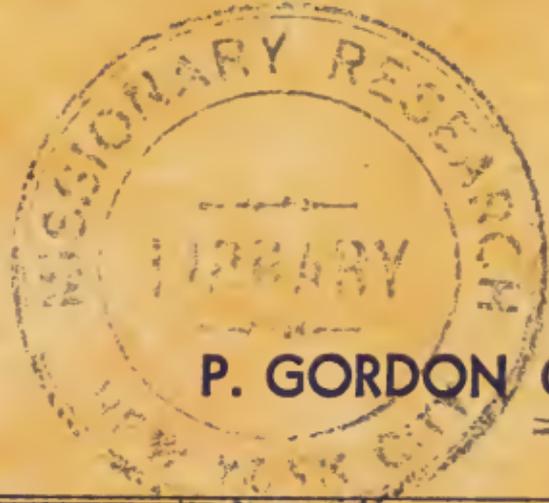


JUN 23 1941

Pam
Native
ministry

BECOMING A FISHER OF MEN



P. GORDON GOULD

BECOMING A FISHER OF MEN

The Story of the First Native Alaskan
to Become a Fully Ordained Minister
in the Methodist Church

BY

P. GORDON GOULD



SYRACUSE, NEW YORK

1940

*This story is dedicated
To all who have left fathers and mothers,
Loved ones and friends,
To carry the Good News to the far-distant
Corners of the earth;*

And

*To all those loyal Pastors and
Devoted Laymen and Women who have given
Time, energy, prayer, service and money
To sustain Missionary Enterprise
Throughout the world.*



P. GORDON GOULD

Ephesians 3:8



UNGA VILLAGE

IT is a long, long way for a lad to come from a small fishing village of the Aleutian Islands to the position of a minister in the Methodist Church. Yet this is the story I would like to tell you, not as one who boasts of achievement, but rather as one who would allow you to vision the hosts of humble boys and girls throughout the world who are looking to you, with an inexpressible longing, for an opportunity to equip themselves for service to mankind.

I am a native Alaskan, born on July 8, 1900, in the village of Unga on Unga Island, which is one of the Shumagin Islands, lying to the South of the Alaskan Peninsula. I know very little of my parents, for my father died when I was six years old and my mother sent me to the Jesse Lee Home the following year. However, I do have some recollections of my home.

Unostentatious piety characterized the religious life of my home. Father and mother were both devout people careful to observe the ideals of their faith. My father was a leader in the Russian Greek Catholic Church of the village. He was often in charge of the services during the absence of the priest. Mother's cheerfulness and her deep sympathy for those in need made a profound impression on my life which I have never forgotten.

Very early in life the seeds of my calling were planted. I can remember when, as a boy of three or four years of age, my father used to take me upon his knees and tell me the stories of the Church and teach me its songs. When I was able to sing the songs he would carry me on his shoulder from house to house during the celebrations of the church festivals so that I could sing those songs to the people of our village.

After his death, my mother continued this training in her own way. She was a very capable woman, of vision, daring, and a sacrificial spirit. She knew something of the Jesse Lee Home because of the ministry which this mission rendered to the people for many miles around. So she began to picture to my mind the opportunities which I would receive in the Mission, telling me that if I wanted to grow up to be a good man I must go to the Jesse Lee Home. While she was preparing my mind thus, she was busy making clothes for me in preparation for the journey.

At last the day came. When the mail boat arrived in the harbor, mother cleaned me up, packed my suitcase and took me down to the boat, carrying the suitcase in one hand and leading me with the other. She put the suitcase into the boat, then lifted me in her arms and hugged and kissed me, then set me down in the boat and stood on the shore waving to me until I could see her no more. Hannah taking her son to the Temple at Jerusalem displayed no more dignified, reverent, self-sacrificing devotion to a great spiritual ideal and purpose than did my mother on that unforgettable day. Years later she unfolded her secret in a letter to me containing this sentence, "I hope my boy will become a great preacher someday."



FATHER AND MOTHER

In the month of June, 1907, I arrived at the Jesse Lee Home, which was then located at Unalaska. It was the time of busy activity as the fishing season was coming on. My sister Anna met me at the boat and took me under her capable care. She, too, had something of the spirit of our mother and wisely led me in the task of making my adjustments to these new surroundings. Here in the Jesse Lee Home I found an atmosphere genuinely religious, characterized by a Christlike love manifesting itself in the wise, solicitous care which the teachers exercised over us.

Life in the Home was intensive, interesting, and calculated to develop characters that were industrious, responsible, dependable, socially minded and Christian. Each month each boy and girl was assigned specific tasks for which he or she was responsible for a whole month. Then there were other duties and work which we did together. Thus in the matter of work we learned individual responsibility, dependability and social cooperativeness.

The years I spent in the Jesse Lee Home are filled with many interesting memories. How well I remember how we celebrated Christmas, Easter, Fourth of July, and Thanksgiving; how we marvelled at the variety of supplies that came each year; how we helped catch and pack our salmon; how eagerly we speculated on the contents of the boxes and barrels that came from the States and what amazing revelations burst upon our youthful minds when those boxes and barrels were opened. Then, too, there were our romps over the hills surrounding the Mission, the harvesting of berries, garden crops, and the grass with which we filled our silo. All these activities invite me to reminisce, but space is limited so let this one incident suffice.

I think I was the first boy in the Jesse Lee Home to try an original scientific experiment. One day Dr. Newhall got us older boys together to repair the cow stable. It was an all-day's job. Late that afternoon, when there was just one more plank to be put in place, Dr. Newhall said to me, "You can finish this job while I take the other boys and start another job." I said, "All right," and was very much elated to have been selected for such a responsibility. I put the plank down in place, picked up the hammer and a spike, and just as I was about to drive the spike in came a hen and flew up into a nest. Now one of the older boys had told me that if you wanted a hen to lay an egg you must be very quiet, so I put the hammer and spike down very gently and sat on the edge of the plank to watch the proceedings. I do not know how long I sat thus, but after a while my eye caught the movement of a shadow in the doorway and in came Dr. Newhall. He looked at me and asked, "Haven't you got that done yet?" I said "No." "What is the matter?" he asked. I shuffled from one foot to the other and finally blurted out . . . "Well, Doctor, one of the boys said that if you wanted a hen to lay an egg you had to be very quiet, so I was just waiting to see how long it would take that hen over there to lay an egg." The good Doctor looked at me with a kind of twinkle in his eye and said something like this: . . . "My boy, whenever you have an important piece of work to do, I don't want you ever to let any hen interfere with your getting that work done."



WITH MY DOG AND GUN

Let it be remembered that we were not an adult society but a group of healthy, growing boys and girls — boys and girls having as high a degree of intelligence, imagination, mischievousness, etc., as you will find in any community in the States. Yet, in spite of that fact, our teachers were adequate for the responsibility. Their patience with, wise consideration for, and personal treatment of each individual case merits high praise.

As I look back over the years I spent at the Jesse Lee Home I never cease to give thanks to God for the wisdom and faith of my mother who sent me into an atmosphere and surroundings best calculated to develop the qualities of character which I so much needed for later experiences. For here in an atmosphere of applied Christianity I learned how to work, how to be dependable, how to accept responsibility and carry on to achievement. I learned how to cooperate with others in various ways. I learned a profound respect for the rights of other individuals and through it all I gained a feeling that religion was the normal experience of a well-rounded life.

One day Dr. Newhall called a number of us boys together and painted a word picture of life on a farm in the United States. He then asked how many of us would like to go to the States and live on a farm. As I remember it, I was the only one who manifested any positive interest in such a proposition. A day or two later Dr. Newhall called me into his study and told me that my sister Anna had written to him and asked him to send me to her. She was then living on a farm in Ohio, working for a retired Methodist minister. I told him I would be glad to go and he set about preparing me for the journey.

I arrived in the small town in Ohio about the middle of July, 1914. No greener greenhorn ever struck this country. Life on that farm was not a bed of roses after the glamour of having a boy from Alaska wore off. I attended the village school the first year, was not allowed to enter the grade in which I belonged, but finally proved that I was capable of doing work two grades above where they placed me.

After the first year on the farm there was no more school to speak of. It was work more and more, as an inexperienced fifteen-year-old boy was expected to do the work of a man twice his age. I experienced a growing feeling of one who was abandoned by the very ones who should have held his interests and life close to heart. Were it not for the encouraging letters from Dr. Newhall and my mother it is hard to think what would have happened. In 1916, on his way East, Dr. Newhall stopped long enough to find out about the conditions of our life on the farm. After he left he



Unalaska Village showing former location of the Jesse Lee Home, which has since been moved to Seward, Alaska.



Four Boys of the Jesse Lee Home (1912): 1. Henry Peterson, Fox farmer and hunter's guide; 2. George Peterson, Father Hubbard's guide; 3. Simeon Oliver, First Eskimo to become a concert pianist; 4. P. Gordon Gould.

looked up a school teacher who had taught in Alaska when I was there and told him about our conditions of life, urging him to stand by ready to help when help was needed.

Though I never completely lost consciousness of the watchful providence of God, yet I began to drift farther and farther away from Him. However, my sister Anna was not unmindful of the trust imposed on her by my mother. She prayed for me and loved me with her whole heart. One morning during an evangelistic campaign she said, "We're going down this evening, so plan to get your work done early."

That made me uncomfortable for then God spoke to me and revealed to me my lost condition and my need. I went to my room and prayed but found no release. I went back to work. At noon I went again to my room and prayed and still found no release. I worked that afternoon with a heavy heart. Just before supper I again went to my room for prayer and still no release came. My burden remained and it was heavy.

After supper I hitched up old Maud and drove down to the meeting. Anna sang in the choir. I sat through the service in a kind of daze, hearing the songs, the prayers and the sermon but really not hearing anything. Finally the invitation was given, but I refused to accept. Anna watched me closely and soon came down to where I stood, put her arms around me and said, "Brother, come on." I went and knelt at the altar and prayed with my whole heart. God spoke to me again.

"Will you become a preacher?" He asked.

"Yes," I said, "I'll be a preacher, I'll be anything You want me to be." And I meant every word of it. Then a most glorious thing happened. That heavy load was lifted from my heart and a peace—divine, heavenly, joyous, glorious peace—filled my soul and quieted me with a solemn quiet. My mother's and my sister Anna's prayers were being answered in a very real way. That was on December 16, 1916.

Words are inadequate to express all I owe to my sister Anna. No sister could have helped her brother with more utter devotion and sacrifice than she, sharing with me her



ANNA IRENE GOULD

earnings and encouraging me when the way was hard. Despite all her hardships, Anna never gave up the hope that some day she would be permitted to return to the Jesse Lee Home as a missionary. Such an opportunity did come, and for a number of years now she has been connected with the Jesse Lee Home and has been doing well the kind of work she so much wanted to do. A long, hard trail lay between the little fishing village of Unga Island to membership on the staff of the Jesse Lee Home. The more we think of it the greater is our admiration for the one who has surmounted every obstacle to reach that high point of service—to achieve the distinction of being the first girl out of the Jesse Lee Home to return as a missionary.

In January, 1917, Mr. Robert Scott, the teacher of whom I spoke, made arrangements for me to come and visit him. He and his good wife got from me the story of our life on the farm and immediately set about to help secure our release. He arranged with a prominent banker of Claysville to take us into his home where we might work and earn our way. I went back and laid the matter before Anna and we decided to accept this offer. Anna is a generous soul who would rather suffer herself than do the slightest harm to another. The lady in whose home we were working was an invalid and Anna could not see her way clear to leave this woman. I promised to stay on for a time and thus I got her to agree to leave.

I shall pass over the unpleasantness that followed the announcement of our purpose. It is a thing of the past. Anna got away as quickly as possible. My case was different. The man for whom we worked said that he had papers to keep me with him until I was twenty-one years of age. I asked him to show them to me. He refused. So about two or three weeks later I ran away from him and his farm and went to live in Claysville, Pa. While working there I was able to complete my grammar school education.

At the 1917 Session of the Pittsburgh Conference, Rev. R. R. Griffiths was appointed to Claysville, Pa. He and his good wife were saints of God sent there to find Anna and her brother who were in need of their spiritual guidance. What loyal friends they were! They found us, took us into their love, invited us often to their home, learned all they could about us, and I believe they heard somehow the appeal of my mother that her boy whom she had consecrated to God might be helped on his way.

They talked to me about school, about my plans, about my hopes and then introduced me to a catalogue from Williamsport Dickinson Seminary and showed me how I could get there the things that would equip me for my chosen life work. I decided to go to the Seminary.

This decision made necessary certain changes. I went to work in the mills and lived in the Griffiths home. I am forever indebted to the Reverend and Mrs. Griffiths for their genuine Christlike love for me, and the only way I can

even approach an adequate expression of my deep sense of gratitude to them is to make good in what I firmly believe is the work God has called me to do.

I arrived at Williamsport Dickinson Seminary with a few dollars, some clothes, and a determination to make good at all hazards. I got my books, my room and a job. I settled down to what seemed to me to be a mighty lonesome life. With few exceptions, people had considered me in a rather condescending way and had made me feel like an exhibit so long that I became very shy, bashful and backward. It was as though all the friendly impulses of my nature were bottled up. Several days went by as I lived my lonesome life among so gay a crowd of boys and girls.

It was the custom then for each literary society to invite the freshmen to their first meeting to get acquainted. I accepted the invitation of the Gamma Epsilon society and attended, yearning for something that I could not put into words. Just before the close of the meeting the president introduced each new-comer and asked him to make a few remarks. One of the young men thus responding caught my attention. I liked his manner and I liked what he said. When the meeting broke up and we were going back to our rooms this young man took hold of my arm and spoke to me.

“My name is Sam Maconaghy. I liked what you said in the meeting. Let’s get acquainted.”

Then and there I fell in love with my first American boy friend in the States. That was in September, 1919. When you remember that it was in the spring of 1914 that I left a grand bunch of fellows in the Jesse Lee Home, that since that time no boy of my own age had befriended me, you can imagine with what joy I embraced this first American boy who called me friend.

As I look back over those days I wonder if Sam ever wondered why I stuck so tenaciously to him. All through our course at the Seminary wherever you saw Sam you could almost be sure to find me, for I took advantage of the least possible excuse to be with him just to feast my hungry soul in his friendship. It is needless to say that Sam’s patience and love and faith have been a great inspiration to me to fight this mighty battle which I have waged, against what seemed at times almost insurmountable obstacles, to

victory. I owe much to him and shall never cease to thank God for sending to my side so choice a young man for a friend.

It was in the Spring of 1920 that I came in contact with the first American girl of my age to treat me as an equal and not condescendingly, or as though I were a prized exhibit. Her friendliness for me, her faith in me, her willingness to enter my struggles, her wholehearted welcome of my friendship have meant more to me than she will ever guess. She invited me to her home, her parents and brothers and sisters treated me as an equal and helped to make life seem more interesting and worthwhile. I fell in love with this girl, (who wouldn't?) and several years later she became my wife. She still, by her quiet, dignified, wholehearted love continues to inspire me on and on to greater achievement. No fellow could have a better wife than she is. I therefore cannot find adequate words to convey to her all that she means to me. Could she look deep into my heart and read there what she sees, she would understand.

I graduated from the Seminary in June, 1923. The Fall of that same year found me admitted as a Freshman in the University of Syracuse, where by long hours of outside work and by practically no social life I struggled for an A.B. I worked in a hotel, in a boarding house, and with a contractor, and also preached. My body was put to it to keep pace with a spirit which desired only to achieve and to make good. We read these days about the great numbers of young men and women who have lost their faith while in college. Because of that I should like to give this little incident. I took a course in the science of Behaviorism. It seemed to me that much of that course was directed toward the breaking down of religious faith. One day the professor spoke on conversion. He intimated that this experience could be traced to the fact that the individual wished to exalt himself in the eyes of the community so that his neighbors would pat him on the back and call him a good fellow. That was too much for me. I spoke up and said that such was not the case when I was converted. Mine was a real experience. I did not care what the people of the village thought. I had a profound sense of need in my soul and only as I came to God and met His conditions was that need satisfied. What

people said made no difference to me. That was a real experience and all he said could not shake me from that conviction. To my joy and to the surprise of the whole class on the next Monday morning this professor brought in a paper and read it before the class, the substance of which was that there were limits to all sciences and that there were areas of human experience that could not be adequately analyzed by behaviorism. Of such a nature was the religious experience called conversion. That to my mind was the first truly scientific attitude displayed by that professor in that class. After that he was more careful in his statements about religious experience. I have always felt a very profound sense of satisfaction that it was an Aleut boy from an inconspicuous island in Alaska that brought about that statement.

In December, 1923, I went to Dr. Victor Britten, then Superintendent of the Syracuse West District of the M. E. Church, and told him that I would like to try my hand at preaching. He said, "Well, there are at least three places to which I could send you. You wouldn't want to go to the first anyway. The second is covered with snow that is three or four feet deep most of the winter, so you can't go there. The third place is Cayuga. Now they are planning to close up the church entirely in about two weeks. I'll send you there. You can go next Sunday and stay on till they decide to close up. If they close up, don't feel bad about it. If they stay open, that's a feather in your cap."

So on the first Sunday of January, 1924, I began my preaching career. The church at Cayuga did not close up. I was reappointed at the following Fall Conference and a new District Superintendent was elected. Dr. and Mrs. C. C. Roszell took a very personal interest in me and in a kindly sympathetic way learned from me my story. Their help and encouragement meant a great deal to me and the fact that they made me feel perfectly free to come to their home at any time meant more to me than they can imagine. They kept up this lovely ministry even after I was married and have treated both me and my wife as though we were their own children. Dr. Roszell encouraged me to join the Central New York Conference and steered me along in a perfectly fatherly manner. There is no way to thank such

folks except to make good so I bent every effort at my command so to do.

It was during my first winter in Syracuse that Dr. Newhall visited me for a day. I cut classes so as to spend all the time I could with him. That night he put his arms around me and hugged me with all the warmth of a father's love for a son whom he had not seen for many years and what he said I shall never forget.

"So many of the boys and girls that have been trained in our Home have gone out into the world and slipped back into the old life from which we have tried to save them. When I find one like you fighting to make good as you are, it makes me feel that all my life in the Mission in Alaska is amply justified."

There is no man or woman in all my acquaintance who yearned for the welfare of the boys and girls of Alaska as did Dr. Newhall. He truly was a saint of God if ever there was one. It was a sorry day for the boys and girls of the Aleutian Islands when the Woman's Home Missionary Society refused to accept his judgments and ideals for these people. But God makes even the selfish mistakes of Mission Boards to praise Him, for sometime later, after Dr. Newhall had been appointed by the Presbyterian Board to the Far North, he wrote me these words. "God said 'Ask of me and I will give thee the heathen for thine inheritance,' I have asked Him and my inheritance is great."

I graduated from Syracuse University in June, 1927. At the close of the graduation exercises I received my diploma and a strange feeling of weariness seized me. I could hardly get home. When I did arrive I refused to eat and fell down on the couch and slept the sleep of the utterly exhausted. Late that afternoon I woke up feeling better.

At the Fall Conference Dr. Roszell secured my appointment to a place near the city of Auburn so that I could take advantage of the Auburn Theological Seminary. I started, but the terrific struggle of eight long years began to exact its toll. Sleepless nights and high nervous tension were signs of a body breaking under the lash of a spirit keenly passionate to make good a mother's prayer and sacrifice and to demonstrate to the wide world that the boys and girls of his race

can achieve and will make their contribution to the life of the world if given half a chance.

It was at this point that into our lives came two friends. Mr. and Mrs. E. E. Pease, members of my church at Fleming, who opened wide their home, received us like their own children, and loved us with a great love. Mr. Pease urged me to undergo a thorough physical examination and I accepted his advice. When the doctor finished his examination and he looked at me and asked me what I had been doing to myself. I told him. Then he gave me this advice:

“Now, you can go to the Theological Seminary and continue your church work if you want to, but when you get through you won't be worth a damn, because your body will be completely shattered. But if you will listen to me and do as I say you'll come out all right. Go home, do your parish work, call on your people, get outside as much as possible, get lots of sleep, and study when you feel like it and then not too long at a time, and occasionally get completely away from your work and rest.”

I took his advice and followed it almost religiously. Dr. Roszell encouraged me to take the Conference course of studies which I carried on as I felt able. I regained my health, completed the course and was ordained Elder in 1930. In 1932 I was appointed to the Methodist Church of Port Byron and in 1934 I was asked to accept the appointment to the Bellevue Heights Methodist Church of Syracuse, where I still serve.

Owing to the fact that I had worked my way through preparatory school and college, upon graduation from college I discovered that I had what Abraham Lincoln called “A National Debt.” I have been whittling on this debt through the years but since the income of an average minister is very inadequate my emancipation from this “National Debt” has been embarrassingly slow.

However, I am a happy man. I have a good wife and three fine boys. Ardell Gordon Gould was born on July 17, 1926. Edward Curtis Gould was born on April 10, 1930,

and Robert William Gould, born March 9, 1937. We had a little girl but she did not stay with us very long. She joined hands with our loved ones in the Eternal City who await our arrival.

I deeply appreciate the many friends who have given me encouragement along the way, whose names may not appear in this booklet, but which I am sure are enrolled in the records of Him who said, "Inasmuch as ye did it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye did it unto Me."

I am profoundly grateful to God who in His wise providence has never left me alone, and has seen to it that at the crucial times along the way someone has been ready to stand by and help. I am very humble when I think that "unto me, who am less than the least of all (His children) has this grace been given, that I should preach the unsearchable riches of Christ."



MRS. GOULD

EDWARD

ARDELL

MR. GOULD

ROBERT

