

## Summary Observations on *They Found the Secret for Today Series*

by Dan Trygg

“Consider the outcome of their way of life, and imitate their faith.” (Hebrews 13:7b)

We just completed a series of twelve biographical articles inspired by V. Raymond Edman's book, *They Found the Secret*. I unashamedly copied and adapted a significant portion of his work. I lightly edited some of the language, taking the liberty to paraphrase at times in order to make it a little more readable. I also added some Bible study material at the end of each chapter to further support his main thesis, namely that God will reveal Himself to those who will diligently seek Him. I did some additional research on most of the people highlighted in the chapters from Edman's book. I added some of this to his writing to offer further background information, because I thought it was helpful and encouraging to understand a little more about these individuals. My purpose in all of this was not to take anything away from Dr. Edman's delightful book, or to steal his thunder. Rather, **my hope is that these studies may whet your appetite enough so that you would pick up a copy of his book, and read *more* for yourself.**

Dr. Edman has done us a wonderful service by compiling the selection of people he includes in his book, many more than I have included in my survey. **He has pulled back the curtain to a rich resource of spiritual stimulation and encouragement, Christian biographies.** Dr. Edman has selected brief portions which are pertinent to his main theme of “entering into a deeper life in the Spirit”, but **there is much more to be gained from reading the life stories of men and women of faith.** Many times in my spiritual journey, I have benefited much by observing and learning from the examples of those who have gone before, and who have accomplished great things with and for God. Paul said, “Be imitators of me, as I am of Christ” (I Cor. 11:1). Similarly, **we can learn much from the example of these other brothers and sisters, and imitate what is beneficial from their lives** (Heb. 13:7).

**Dr. Edman tried to convince us that there is a deeper, richer, fuller, more powerful and more fruitful Christian life to be experienced that what most people know about.** This is available to us all, but so many believers have no idea what God desires to do in their lives. **We miss out on the great provision and power of God because of our ignorance or unbelief.** The prophet declared, “My people are cut off for lack of knowledge” (Hos. 4:6; cf. Isa. 5:13). God has provided a life of rest, a life of intimacy and power in the Spirit, but we do not enter into it because we do not know it is even a possibility, ...or, if we do know about it, we do not enter because of our unbelief (Heb. 3:7-4:11). **Watchman Nee called this “the normal Christian life”, yet the Christian experience most of us have seen as commonplace is a far cry from what these men and women came to experience.**

**Faith is built upon a foundation of knowledge and expectation.** “Faith” is not the same as either of these, but without them there can be no real faith. We must become *aware* that something is even a possibility, before we could ever begin to *hope* for it or *expect* that it could be true for us. Then, if we come to be aware of something that someone else has experienced, it will mean little to us unless we can reasonably think that this same experience may be available to us. **Knowledge does not necessarily awaken hope, or result in faith. I may be convinced that something is true, but have no hope or expectation that it could be mine.** I may read in the paper of a man who found a gold nugget on his property. I may be convinced that this is a real event. However, this may not be sufficient to convince me that there may be a nugget on *my* property. The possibility of this seems very remote, and I have no hope or expectation that I would find a nugget in my back yard. If I did however hear that other people were finding nuggets in their back yards, I may then begin to think that there may be gold on my property as well. The reasonableness of this hope increases not only by how many others discovered gold in their back yards, but on other factors as well. For example, finding out that 100 people discovered gold in their back yards does nothing for me, if they all live far from my neighborhood. **Knowledge does little to engender hope, if it seems irrelevant to my situation.** If, however, neighbors in my community were finding gold in their back yards, I may soon find an expectation or hope rising in my heart that there may be gold on my property as well. **Hope and faith are not the same, either. Faith is trusting enough to take action. The evidence of faith is the pursuit of hope.** If I hope or expect that there is gold in my back yard, but *do nothing* about it, then I do not truly believe that there is gold there. If I don't get a shovel, or a back hoe, and start to dig, ...or, at the very least, go out into the yard and look around..., then we can conclude that I do not have faith in the hope I may *say* that I possess. Even then, **there are different levels of faith, or different strategies prompted by faith, that may produce very different results.** If I believe enough to go out on the back steps and *look at* the back yard, that will not have the same results as the person who goes out and starts *digging!* In a similar way, **someone who believes strongly enough to diligently invest time, money and effort into his pursuit will probably get better results than the person who is only willing to casually invest himself toward obtaining what he desires.**

As Edman observed in his first chapter, **the people he chose to write about all experienced the power of a deeper spiritual life in different ways.** Adoniram Judson Gordon correctly observed that God had sent the Holy Spirit to the earth in a fuller, richer way than OT saints had experienced. He was poured out upon the church once for all on the day of Pentecost, mentioned in Acts 2. From that time on, the Holy Spirit, and the power for victorious living and fruitful service, have been made available to all, but people vary in how they come to experience it for themselves. **Although they seem to make this discovery at different times in their spiritual journey, or through different means, there does seem to be a pattern** Edman observed.

They came to believe there was something they were missing or lacking.

They experienced frustration and fruitlessness in their lives.

They were always *yearning for a better way*, yet never *achieving a better life* by their efforts.

Then they came to a heart surrender, an utter abandonment of their lives to Christ.

Then, in some way or another, the Lord revealed Himself to them,

...or there was a breakthrough experience or insight that brought them to a new level of faith and a deeper experience of God.

From that point on, they lived at a higher level of spiritual awareness, victory and fruitfulness.

They had learned to give up self-striving, and to yield to the leading of the Spirit who had been within them since they had given themselves to Christ.

They had learned to exchange their old life, their old way of living, for the new life of the Spirit.

Instead of trying to get God to bless their service for Him, they saw themselves as available to God to do *anything* He wanted them to do, *any time, any place*. They were ready to serve Him.

**These were men and women from all kinds of backgrounds, levels of education and walks of life.**

**Many came from very humble beginnings, yet, when they followed God, He made their lives very productive, fruitful and significant.**

**One of the strongest lessons for me was the determination and persistence of these people.** *They were seriously devoted to God, and invested consistently into their walk with Him* by prayer, Bible study, reading, authentic fellowship with other believers, and active obedience to what they perceived to be God's will. They were not couch potatoes, or mere spectators and church attenders. *They were serious-minded followers of Jesus Christ. They were not fair-weather followers, but daily disciples.* Their life was about *Jesus* first. Yet, it is clear that this activity in itself did not provide the answer they were looking for. **Only God could meet the real need in their lives.** Because they were *seeking*, however, they *stayed on target*, and kept coming back to Him. Others who got distracted by worldly pleasures or activities lost their focus, and wandered away from God as the goal, focus and source of life.

**Jesus said that the one who will abide in Him will bear much fruit** (Jn. 15:5). In our studies **we also saw that the Bible repeatedly says that God will reveal Himself to those who diligently seek Him.** These people *knew* those promises, and they had *awakened hope* in their hearts that they, too, could know God more intimately and live fruitful lives. They *trusted in this hope* enough to *apply themselves to seeking God* and abiding in Him. Eventually, God answered the longing of their hearts. He responded to the seeking of the seekers. He answered the call of those who were asking. He responded to the knocking of those desperate enough to pound on heaven's door.

**Think again of the four commitments of the Fellowship of the Burning Heart.** One hour a day devoted to God in reading and prayer; a commitment to live a life that is holy, devoted to God; a pledge to continually look for opportunities to testify to others about Jesus; and an absolute surrender to serve God as number One in your life.

**What about you?** Do you *know* that God has more for you than what you have yet experienced in life? Does this knowledge cause a *hope* and *expectation* to rise up in your heart? Did these biographies stir your heart with longing and hope for more *for you*? Well, **you have a choice.** You can *ignore* that hope, that calling of the Spirit upon your heart, *or* you can *choose to respond to that hope* and move toward God. Remember, **the evidence of faith is action, the pursuit of hope.** Faith is trusting in the promise, the hope, the expectation *enough* to spring into action, ...to put shoe-leather to your aspirations for God in your life. **The opposite of faith is to do nothing.** It is un-belief. It is to *disregard* (*not* regard or value) the things of God, ...the promises of God, ...the hopes and longings of the heart that have been stirred up by the Spirit. **It is to choose to not make room for God in the busy activity of your life.** You see, we all have the same number of hours in a day. If you *really* want God and His will, you can make time for Him. **The people in Edman's book found the secret because they were looking for it.** Do you want to see what God could do with *your* life? It is not too late. It doesn't matter what you have done, or where you have been. **What matters is, "What are you going to do from here?"** What will it be, shoe-leather or couch potato? Seeking or sleeping? Regarding or dis-regarding? **Are you going to settle for less, or seek for the most?**