

## On to Louisville, Kentucky

This is from A.B. Simpson's biography--*Wingspread* by A.W. Tozer.

A.B. Simpson began to sense a burden for a new field of labor. After prayer and consideration, he took a new position as a pastor for a congregation in Louisville, Kentucky. This new assignment brought him to a larger congregation and city.

The time of this new beginning was shortly after the Civil War. The city of Louisville was on the border of the North and the South. This caused many problems as one could imagine. At the time of Simpson's coming there were still bitter feelings remaining. Simpson, being a servant from Canada, was just the right neutral prescription for this people at the time.

Simpson began his labor there by bringing pastors together in reconciliation to pray and lead men to Christ in city-wide revival meetings. Major Whittle, a gifted speaker and one with a consuming passion for souls, was invited to be the speaker for these meetings. Hundreds came to the Lord in these revivals. These gospel meetings had a great effect on Simpson. He began to have a real change in his life and service. He reconsidered his dignified church ministry service and began to see that people were more precious to God than all the church forms and activities. He was beginning to view the unbelieving lawless as objects of God's present love. Simpson was beginning to realize that these were dearer than all the rules and regulations of the Presbytery.

The Louisville evangelistic meetings caused him to be burdened for many lost sheep, regardless where they were from. He was becoming an evangelist to the lost world. Until he came in contact with Major Whittle he had not realized how proud and self-absorbed he had been and how little of the power of Christ was exhibited in his life and service. Simpson dealt with the Lord in his prayer following these times and experienced the Lord's work of the cross upon his old man. Through his time with the Lord he desired now to live from this time on a "consecrated, crucified, and Christ-devoted life."

Simpson now became burdened more than ever to evangelize. He still endeavored to continue to work with the other city pastors. He suggested to them that they continue the work begun by Major Whittle by having more evangelism meetings to reach out to the lost in the city of Louisville. Simpson encountered a wall of unwillingness by the pastors. They rejected his proposal for regular Sunday evening evangelism services. They feared that these would interfere with their regular Sunday evening services of their congregations. With no other recourse, Simpson did not drop his burden, but began these services with the help of some of his own congregation. These meetings included enjoyable gospel music and singing. These meetings were both effective in the city to reach the lost and were a real joy to Simpson and his co-laborers. He was beginning to enjoy this work of evangelism like never before.

In the following year his labors in the gospel service led him into some unconventional territory. In an effort to secure a building large enough for these meetings, he rented a theater. Many believers were shocked by this. All these frustrations were working upon Simpson, causing him to realize that to labor for the Lord was not easy, and that to follow the Lord in His burden for the lost would sometimes cause him to encounter misunderstanding, scorn, and persecution, especially from some religious ones.

The dream of Simpson's heart was being fulfilled by the fact that many in Louisville were hearing the gospel and hundreds were receiving salvation. Eventually his congregation grew and they built a new tabernacle.

The call of the unevangelized was continually on Simpson's heart. After a few years in Louisville, he once again felt a growing burden towards a larger field of service. At this time he also realized the great need with regard to foreign missions. He became burdened to launch a new mission magazine which would give believers information about what was happening on the mission fields. In order to carry out this burden it became

necessary for him to be close to some center of missionary operations -- a port from which missionaries sailed. His way became clear when he received an invitation to begin working with a congregation in New York City.