

## CHAPTER II

### *The Sleeping Church*

The Church of Jesus Christ is fast asleep in this hour of world conquest. She is playing with toys when she ought to be fighting for kingdoms. She is too comfortable and cozy. Her leaders are afraid to sound the trumpet for battle. Her members who are awake now find themselves with their backs against the wall, fighting for their very lives in every land and nation, and it is a fight unto death.

Communism, like the tentacles of a giant octopus, is crushing the world in its powerful embrace, while the evangelical world is fast asleep. It is an utter impossibility for us to ignore the onward march of Communism. Within the space of forty years, this godless movement has challenged and almost conquered Christianity on every front. If we think back to some forty or fifty years ago, we see little groups of solemn-faced people studying the writings of Karl Marx and others in cafes and basements in Paris, Geneva, London, Rome, Berlin, and Moscow. We ask, "Why this seriousness? Why this determination? Why this look of utter abandonment upon their faces?" These students and University professors, and working class people have a vision. Look over their shoulders! They are studying intently the text-books of Communistic philosophy. Time, money and work mean absolutely nothing to such dedicated people. For hours on end, they study and discuss these writings until the whole message of their text-books revolutionizes their lives.

Often, under sentence of death, their secret conclaves break up at sunrise. See them quietly wend their way through the city streets of Europe, inspired with an intense ambition to

bring to pass a godless regime; to translate the vision of these writings to a practical reality. How breath-taking is their plan to conquer Czarist Russia, a nation of 200,000,000 by revolution; revolution by propaganda and by force! How audacious is their plan! How ridiculous and impossible it all seems! How could this little group of a few hundred people, with no prestige, money, or army, conquer such a mighty nation?

Yet, the whole world knows of the success of the Revolution. Think of it, dear believer. How bold is their conquest!

Here we see an entirely new thing in the history of the world; a nation established on the basic concept of the non-existence of God. What a contrast to the founding of the United States, whose God-fearing founders wrote on their coins, "IN GOD WE TRUST." To these godless Soviets, the Bible is a book of man's fabrications and legends. Christianity is the religion of the decadent capitalists, and religion is the dope of the people!

In accomplishing their conquest of Czarist Russia, are they satisfied? No! Fired by satanic zeal, they form a committee for the conquest of the world. Their slogan is "Workers of the World Unite". Their emblem is The Hammer and the Sickle.

*What is the world-wide picture today, after forty years? It is a sad and sobering sight.* Communism is still on the march. I personally saw them occupy ten of the Eastern European nations. They have conquered China where lives one-fifth of the earth's population. India, another great mission field, is in grave danger. Italy, with its 46,000,000 souls is in the balance. Many nations around the world are being captured by this pagan religion, philosophy of life, and political ideology.

Russia alone occupies one-sixth of the earth's surface. This does not include the ten Soviet satellite nations of Europe.

Let me give you an illustration of the vastness of the Soviet Union. If you crossed the American Continent from New York City to San Francisco and back, and once again back to San Francisco, then and only then would you have crossed Russia from east to west. Yes, Communism is on the march!

One would have thought that, after the conquest of China and other nations by the Communists, and the withdrawal of hundreds of our missionaries, the evangelical churches throughout the world would have spent a month in humiliation and confession because of its impotence and lethargy. But no! We simply were shocked for a day or so, and then shrugged our shoulders and said "What a pity", as we went on our foolish and selfish ways. Whether we like to realize it or not, we cannot evade or avoid the conquering armies of the godless. *If the Christian Church does not arouse herself she will find that all her foreign missionaries will be camping on her doorstep, as the doors are closed against them.*

As one who has pioneered with the Gospel in The Russian Border States of Latvia, Lithuania, Estonia, Poland, Ruthenia, Czechoslovakia, Rumania, and Bulgaria, and who has been arrested by the Soviet military police in Hungary, I feel that I can speak with some authority. Having been cradled and catechized in evangelical Christianity, it is not difficult for me to see what is wrong with our global evangelism. May I give a few suggestions as to why we are losing the battle.

*First, we are too optimistic*

I realize that a pessimist is defeated before he begins the battle. I know a pessimist is a grave menace, but a super-optimist is an even greater menace. Our evangelistic reports and our evangelistic thinking are too optimistic as compared with the actual results. This, in one sense is only natural because of our love to Christ and our enthusiasm in spreading His

message. But true Christian reporting must be factual and accurate. As evangelical leaders, we must coldly and soberly weigh the facts, as we receive the reports from the far-flung battle fields of the world. The true Christian worker will report his "Waterloos" as well as his victories. We should not give our reports until the smoke of the battle has cleared away and we see the actual results. All that glitters is not gold! All the professions may not be conversions. Sometimes the glowing reports of victory are not so glowing in the same city or country six or twelve months later.

*Second, we are too self-commending*

We must esteem each for his work's sake, and praise God for every advance, but we must be careful not to drug ourselves to sleep with the drug of commendation. We need to encourage each other in the conflict, but it is necessary in the heat of the battle to handle the sword and the trowel instead of handing out bouquets of flowers. Our Christian magazines are filled with deadly opium. Patting each other on the back and eulogizing our men and movements, we have lulled ourselves into a deadly slumber in relation to actual conditions.

If the evangelical public would read the magazines of the false cults and the periodicals of pagan religions, as well as the Communist papers, they would experience a rude awakening, and realize that as things are, we are not winning, but are rather losing the spiritual battle.

*Third, we are too parochial in our vision*

Like Paul, in Acts 16, we need our horizons enlarged, in order to see the other pagan mission fields of the earth. Our vision is too narrow. It hardly goes beyond the four walls of our local church. We are playing with toys when we ought to be fighting for kingdoms. God give us men and women with a world-wide vision! God give us men and women who

will pray in soul agony with a map of the globe before them!

The Holy Ghost has a divine strategy for global evangelism. Let us go to Him in our secret closets where He will reveal to us our part in the winning of today's battle! We must never be satisfied until we have travailed in agony for, and reached out to, every nation and island.

*Fourth, we are too comfortable and cozy*

The Christian leaders are afraid to sound the trumpet for battle, in case perchance they may awaken some of their people out of their worldly sleep. They are afraid in case some of their members will be offended. As one has said, "The arrest of the Church's extensive effect is due to the decay of its intensive faith, while a mere piety muffles the loss."

Alas, the Communists do not fear us. The red-hot heralds of this pagan religion laugh and scorn the feeble attempts of our global efforts. The reason is not far to seek. *The Church is really getting nowhere. She has lost her vision, and thus her momentum.* The Communists point to the powerlessness of our Christianity. "Where is your Christianity?" they ask. "Where is your dynamic witness?" they cry. "Where are your soldiers who are willing to suffer, endure, and die for their cause? They are just a tiny minority! Where are your people that are willing to give their all for the spread of your message? What is the sum total of your Christianity? To us, Christianity is just million-dollar church buildings and Christian social clubs. Your Christianity is incorporated into piles of brick and mortar, and rarely into energized flesh and blood with a fiery purpose!"

How true is their indictment! Each pastor knows that he has two congregations; the congregation of the "dead" and the congregation of the "living". No wonder we read in John Wesley's diary, "Visited such and such a Society (church)

today. It had thirty-two members. Stroked off twenty. Glory to God!" .

God's rebuke of old was, "Moab hath been at ease from his youth, and he hath settled on his lees, and hath not been emptied from vessel to vessel, neither hath he gone into captivity; therefore his taste remained in him, and his scent is not changed." (Jer. 48: 11)

*Must I be carried to the skies  
On flowery beds of ease,  
While others fought to win the prize,  
And sailed through bloody seas?*

We must answer the challenge of the Hammer and Sickle with the fiery proclamation of God's eternal truth! The Hammer and Sickle of God is more mighty than the Hammer and Sickle of the godless.

"Is not My Word like as a fire? saith the Lord; and like a hammer that breaketh the rock in pieces?" (Jer. 23: 29). "And I looked, and behold a white cloud, and upon the cloud one sat like unto the Son of man, having on His head a golden crown, and in His hand a sharp sickle." (Rev. 14: 14).

The Huguenot symbol was the anvil of the Word of God. The inscription on the Huguenot monument in Paris says:

"HAMMER AWAY, YE HOSTILE HANDS; YOUR HAMMER BREAKS, GOD'S ANVIL STANDS."

The Communists' power lies not in their magnitude of financial investments in great buildings, but rather in their dynamic individual and cell-witness.

The Communists have stolen our thunder. We must get back to New Testament evangelism, where every believer is a vital witness for Christ! Oh, for God to give us evangelistic cells in every town and every city in every part of the globe, for the spread of His glorious message!

*Oh Zion! haste, thy mission high fulfilling,  
To tell to all the world that God is light;  
That He Who made all nations is not willing  
One soul should perish, lost in shades of night.*

*Give of thy sons, to bear the message glorious;  
Give of thy wealth to speed them on their way;  
Pour out thy soul for them in prayer victorious,  
And all thou spendest Jesus will repay.*

*MARY A. THOMPSON.*