich developer in the 1920s. They went in search of the ruins and found themselves traveling on a near-empty gas tank, without street lights or paved roads. A mysterious old man led them to a deserted building where they slept on mattresses, safe for the night.

At dawn Charla discovered they were in the buildings described in the article. She was looking around when something remarkable happened: "Suddenly, I heard the sound of children's laughter in the distance. I looked and looked for children, then heard it again. I walked behind the buildings but found only salt weeds. The laughter seemed to disappear and in the place of the weeds, I saw a field of grain waving in the breeze."

Today when Charla hears the laughter of children in the desert, it's real. She is the founder and director of Foundation for His Ministry, a home for needy children and an outreach ministry housed in the renovated resort complex.

"I never expected God to use me, a homemaker with five children, to start an orphanage in another country. But when the land went up for sale 11 months later, I felt God calling."

The Pereas told their long-standing prayer group about their vision. Everyone agreed that if it was from God, the money to purchase the land would become available.

"They stood with us in faith," Charla remembers. Three weeks later, God met the need and the ministry began.

"It's been a work of faith from the beginning," Charla says. At one point, the orphanage ran out of food. But right after morning prayer a busload of Boy Scouts who were returning home because of bad weather pulled up.

"They wondered if we could use any groceries. Before our grateful eyes they unloaded meat, cereal, milk—box after box of groceries."

Because a California homemaker believed, by faith, that God called her, more than 80 children are living in the orphanage today. Hundreds of orphaned children have passed through the center and gone on to productive living, many in Christian service.

Former residents are training nationals in a Bible institute and preaching to migrant workers. About 1,000 children a week participate in child evangelism classes sponsored by the orphanage. Thousands of women and babies are treated in a maternity service and clinic.

The ministry still operates by faith. It runs on contributions, and is supported by no single denomination or agency. In 1993, more than 3,000 volunteers helped Charla Perea and a staff of 90 minister in the Baja desert.

"We live by faith," Charla says. "And it's an exciting way to live."

—Lonni Collins Pratt

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Eleanor Workman: Praying and Believing

Every year, Eleanor "Mom" Workman, founder of the Christian Haitian Outreach orphanage, holds a convention to educate pastors from all over Haiti. In the heat of July, these pastors begin an up to four-day pilgrimage on foot to the convention—barefoot or in badly worn shoes.

One pastor, having lost a leg, hobbles over this rough terrain year after year on one bare foot and his crutches.

With these lingering images from years past, and just seven days until the convention, Mom Workman, in her mid-70s, retreated to her prayer closet. After 20 years of caring for orphans in volatile Haiti, Eleanor is used to asking God for miracles.

"Oh God, I don't know how it will happen, but I need for You to provide shoes for these pastors. *Five hundred* pairs of shoes, Lord. I thank You now for answering this prayer."

Finding the presence of the Lord especially sweet, she continued praying into her second hour, when she was interrupted by a phone call from a stranger.

"Hello. This is Dr. Michael. I wonder if you could use a lot of shoes."

Mom Workman gasped with surprise and delight. "It's amazing," she exclaimed. "I am sitting here right now *praying for shoes!* But Sir, how did you get my number? Why do you have extra shoes?"

"As a podiatrist at the Humana hospital in Miami, I recently held a fund-raiser for which we asked participants to bring one pair of shoes. I had no idea what we would do with them, but the night ended with a huge pile of shoes. I thumbed through the *Yellow Pages* and found your number—"

"This is a miracle, Doctor! We have hundreds of pastors traveling barefoot to our convention right now. . . ."

She quickly made arrangements to pick them up in Miami. Upon arrival she found a mountain of shoes.

As they were loading up, the doctor mentioned, "We have quite a collection of half-pairs of shoes from our amputee patients. Could you use those?"

"We'll take them," Mom declared.

Upon her return, the parade of exhausted pastors began to enter her gates. Each man was greeted by a loving woman whose faith had brought him the Word of God and a new pair of shoes.

And the amputee, who had traversed the countryside on one foot, drew a single shoe from the pile of half-pairs. Just his size.