

A Campaign at Home

by Lewis Williams

The sermon recounts a powerful evangelistic campaign that led to significant spiritual transformation and renewal within the church community.

Scripture: Isaiah 55:6, Philippians 2:5, 1 Thessalonians 5:23, Hebrews 12:14, James 5:16

Topics: "Evangelism", "Sanctification"

Description

L. Milton Williams and his wife led a powerful evangelistic meeting where many souls were touched and transformed. The altar was filled with seekers, including backsliders, penitent sinners, and believers seeking entire sanctification. The work extended beyond Grace Church, impacting all churches in the town. Williams fearlessly preached the truth, leading many to register as converts, reclaimed backsliders, and those professing entire sanctification.

Transcript

A most wonderful meeting under the leadership of L. Milton Williams and wife, in our church, has just closed. For some time there has been very pronounced interest in evangelistic work, so when Brother Williams came all things were ready. From the first day, the altar was filled with seekers; some backsliders, penitent sinners, and believers seeking the blessing of entire sanctification. From forty to one hundred and fifty came to the altar on different nights; the last Sunday night one hundred and fifty-three. Men fell at the altar, not out of excitement, but in agony, confessing that their lives had not been right before God, though they professed to be His children, and crying out in anguish for pardon and peace.

I have been in three great meetings, but this is the greatest of them all, for the depth of interest and the thoroughness of work. People were not persuaded or even asked to come to the altar, save from the platform. They were not even sung down. The first call was simply an invitation to come to God now, and they came. Then the singing began, and the timid ones were given a chance to come.

At the close, over one hundred registered as desiring to unite with Grace Church; one hundred and sixteen registered as converts; one hundred and twenty-nine as reclaimed backsliders; two hundred and ten professed entire sanctification; eighteen still seeking on one or the other of the three lines. The work was not confined to Grace Church alone, but has touched the life of all the churches of the town, even foreign speaking ones. Many were unable to attend the last night when the registry was made.

Brother Williams is a fearless preacher of the truth, filled with love and long-suffering, acquainted with God and the ways of men, and is affectionately commended to our brethren as worthy. Our personal knowledge of him extends over a period of fifteen years. -- E. C. Deleplain.

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Praise God forever! There is a song of victory ringing in our hearts this morning. God is indeed good to us, in allowing us to see these days, for which our hearts have been longing and praying these many years. We have seen souls come to God by twos and twenties and sometimes by forties, but it did not satisfy our hearts. We wanted to see men and women seeking after God and His fulness by the hundred and, bless His dear name, He is allowing us to see it these days. Truly these are the best days of our lives. To God be all the praise!

Some fifteen years ago, worn out by many meetings, hard toiling all day, meetings until late at night, then sitting up nearly all night with the sick, with neither sufficient food nor the proper kind of food or care for the body, a young man engaged in frontier work lay upon a sick cot in a small, two-roomed shanty in a Western town, with no hand to bathe his throbbing brow. He lay there tossing about with a high fever, too sick to help himself to a drink of water. In the same town a second young man and his good wife were at their "first charge" as pastor of a church. The two men had met several times and had scraped up a passing acquaintance. Not seeing his friend about for several days, the young preacher instituted a search and found him as above described. At once a change was made in the sick man's surroundings, a bed fixed up in the other room, a stove found, the good wife took off her feather bed to make the young man comfortable, a physician was called in, and everything that loving hands could do, was done to alleviate the sufferings of the sick. One night at the church, where revival meetings were being carried on, it became known that he was sick "nigh unto death," and prayers were offered in his behalf. When it came time, and the text was being read, in walked the sick man to attend services and be where souls were being saved. A good old Quaker brother had also been in to visit the sick man that same afternoon, and had knelt by the bedside and asked God to lay His hand on the sick man. God answered those prayers. That sick man was the writer of this article, and the young preacher was Rev. E. C. Deleplain, now pastor of Grace M. E. Church, Warren, Pa. A warm friendship sprang up between the two young men which lasts yet, and God has allowed us to be together once more in a battle for souls. We have stood together when the battle was hard, and there were no shouters about; when the clouds hung heavy and the death angel was making his visits; when the storm was bursting in its fury; when the fighting was more than simply singing songs and saying prayers. The last time we had met was at Perry, Okla., some seven years ago, when Brother Deleplain was presiding elder of his district and we were engaged in evangelistic work. We had had only a few hours together, but long enough to talk and pray. We have looked forward to the time when we might again lock arms against the powers of darkness, and God has given us our desire.

Three years ago, Brother Deleplain was sent to Warren, Pa., as pastor of the church, and on March 19th, this year, we began our battle for souls. Brother Deleplain had written us that there was "a going in the tops of the mulberry trees;" that victory was assured already. It certainly has all proven true. We began at the bottom and in the strength of God, we put in the plow as deep as we knew how. During that first night's service, while we were drawing in the net, Brother Deleplain laid his hand on my arm, stopping me, and after a few words to his congregation, went down to the altar. He did not let down the standard nor smooth things over, but said a few fearless, but kind, words, and went down, followed by a number of his people. We knew that meant victory, and it would bring victory in hundreds of other churches throughout this land of ours, and victory will never come to them until it does happen. There is so much Hell-hatched-pride of

position and reputation, or what will "they say," in the way, that God has no chance to work. When a pastor and church are willing to follow the way Jesus marked out, as it is recorded in Phil. 2nd chapter, 5th to 8th verses, and do what Paul was beseeching the Christians at Rome to do in his epistle to that company, recorded in Rom. 12, first two verses, then God will open the windows of Heaven, -- and that is just what happened at Warren, Pa. Glory to God!

For a week, we told the whole truth as we understood it. We did not hold up a holy life, simply as a believer's privilege, or to satisfy their desire for "more power," but because God commanded His people to be holy; because the New Testament, I Jno. ii. 4, declares that "if we say we know God and keep not His commandments we are liars," and no liars can enter Heaven (Rev. xxi. 2; also xxii. 15). Because Heb. xii. 14 teaches holiness or Hell, even for those who may now be believers, and that we must be holy. We told them that the first work of grace took us out of our sins and worldliness and all filthy habits; that, according to 2 Cor. 6th chapter 14th to 18th verses, it was a clear-cut separation from all worldliness and wrong-doing, and that all theater-going, card-playing, dancing, tobacco-using, secret-society-joining, etc., were of the world, the flesh and the devil. That, according to I John ii. 15, we could not love those things and have the love of God in us, and that James, in the 4th chapter and 4th verse, declares that a man cannot be friendly to such, without becoming an enemy of God.

Whew! What a commotion. At the beginning quite a number of preachers came in and sat on the platform, but not many came back, except to give their advice. It would not do. It would ruin the church ; they knew a church that was split by the preaching of holiness, and so on. Well, it all came true. That church had gotten into the world and the world into the church, and there was the biggest kind of a split, right in two, in the middle. Let me tell you how it happened. Old debts were paid, stolen money refunded, old grudges wiped out, confessions made, pardon asked for, and enemies became friends. Men who had been slaves to the use of tobacco for over forty years were cleansed up and freed from the use of that vile poison. Men who were in the church, and were also mixed up with lodges and secret societies, resigned, and quit the lodges and the society of worldly, and in many cases Christ rejecting men, and men who take His name in vain. Men who had been bowing down before other altars, gave up all to bow and lay their all upon the altar of Christ. Yes, it did split things terribly. Some had to resign from as many as four or five lodges, so they themselves told me. Jewelry and flashy, worldly stuff disappeared and was put aside. Yes, we repeat, there was a split with a vengeance, and while other preachers stayed away and some critics thought it was awful, and other doors were closed up against holiness, yet God moved in over at Grace Church, and we had Heaven on earth.

The second and third weeks were simply wonderful. There was but one night in those two weeks when there were less than fifty seekers at the altar, and that time there were forty-seven, and several times there were over one hundred, and the last Sunday night there were one hundred and fifty-three on their knees at the altar all seeking God at one time Some prayed through the first time they came, others came for a week or longer, every night. Some prayed through at the altar, some at home, some at their work, some in the daytime, and some at all hours of the night; back they came to tell the glad story, with shining faces. The Sunday School superintendent (God bless Brother Lewis) was a seeker for several nights. He wanted God to sanctify him wholly. When it came he jumped and shouted, and in passing his place of business afterwards it was nothing to hear him shout out, "Amen," as we passed by. The official board, one after another, were found at the altar crying out to God. I believe nearly all, perhaps all of them, found God in the campaign. It was wonderful. Many hungry hearts from other churches came in and sought for the blessing and many obtained what they were seeking for. Glory to God!

The last two Sundays we were on the platform over ten hours each day. It was simply an all-day battle. The last Sunday morning we had an old-fashioned love feast and a breaking of bread together. There were hundreds present, and each took his bread and went and found some one to break it with. That service closed at 2 P. M., and the next one commenced at 3 P. M. The last Monday night we held a meeting for those only who had been converted, or reclaimed, or sanctified in that campaign. That night each write down what he himself had obtained in the meeting, and the following morning the pastor handed us the following figures: Converted, 116; reclaimed, 129; sanctified, 210. Among the number were 146 church members. Yes, it split the church out of the world and the world out of the church. God hasten the day when we can have more splits just like it.

A letter just to hand from the pastor says the meetings are still going on, and that the following night after we left there were about twenty seekers at the altar, five for pardon and the balance to be sanctified. I say, Lord, give us more splits like that. -- L. Milton Williams.

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