

Here Am I — Send Me

J.C. Choate

**with revisions and additions by
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DEDICATION

To all those throughout the centuries who have given their lives to the spreading of the Gospel... To those who are hard at work with the Message today... And to those of future generations who will take up the banner and go forward with the invitation, *"He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved..."*

BEFORE YOU READ...

In the Year of our Lord, 2018

Recently two sisters in Christ contacted me about writings in our “ancient history”! One had checked from the church library a copy of **Here Am I — Send Me**, printed by my husband, J.C. Choate, in 1960 as a voice to help raise awareness and support for our efforts to go to India as missionaries. She was motivated by it enough that she was ordering copies for herself and to share with others. Of course the book has been out of print for decades, but we did have copies in the Archives room, so I sent her what she wanted — and then I decided to scan the book anew, just to see what had impacted her so. The message stirred me too, so I have gone through the process of doing the needed editing to make it relevant to today — and at the end of the original text I am doing an update on how much the picture has changed since that year, six decades ago. So we have a “new” book that I pray will still motivate Christians to obey the command to “GO!”

The second call was from a sister who was looking through old copies of “Christian Woman” and found an article of mine, written as we were living in Karachi, Pakistan in 1963.

“One of the strongest memories I have of my early childhood is of my mother drumming into me that it is wrong to tell a lie. I believed her, but like most children, one day I reached a fork in the road when I had to make a choice between lying to her about something I had done or telling the truth and “facing the music”! I chose the “easy” way. I’ll never forget the days of torment I had before my conscience finally got the best of me and I owned up to the truth. I learned right then that the “easy” way is not always the best one.

“I grew up, obeyed the Gospel and married — a preacher. We had a great deal in common: a background of mother-taught honesty, for one thing! Week after week and Sunday after Sunday, as we worked teaching people what the New Testament says one must do to be saved, we found ourselves continually confronted with the verse preceding the familiar Mark 16:16. All the emphasis at first

seemed to be placed on “He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved,” but our eyes often seemed to fall on the fifteenth verse of that chapter. “Go” — it was such a little word, and so easily overlooked when we felt we were doing all we could to spread the borders of the church. I don’t know what J.C. thought at that time, but I was not stirred to action then.

“I can’t put my finger on the day that my conscience first began to work on the subject but it seemed that, all too often in the sermons I heard, that verse kept popping up: “Go and teach,” “Go and preach.” I began to look at my soul. Yes, I had accepted Christ as God’s Son; I had been baptized into His death; I claimed to be a Christian, Christ-like; I was faithful in worshipping God; we didn’t rob Him in our contribution; we tried to treat others as we wanted to be treated; we had dedicated our lives to the work of teaching the truth to others. We made mistakes and fell short of the mark, as all people do, but we felt that we were doing our **best** — except, that word kept coming back: *Go — Go!*

“We were living in California when the real awakening to the Great Commission finally came. We chose India as the prospective field, but we decided it would be worthwhile to spend two years in a mission area of the States in order to gain more “mission” experience before going to a country that would be so new to us in every way.

“After those very helpful years in Minneapolis, Minnesota, we moved back to my childhood home in Winona, MS, into a bedroom of my parents’ house. India proved to be a difficult country to deal with, so in the time involved in making three separate applications for visas, J.C. visited churches throughout the South on weekends and Wednesday nights to raise funds for the proposed work. During the week he attended classes at the Harding Graduate School in Memphis, TN, taking every course they offered on mission work.

“Finally, the third application for visas was rejected, and we realized we would have to turn our thoughts to some other area. Pakistan, a part of India until 1947, seemed to be the logical answer. We made applications and received the visas on January 30, 1962, and were ready to leave with our 1 1/2 year-old daughter on February 19.

“We have now completed a year-and-a-half portion of the four-year stay we originally planned. Twenty-nine precious souls constitute the harvest in Karachi thus far. A by-product of our efforts is that once again we feel that we are *honestly* doing our best to be Christians.

“Some people *cannot* physically go to a foreign country to preach the Gospel. Many can, and do, but countless others can offer no providential reason for their failure to obey the Great Commission, and though they may not realize it, they are being dishonest with themselves and with God.

“Yes, a decision was made for us to “Go”, but we did not really make it ourselves. *Jesus of Nazareth made it for us long, long ago as He stood on the Mount of Olives and looked out over all the souls of the whole world for all time....*”

Another word...

BEFORE YOU READ...

The following text is an edited version of **Here Am I — Send Me**, leaving out the introductory explanation about our desire to work overseas and limiting the message to the motivational part of the book with some occasional updates in statistics and evangelistic tools. The closing chapters are an over-view of the many wonderful advances made during the last five-and-one-half decades in the challenge to evangelize the world.

Very little about the over-all picture has changed since these words of urging, pleading, and exhortation were written. Percentage-wise, most congregations in the U.S. do not have as their primary focus the evangelization of their own neighborhood, city, county, or state. Instead, for decades, the shift has been away from the preaching of definitive doctrine to lessons primarily on morals, values, and biblical history — lessons that, in too many cases, could be taught in any denominational church without imparting new Truth to the listeners or angering anyone with our message of “oneness”.

Because of this passivity and lack of doctrinal knowledge on the part of many members, there may not be as much divisiveness in congregations today, but we see many of the larger churches drifting into denominationalism, some being honest enough to cease calling themselves the “church of Christ”.

J.C. passed into that eternal world February 1, 2008, but if he were here today his heartfelt plea would be the same. For that reason, I feel compelled to bring his message back into print and to pray that readers of this generation will be moved to do what evidently has not been done since the first century: **to take the Gospel to the world!**

CHAPTER 1

WHAT THE GREAT COMMISSION MEANS TO ME

“Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned.” Our Saviour spoke these words to His apostles just before His ascension into heaven to take His place at the right hand of God. These men who were gathered around Him had followed Him since His baptism by John in the Jordan River; they were loyal and faithful to Him even though they did not always understand Him. But this command they could understand. Peter had just asked, ***“Lord, wilt thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel?”*** and Christ’s answer had been, ***“Tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem, until ye be endued with power from on high: “ ... after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you, ... ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in Judea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth.”***

Christ was speaking to the men who would be the first members of His body, the church, and He was giving them the instructions they were to follow. This command to go into all the world and preach the good news of the gospel was not an idle one — it was to be the propelling force that should move God’s people not only in the first century, but throughout every generation since that time.

In making the statement we have just quoted, Jesus gave *two* commands: the first one is to the church; the second one is to the world. What did he say to the church? *Go and preach*. What did he say to the world? *Believe and be baptized*. For years, we of the body of Christ have wondered at the blindness of our religious friends when they fail to understand the second command, that they must believe and be baptized to be saved. But we have neglected to turn the mirror around and look at ourselves in it. Is it any more unforgivable for them to refuse to obey than it is for us? As individual Christians we have complied with the second command, but we have somehow failed to see the importance of the first one — to go and preach this gospel to others. Are we also blind to the whole truth?

When I think of our attitude toward the great commission, I am reminded of the statements Jesus made concerning the man with a beam in

his eye who tried to pick the mote from his neighbor's eye. And He said, "**Thou hypocrite!**" That isn't a very pretty word, is it? And yet many times we are no more than pious hypocrites. We can't see that we are failing our Lord even more than is our neighbor who is in religious error.

To most of us, the great commission is no more than a few words that we *believe*, but not very *strongly*. We have heard our duty along this line pointed out so many times that our ears have callouses on them about an inch-and-a-half thick and our hearts are covered by an even thicker shell. And, brethren, we just don't much care! We are content to drift along in our little world of indifference and let the rest of mankind go by, unsaved.

I wonder: What will it take, short of that final jolt at the end of the journey, to get us to realize that the direction every "little world of indifference" floats toward is HELL! We can't drift and float into eternal salvation — we have to paddle like the devil is after us, because he is! And the majority of us have already been caught, and just don't realize it. Brethren, the consequences of failing to preach the Gospel to all the world is eternal punishment for every person responsible. When will we wake up to the pit that lies before us, and all mankind?

But there is another reason for going into all the world and telling the story of Jesus. Just think for a minute: What would this world be today without the influence of Jesus Christ? What would your own life be without Him? Think what a blessing this one Man — God's Son — has been to all those who have accepted Him! And yet there are millions of people who have never even so much as *heard* the name of "Jesus". They have not even an inkling of an idea that almost two thousand years ago this Jesus died for their sins. They have never been told of the perfect example after which they can pattern their own lives. They have received none of the blessings that come to all Christians. Just place yourself in their position for a minute. Wouldn't such a life be one of terrible *darkness*? Well, *you* as a Christian can turn that darkness into light. It is your responsibility to do *everything* in your power to see that these people hear the story of Jesus.

But this is more than a *responsibility*: it is a *privilege*. Just think: you have a Saviour. He has wiped away your past sins, and continues to plead with God on your behalf. He has given you full instructions as to how to conduct your life. He has blessed you abundantly with both material and spiritual gifts. He has promised to save you for all eternity; to give you a home with Himself and the Father. How much more could a people ask? And yet, all that He wants in return is for you to share this blessing of Christianity with the rest of the world! Can we be true Christians and do any less? I think not. Christ *gave* everything He had, even His life, for

mankind; not only for you and me, but also for those in other lands who have never heard His name. Surely, if He gave all, we can at least share what we have from Him with those who deserve it as much as we. ***“Go ye therefore and teach all nations...”***

CHAPTER 2

THE LORD'S PRAYER

Listen to the words of Jesus: "**... As thou hast sent me into the world, even so have I also sent them into the world ... Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word, That they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me**" (John 17:18, 20, 21).

Christ came into the world for *one* purpose: to save mankind. All that He did while on this earth was done to bring about this result. In the prayer we just read we can see this truth pointed out clearly. Why did God send His Son into the world? For the same reason that Christ sent His apostles forth: "**Go and preach ... he that believeth and is baptized shall be saved.**" Christians have no other mission in life but to obey their Lord and to lead others to Him.

But how far away we have gotten through the years! Today we as Christians live and work for the comforts of life, first. We seek *security* in a world that has never known security. We play with the true religion of Christ, bringing it down to a common-place thing. We can see no further than the scant hour or two we spend in "worship" on Sundays. Our goals have fallen far short of the goals of the early disciples — to gain the crown of life, no matter what obstacles stood in the way.

Because we have aimed ourselves in the wrong direction, as a body of believers we are not united in the sense that Christ prayed we would be. Nowadays one Christian seeks for one thing in life and another seeks for something else and they can never be united on one major goal to the extent that they will put every ounce of effort they possess into the work of reaching that goal. But Christ prayed, fervently and earnestly, that even as He and the Father are one, we might be one also. What does this mean? It means that from the beginning of time, God's purpose was to make a way for man to be saved. Jesus had the same purpose as His guide during the entire time He walked upon the earth. He allowed Himself to be shame-

fully and cruelly crucified in order that one thing might be made possible: that you and I might have a way of escape made for us!

All of this was done to give us the hope of eternal life. Does it mean less to us, the beneficiaries, than it does to our Benefactors? Surely we are not such ingrates as that! And if we are not, let us open our eyes to the great task that has been set before us.

Is it possible for us to lift our sight above the material things of this life, and to see the home that waits for us if, *and only if*, we are obedient to our Master? Every one of us should strive with all that is within us to do this very thing, because unless and until we do, we'll continue to drift along in the unconcerned way we have gone in the past.

Just think what we could do if all of us would put Christianity first and foremost in our lives! Here in America we would be a body of one-and-a-half million courageous soldiers of the cross — not even counting the many Christians in other countries. The preachers in our midst wouldn't have to spend the major part of their time keeping the weak Christians faithful for all of us would be out working to win our neighbors and friends to Christ. We would use every minute of time possible in building up the kingdom. We would *sacrifice* in our giving so that the church would be financially able to carry out its task of reaching the lost souls of the world. We would be such shining lights of real conversion that the people around about us would flock to the kingdom in order that they might have a part in such a wonderful thing! Why were people drawn so irresistably to Jesus during His lifetime? Because He was living proof that He was willing to give His all for the sake of the truth He preached. I am convinced that this dedication of first century Christians, even in the face of death, was what so impressed on-lookers that "the world was turned upside down" by the spreading and acceptance of the Gospel.

Our very lack of having world conversion as our goal is the thing that is dulling our influence every way we turn. If we today *literally lived* to see others converted from sin to righteousness, it wouldn't be so hard to accomplish. But when we preach that we have the truth and want all men to accept it, and then live like we don't much care what happens next in the spiritual realm, you can see what the end

result will be. In the eyes of all of these who are watching us, we, by our manner of unconcerned life, make the effect of the truth void.

Why is it necessary that we be united, even as God and His Son are one? Jesus said, "***That the world may believe that thou has sent me.***" So, if we fail to march forward, even as one man, we will fail in reaching the world with the message of the Gospel. It's just that simple: either we put everything else behind us and march, *or we fail*, and *if we fail*, not only have we lost the world, but ourselves in the bargain.

But notice further: did Christ pray "That the people in Jerusalem may believe," or "That the people in Judea may believe?" No! He prayed, "***That the world may believe.***" The field in which we are to work is not just our home town, or our home state, but the *whole world*. The *Gospel of Christ is too great for one area* — the *entire world*, and all mankind, is its home. That's where it belongs, and when we try to confine it to one area, either by our neglect, or by our lack of faith, we are doing nothing less than *limiting* the power of God! Think about it! We hold within our grasp a power much greater than any other, and yet we smother it down with *our smallness*.

And think about this: The sacrifice that would make it possible for humans to be forgiven of their sins had been planned since the foundation of the world. All of God's work, from Genesis to the last chapters of the Gospel accounts, had been done with that goal in mind! Then the completion of that work — taking the message to humanity — was entrusted to the hands of humans! Does its message die with *me*? Does it go further than to *your* heart? *What will we do with God's treasure?* The light of truth that we possess is strong enough to illuminate the whole world, but how often do we put a bushel over it so that even those in our own area cannot see its radiance?

Christ taught in principle that we should march as a united front and let the world, *all of it*, see and believe. When will we begin to carry out our work? I pray that we'll not realize too late that it is our task, and that we must be up and about the Master's business if we expect to be rewarded. One thing is certain: We can't *earn* eternal life, but God has never promised it to shiftless, lazy bums

who won't lift a finger in His vineyard after the "great task of being baptized." So often *we preach "faith and works"* and then practice *"faith only."*

It seems to me that the prayer we have been considering should make a deep impression upon our minds and move us to strive to be obedient. But the circumstances under which it was uttered should make us even more aware of the grave importance of its every word. Christ was praying in the very shadow of the cross. He knew that torture and torment and death — all that the human body could endure — lay just ahead of Him. Therefore, in this, His last major request to the Father on the disciples' behalf, He was praying for the things uppermost in His mind. His words to God expressed fully His desire for His followers, not only for the eleven around Him at that time, but for all who should believe on Him — for *you* and *me*. He wanted God to *help* us carry out the work He left in our hands, and He prayed to that end.

One thing we can be sure of: ***God will do His part, if we will do ours.***

CHAPTER 3

WHAT THE CHURCH DID IN THE FIRST CENTURY

With the establishment of the church, twelve men began to sound forth the glad tidings of the Gospel. These men were not especially well educated, nor were they recognized as prominent figures in their society. They were no more than simple, humble people who had a purpose in life, and that purpose was to tell the world that the Saviour had come.

When the first Gospel sermon was preached, so fervent and convincing was the message that around 3000 of the listening audience were moved to obey the voices of the apostles. The record says that they were buried in the waters of baptism and added to the church. It's interesting to note what they did then: ***"And they continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers. And fear came upon every soul: and many wonders and signs were done by the apostles. And all that believed were together, and had all things common; And sold their possessions and goods, and parted them to all men, as every man had need. And they, continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, did eat their meat with gladness and singleness of heart, praising God, and having favor with all the people. And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved"*** (Acts 2:42-47).

We can see by the text that their acceptance of the Gospel was no light thing. It changed their whole lives immediately, and their main purpose in life now was to follow Christ every step of the way. In short, they were *converted!* They were truly translated out of the kingdom of darkness into the kingdom of light. Everywhere they went and everything they did bespoke the church at work. And what effect did this have upon the people of Jerusalem? The light of Christianity shone so brightly that others, by the hundreds and thousands, obeyed the Gospel of Christ!

Two things came as a result of the widespread acceptance of Christianity. (I) The whole affair snowballed and thousands were

converted in a very short time. (2) The religious leaders of the day became jealous and brought about severe persecution upon the church. In Jerusalem, the persecutions were begun by the stoning of Stephen by the Jews, but instead of helping to stamp out this "new sect" as intended, these trials and tribulations only served as more fuel for a raging fire. ***"And at that time there was a great persecution against the church which was at Jerusalem; and they were all scattered abroad throughout the regions of Judea and Samaria, except the apostles . . . therefore they that were scattered abroad went everywhere preaching the word"*** (Acts 8:1,4).

The Biblical record, and secular records, recording the trials of early Christians prove to us that they were willing to suffer anything for the Saviour they professed. Before they obeyed the Gospel they knew full well what the consequences could be, so they, as Jesus advised, "counted the cost". Then when they did take up the cross to follow Him, they did so with their whole heart and soul.

The plan Jesus gave for evangelizing the world is recorded in the first chapter of Acts. ***"And ye shall be witnesses of me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth"*** (Acts 1:8). The Gospel, as we have seen, was first preached by the apostles in Jerusalem, with the result of thousands answering the call. Next we find the people who were dispersed because of the persecution going throughout Judea and Samaria preaching; Philip's work in Samaria is especially mentioned in the eighth chapter of Acts. Beginning with the ninth chapter, we read the story of Paul, the apostle called out of due season, and in following him in his travels we witness the preaching of the truth in much of Asia. Later a man of Macedonia appeared to him in a vision, saying, ***"Come over into Macedonia and help us."*** So Paul, and those of his company traveled on into Europe, preaching in such cities as Thessalonica, Athens, Corinth, and Berea. Other Christians established the church in Rome, and soon the plan had been followed in its entirety, and the whole of humanity had heard the glad tidings of the Saviour.

What a challenge this feat is to us, especially when we realize

how much more we have than they, in the way of material possessions, transportation, and communication. But they possessed two things that we lack, at least to a degree. (1) *They walked by faith.* If they had not, they would not have risked giving up all — material possessions, success, security, worldliness, and even life, in many cases — just to call themselves “Christians”. In the light of all they gave up, and since they did this because of their faith, they believed that they could preach the Gospel to all of mankind. *So they did!* (2) *They were Christians twenty-four hours a day, and thus when opportunities presented themselves, they took immediate advantage of them, and they also **made doors of opportunity.*** Because of this eagerness to teach others, we see Stephen pouring out his heart to the men of the Jewish Council, when he was called in question concerning his beliefs — and he paid for his eagerness with his life. Philip was directed to go and join one man on a lonely road from Jerusalem to Gaza, and when he found him reading from the Scriptures, he began to teach him concerning the Christ. The results? the Ethiopian eunuch was baptized, and went on his way back to Africa, rejoicing as a Christian. Peter preached to an interested man, Cornelius of Caesarea, and his family and friends, and they all obeyed the words of the Gospel. Paul and Silas preached to the jailor of the prison in which they were held, and converted him and his family. Later Paul took advantage of opportunities to speak before the Jewish Council, before Felix and Festus, governors, and before King Agrippa. As a prisoner, he lived in Rome for two years in his own hired house, and taught all who came to him. History tells us that he died a martyr’s death in Rome. Secular history also recounts the work of the apostle Thomas in south India, where he was martyred and lies buried.

This is what the church did, with few workers and little equipment, in the first century. It has been God’s will that this same mission be accomplished in every generation. In about thirty-five years the early church was able to evangelize the world — no group of Christians since that time, as far as we know, has fulfilled the great commission, **“Go ... And preach the gospel to all the world.”**

CHAPTER 4

A CLOSE LOOK AT THE CHURCH TODAY

Dare we do such a thing? Let's face it, brethren: for too many years we have been telling ourselves that we're "Christians", bound for heaven. And we've been *afraid* to take a real close look at ourselves. Why? Because, surely, deep down inside we've known all along that for many of us our "Christianity" is a religion of *convenience!*

"You're judging," some pious brother is ready to shout. "You have no right to make such a statement." But, brethren, unless we begin being honest with ourselves and stop using as an excuse, "**Judge not, that ye be not judged,**" we're going to be in pretty poor shape when that real and last judgment comes.

I know, and you know, that the majority — and a *large* majority — of the modern day "Christians" are not converted to Christ. What happened with them in their conversion was that they tried to slip "sheep's clothes" over their worldly wolf's costume, and the wolf is sticking out all over! It's not necessary to *judge* such a person: you can easily see — in fact there's no way you can look at him *without* seeing that he's not what he claims to be.

During the years I have been preaching I have seen this ugly truth manifested time and time again. Don't get me wrong — I am not saying that *all* members of the church have only been half-converted. There are staunch soldiers of the cross in every congregation, and thank God for such men! But these sincere, dedicated brethren so often are so outnumbered by the weak majority that it's a heart-breaking sight to behold. How often have I come home from so-called business meetings with my hopes for real progress in the church literally cast down into a bottomless pit. Why? Because with every suggestion to do something, the half-converted would holler loud and long, "That's not important," or "We can't," or "Let's not decide anything on that until the next meeting." Why did they always object? Simply because they were afraid that if the *church* got

involved in *doing* anything, they might have to put an extra dollar in the collection plate to help take care of the expenses involved. Or, they might have to work a little themselves, and with a person who is only half-won to Christ, these things just cannot be.

Another dark spot in the picture of the church today is the materialistic attitude expressed. How can any one get really concerned about the souls of the people around him, or those in some far-off country, when the value and importance of his own soul is hidden from his eyes by the lure of the things of this world? And all of us are guilty, at least to some extent, of being too attracted by the luxuries of life. Perhaps we have been blessed *too* much, and now we aren't satisfied with what we have. How many of my brethren have I seen who would be willing to work all hours, any hours, for the sake of that extra dollar they would earn! And I'm not speaking of working for the *necessities* of life either. I've heard brethren over and over again make the statement, "I have a chance to get in some over-time Sunday (or on some night that would interfere with the planned work of the church) so I'm going to take advantage of it — we can always use the money to buy those little 'extras'." Does this sound like a *Christian* who is sincerely seeking to put God first and striving to do *all* within his power to spread the borders of the kingdom? How few there are in the Lord's body today who are able to withstand the temptations offered by the world!

These people who have been only half-converted to Christ, and are more interested in preparing for ease in this life than in the life to come, are so weak spiritually that they can hardly hold on to the cross of Christ from one week to the next. They may manage to "go to church" on Sunday mornings, if they don't have anything else to do, but no dependence can be placed upon them at all. Just recently, one such brother who is so zealous in word and lazy in work was asked to wait upon the Lord's table (a shame) and he made a rather long speech about "we as Christians assemble every Lord's Day to remember our dear Lord and Saviour and the suffering he endured for us" — that afternoon he and his family had a "family get-together" (all of them "faithful" Christians) and the whole kit and kaboodle missed the evening worship service. Brethren, this is why the body of Christ is in the

position it's in today — the world looks upon the church as a whole as a bunch of piously bloated hypocrites (don't try to fool yourself into thinking that onlookers can't see through the sham-acting so many are engaged in) and many of the people in religious error are trying more sincerely to do the right thing than we are! I wonder, who is to be held more responsible in the day of judgment: those who were erroneously, but sincerely, striving to please God, or those who know the paths of righteousness and just won't trouble themselves enough to walk therein?

I've got a string of excuses a mile long, or maybe more, that have been offered by weak Christians who were conscientious enough that they felt they must justify themselves in the preacher's eye, and yet didn't have enough love for God about them to make a real effort to avoid situations where they would have to make excuse! How often have I heard: "I was too tired to come." "I had to work a little later than usual and just couldn't make it." "Well, you know, I just forgot!" "The baby's not feeling very good." "By the time we eat supper it's too late to attend the meeting." "I went to a parent-teachers' meeting at school." "The children have to get up early, so I'd better not bring them out." "I didn't have a way to come." "Sunday is the only time I have to rest — I work all the other days of the week." "The children make too much noise and I can't get anything out of the lesson because of that, so I'll just stay at home." "We just can't afford the long trip in to the meeting house more than once a week." Does this sound like the early Christians who, for the cause of Christ, were crucified, boiled in oil, sewn up in the skins of wild beasts and drowned, burned at the stake, eaten by wild animals, beheaded, beaten to death with clubs, and stoned? Can we even dare to claim the same eternal reward as they, when our faith is so weak that even a good-sized *threat* would make the majority of us deny our Lord?

It has been said by some that the lives of the Christians of the first century consisted of "persecution above ground and prayer below ground." What will people of tomorrow say that the lives of twentieth and twenty-first century Christians consisted of? You just think about that question for a minute, truthfully, and you'll be surprised at the answers that come to your mind! But even more

astounding is the thought that, with the depth of the imprint we're making, people of tomorrow may not even know that there were any Christians during this era!

As though half-converted, material-minded, spiritually-weak Christians aren't enough to hamper the church today in fulfilling its mission, we are bound and tied by brethren in authority who have no vision whatsoever. Evidently they feel that the threat of war and destruction is so great that tomorrow may never come, so there's no need to make any preparation for it. Or else, they feel that since Christ is the head of the church, He'll see to it that it gets to where it's supposed to go without any assistance from us.

Where do we fall short in our vision? In almost every phase of the work of the church! Sometimes meeting houses are built without any eye toward future needs. I know of one congregation that built a nice meeting house a few years back, with two little, bitty ole classrooms. Adequate? Of course not, and the children there today are lacking in interest because all ages have been cramped together in those two rooms to study. Are any plans being made for "adding on" to the building? No. Probably every member there feels that he would be faced with paying the debt out of his own pocket, so they just drift along, losing their precious children to the world. On the opposite side are the congregations that are investing most of their contributions in paying off the enormous debt for their enormous, luxurious building. Brethren, would we make our personal commitments so foolishly?

In many cases *no long range programs of work are planned for the church*, and therefore it drifts along from year to year, just existing. They don't grow much numerically because they have made no plans for reaching outsiders. They grow even less spiritually because their interest and enthusiasm lie dormant or dead. They just meet once or twice a week to "worship and serve" God and then go home and live as they please the rest of the time. Will we ever get the truth to the whole world with a complacent attitude like this? No! A thousand times, NO!

But the same complacent attitude is present in most *business meetings*. They remind me of a hot potato game: you pitch a "hot" issue or suggestion around among the few men present, until it

“cools” off, and then nobody’s interested in it because it has literally been worn out. How men can get together and discuss different matters in the work of the church pro-and-con for two to six hours, and go home with practically nothing decided upon, and call such meetings “business meetings” is beyond my understanding. It sounds more like a five-year-old handling Papa’s affairs! Brethren, more than anything else, we need to grow up and be men in the Lord’s work. Surely if we can handle our own business matters competently as individuals, we ought to have more ability in seeing after the needs of the church than we usually manifest.

Probably one of the biggest reasons, though, that we fall short in our Christianity is that we’ve let the two thousand years of time since Christ died come between us and Him. He should be just as real to us today as He was to those of the first century, but He isn’t. That’s why the pleasures and niceties of the world hold so much attraction to us — we’ve got our good eye on the things around us, and our near-blind one on the events that took place so many years ago. And we can’t see the important things.

People today aren’t touched much by the things Jesus suffered for us — they don’t feel the need the early saints felt for converting even *one* soul to the truth. They aren’t too concerned with worshipping God, or working for the crown of life. Why? Because the years gone by, and the world around them, have dulled their minds in these things — they just don’t seem *real* enough to seem *urgent*. We don’t think on such matters enough, or of our own souls, or of hell. Will we have to be dangled above the pits of fire and brimstone and have our shell of indifference melted away before we realize what *salvation* and *damnation* mean?

If we ever come to the point that we realize how valuable our own soul is, we’ll be more concerned about the souls of the rest of the world. But most of us hardly realize we possess, and are, an eternal being that will *never, NEVER, NEVER* die and will live after the death of this tabernacle of clay, in a *heaven of peace and bliss, or in a hell of torment*. I think so often of the scripture, **“If the righteous SCARCELY be saved, where shall the ungodly and the sinner appear?”** (1 Peter 4: 18). And I wonder how many of us could hon-

estly class ourselves as “righteous”? Yes, we live good moral lives, but are they truly *righteous putting God first in everything*? What a terrible fate awaits those of us who fall short of being righteous unless we realize *in this life* how real these matters are!

I know that one reason such weak spots appear in the picture of the church today is that the elders, preachers, and teachers have failed to some extent in teaching their fellow Christians how to recognize the really important things of life. Too many have just not been properly taught of their responsibilities. It has been said, “As the leaders go, so goes the church,” and this is true. How can you expect a congregation to be enthused and on fire for God when its leadership has gone to sleep in the rocking chair of contentment? When elders and preachers can see no farther than the tips of their noses, how can the church have much vision, either in the work at home or in taking the Gospel to all mankind?

So far, brethren, we have been considering what we are. Perhaps you think the things I’ve said are a little too critical and hard, but I think not. The truth is that these problems do exist among us, and the sooner we admit our faults and begin to work out ways to better ourselves, the happier the whole situation will be. In the last few years just such an honest examination has awakened many Christians to their failures and their responsibilities, and no one on God’s green earth is any happier to see these signs of progress than I am. We *must* have a general awakening among us if we are ever to fulfill our mission, **to preach the Gospel to every creature. Is that mission the focus of the church with which you worship, the focus of the men in leadership of the congregation of which you are a member? Is it your own focus?**

We’ve discussed pretty fully our hindrances in carrying out the commands of God toward evangelizing the world, and now that we have faced them, surely in a short time they’ll be wiped from the picture completely — they will be, that is, if we really *want* to be saved in the world to come. Now that the canvass is clean, let’s see what points we have on our side.

First of all, before we will really become involved in preaching the Gospel to the world, we will all become more dedicated to “liv-

ing” Christianity. Then, the church, as a body of zealous and faithful Christians, will begin to make tremendous strides forward. Why? Because it will be marching with the *truth*, and nothing can stand in its way. Brethren, denominations send their ministers of error far and wide over this world of ours, and even they are able to reach many thousands with their error. Think, just *think* what we can do with the *truth* if we’ll only take it into our hands as the precious seed it is, and sow it in the hearts of men and women throughout the land. What a power we have within our grasp, and yet we hear the ones of little faith say, “We won’t be able to convert anybody even if we do try.” How often we belittle God’s power unto salvation! If in the past years He has given life to the dead, turned the tide of battles, preserved His people through anything and everything they faced, and done any other mighty deed that pleased Him, can He not today through His word draw men unto Himself?

Yes, we have the truth, a mighty weapon for good, and we cannot afford to fail to use it. But Christians of today have other advantages, too. Think of the material blessings that have been poured out upon us. If we’ll just be honest with ourselves, we’ll have to admit that most of us are getting along pretty well, financially and otherwise, in this old world. And what do we do to show God how thankful we are? Most of us slip Him a fraction of what we ought and expect Him to be happy with us. Our attitude toward money reminds me of a remark I heard a Baptist preacher make once. He said, “If you want to kill a Baptist, just shoot him in his pocket book, ’cause that’s where his heart is.” And Christians are just as guilty as Baptists, brethren! But if we’d turn loose of the money that, in reality, belongs to God, think what we’d be able to do! The treasury of every congregation would be bulging, and we wouldn’t have such a hard time digging up support for the men who want to preach the Gospel in foreign lands. We wouldn’t have to fall back on the worn out excuse, “We’re just poor people.” Think what we could do if each one of us would give only \$1.00 — just \$1.00 — more each week! We are told that there are about a million-and-a-half members of the Lord’s body in this country. If each one gave \$1.00 more each week that would mean that we would have **one-and-one-half**

million dollars more *each week* to work with! **78 million dollars a year!** It's unbelievable isn't it? But it shows what material power we possess, and what a blessing it would be to all mankind if we would only use it for good!

Along with our material blessings though, we have other advantages that the generations of the past have lacked. We have the very best in methods of transportation and communication. At no other time in the history of mankind have people had the blessings we possess in this field. It wouldn't be much fun to try to evangelize the world from a donkey's back, would it? And yet we know that this was one of the major ways of traveling during the first century. Today we have comfortable, and even luxurious, cars to speed us from place to place. We have trains and ships and planes. There's nothing to keep us from going anywhere we want to go to preach the Gospel, except our own reluctance or lack of vision.

Think of the systems of communication we have today. There are newspapers through which we can advertise the Gospel. We can easily print books, Bible courses, and tracts in the many languages of the world. We have radio stations that can be the means of reaching millions with the truth, television can be employed in the task of preaching to the masses, telephones can be used to this end, and letters written.

And surely it is through the providence of God that the worldwide Internet, with Twitter, Facebook, YouTube, etc. are available to the masses everywhere. Whenever before, in the world's history, has it been possible for a Christian in the USA to serve as a "teacher" for someone on the opposite side of the world, and to have instant communication back and forth in the lessons being studied through the Internet connections? Whenever, before, has it been possible for churches to carry their entire worship service over the Internet, so that people *anywhere* can hear the lessons being taught? I am excited to know that many congregations are taking advantage of this tool, bringing the Gospel to souls who would otherwise never have the opportunity to learn. There are countless ways to get the message of God before the lost. All we need is the vision to see them and the determination to put them to work.

Another thing in our favor in evangelizing the world is this: we live in a nation that is respected by most other nations of the world. The people in almost any land will stop and listen to what we have to say (1) because we are Americans, and (2) because after hearing a little, they will become attracted by the truth and will stay to be converted. This has been proven time and time again, and should be used to the advantage of the cause of Christ.

So, brethren, let us lift up our eyes and look out upon the world. It's a huge field, white, and ready for harvest. People, both here and abroad, are searching for the right way and will be eager to accept it if we will let Christianity shine throughout the universe as God intended it. Remember, God is with us, and if we are on His side, how can we fail? The challenge is set before us. Let's grasp faith in one hand and the truth in the other and conquer the world for Christ!

CHAPTER 5

CAN WE TAKE THE GOSPEL EVERYWHERE?

By our actions we say NO! Can it be that, in this one command, Christ has asked too much of His followers? Let's reason a little: It is an admitted fact that, *if we are to be Christians and if we are to gain Heaven as our final home, we must do everything within our physical power to "do His commandments."* Looking at the picture the other way, if we don't obey His words, we are not true Christians and cannot hope to be eternally saved. World evangelism is one prominent command to each member of the church; *if we fail to be obedient to that command, we forfeit our right to the tree of life. Therefore we must conclude that since Jesus has told us to preach His word to every creature, someway, somehow, it is possible.* And if it is possible, *WE will be held accountable with our souls if we neglect to be obedient to the fullest extent of our ability.*

It is possible to take the Gospel everywhere! It has been done before, and it can be done again! Our trouble is that we haven't yet learned to think highly of ourselves and of our ability. Brethren, we have such an inferiority complex and such a pessimistic attitude that I marvel at us. How can we expect to be successful when we defeat ourselves with, "We can't," long before we ever start? Why, as individuals, in the secular world if we had such an attitude the entire church would be on relief — we would literally be starving to death! And yet, when we band together, in what one would suppose to be our greatest strength, we look like the big healthy Tomcat running from the mouse! We, the church, tuck tail and run from the world, and yet we have on "our side" the most powerful force in existence — the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

What's wrong with our eyes and our minds? Why are we determined to be such defeatists? Even in spite of almost unbearable persecution in the first century, *the church believed that it could teach the world of Christ, and it did.* Today we have no such obstacles and opposition to overcome, and yet we have defeated ourselves!

During the Freed-Hardeman Lectures one year, brother Alvin Jennings made a statement to this effect: "The church of today would be better off, and would make more progress, if it had to suffer persecution as did the early church." He may have hit the nail on the head. We have had it so easy, and the world has left us so completely unhindered that we've felt no challenge. Tell a child that he can't have a piece of cake or a cookie, and it'll get that forbidden treat or bust tryin'! If the world did forbid us to serve Christ and to teach others of Him, it would be like a red flag waved in front of a bull — a growing number of us would charge toward our task with such fervor and faith that no power on earth could stop us!

But we can be thankful, from the human standpoint, that we live in a country of freedom and can preach Christ and Him crucified without having our mouths stopped. The task that lies before us now is this: since we haven't been awakened to our responsibilities by the **opposition of the world, we are going to have to wake ourselves!** This is the only answer! The truth is evident that we can teach all humanity of Christ: He would not ask us to do something we can't do, and what others *have done, we can do*. So now, if we really mean business as Christians, and if we expect to be received with joy as faithful and profitable servants at the judgment, *we will have to get up and work.*

Let's stop saying *we're too little* and tell the world that since Christ is with us, *we're big enough!* Not "big enough" to stop growing, but "big enough" to conquer every obstacle set in our path. Every night before going to bed the Christian ought to count "We Cans" instead of sheep, and this should be our philosophy throughout every day. Before we can hope to begin the real work of evangelizing the world, we're going to have to re-train ourselves in our thinking. We've undermined our strength with negative thoughts — or in most cases, with **not thinking about it at all** — for so long that we're going to have to teach ourselves to *believe* we can be *successful* before we'll even take the first step toward real success.

In this modern world of greeting every suggestion or project with the question "How?", it might be good to think of a few ways through which we can perform the task that has been set before us. Have you

ever thrown a pebble into a lake and watched the ripples of water spread farther and farther out until the whole surface was affected? Well, Christianity is like that. In the first century Jerusalem was the point where the “pebble” was dropped and, with the spread of the Gospel, the whole world became affected.

Today, we might think of the starting place as our own town: *If we live and actively preach genuine Christianity* in our home town, soon the neighboring cities, states, countries, and even the world will feel the impact of truth, because the *truth is never* bounded by political lines and barriers. But in order to have this effect, **we must get outside of our church buildings with the message!** We must stop waiting for the world to come to us, and we must go out into the highways and byways to the world!

Christianity starts, first of all, in the home. Every father and mother who have been obedient to the truth should make it their aim to bring up their children (1) with a thorough knowledge of the word of God, and (2) with the assurance that, as Christians, they must *work* for Christ. There is no better way of teaching those lessons than by *example*. Make spiritual things the center of life in your home, and see what a difference it will make for everyone.

When our homes become more like they are divinely meant to be, we will be more zealous and fruitful in the Lord’s work. We will do all we can to strengthen the local church, and to carry out its mission in this world. There are countless ways for the church to spread its influence and to eventually, in a very short period of time, carry out the great commission.

There is an old saying that “an idle mind is the devil’s workshop.” In these days, so many are idle that when any workable program is suggested for evangelizing any part, or all, of the world, the devil immediately begins to plant his seeds of discord. I’m not saying that we should use just any means to reach the lost, but I do believe that as long as a plan doesn’t violate the Scriptures in any way we should put our minds to the task of seeing it performed, and not spend months and even years “questioning” whether we should do it or not. It seems to me that in more cases than one this has been used as an excuse to do absolutely nothing. Brethren are so afraid *they’re going to do*

something wrong — I might fear that, too, if I didn't know them so well! As it is, *I am afraid they're going to do nothing!* Brethren, let's face the suggestions that are made for doing our work and if they are Scriptural, let's stop haggling about the thing and get busy.

When we really begin to put the various methods of reaching the lost to work for us, we will see the effect spread far and wide around us. In order to help spread this influence even further, it should be our goal to see the church established, *firmly*, not only in our own cities but also in the neighboring cities that are without the Gospel. **If every congregation would accept, as its God-given responsibility, the challenge of starting the work in the neighboring areas, it wouldn't be but a very short time before the whole world would have the truth.** *You don't believe it? Then think about it for awhile and you will see that with this small amount of effort we could teach the world.*

But, as congregations, and individuals, we can do more than that. How many times have "Christians" moved from one part of the United States to another, or even to another part of the world, and left their "Christianity" behind with their "other unnecessary junk"? Of course we know that there will always be some who will do this, but beloved, this percentage today is far, far too high! Hasn't it been estimated that there are 100,000 unfaithful members of the Lord's body in New York City alone? Can that figure be right? And the terrible thing is that almost every city has its quota of erring Christians! Think what a power we would be if we only had these multitudes back "in the running" again!

I believe there are two things we can do to correct this situation, at least in part. (1) We can have an effective teaching program that includes instilling within every member of the church the knowledge of their responsibility of remaining faithful to the Lord no matter where they go. We need to teach them to think in terms of *starting the work*, first in their own homes if they move to an area in which the Lord's church has not previously existed. By doing this, soon they'll be renting a place to meet, then building or buying their own building; and another city will have the truth. Think what this would mean if Christians the world over would be determined to do

their part! We must teach them of their importance in the work of the Lord. (2) When a Christian does move to a "mission area", his brethren back home would do well to write to him, encouraging him, and to write to the elders or preacher of the nearest congregation, telling of his arrival in their locality. This way, perhaps fewer and fewer would get weaned away from the truth.

If we truly put Christianity to work in our own home towns, and if we train members of the church to face up to their responsibility of establishing the church in the mission fields into which they move, we'll pretty well have the task of taking the Gospel to the world licked. But there is one other major thing we can do to speed up the accomplishment of our mission. We can work together to *send missionaries and workers* into the areas without the Gospel, both in our own country, and abroad.

How can this be done? In a very simple and *scriptural way*: the one being sent can be completely sponsored and supported by a congregation large enough to do this, or several small congregations can volunteer to support him. The funds in that case could be (1) sent directly to the preacher, or (2) one congregation could have the oversight of the man in the mission field, and handle the funds coming in from the other congregations and individuals for his support. (And as long as this "sending" is on a volunteer basis, no scriptural principle is being violated.) The first method would have several drawbacks, such as: the preacher then would have to spend a great deal of his time trying to keep the funds coming in, and informing all the supporting congregations of the ways the money was spent; also, since several congregations would be individually overseeing the work, one of two things would be likely to happen: (1) He would be hampered and pestered to death with too much oversight, or (2) each congregation would leave most of the responsibility to the other congregations, and in the final analysis, *nobody* would know what was going on.

So the second method, of having one sponsoring congregation and several volunteer congregations to help with the financial support, is the better way. And no group is too small to have a part, in one role or the other, in this work of evangelizing the world. Brethren, we can do it — now let's get up and get busy!

CHAPTER 6

IS IT NECESSARY?

Naturally, before we do anything, we would want to be absolutely sure that it is necessary. This principle would apply to mission work just as it would to any other undertaking.

I believe there are four reasons that make evangelization of the entire world during our generation a *necessity*. The first two reasons are based on the individuals involved: *Myself* and the *person* to whom I must teach the truth. Every Christian should reason from this point of view, first.

Is it necessary, *for my own sake*, to evangelize the world? From our former studies we have found that the answer to this question is "YES". It has been said that "you can't go to heaven alone," and this is true. As Christians we must be doing all within our power to win, at the least, one soul to Christ during our lifetime. If we don't make this our task, we are refusing to obey countless commands in the New Testament. **"Let your light so shine . . . that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven"** (Matthew 5:16). **"Go and teach all nations ..."** (Matthew 28:19). **"How shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? And how shall they hear without a preacher?"** (Romans 10:14). Going on, we have such statements from the Bible as these: **"In meekness, instructing those that oppose themselves."** **"Preach the word."** **"Let him know, that he which converteth the sinner from the error of his ways hides a multitude of sins."** **"Be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you."** **"For when for the time ye ought to be teachers, ye have need that one teach you again which be the first principles of the oracles of God."** **"And others save with fear, pulling them out of the fire."**

These verses, and many, many others, teach us of our duty not only to ourselves but also to the rest of mankind. If we are to be saved, it is not enough that *we obey the first principles* of the Gospel — the remainder of our obedience lies in *the teaching of that truth to others*. Therefore, it is necessary *for our own soul's sake* that we be "mission minded".

The other individual involved — the person to whom I must teach the truth — also has a great deal to lose if I fail to do my duty as a Christian. He is in error; perhaps he is in modern-day denominationalism, or he might be an atheist, or an idolator, or just nothing religiously. Whatever be the case, he walks in darkness without the truth and it is my God-given responsibility to bring the light into his life.

I've heard members of the church say, "I know so-and-so well: he's in a certain denomination, but he's satisfied there so I never talk to him about religion." Is this the attitude we should express? If that person, ignorantly, were in a burning house, would we leave him there, unwarned, just because he was "satisfied"? Surely if he knew of his danger, he would no longer be satisfied to remain where he was! The same principle is true of religion — we must make men aware of the danger of losing their souls, so that they will desire to come into the "ark of safety".

We also have a story to tell the atheist and the idol-worshipper. Perhaps they will accept it, perhaps not, but they must have the opportunity to hear the truth, even as we did. It is the belief of some, possibly in order that they will feel less burdened, that in the day of judgment surely God will not eternally condemn those who have never heard the Gospel. They argue that this would be unjust. Therefore, because they have convinced themselves that "ignorance is bliss", they feel absolutely no responsibility in teaching these people the truth. But, is "ignorance bliss"? Paul makes the statement that when Christ returns, He will **"take vengeance on all those that know not God, and obey not the gospel."** Does this sound like they're "safe"?

But look how far we could go with reasoning such as that: if one will be spared because he has not had the opportunity to know the truth, let's stop teaching anyone, even our own generation of young people growing up, and let the world live and die in ignorance. Everyone would be saved that way! But if we teach them, they may not obey, and even if they knew the truth they might not live in accordance with it, and would then be lost. But, no, this theory is not founded on God's word. The truth is that God has done His part: He

has given His will to the whole world. Now it is left in our hands who know His truth to deliver it to the rest of mankind. If we neglect or fail to do this, *that poor soul who has never even heard of Christ will be condemned, and WE will be held responsible!* What terrible consequences for laziness and indifference!

Not only are the two individuals, myself and the hearer, involved, but the church as a unit and the world as a unit must be considered. God has placed the task upon us, as His people, to do a certain work: to preach the Gospel. When we do as we are commanded, we make great strides of progress, we're happy, contented, and redeemed.

But the situation is different when we neglect to do the work that has been given to us as a body. We begin to grow lazy and slack in our service to God. We have idle time on our hands and if we don't turn to the world to spend our time usefully in teaching the truth, we turn on ourselves. One thing is certain: people are going to be busy, and they will be doing one of two things: either building up, or tearing down! If we don't build up the church by converting new workers for it, we will begin to tear that body down. How? We'll begin to "pick" at one another; we'll be constantly "finding fault" — nothing will be done right; we'll question and hinder every move that's made toward progress. And soon, we'll be like the mythical lion chasing his tail around the tree — *we will have devoured ourselves*. Or we will die spiritually from indifference. These are the dangers that faces the church constantly, for the church without a mission is comparable to the young women without husbands that Paul speaks of in 1 Timothy 5:13: ***"And withal they learn to be idle, wandering about from house to house; and not only idle, but tattlers also and busybodies, speaking things which they ought not."*** Isn't this a pathetic picture of many of us today? How far we have strayed from our purpose! And how can we hope to be spared hell-fire when we maul and destroy the power of the truth which we possess?

The world must hear the message of God if it is to have any hope of salvation. One thing is certain: no one else is going to teach them for us! We can't depend on them to learn the truth for themselves; we can't expect idolatrous people to teach mankind the will of God;

denominational doctrines — error — will not lead people closer to the pure Gospel. Only we, the church, are left! If we don't teach men the truth, they will go *untaught* and *unsaved*.

We ask "Can we *afford* to do all of this work?" Brethren, we can't afford *not to!* Actually, we have no choice whatsoever in the matter — it's *teach*, or *else!* There is too much at stake to take the "or else," so it is *necessary*, and may God help us to do the work we *must do*.

CHAPTER 7

WHY I MUST DO FOREIGN MISSION WORK

Time and time again I've heard people say, "Why go to a foreign mission field to work? There's plenty to do at home." My own friends and relatives have used this reasoning in answer to my statements concerning my desire to preach in a foreign field. I'll admit that there are countless "mission areas" here in the United States. Some are places that are entirely without the Lord's church (parts of the north, in particular); some are places in which the church exists in a sleeping form (parts of the south). Both areas are mission fields and need the truth to awaken them! But I don't believe that we have any right to confine the gospel to the U.S.A. just because there are many here who are lost!

Those same people who say "there's plenty to do at home" advocate the theory that "we need to convert *the people at home first*," implying that this is the only right thing to do. But I ask you: Is this the truth? Do Americans deserve to know God's will any more than that poor heathen in the wilds of some far-off land? Where in the holy Scriptures does it say that *Americans* have a right to the truth FIRST? I have yet to find a scriptural basis for such reasoning. God is no respecter of persons: He loves the European, the Asian, the African, just as much as He loves the American! And this one error in our thinking explains almost entirely why we have been so slow to share the truth with the rest of the world. Brethren, we think quite a lot of ourselves, but in our concern we have grown so selfish that we are denying that truth to other souls, just as important as we! I think often of Paul's admonition to the Romans in the 12th chapter and third verse of that book: "**For I say ... to every man that is among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think.**" Perhaps our failure to heed this warning has warped our conception of the worth of "thee" and "me."

Yes, there are many in the United States who have not even heard the pure truth, and there are thousands more that have heard it and just haven't accepted it. Think of the people, especially in the

South, who have heard the Gospel over and over and over again and yet continue to live out their lives in error. Not only will they not obey the truth, but in many cases they become so calloused and hardened to it that they no longer feel any need to respond. Moreover, some have become bitter enemies of the church and do all within their power to destroy it and its influence for good. Christ commanded, ***“Give not that which is holy unto the dogs, neither cast ye your pearls before swine, lest they trample them under their feet, and turn again and rend you.”*** In Luke 9:5 He told the apostles, ***“And whosoever will not receive you, when ye go out of that city, shake off the very dust from your feet for a testimony against them.”*** Later, in Acts 13:51, in the account of Paul’s first missionary journey, the record says, ***“But they shook off the dust of their feet against them, and came unto Iconium.”*** These verses point out clearly that it is not our responsibility to keep on keeping on preaching God’s word to those who will not accept it. In fact, not only is it not our responsibility, but it’s wrong! Why? For two reasons: (1) God’s truth is too holy and precious to “cast it before swine.” (2) As long as we continue working and laboring with those who have time and time again rejected the truth, we will be neglecting to preach it even the first time to souls who in all probability would obey it.

Don’t get me wrong. I’m not saying that we should stop striving to persuade *interested* souls to obey God’s will, but it is my firm belief that the power of the truth is being wasted when we continue, year in and year out, to press it on people who don’t want it. There are too many souls in the world who are starving for that *first invitation*, and they’re *dying* without it!

The church today, as a whole, is going around in a “vicious circle”: preach to the members, hold a big meeting and preach to the few outsiders who come to the church building, preach to the occasional visitors, preach to those who have heard the word and know it almost as well as the preacher, but are waiting for a “convenient season” in which to obey it. Brethren, we need to break this circle and *expand* — we need to add to it: Go out into the highways and byways and *preach to the souls who have never heard*, and we need

to concentrate the major part of our effort on this phase of the work. Let's open up our mission fields and make them mission fields no more!

For two years I worked in the state of Minnesota which had a population of approximately 3,000,000 people, and the members of the church in the whole state numbered only about 300. This is truly one of the mission fields of the United States! Several asked me: 'Why do you want to go to a country overseas when you are living in a state in which the church is as weak numerically as almost any place that could be found?' The answer to this question is simple, and consists of three reasons.

First: I feel a personal responsibility to go into some other part of the world and do my best to open it up for Christ. When I read the great commission I can't help but read it with *the understood subject inserted*. Then it reads "**(You)** go into all the world and *(you)* preach the Gospel to every creature". *You* means *me* and I can't push my responsibility off on someone else and expect him to do my work while I stay at home. *I* must go and do all *I* can, with God's help, before I'll feel that I am "**free from the blood of all men.**"

Second: There is no real reason why I can't go. I have the desire; my wife is perfectly willing; we have good health; our family is small enough, in age and numerically, that we don't have a problem there. There's nothing to hinder us from going and doing our part to evangelize the world. There are many able preachers who *can't* go because of one reason or another. It is their duty to do all they can to help those who *can* go, and it is the duty of those of us who are able to go to get up and go and stop trying to find excuses. I know it's hard to leave family and friends and country and customs behind to go into a completely *strange* land and work for several years, but it must be done. And *somebody's* got to sacrifice these things if the world is ever taught the truth.

Third: Yes, I lived in an American mission field, but I looked at the situation this way: there are approximately 10,000 preachers of the Gospel in the United States. Out of that number, it would be many times easier to get a person to move to the city of Minneapolis to work than it would be to get him to go to a foreign land. Yes,

Minnesota is a long way from the South where most of the preachers live, and it's hard to get them to give up "home" for the cold north-land! But think how much harder it would be if he were thinking of going several thousand more miles away from home, and for a much longer period of time! So, I don't worry about the mission fields in America being taken care of — sooner or later they can be evangelized effectively. But at the rate we're going now, if the other countries have to wait for the truth until we "overflow" here, I'll never live to see that day.

This is why my conscience has driven me to go, according to the Lord's will.

CHAPTER 8

FOUR QUESTIONS

Have you ever stopped in reading the following passage of scripture, and just thought for a few minutes about the tremendous subject Paul was discussing? Listen to his words: ***“How then shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? And how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? And how shall they hear without a preacher? And how shall they preach, except they be sent?”*** (Romans 10:14,15). What a sermon we should receive from these four questions, and yet I don't believe I can recall ever having heard a preacher of the Gospel use them, as such, specifically! Isn't this an indication that we, as God's people, aren't as mission-minded as we should be? If more were *said* in the pulpits and through our excellent Gospel papers on this subject I am sure more would be done. Most members of the church haven't yet been awakened to this phase of the Lord's work and it is our place, as ministers of His word, to prod them into wakefulness. Let's think for awhile on these four questions that deal so fully with the problem of evangelizing the world.

“HOW SHALL THEY CALL ON HIM IN WHOM THEY HAVE NOT BELIEVED?”

No man can be saved unless he calls on God through obedience to the Gospel. There are millions and millions of people living today who have never done the will of God and who, therefore, are lost in sin. These people have not asked and received forgiveness for their past errors. They don't pray daily, as do you and I, that the wrongs they commit in ignorance will be wiped clean by the blood of the Lamb. They don't ask for the spiritual and material blessings that the Almighty Father has the power to bestow upon them. They never praise him for all that he has done for humanity. Their eyes are not set in hope, on that home of the soul that has been promised to the faithful. Why? Why do they not recognize the God of Heaven? It is because they have not believed in him. How many times do the phrases *“By faith,”* *“Without faith,”* *“Whosoever believeth,”* *“Through faith,”* etc., appear in the Bible? Everything we do as Christians, we do because of our strong belief in God and His power. But some have not believed. *Why?*

“HOW SHALL THEY BELIEVE IN HIM OF WHOM THEY HAVE NOT HEARD?”

“So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God” (Romans 10:17). Faith, or belief, cannot fill a person’s heart unless he has *heard* of the Father, and countless souls in this world have never heard. The man deep in the wilds of Africa, worshipping his jungle god does not know of the true Creator. The Indian woman who lives by the laws of the Hindu religion, believing animals to be gods, doesn’t know that Jesus died for her. The Japanese and Chinese children grow up worshipping their ancestors because they haven’t been told of the Father of all men whom they should serve. The Arab believes Mohammed is his saviour, for he hasn’t learned of the true Messiah. These people are born, live, and die in total darkness. The majority of them, not only in this generation but throughout the centuries, have never heard “God” and “Jesus” spoken in their own language or in any language. Why?

“HOW SHALL THEY HEAR WITHOUT A PREACHER?”

In our own country a Bible can be seen in practically every home. The truth, the pure will of God, is to be found between the covers of that book. As stated before, in addition to having God’s word to read, we have more than 10,000 men who stand in pulpits and proclaim the glad tidings of the Gospel! In countries outside of our own, we have a few American missionaries and some native preachers but **in many of the nations there is no Gospel preacher and the people would not even know where they could purchase a Bible to read in their language.** How shall they *hear of God*? They grope along in darkness, walking blindly, because there is no one to bring them the Lamp of Life so that it may light their way. Why is there no preacher to teach them the word of God?

“HOW SHALL THEY PREACH EXCEPT THEY BE SENT?”

This explains *why*, and is the root of the whole problem. When this question is answered and blotted out, the preachers will be sent, they will proclaim the word, souls will believe and will call on the name of God in obedience. But, first, the messenger must be *sent*. Even in Paul’s day, when he went out as missionary, he was “sent” — the church in Antioch of Syria “sponsored” him, and other congregations

(Philippi, for one) over the country helped in his support. Today, a man cannot just “up and go”. Even if he wanted to, he wouldn’t be allowed to enter a *foreign* nation on that basis. In order to be granted permission to live and work in another nation, one must be able to guarantee its government that he won’t become a “liability”. In order to do that, he must not only have the money necessary to pay for the trip to the country, but *back home* as well. A sufficient amount of support monthly must be guaranteed, and if a successful job is to be done, money, *much* money, is necessary for a “working fund”. So there’s a lot more to preaching the Gospel abroad than just “going”: one must be *sent*, and with the complete backing of the brethren at home. Let us SEND, so that the word may be PREACHED, and men and women may HEAR, and CALL upon God. Amen.

CHAPTER 9

CAN ONE MAN EVANGELIZE A NATION?

I realize that problems exist in our desire to “go into all the world”. Some countries make it very difficult to obtain a visa; some hold such tight reigns on the missionary once he gets inside their borders that it makes his work very difficult. But, brethren, look at the situation this way: What is more powerful than right and truth? Who can stand against the will of God? The Creator of the whole universe is working with us to take His message to all of mankind. No matter what obstacles, or trials, or refusals we have to face, if we are determined to do His will and preach His truth in every nation under heaven, He will see to it that a way is made. Our trouble is that when Satan puts a block before us, too often we are willing and ready to say, “We can go no further.” Brethren, there’s always A WAY, if we’ll only seek to find it.

Yes, the challenge is great, almost overwhelming. But as long as we look upon the work to be done as a *challenge*, and are willing to accept it, we’ll be able to overcome it. Challenges don’t worry me, but a *complacent attitude* toward them does. When brethren begin to look back at all the work behind them, and to feel that the future tasks are anything but urgent, I fear for their souls — in fact, I fear for the souls of humanity when those who have the truth have lost their sense of responsibility and urgency.

We have a long road ahead in evangelizing any country, even those that have several preachers now. When people reason, “They have enough, and we won’t help financially or otherwise to put another man on the field,” I want to ask: Can ONE man evangelize a NATION? Can one drop of moisture water a lawn? Can one bite of food fill an army?

Can ONE man evangelize a nation? Of course not! If we brought that thinking a little closer to home, we might not be prone to so reason. Could one man evangelize the United States? Could one man evangelize even one state, or one county, or one city, such as Minneapolis, Chicago, or Los Angeles? Why, it would be virtually impossible for him to do such a work alone, and yet we believe that

just because the missionary is five or ten thousand miles from home, he can perform such a feat!

No! One man cannot do the work alone even in a lifetime, and we need to realize that. Let's not be so stingy with our support! Let's decide that until the church in the individual nation is strong enough to support and take care of its own work, we will do all within our power to help it.

Can one man do the work alone? No, but even *one man* can do a tremendous amount more than *none*! Let's not forget those nations that haven't had a chance to lay hold on the truth as yet. It should be our goal, as the body of Christ, to *put the first man into each of those countries within the next five years*. It **can** be done, and it **must** be done. One, working alone, can't do the impossible, but there are many invaluable things that he can do.

In the first place, he will serve as a starting point. Nothing, and no work, great or small, can be done without a beginning. It's true that we'd like to see an army of a hundred missionaries go into each nation, and really turn that place upside down, inside out, for Christ, but we might as well face facts — we won't be doing that any time soon! But *isn't a small beginning of even one man and his family better than nothing at all?*

Countless doors, **in the second place**, are opened when one man goes into a country that has not heard the truth. In his preparations to go, he will awaken and arouse many brethren to awareness of the needs of the country to which he is going. Perhaps those people had been sleeping in indifference, but because of one man's desire to teach lost souls about Christ, they have become "living" Christians again. They are willing to give and work and pray to help share their salvation with another nation. This side-effect always comes when one goes out "raising support," and who can say that this awakening is not one of the first great results of preparation to do mission work?

A third thing that one man can do is to lay a foundation so that those who follow can build upon it. In the south, in this nation, the church is strong today because of the work of a few pioneers. These men first introduced the truth in its purity to the people, and through the years others have continued to teach them, building upon the

ground-work already done. In foreign nations, we're going to have to get at least one man in their midst to teach and live Christianity. After he has begun to train their minds with the truth, others coming in can take up the work and see it grow faster and faster. And no doubt, after many years, results will still be coming in from the efforts of that first Gospel preacher.

In all the countries that have one evangelist, it has been found that the training of the native converts is an all-important thing. When young men learn the truth and desire to teach their own people, they need the help and guidance of one who is sound in the faith. This can be the work of that first missionary. He may not be able to interest many others back home in coming to help, and he may find it hard to gain and keep the necessary financial help he needs, but one thing is sure: no matter where it's preached, the truth has the power to draw souls to it, and in that number, there will always be some who have a strong desire, themselves, to go out preaching the glad tidings they've heard. This is an all-important work that the first missionary can accomplish.

Finally, the one who goes and opens the door of the foreign country can interest other workers in coming to help. Have you ever noticed that years may pass with no one seriously considering evangelizing a certain country, but just as soon as one man begins to preach and talk and write about going — and then actually goes — others develop such an interest that within a short time two or three additional mission-minded preachers are headed for the new field? Why does this interest develop? Because of the work of the first missionary; he leads the way and spearheads the attention toward greater evangelization of the chosen country.

Can one man evangelize a nation? Surely, not one of us would say "yes," but there is a great work that he can do, and how much better off the entire world would be if each country had at least that first man! Let this be our goal!

CHAPTER 10

HOW SHALL WE REACH THEM?

About the first question that pops into a person's mind when he hears the subject of mission work mentioned is this: "How will you go about reaching the people?" Such a query deserves much consideration and planning.

Some first things are obvious: Landing in that city that is to be "home", the newcomer must locate a place to live and in which the potential contacts can meet for studies/worship. He must make arrangements for equipment, print calling cards and other literature, place advertisements in the local paper, etc. The "new-comer" should go out purposely to meet people, and he should keep a list of the names and addresses of those he meets. Since he is obviously a foreigner, he can drop into the initial conversation the piece of information that he has come to the country to teach people about Christ and His church. When interest is shown, he should make it his business to get to know those individuals, and other such acquaintances, and to become their friend. Before long, there will be occasions for serious religious discussion and, in time, here and there, souls will begin to obey the Gospel of Christ.

I don't suppose that establishing the work in a major city such as Bombay would be so drastically different than doing the same thing herein the States in an area where the Gospel has not yet gone. After all, the people to a great extent do speak English in India, and even though there would be strange customs to which one would have to accustom himself, the work shouldn't be too much hampered by those differences. In time, and after making acquaintances and friends among the people, there would be many ways of teaching them.

Naturally, the preacher and his family would begin to conduct worship services on the Lord's Day upon arrival. Perhaps, for a short period of time others would be hesitant to attend, unless by a wonderful fortune it was found that one or two Christians were living in the city already. But, regardless, before many worship periods passed by, the people would begin to trickle in, and soon those

that had become interested would be attending regularly to hear the preaching of God's word. If they are English-speaking, the situation is much simplified, but the language obstacle can be overcome: interpreters can be used, or after a period of time the preacher may be able to speak the local tongue fluently enough to preach in it.

Along this line of reaching the lost souls by preaching is the role of the traditional Gospel meeting. In many countries this has proven to be a successful way of attracting the attention and interest of the masses, and winning them to Christ. As in the cities of the United States, radio, and television preaching and advertising, when available, are excellent ways of reaching the multitudes. Perhaps these will prove to be excellent methods to use in establishing the work, since such programs would reach a great number of people concentrated in one area. One of the obstacles we would face, though, is that the cost is reported to be relatively high in comparison to a similar program here. Be that as it may, if a thorough investigation it is found that such a work would "pay for itself" in the long run, certainly the missionary would want to take advantage of it.

While living in Minneapolis, I've found that it isn't hard to get "news" in the religious section of any of the newspapers, even the "Star" which has a circulation of more than 400,000 daily. Our preaching brethren here in the states seem to be pretty slow in snapping up this free advertisement, and it's a shame. But, certainly, in working in a foreign country, we would want to take advantage of every opportunity that came our way. Newspaper articles and ads, both free and paid, would be an effective way of introducing the church to the people and making them aware of its existence in their city.

In a more personal way of teaching individuals, "cottage classes" and the such like have been used in several countries most successfully. Nothing takes the place of personal contact and the opportunity for discussion. As for equipment to be used in the classes, slides, the blackboard, charts, or the Bible alone, would be the answer. Probably more people would be converted and sufficiently taught through this method than by any other. And after converts have been made and taught, they should be thoroughly schooled in the idea

that it's their responsibility — not solely the preachers' — to teach others in home-study classes and by any other scriptural means they are capable of using. Our failure to teach new converts even in this country of that responsibility has proven to be a crippling blow to the growth of the church. Let's not make that same mistake as we "begin anew" in other nations!

Personal visitation and hospitality — visiting in the homes of contacts and inviting them into your home for visits and meals — are two more ways that contacts can be strengthened and souls eventually won to the truth. In going to a "strange" nation, one should make it his "occupation" to get to know the people and to understand them. He should do his best to learn how they think and what customs guide their lives, and as opportunities present themselves, he should show them what American life is like, not for the purpose of "Americanizing" them but in order that a real interest and friendship can be developed.

Personal contact coupled with hospitality will go a long way toward turning interest into real concern, and finally resulting in conversion. What equipment can be used in making and developing these personal calls?

(1) Calling cards, to be used to introduce the church and the preacher, should be employed when the person being visited is a very casual acquaintance and has no special interest as yet in the "new religion."

(2) For those who are a bit further along, tracts written about subjects in which they have shown a particular interest would be good. These could be printed tracts, or neatly copied articles that the missionary himself has worked up. During the two years we lived in Minneapolis, we mimeographed a bulletin containing a short article and a four-page "Meditations" each week to be mailed to about four hundred people, most of whom lived in the area. The comments and contacts made as a result of that work have proven its effectiveness to us, at least in this part of the world. Whether it will get the same results overseas, I'm not able to say, but one thing's sure: We'll try it!

(3) For those who are ready for a deeper study of God's Word,

the Bible, periodicals, and books should be provided. Where the people don't speak English, translations in their language would be necessary of course, but among English-speaking people, not even this problem would be present. As a result of having the Bible and religious literature to read and study for themselves, many would eventually read their way into the truth. Never overlook or underestimate the power of the printed page — it's been strong ever since Gutenberg invented the printing press long years ago — and copies of the "written Word" have been God's choice of spreading His message since the first century!

(4) Even as here in America, correspondence courses have been used effectively in some of the countries now being evangelized. This provides a good way for the contacts to study for themselves, but would not be "at its best" without the personal visits of the evangelist for the purpose of discussing points of disagreement when that is possible.

(5) It is our purpose to begin a "sort" of school as soon as possible after we reach India. Several reasons have prompted us to form such a plan. In the first place, it will help us in getting our visas because the Indian government is much happier if missionaries contribute to the upbuilding of the country as well as to preach "Christianity". Secondly, probably many who do not know English well or would like to study it further, would be anxious to attend such a school for that purpose. What better textbook could be used than the Bible? Thus, they would not only learn English, but the truth as well, and another soul would be brought to Christ!

An additional reason for establishing such a school would be to train the new converts to teach their own people. We don't plan to go to India to establish a work that will depend forever on Americans to keep it going. That would be a far cry from success! Our desire and our goal will be to make real Christians of as many as we can possibly reach, and to see them — as the Lord's church — become dependent on no one but themselves and God. We would strive to teach them of their responsibilities: to assume their own financial obligations, to pay for their own meeting houses, to support their own preachers, and to send Indian converts out over the nation to

teach the multitudes. Until this goal has been reached, the work has not been established in the fullest sense of the word and cannot be counted as a lasting success. But we believe that such a goal *can* be reached, and thus the American churches and preachers will eventually be able to concentrate on other mission fields.

These are a few of the methods a missionary might use in teaching aliens of Christ. How many of them will we use in India? Which ones will be most effective? We'll have to wait until we get there to be able to answer those questions! But I'm sure that there, as in every other location, we will find that there's a far greater amount of work to be done, and many more opportunities waiting to be accepted, than one man could possibly handle alone. Won't you begin to make plans now to join us?

CHAPTER 11

A CHALLENGE

What does mission work mean to you? Does it occupy the place in your thinking and life that God intended?

I am firmly convinced that the negative answers to these questions explain fully why we, as the people of God, have not yet awakened to everything that we should stand for. For too many years we've been blissfully ignorant of the great challenge we face. Now is the time to awaken our minds and our sense of responsibility and to be about the Master's business.

Who is challenged by mission work? The first person usually who feels his conscience being pricked by the lost condition of the world is the preacher who decides to GO. And, oh, what a rough and rocky road lies ahead of him before he even leaves the shores of home to begin the work he has set out to do!

When a man decides that he must do his part in evangelizing the world, he first begins to cast about to find a congregation to sponsor, and if possible, support his work. What happens? He sits down, and through long and weary hours, writes letters or makes calls to the churches he feels could help. He soon learns to be a professional beggar! And what becomes of many of the appeals he makes? Usually the preacher of the congregation gets the mail and goes through it. There may be pleas for help from several different places. Perhaps the preacher personally knows the writer of one or more of the letters, he may have a special interest in a particular request, or there might be a plea from one of the better known "big preachers". In either of these three cases, the letters are usually saved and relayed to the elders or leaders of the church. But what happens to the other requests that are equally and perhaps more important? They don't mean anything to him personally, and he feels that it would be a waste of time to present them in a business meeting, so into the waste basket they go!

Is this the way the business of the church should be handled? If the preachers of the various congregations weren't such good "weeders" perhaps more mission work would be done! And look-

ing on the other side, if they not only referred to the elders all the "church mail", but also did what they could to encourage them to respond to worthy pleas, how much more they would mean to the cause of Christ.

Very few congregations are going to be enthused and interested in any program abroad unless the preacher who works with them keeps the fire burning under that enthusiasm. Surely, what we need as much or more than anything else is preachers who are willing to open their own eyes, and then do all they can to get other Christians to do the same.

One thing is certain: if you as a preacher are not interested enough in foreign mission work to even pass requests on to the elders, to the men of the church, and even to the congregation, you'll not be doing much to go yourself. Won't you realize the power you hold in your own hands? What you say in encouragement may mean the difference between the congregation sending or helping a man, or not doing one little thing. I challenge you to do what YOU can. Don't fool yourself; there's something, no matter how great or how small it may seem to be, that you and only you can do! If you fail to do that part, can you feel that you're worthy of being called a Gospel preacher?

Many of you can GO yourselves. All you need to do is to put the kingdom first as you've been preaching all these years. Decide that CHRISTIANITY is worth a little sacrificing. Isn't obedience to God more important than living within driving distance of "home", having all the luxuries Americans can possess, and taking the easy way out? It may sound as if I have a warped feeling toward my preaching brethren, but in all honesty I can say "NO" to that accusation. I just want them to wake up! Brethren, I know that many aren't doing what they could to carry out the great commission, and my heart bleeds when I think about it. The easy way isn't usually the best way or the right way. Preachers must be more mission minded if the world is to have the truth, and it's going to take a tremendous amount of teaching in the local church by the local preacher.

If for any reason you, as a preacher, can't go, surely you can work to help someone else to go. Every congregation should be

helping in a foreign field, and every congregation can help *some*, if it's no more than twenty-five or a hundred dollars a month. But, I'll tell you something: the majority aren't going to turn a hand to do one thing unless you preachers push the suggestion and encourage it to pass. I challenge YOU to do what you can.

When our preaching brethren throughout the nation begin to wake up, we'll see the elderships and leaders in the various congregations changing their attitude toward mission work but, as it stands today, how do the usual pleas for help fare in business meetings and discussions? Well, if they get by the preacher they've gone a long way! Then the gauntlet to be run is an "efficient" eldership. So many are so efficient that the majority of the requests received never get by them. Why? Because "we can't answer all the needs, and we can't help all of those who write, begging, so since we can't do it all, we just won't do anything." Of course that last part is never voiced aloud, but it's the answer, nevertheless.

Brethren, what's happened to our reasoning? In buying the necessities of life, individually, would we reason that since we can't afford everything, we'll just not buy anything? In performing the countless "never-finished" tasks in our personal lives, do we think: "Unless I can get everything done, I'll just sit down and not do anything?" Truly it is as Christ said, ***"The children of this world are in this generation wiser than the children of light!"***

Elders and deacons and leaders in God's church have accepted a grave responsibility, too grave to be treated as lightly as it usually is. **Most of the business-meeting decisions, the church activities, and the spending of the Lord's money are done purely on the local level and for the local church.** That's not what God intended! This work of evangelizing the world should be the greatest challenge for the church and for our lives individually. I plead with you, if you fill the office of an elder, don't be an hindrance to the cause you have espoused. The future and eternal welfare of the souls of the entire world rests in your hands! WHAT will YOU do with it?

There's one fact we must admit. The restoration movement has restored "New Testament Christianity," but thus far, for the most part, we are functioning without the driving, motivating power that

possessed the early church. By that I mean: we exist, but with no direction; we are going, but nowhere! Why? Because the very life of the church is its “mission work”! Brethren, we’ve been placing this work, not first on the list, but in the position of a “sideline”. It’s high time that the ones in the places of leadership, both elders and preachers, begin on the overwhelming task of re-aiming the church. Sermons need to be preached on this subject: we must educate Christians on their purpose in existing as a body of people.

In the past years, to a great extent, the church has presented itself as a striking parallel to the Dead Sea: forever willing to receive, but giving nothing. You can see what the end result would be: a stagnant body, pandering only to itself. Surely this is not a description of the church for which our Saviour is returning. Early Christians gave all they had, materially and physically, to share their salvation with the rest of the world. They gave, brethren, and until we learn that this is our purpose too, we will continue to be our own greatest enemy!

Mission work is a challenge to every congregation — great or small, poor or rich, weak or strong — each one has a duty to do and will be held responsible for it on the day of judgment. It’s true that, as in the parable of the talents, some can and must do more than others; but the comparable insignificance of one responsibility in the light of a greater one doesn’t excuse anyone. I know that if each congregation would only do what it could, the work would be done. When are we going to make this theory into living testimony?

In the teaching program of the church we need to begin now to train the youngsters. If they grow up with the importance of world evangelism firmly planted in their minds, the next generation will have a much easier task to perform than we have. The answer to the whole problem is our way of thinking. We are always able to do what must be done. Now if we can just be made to realize that mission work is a *must*, not an extracurricular activity, we’ll see that work accomplished!

Teachers should plan their teaching program around the mission of the church and spend a great deal of their time in training the thinking of their students along these lines. Youngsters should be taught that one of the reasons we give money on Sundays is so that

the little boys and girls across the sea can hear about Jesus. Those who are old enough to obey the Gospel should be thoroughly taught of their responsibilities to train themselves so they can do their part in the Lord's work as they grow older. Young men and women should be encouraged to get a Christian education so they'll be able to contribute more to the cause. They must be taught that the burden of *going* rests upon them, because they are the church of tomorrow. Perhaps they will have the desire to go as full-time preachers of the Gospel, or as missionary wives, but if that isn't the case there is a great deal more they can do. As Christian doctors and nurses and teachers and workers in mission fields, both here and abroad, they would be invaluable. How much more effective the missionary's efforts would be if he had faithful workers to go along with him and to support him in the struggle to establish the cause in Satan's land!

Yes, the years to come will be easier if we'll change our teaching and working programs now, and such a change will make it possible for more and more to be done even today. Truly the work is great and the workers are few, but we can do it if we'll try hard enough.

There are some congregations, though, that seemingly are determined to go on sleeping peacefully through their duties and opportunities. What can be done in such a case? I would suggest that if the group just isn't going to do what it can, the Christians in it who are interested in mission work should do as much as they can, individually. Perhaps the congregation could help support a man in a mission field and won't. Well, this is a bad situation, but it shouldn't stop the interested souls from doing their part. For the sake of easing their own consciences they should, as individuals, send what they can each week or each month to support the work elsewhere. This is the only way they can rest assured that their souls are safe from hell-fire, for verily "**He that knoweth to do good and doeth it not, to him it is sin**" (James 4:17).

In the past few years the Gospel papers have accepted the challenge of mission work in a wonderful way. They have done all they could to encourage the churches in carrying out the commission, and they've made available every possible scrap of information relative to the work being done abroad. I'm sure that a great deal of

the credit for the gradual awakening of the church throughout this nation rightly belongs to the papers that have set the example of being "mission-minded". May God help us to find more effective and appealing and stronger words to print for the purpose of pricking the hearts of the readers!

The latest challenge that has been accepted is to the Christian Colleges. Through the years, I'm sad to say, the colleges have made the same mistake in teaching that the congregations are guilty of: most of them have miserably failed to stress the necessity and urgency of mission work. Every other subject thinkable was offered, but none, or almost none, were available in the field of mission work! What were they thinking about? Here was the greatest, most important, and interesting subject imaginable, and it was — as a whole — completely overlooked! A tragedy indeed! But finally, at long last, some brethren with some vision about them decided that the empty space had to be filled. This past fall **North Central Christian College** began operation with brother Otis Gatewood as its first president, and several former missionaries on its staff as teachers. The primary aim of this college is to make its students, and all interested parties, more pointedly aware of the tremendous challenge of mission work. **Heritage Christian University** in Florence, Alabama also focuses first on evangelism and the equipping of men and women to do that work well. **Bear Valley School of Preaching** and **World Video Bible School** are additional training programs, with facilities available to students in many parts of the world. **Freed Hardeman University**, **Harding University**, and **Sunset School of Preaching** also offer courses to equip those who want to do foreign work. I'm sure that with such an aim, new life and direction will be characteristic of those who come under the influence of these and other brotherhood schools. If such a goal had been present in the colleges twenty-five or thirty years ago, we would now be years ahead of our present position. But let's be thankful that the error is being corrected, in part, and let's do all we can to see to it that similar programs are begun in the other colleges throughout the nation.

There are many challenges facing us, and I thank God that we are answering more and more of them. Brethren everywhere are be-

ginning mission programs; they're planning and conducting special studies in solving the problems of world evangelism; lectureships are being centered around this theme; more congregations are supporting or helping to support a foreign work. New life and interest are springing into existence. The day of preaching the Gospel not only to every nation but to every creature is beginning to dawn. Let us work, for the night cometh when the work must be done!

CHAPTER 12

THEY TURNED THE WORLD UPSIDE DOWN

It thrills me right down to the depths of my heart when I read the declaration of the Thessalonian Jews in Acts 17:6, concerning the early Christians and their work. Listen: ***“These that have turned the world upside down are come hither also.”*** What greater testimony could they have had of the tremendous work they were doing? None! Imagine what the situation must have been: this “new religion” was spreading as a burning flame throughout the whole world, completely changing the lives of those who accepted it — even ultimately affecting the secular culture over the globe! So drastic was the change and so powerful was the impact of Christianity that news of it traveled on the wings of the wind until even those who had never met one of the “CHRISTIANS” knew who they were and what they stood for. The whole world was buzzing with talk of the religion of Christ, and when Paul began to preach to the Thessalonians, they immediately realized that ***“These . . . are come hither also!”*** Naturally, some listened to the truth and obeyed it — others completely rejected its blessings. But the word was preached and within that one generation, every living soul had heard the message of the Christ!

How I long for the day to come when these words will again be characteristic of God’s people. It’s within the realm of *possibility*, and in fact, it’s within the realm of *necessity*. We cannot fail in our generation to obey God’s command.

The church of the first century, small and hampered as it was, has set the pattern and the pace for us. We have a challenge that would stop the strongest body of people, working alone. But, brethren, with an effort we’ll be able to meet that challenge because we have the strength of God to undergird us when we get up and help ourselves.

You ask: “How can we do this? How can we preach the word to every creature — to billions of people — when we are so small? Isn’t this an impossible task to perform?”

In answer to these questions, I'd like to suggest some simple things that would be giant steps in executing the great commission. Recently I worked in a meeting with a church in Bedford, Indiana. The congregation is made up of about 300 members and their contribution averages \$325- \$350, which is typical of many congregations, especially in the south. But anybody with one eye and half-sense can see that such an average is far too low — and the members of the church there admitted as much. On the last Sunday of the meeting I challenged them with this thought: They were barely making ends meet, due to their own financial responsibilities and the help they were supplying for the Southland congregation, just newly established. They didn't have the funds to support, or to help support, a man in a mission field — but if each one of the 300 members would just give 50¢ (that's all!) in addition to his regular contribution (which surely was not, on the whole, as he'd truly been prospered, or the total contribution would have been higher) the figure would jump from \$350 to \$500! And only 50¢ more would have to be taken out of their pockets each week! Well, some of them tried it, and some didn't, but that Sunday they gave a total of \$486. That's \$136 more than they'd been averaging, and plenty enough to help supply the support of a missionary in a foreign field! Now if they would only keep that extra 50¢ in mind and give accordingly each week, you can see what they could do.

Now look at the church as a whole. There are probably 14,000 congregations here in the United States, and about two million members in those congregations. If each Christian would only give 50¢ more each week, we would have \$1,000,000 more in the treasury each week for the preaching of the Gospel abroad! That's \$52,000,000 a year, brethren! And such an amount of money would support and provide for three or four thousand preachers in foreign lands each year!!! Now compare that with our sickly, scrawny, pitiful, pathetic number of maybe 200! And you ask, "Can We Do It?" Why, shame on us! Look what we can do! It makes me nearly have heart failure to think of *how much we have to do with*, and *how little we're doing with it!*

The church in Minneapolis briefly considered sponsoring the

work in India but decided in favor of the negative answer because of the negative attitude of some. But, nevertheless, I'm thankful for the brethren there who were willing to do what they could to help the work go forward throughout the world. One of the brethren made a thought-provoking statement concerning the financing of mission work. He suggested that if each congregation of the 14,000 here in America would put aside \$5.00 more *each month* for preaching the Gospel abroad, each month we would have \$70,000 more to work with. Divide that amount by the required support for one preacher, and we could almost double the number of missionaries we're now supporting !

Let's raise the amount a little. Suppose each congregation, or one individual from each congregation would give \$5.00 *a week* for mission work. We'd have \$280,000 more a month to use in preaching the Gospel and hundreds more preachers could be supported throughout the world! Why, there's just no end to what we can do, and every congregation — no matter how small — can do its part in carrying out such simple suggestions as these.

But someone is bound to complain "Five dollars a week, especially for an individual, is just too much." Oh, it is? I'd like for you to read an article I received this week. I quote: "It is conservatively estimated that there are 1,600,000 members of the church in the U.S. If one out of every eight members (200,000) buys one package of cigarettes per day, the cost would be \$60,000 a day ... If one out of 8 (200,000) takes one coffee break a day, or buys one coke, the cost would be \$20,000 a day. If one out of eight (200,000) bought one 5¢ package of chewing gum per day, the cost would be \$10,000 a day. Now: The total of these three items (items that could hardly be classed as necessities of life) is: \$90,000 *per day*, or \$32,850,000 *per year!!!*" **[Translate those figures to the economy of 2018, and the total increase in funds available for evangelizing the world will blow your mind!]**

We literally have no excuse, brethren, for not doing our work.

Now let's look at the situation, not from the financial standpoint, but in view of what each individual Christian could do. Have you ever stopped to think of the many cities and towns in which one or

more Christians live and yet there's "no church"? **If these people, each Christian, would decide that he and he alone is responsible for starting the church in the community where he lives, think of the result!** Why, all over this world of ours, congregations would spring up, like the lights in a city on a dark night! What a beautiful sight for the soul to behold! Yes, the major cities and many of the smaller, more insignificant ones would soon harbor an industrious body of the Lord's people. Members of the church today move everywhere because of their work, their service in the armed forces, their families, or just a good case of wanderlust. Why can't we take the Gospel with us, and go everywhere preaching as did the early church? This would be one of the quickest methods we could use to evangelize the world.

I suppose these figures may sound incredible, and to tell the truth, my multiplication might be a little off, but not much, I'm sure. At any rate let's think about this for awhile: If you as an individual Christian would set out in determination to convert one soul to Christ each year, and convince him after his conversion of his duty to teach another person each year, just think what the chain reaction would be! At the end of one year two people, you and another person, would be loyal and faithful to Christ because of your efforts. After two years there would be four people; three years would result in eight Christians. The number sounds insignificant doesn't it? But look what ten short years would bring: 1,024 faithful Christians! Twenty years would end in 648,576 won to the cause! And all because of your work in the beginning!

Now, let's say that you and 99 other Christians win one to Christ each year, and convince the new converts that they must do the same. In ten years time 102,400 would be serving God acceptably — 20 years would find the number increased to 64,857,600!

If the two million members of the Lord's body would decide today that they're going to put such a program into effect, individually, we would number 4,000,000 in one year, 8,000,000 in two years and 2,048,000,000 in ten years! Do you realize that that is equivalent to the entire population of the world [**Remember, these statistics were the numbers in 1960...**]? It took the early church

35 years to preach to the people through the world. In a third of that time, according to these figures, we could do the same job!

Beloved, there's no end to the possibilities! The doors are opened so far ahead of us that there's not a closed door in sight. We have the people, the money, the opportunities, and the power to teach every creature about God. All we lack is the faith! Now, what will our future hold?

CHAPTER 13

A PARABLE

"A certain man was blessed, beyond all expectation, with the goods of this world. He had a fine home, a luxurious car; his family had warm clothes in abundance, food was plentiful, and there was nothing to cause him to worry. He could look around him and see all the comforts with which he was blessed; he never had to fear that his wife and children would be in need or that he would have to deny them of anything their hearts desired. Yes, he was blessed.

"But this man had a neighbor. The neighbor was poor, and he had no fine home: his shelter let in the cold when the winter winds blew, and the rain poured through the roof. He did not choose to be poor, nor was he lazy; he did the very best he could to care for his family, but even his best was not enough. His children did not have clothes to keep out the cold of winter; they were thin and sickly because they never had enough food. He did not know where to turn to find the help for himself and his family that he so sorely needed.

"Day after day, the man who was blessed with plenty walked past the poor man's wretched shack. He saw his neighbor as he worked to feed his family and care for them; he saw the man's wife as she did the best she could to make their little bit of food and scanty clothing fill their needs. But he saw, too, that in spite of it all, they shivered in the cold. Every bone of the children's pitiful little bodies stood out in testimony of starvation; their eyes followed him when he carried groceries home, haunting him with their longing; their scrawny hands reached out to him as he passed by, grasping his clothes, and they begged for just a little to eat.

"But he walked on and never gave them a backward glance. Now and then he threw them a crumb or two, but he never put forth any effort to see that they had enough for just one time. He never took a small part from his blessings to help his neighbor. And one day as he passed the shack, he saw them taking one of the children away, and as time went by, another and another died, for the lack of the care he could have given them, until finally the whole family was gone.

"The rich man went to his home and he looked around at all that he had. He reasoned with himself: "They had need of food and clothes and a home, but I did not have enough to spare. I barely have enough for my own family, and a little savings for the future. It isn't my fault that they died in want. I must take care of my own family first." So he cleared his conscience, and it never even bothered him. He had not especially cared for his neighbors' terrible plight all along, and now that they were gone, it passed from his mind like clouds from the sky. He lived in peace with himself."

How would you feel toward such a calloused man as this? Would you not hate his indifference, his coldness, his hardness of heart? Would you not say that he was a miserable man? My brethren, THOU ART THE MAN!

Yes, you are the man who is so blessed, and so uncaring to those around him in need. How? You are blessed not only temporally, but above all, spiritually. You have God's TRUTH! You have everything that can be desired in this world, because you have food and clothing and shelter for your soul, and you have the words of eternal life!

But you have a neighbor — a man living next door, people in the next city, the families of the states around you, the crying, begging population of the whole world — you have a neighbor who is in need of help. He is doing the best he can to do right, but he cannot help himself more; you have the spiritual blessings that he needs, and unless you help him he will never have those needs filled. Your neighbor's family is large: there are millions that cry out in darkness for the Light. They are starving for the bread of life and the water to quench their thirst; their souls are starved and twisted and sick and dying because they have taken anything to fill their needs — denominationalism, atheism, idolatry — when they could not get the truth they desperately need.

Day after day, month after month, year after year, you are reminded of your neighbor's condition. You know that his hands reach out hungrily for the truth you hold so thanklessly in your grasp. You know that he will die eternally without that truth, and yet you walk carelessly by and pay no heed. You see your neighbors dying by the thousands each day, lost and damned, and you don't care! You don't care, brethren.

You reason within yourself that you don't have the money to take the truth of God to those poor souls. You know that without it they stand condemned; you know that it is your responsibility to teach them of the Saviour's will, but you excuse yourself with "I am too poor. First I must take care of my own self and all my needs. There isn't enough to spare for any one else." Since you aren't very concerned about their salvation all along, their passing from this life means nothing to you. So you live in peace with yourself.

Yes, thou art the man, and you're wretched and miserable and blind because you don't care for any soul but your own. You buy fine cars, elaborate homes, expensive clothes; you eat to the point of being gluttonous; you spend your money on luxuries: television, theaters, long vacations, trifles! You throw money to the winds, and then you whine that we're too poor to do anything about taking the blessed truth to the rest of mankind.

Well, bless your heart, you *are* too poor, but not materially; your own soul is near death because you would not take to yourself the truth you possess. You know that you are blessed to have the truth in your possession, and you have fooled yourself into thinking that you have accepted it, but listen: ***"Because thou sayest, I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing; and knowest not that thou are wretched and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked: I counsel thee to buy of me gold tried in the fire, that thou mayest be rich; and white raiment, that thou mayest be clothed, and that the shame of thy nakedness do not appear; and anoint thine eyes with eye salve, that thou mayest see. As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten: be zealous therefore, and repent"*** (Revelation 3:17-19).

My brethren, unless we wake up and make Christianity a live religion instead of a dead or sleeping one, not only will we be responsible for the lost condition of the rest of the world, but our own souls stand in jeopardy of being cast into hell. Let's stop fooling ourselves! Neglect will be the condemning sin in the lives of the majority of "Christians". It is said that death is the common denominator of all men, and it may very well be that death will snatch away our robes of piety and leave us to stand before the judgment bar with no cloak to cover our hypocrisy.

Brethren, let us wake up. The end is coming, and our own souls are in danger of hell. That is too great a sacrifice to pay for indifference. Don't let yourself make that sacrifice.

Brethren, let's go into all the world and preach the Gospel, so that many souls will be saved, including our own.

CHAPTER 14

LET'S FACE IT

Well, Brethren, that's about it. That's the story thus far. What it will be ten, fifteen, twenty, or even fifty years from now will be another picture altogether, but there's one thing for sure: the story then will depend much on what is done right now.

The Lord willing, my wife and I are going to India. But I hear someone asking, "Why should we give you a free trip around the world?" Well, if that was all it would amount to — just a free trip — I couldn't blame you. But I am not going for the trip, or for the glory, or for prestige that might come from it. I am going to preach the Gospel; to give more souls the opportunity of being saved. There are some who feel that the only reasons that prompt people to work as missionaries are selfish ones, but when the situation is reversed, and the suggestion is made, "You go, then," the answer always comes back: "No! I'll stay here where it's safe."

There are a good number of brethren who don't intend to go and they aren't going to help, but they can criticize. They can always tell you why the other fellow is going. They surmise that it is because of a heart of selfishness, or for a trip, or for the popularity that he gains from it, or maybe because of the money that is involved. Yes, they've got it all figured out!

But let's just concede that there is a trip in it, that one does receive some attention, and that perhaps the salary may be increased a little (or maybe not; few missionaries draw a salary equal to state-side preachers), but that isn't the whole picture.

Why not tell the other side? Tell how the man and his family are giving up the comforts of home to go to a land of poverty and inconveniences. Tell how he and his wife are leaving their families behind for a period of three or four or more years, to go and live in a land of strangers. Tell how he has to give up his own language to learn a new one, that he is leaving his own country for another; he is giving up fellowship in strong congregations, the conveniences of home and of a well-developed economy, perhaps a good salary, to go to a people who know nothing of Christ to begin a new work from nothing and to toil and pray that it might be at least somewhat

established while he is there. Explain all the hardships, difficulties, red tape, and heartaches that go hand-in-hand with beginning such a work; tell of the money it takes to advertize, to rent a place in which to live, the work and responsibility of arranging for a place for the church to meet or to build a meeting house. Emphasize the cost of food and clothing and equipment while in a foreign land; tell of all the begging and pleading that are necessary in order to raise the support, travel expenses, etc.; tell of the many decisions that had to be made in preparing to go; tell of all the work that is involved in sending out reports, and of all the work that is expected and demanded of one while in such a land; tell of all that one endures in order to take the Gospel to the world; yes, tell *the whole story*. If this were only done, Christians wouldn't have such a warped conception of the preaching of the Gospel abroad.

Dear ones, what can I say to get you to realize that this commitment is not all glory and little work? What can I say to get you to see that this is not child's play, but serious business? I want you to see people hungry, naked, and in the gutter of sin. I want you to see thousands and millions begging, crying, and pleading for the bread and water of life. I want you to see the poor decrepit souls dying without hope. Then, maybe then, you will be moved with compassion and have mercy upon them. Don't harden your hearts and turn thumbs down on them! Give them what you can, now, while there is hope.

One of our big needs in the church today is to be stirred up. We need to get mad at sin. The Devil is being allowed to run free when we should be challenging his every move. Paul says that the Christian should put on the whole armour of God. Why? **Because we are in a fight for our [eternal] lives and therefore we need to act like it.** We must be fighting sin, error, religious error, immorality, ignorance, and everything that the devil represents. What do we care how few we are in number in comparison with the world and denominational churches? As long as the Lord is with us, nothing can stop us! Not even the devils of hell can keep us from marching on to victory, conquering the world for Christ. No, nothing can stop us — but ourselves!

“O ye of little faith.” Is that what the Lord has said of you and me? Is that what He has said of the church? Let not that be our end, but rather may we have the kind of faith that will move mountains. May we say that we can do a thing, and then work to see it accomplished. We can do anything we want to do as long as it is right, and there are plenty of doors for us to pass through to demonstrate this principle. What are we waiting for?

Let's turn our communities upside down for Christ! Let's turn our nation upside down with the Gospel! Let's turn the world upside down with the truth that makes men and women free! Brethren, here is the thing that mankind needs! This will bring peace. This is the thing that will save the world.

May the Lord give us the kind of zeal that will be as a burning fire within us, that refuses to go out. And may it keep us restless, ever on the move, proclaiming and declaring the truth to dying man and woman, both at home and abroad. Let's not be satisfied unless we are preaching, teaching, and publishing the word to the multitudes.

I am my brother's keeper. I am debtor. I have something for my fellowman and I must deliver it to him.

What of you? Will you not join with us to take this good news to the rest of the world? Who will go with us? Who will go to the countries that are yet in darkness? Do you mean to tell me that you can say you are a Christian, and yet be willing to sit with folded hands? Get up off the stool of do-nothing, lest the Lord come and find you sleeping!

Brethren, I could go on and on; maybe it would be only to restate what has already been said, but it needs to be said so often that we cannot forget it. It needs to be said to the point that it will constantly ring in our minds. **We must be moved, someway, somehow!**

How DARK THE NIGHT?

Billions — YES! — of precious souls
Grove through a world of night;
They have no Saviour's hand to hold
To lead them in the light.

The gods they have are made by hands,
Yet blindly do they serve,
For not one man has gone to them
To teach the Master's word.

They have not learned the sweetest name
That mortal lips can say;
They do not know that Jesus died
To take their sins away.

They do not know the Saviour said:
"Ye weary, come to me."
They have not heard, and turned away
They die, and never see.

Like them, we too shall cease to live
We're looking toward a rest;
We long to see that heavenly home
And dwell there with the blest.

But will God say, "Well done, my sons,"
And take us home with Him,
When those poor souls we should have taught,
In blindness, stand condemned?

Oh, let us see them saved, my friends;
Let's work while yet 'tis day
And tell them Jesus died for them
To show that perfect way.

Billions — YES! — of precious souls,
Just waiting for the truth—
Will they die, just waiting still?
The answer lies with you.

J.C. Choate

Covering These Last Six Decades...

Betty Burton Choate

Would you like to follow J.C.'s dream through these passing decades? I'll give you a brief but exciting overview, one that was covered beautifully in the annual India Mission Conference which our team was privileged to host this year at Heritage Christian University in Florence, Alabama:

For most of two years we tried to get visas as Americans for long-term work in India. When our attempts were unsuccessful, J.C. wrote about it in the brotherhood Gospel papers. Canadian brethren, knowing that both Canada and India were in the Commonwealth of Nations, realized that they needed no visas! Brothers J.C. and Cecil Bailey, as well as Carl and Jim Johnson, and others began to make plans and to raise funds to go. In fact, we were already settled in Karachi, Pakistan when brother J.C. Bailey stopped to visit with us on his way to India in late 1963.

The Canadian missionaries worked primarily in states in South India, the Baileys in Andhra Pradesh, and the Johnsons in Tamil Nadu. Converts were made and churches came into existence. With the spreading of the news, many American brethren made short working trips of two or three weeks to add to the outreach that was being done. The Gary Walkers, Craig Phillips and other Americans discovered that they could get student visas or other types that allowed them to live and work in India. So the work force grew through the years.

Six decades later, what progress was reported during the 2018 Conference? That the church in India is no longer in its infancy but has made tremendous gains in size as well as in maturity! Numerous congregations number in the hundreds of members, have their own buildings, are blessed with elders and deacons, and are financially and spiritually able to take care of their own needs. Orphanages exist and care is provided in many places for widows. There are leadership training programs, Bible colleges, evangelistic outreach programs, Bible camps, seminars, lectureships, and monthly preachers' meet-

ings that provide study opportunities as well as door-knocking and Bible studies with contacts in the city or village where the meeting is taking place. Radio and TV programs continue to add to the number who have opportunity to learn the truth, with monthly magazines, Bible courses, and other printed materials provided for follow-up, in addition to all the personal studies that take place every day.

How many churches exist in India now? A definite number would be difficult to name, but it would be no exaggeration to say that there are certainly more members of the Lord's church in India today than in the United States! What wonderful changes these six decades have brought for the souls in that land who were hungry for God's truth! And how thankful we are for the many brothers and congregations on this side of the world that have made this dream become a reality!

Now, Back to our Particular Part of the Story:

Since we were not able to get visas to go to India, we went to Karachi, Pakistan instead, beginning the church in that multi-million city, working there from 1962 and into 1967. Others took our place, and we did interim work in Colombo, Sri Lanka for almost a year (1968), planting the church in that capital city. At the end of 1968 we moved to New Delhi, India to sow the seed and were there until the middle of 1969. You can read about these years of work and the churches that developed in my book, **First Steps in Faith**.

The David family, and a few others, had been converted in New Delhi during the first seven months we spent there, up to the middle of 1969. Even though it was not financially possible to move a family of five in and out, functioning on 3-month tourist visas, J.C. knew that he needed to be with the infant church to help it in its growth toward maturity, so the children and I stayed in the States and he returned alone to India at the beginning of 1970. His times outside of India were spent profitably, encouraging Christians in Sri Lanka, Singapore, Iran and other neighboring countries where young churches existed.

In 1972 we returned as a family, finishing out a 3-month visa, then a 3-month extension, then our landlord helped us to meet a government official who had enough clout that we were able to apply for 1-year journalist visas. Ultimately, permission was denied, but

we had been allowed the time anyway before the decision was handed down! Those months saw tremendous progress in the church, not only in Delhi but also with the work being done by other brethren throughout the country. Capable preachers and workers, now with 6-8 years of experience, were working with the foreign missionaries to expand the growth of the church.

And a new opportunity was also opening up: brother Reggie, one of those first converts in Sri Lanka, had informed us that the radio station — “the Giant of Asia” — [and this was before television had come to that part of the world] was being opened for religious broadcasting! Even while we had lived in Pakistan, we had listened primarily to that radio station, so we knew something of its coverage. Actually, it could be heard throughout the Eastern Hemisphere, from the Fiji Islands in the east to the Scandinavian countries in the west!

We were thrilled beyond words with the developing scenario:

(1) Our time in India was up, and we had to return to the States.

(2) There was the possibility of broadcasting programs, sponsored by churches of Christ, on “the Giant of Asia”.

(3) We knew of men, sound in the faith, who could record sermons in five of the major languages of India!

(4) If funds could be raised for those programs, the message of the Gospel would go out all over the country, and millions would have the opportunity to hear, learn, and obey!

(5) In support of the programs, Bible correspondence courses and other printed materials would have to be offered.

(6) Follow-up work would be done by the local Christians and preachers.

When we were first considering the undertaking, we knew that it would require long periods of separation for our family. J.C.’s attempt to encourage me was, “Let’s just try it for awhile and see how it works.” My reply was, “You know there will be such an overwhelming response that there would be no way either of us could ever say, ‘That’s enough — we can’t go on with this separation’; either we go into it for the long term, or not at all.” With the commitment made, we came back to the States in mid-1974 and J.C. began

visiting churches, telling of the great open door and raising funds for the proposed programs.

A pattern developed of three months in India in the spring to record the radio tapes and to work with the brethren on the developing and printing of literature, three months in the summer to raise funds to pay for all of that new undertaking, three more months in India in the fall for the recording, and three months in the winter to visit more churches and to raise more money. That continued for twenty years, until our children were out of the nest and I could accompany him on each trip.

So what has been the result of those voices being heard throughout the country for these many years? **Thousands of congregations have been established, and hundreds of thousands have been born into God's family. Bible correspondence courses, coupled with monthly magazines in the local languages, and many study books have been printed and distributed free of charge throughout the country and even in neighboring countries. Most of the radio programs have now morphed into television programs, since TV is available everywhere, and the response continues to grow.**

Combined with the efforts of others and our continued efforts to teach the Gospel through mass media, there are now several Bible colleges in the country, orphanages, work among the blind population (which numbers more than half the blind people of the entire world), many programs to help those in need, seminars for maturing Christians, family Bible camps, monthly area preachers' meetings, and annual lecture programs that draw thousands from neighboring congregations.

What has happened in these almost six decades? Through the combined efforts of Canadian, American, and Indian brethren the church has grown from non-existence through birth, infancy, and now into a blossoming maturity in many parts of the country. Though there are still not enough local resources to pay for the mass-media efforts, many churches pay their own preachers, build their own buildings, and cover the cost of local work.

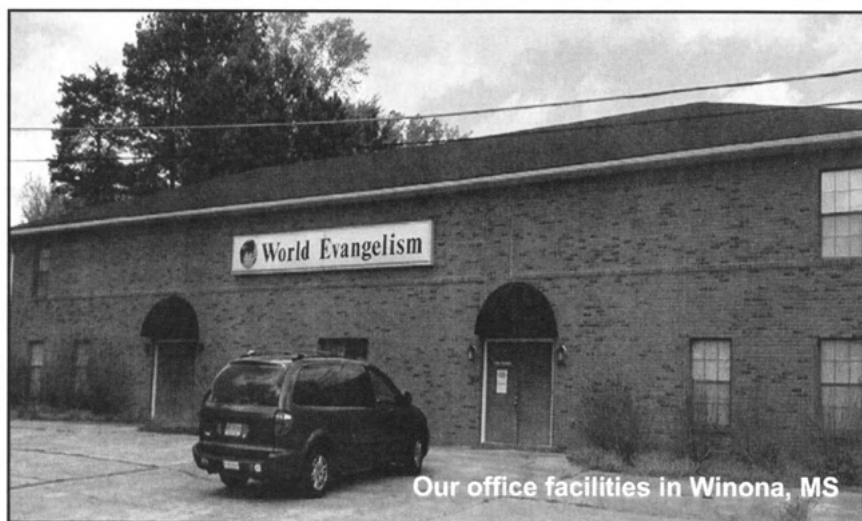
In addition to the work in India, evangelism continues in Pakistan through the efforts of local Christians and preachers. Churches

exist in Nepal and Myanmar, and through the printing of our quarterly magazine, *The Voice of Truth International*, teaching is being done in about 60 additional countries. It is also printed on site in India, Nigeria, and Ghana.

In 1993, largely through volunteer help from American brethren, an 8,000 square foot, two-story office building was constructed in Winona, MS for the use of World Evangelism team members. Barbara Oliver and Eulene Ramsey worked with us in that office for fifteen years. J.C. served as Editor of *The Voice of Truth International* from its first issue in 1994 until his death in 2008; Byron Nichols, who had been the Associate Editor, then moved into the position of Editor. Byron retired in 2017 and Louis Rushmore became the Editor, with Jerry Bates serving as Associate Editor.

When J.C.'s cancer returned in 2005, we began the prayerful search for others to join the team, to continue with the work J.C. had been doing here at home and overseas. Betty learned to do what she could do as a woman. In the late summer of 2007, Jerry and Paula Bates moved to Winona, joined a month later by Louis and Bonnie Rushmore. God has so graciously provided for every need!

Let me share some photos that illustrate the dramatic changes in the spiritual picture in these countries, since we looked at them with longing in 1960:





Our World Evangelism team in the US has grown from two to a wonderful fellowship of brothers and sisters working together. At the present time, Jerry and Paula Bates, and Louis and Martha Rushmore and I (Betty Choate) work from our base in Winona, and Dennis Larson does distance computer-problem-solving. Wayne and Janet Barrier, with their sons, Jamie, Joey, and Jeremy, living in Florence, AL are also important members of the team. The Barriers have been a vital part since 1983, and we are so thankful for them!



The dream of evangelizing through printed materials has grown and materialized in these years. The boxes on the left hold our 120 pocket-sized, tri-fold, full-color tracts. They are used widely in the US and overseas, selling for 10 cents each in bundles of 25 copies.

Volunteers come to Winona to help with many things, including bundling the tracts and unloading pallets of books.

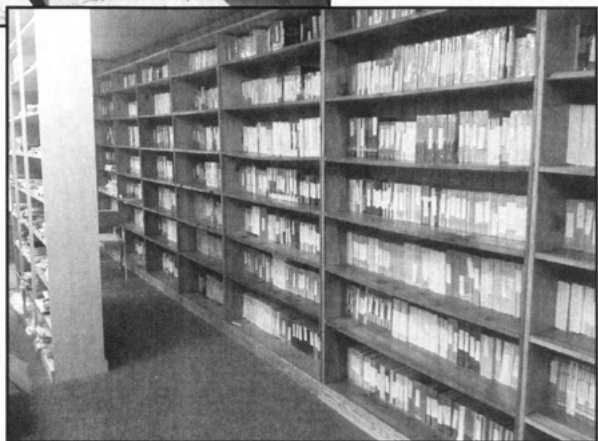


Left: Helpful volunteers putting together sets of our tracts.
Below: Betty Choate in *The Voice of Truth International* storage area; our supply of printed materials fills the lower floor of the World Evangelism building.

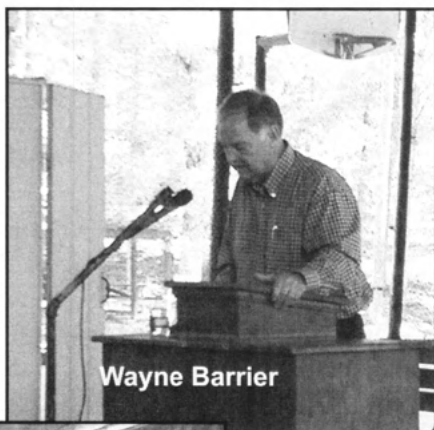


Every year we ship thousands of copies of books overseas, to be shared free of charge to the recipients — getting the message of the Gospel out!

In the archives room we preserve copies of each book printed here in the states and among our brethren overseas. Through the years, hundreds of thousands of copies have been printed and shared in many nations of the world.



In addition to foreign work, our team has sponsored an annual Missionary Retreat, attended by approximately 100 people each year. This is a time for missionaries from many countries to share with each other and with interested Christians the methods, means, and experiences in the work they are doing.



Wayne Barrier

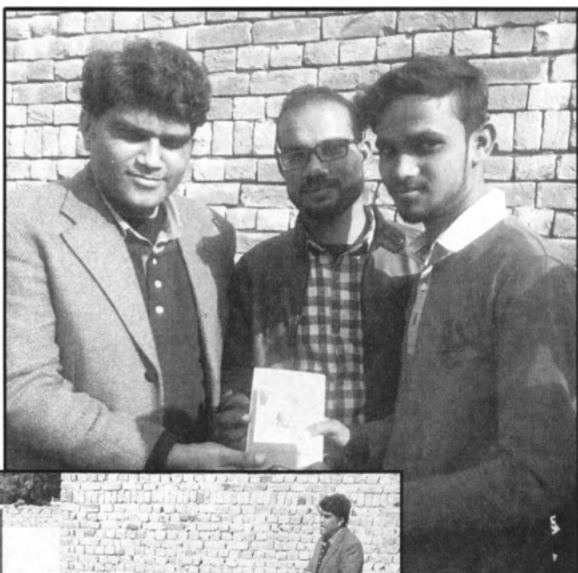


In combination with the lectures and question-and-answer sessions, participants enjoy breakfast, noon, and evening meals together, and talks late into the night.



We also participate in brotherhood lectures, taking along a display of our books and giving information about our work, always encouraging others to join us.

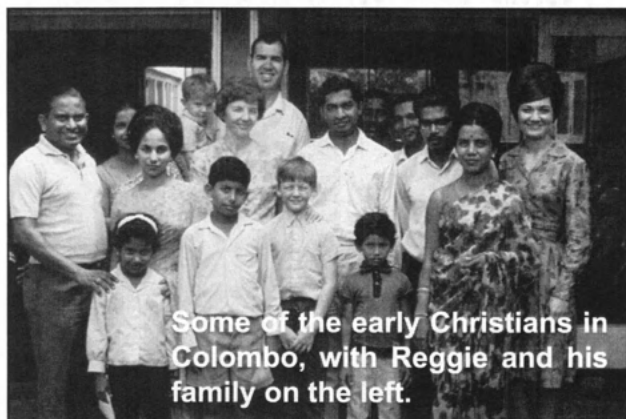
These are photos of Christians in Pakistan, in Lahore (lower left), in Toba Tek Singh, and Burewala. Congregations still exist in Karachi, though because of the tense relationship between Pakistan and India, it is not possible for us to go to Pakistan. We help to support these works.



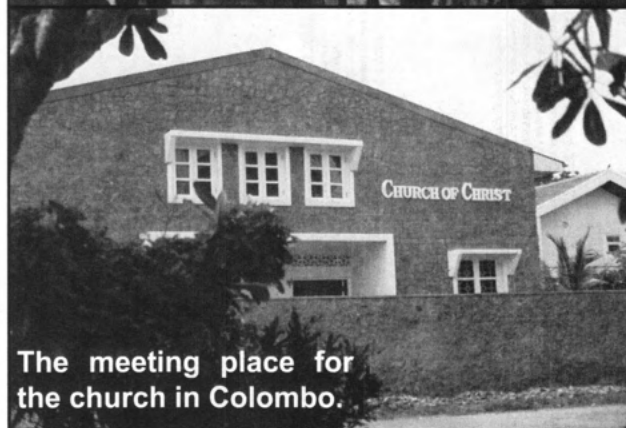
Left: Shahid preaching in Toba Tek Singh in an open-air meeting.

Below: Christians in Lahore, in prayer. Asghar Ali has been a part of the Lord's church since 1962.

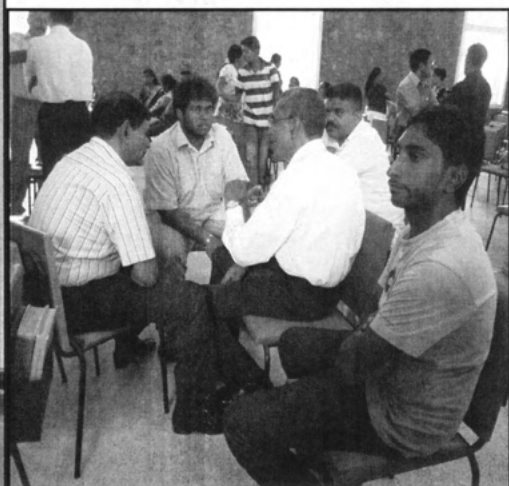
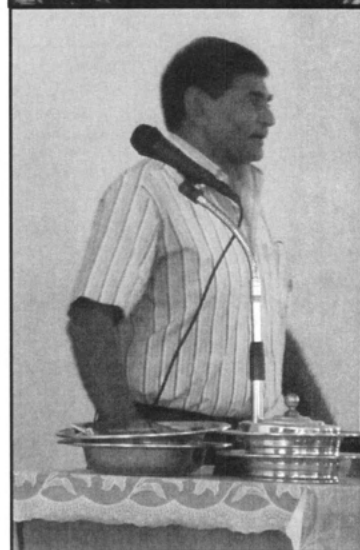




Some of the early Christians in Colombo, with Reggie and his family on the left.

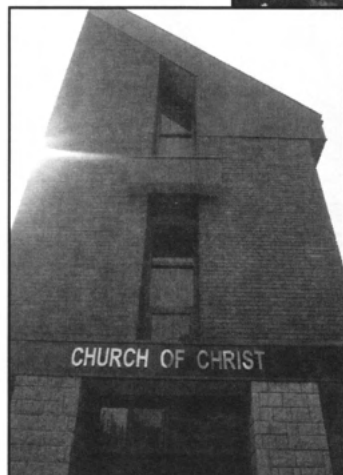
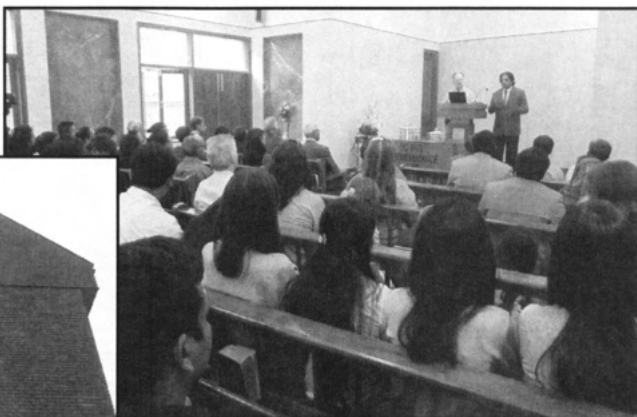
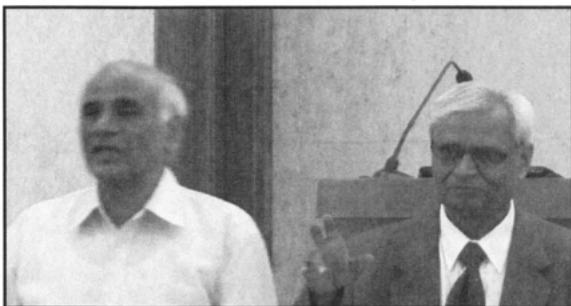


The meeting place for the church in Colombo.



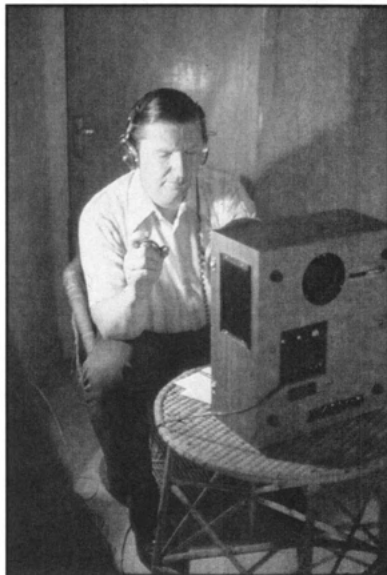
From Karachi, Pakistan we moved to Colombo, Sri Lanka to start the church. During the ten months we were there, Reggie Gnanasundaram, his family, and others were obedient, a total of 40 souls, altogether. Throughout Reggie's life, he proved to be a dedicated worker, partnering with us and with others to add to the church and to construct a building. His son-in-law, Harold Thomas (lower left) and daughter, Lilani, have been faithful in carrying on the work. Below, the men are having discussions about the work after the morning worship.

The church was started in New Delhi, India in the winter of 1968. North India is predominantly Hindu, so the growth of the church there has been slower than in the southern states. The church in Delhi has elders and deacons, and its own place of worship, below.

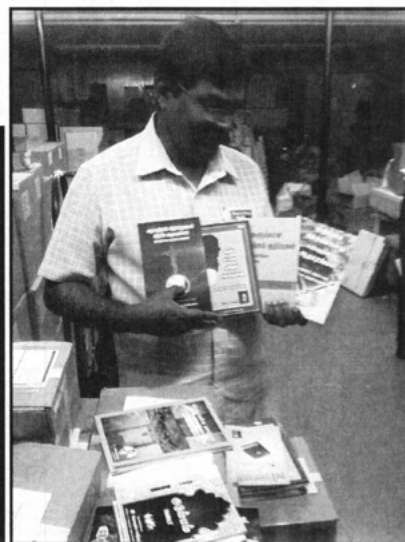


Above, congregational worship with translation from English to Hindi. Below: a fellowship meal.

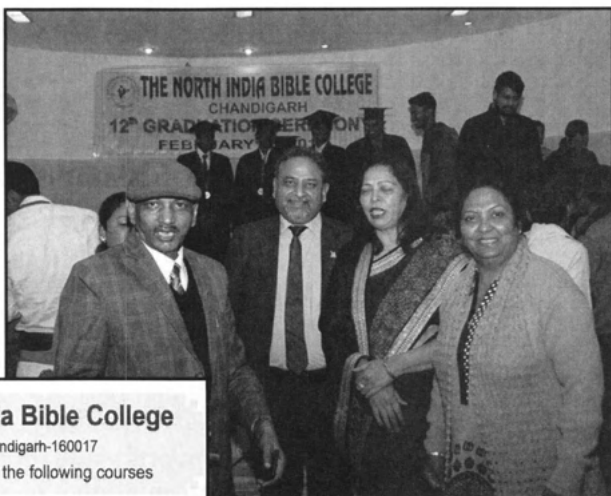




In 1975 it became possible to have radio programs transmitted from Sri Lanka throughout much of the eastern hemisphere. Programs were begun in English and four additional Indian languages. Above, J.C. doing the recording of the programs. In time, most of the outreach was changed to TV (pictured below: Ricky Gootam, second-generation preacher), coupled with all types of printed materials: monthly magazines, Bible courses, and books. The Bible Teacher in New Delhi has been printed every month since 1969, and circulated to thousands! Right, Philemon Rajah with books and magazines in Tamil.



The Indian churches have grown in maturity so that there are several Bible colleges in the country, as well as orphanages and programs to aid widows. Right: Earnest Gill operates the North



The North India Bible College

P. O. Box 44, Chandigarh-160017

invites applications for the following courses

Regular:

6 Months' CERTIFICATE OF BIBLICAL STUDIES

1 year's DIPLOMA IN BIBLICAL STUDIES

2 years' BACHELOR IN BIBLICAL STUDIES

Correspondence:

BASIC BIBLE COURSE (Medium: Hindi/English/Punjabi)

(Duration: As soon as you finish the course, you will receive a beautiful Certificate of completion)

2 Years' Diploma Course (Hindi/English/Punjabi)

(This course is best suitable for the working people and those who can not stay for long.

After completing 32 courses you will be awarded DIPLOMA IN BIBLICAL STUDIES.

Study 1 course for 3 months at your home and come to NIBC for 3 days.

We will teach you 1 course in 3 days.)

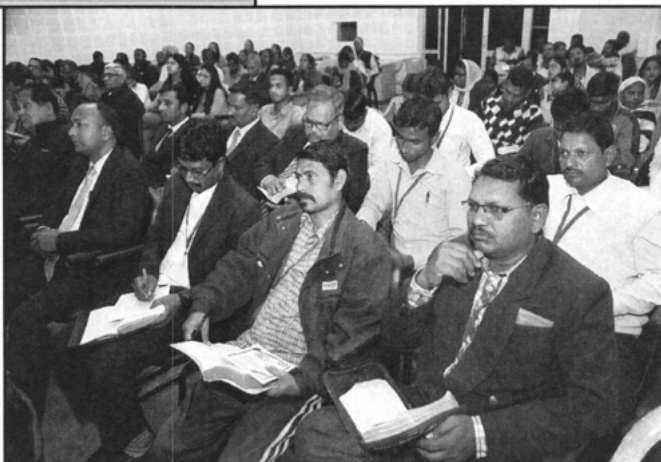
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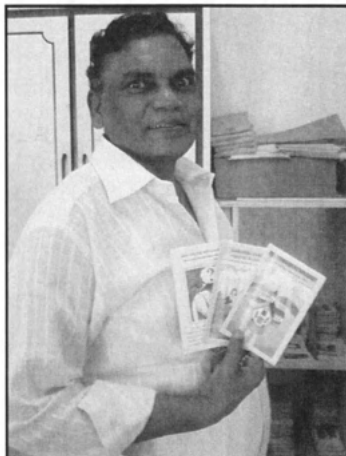
The North India Bible College - Chandigarh

Email: hindibiblecourse@gmail.com, Cell: 09872869079

India Bible College in Chandigarh, sponsored through the combined efforts of World Evangelism and American churches. Students come from neighboring states to benefit from the training. Each February the college has a well-attended seminar, pictured below. Jerry and Paula Bates, Russell Bell and other involved American workers have participated in these meetings, as well as

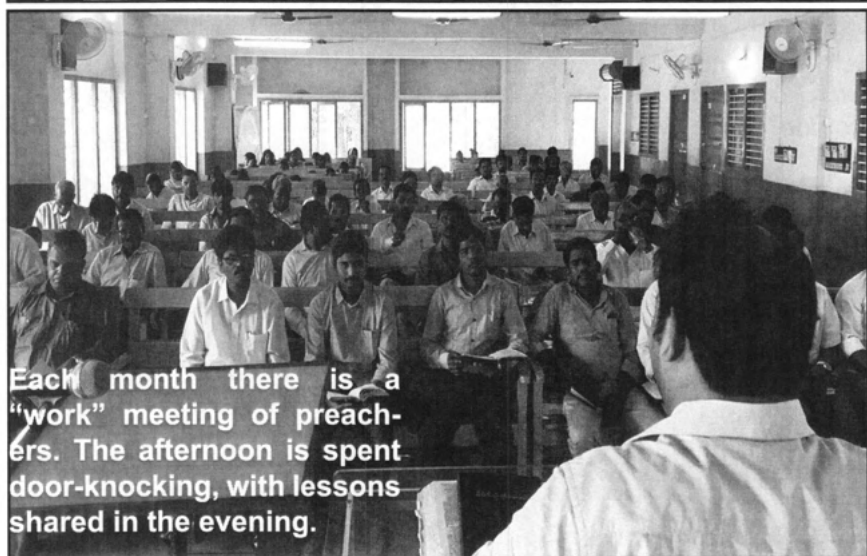
Betty Choate. Such schools provide the training for preachers who will carry on the work of evangelizing the country, as foreigners are increasingly being denied visas by the government.





J.C. Baily began the work in Andhra Pradesh. The Gootam family were early converts, and countless thousands

have been converted through the multiplying work of, now, third generation Christians. Pictured below is a Gospel meeting, attended by about 10,000 people, overall. 13,000 copies of their magazine are sent out each month. Local and national TV programs air each week.

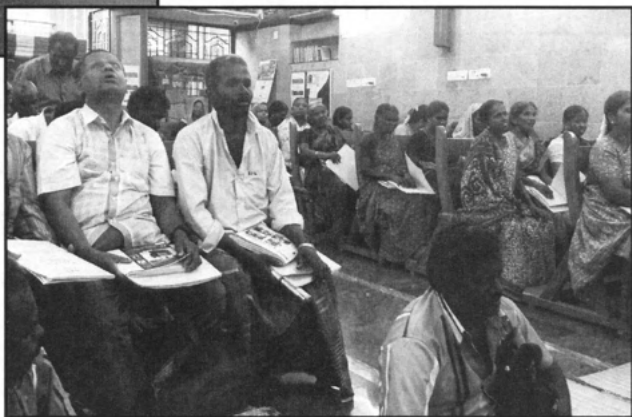


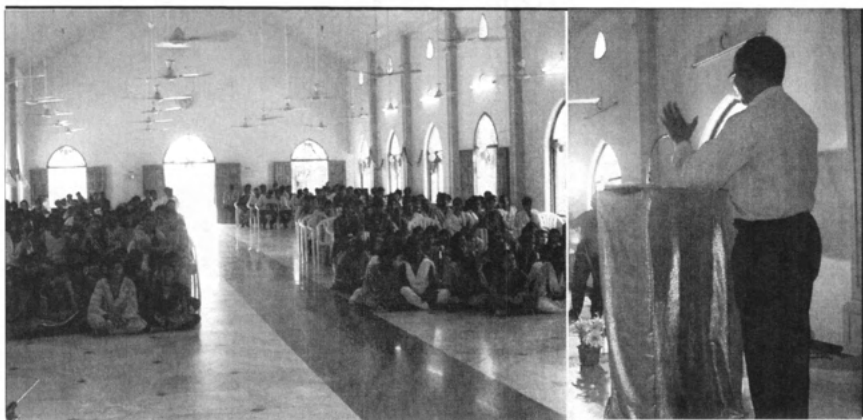
Each month there is a "work" meeting of preachers. The afternoon is spent door-knocking, with lessons shared in the evening.



Philemon Rajah, with his sons-in-law, Kingsly and Andrew, are responsible for recording TV programs, translating and printing monthly magazines and books, printing and distributing 7000 copies of *The Voice of Truth International* in English throughout India and neighboring countries. They are also doing work among the 15 million blind people, printing Braille materials, and training members of congregations in personal evange-

lism and Bible studies through "The JC School of Evangelism". Many congregations have been begun and nurtured through these well-developed programs.





Arjunan also works in the state of Tamil Nadu. Recently, through a Bible course contact, he has been invited on repeated occasions to address attendees in a private secular school of about 1,500 students.

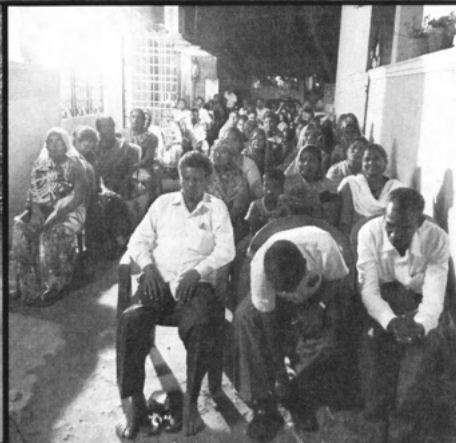


Arjunan works with numerous preachers, shown above during a lecture given by Jerry Bates. Below is a gathering of Christians in the city of Kumuli.

History says that the apostle Thomas traveled and preached in what is Tamil Nadu. He was martyred and is buried there. The "Mar Thoma" church does not hold to the original truth but is testimony to the



fact that Thomas did plant the Lord's church in that area in the first century. Many thousands of Christians live in that state today, and are continuing to spread the word.



We work with Rajanayagam in his outreach to those who respond to his TV programs, the monthly magazine, and the translated version of *The Voice of Truth International* in the Tamil language. The congregation in Kangayam, about 300 members, sponsors an annual Bible camp and a lectureship attended by Christians from many area congregations. Rajanayagam preaches in meetings in many cities throughout Tamil Nadu.

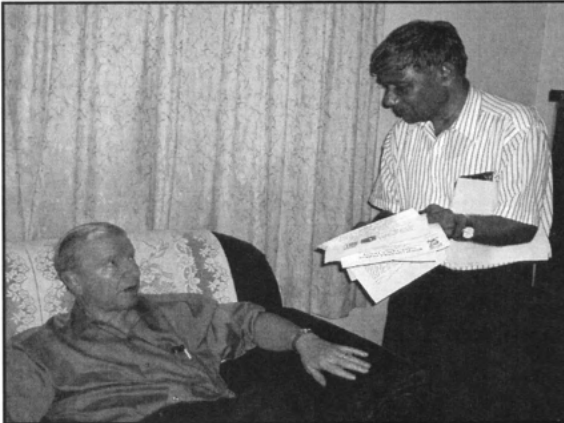


Above: a ladies' seminar with P.K. and Thankam Varghese. They work in the state of Kerala, having begun the church in Tiruvananthapuram, Kovalum and are now working with the congregation in Kochi, in conjunction with a Bible training school, sponsored by the Sunset International Bible Institute.



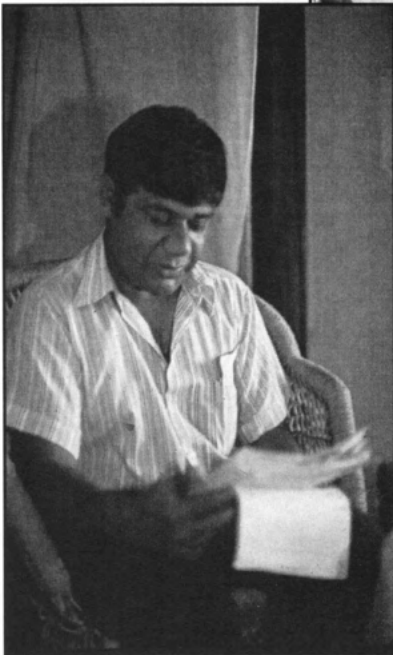
Left: Joshah Varghese, with Betty Choate and P.K. and Thankam.

Left: P.K. preparing for a recent baptism in the Kovalum congregation.



P.R. Swamy, in Bangalore, Karnataka, India, a very sincere convert from Hinduism, was one of the first five radio speakers for churches of Christ on Radio Sri Lanka. He continues with three weekly programs in the Tamil language that have had a tremendous impact on

the growth of the Gospel throughout the state and the entire Tamil-speaking area. Pictured to the right are Joshua Gootam, Swamy, and Sunny David, speakers in three of the major languages. J.C. Choate spoke on

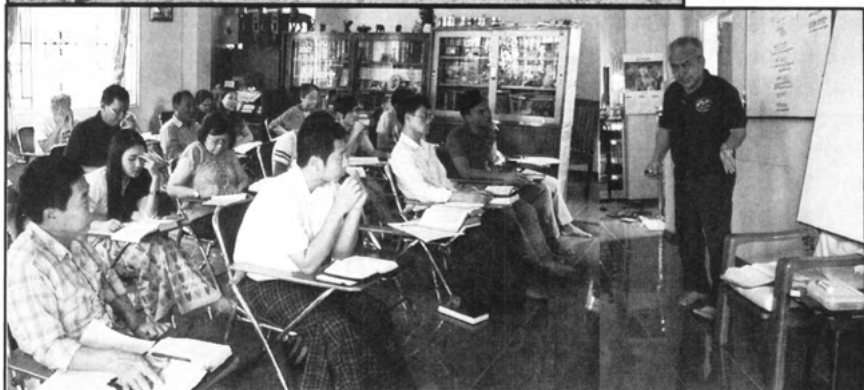


the English programs. Left, a young Swamy reading his radio manuscript. Below, an older but still energetic Swamy with his wife, Sarojah.



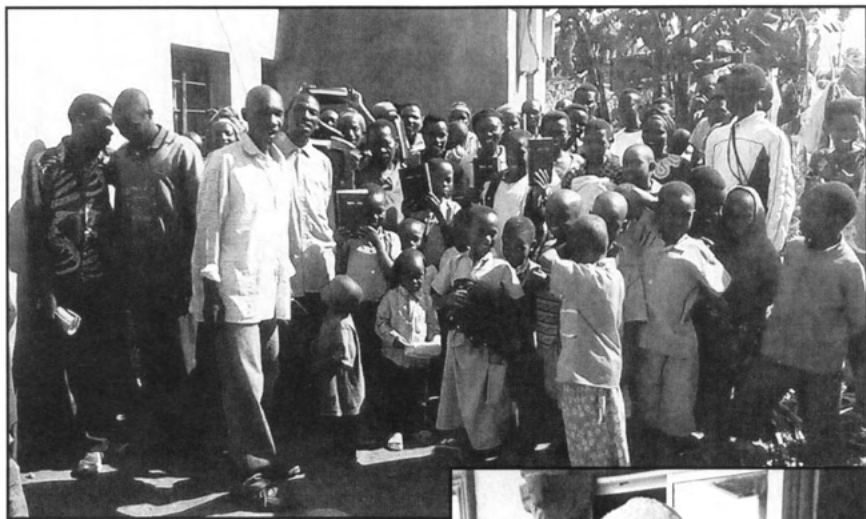


The Gospel crossed the east India border into Burma, and the church began in Yangon. Pictured is one congregation, also sessions of the Bible School.

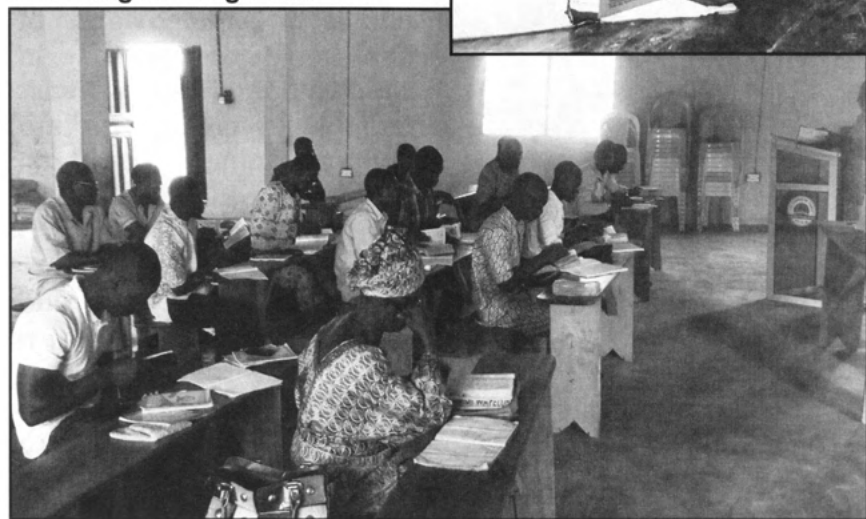


Each year two six-week Bible schools are conducted in Yangon. Preachers from there go throughout the country and into China.





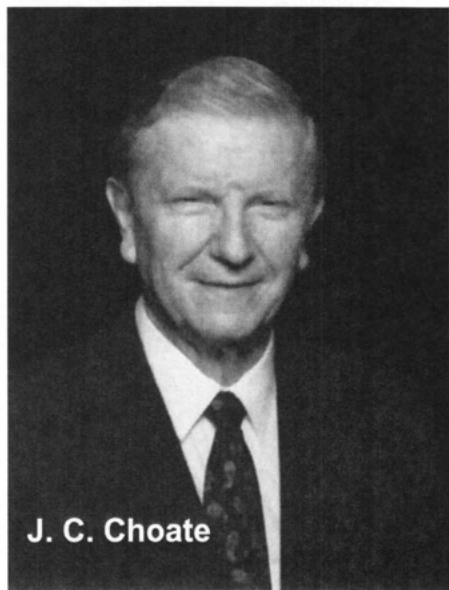
It is estimated that there are more members of the Lord's church in Nigeria than in the US. In order to aid in the continued evangelism, we print 6,000 copies of *The Voice of Truth International* in both Ghana and Nigeria, and they are shared with neighboring nations. Pictured are Christians and training school sessions, and one Christian's joy in reading the magazine.



THE PAST BECOMES THE PRESENT...

We are so thankful to have lived through these six decades, watching the development of God's vision that was so much greater than anything we would have ever dreamed possible. Though our "World Evangelism team" has been directly involved in the many wonderful things that have happened, as pictured in these pages, we certainly don't claim to have been the only workers on the field.

We are deeply thankful for every "full-time" missionary who has worked overseas during these years, and for every "short-term" missionary who has added to the great good accomplished. And we are eternally grateful to every individual Christian and congregation that has supplied the funds for the advancement of the work. God gave all Christians the task of evangelizing the world, and it is as we put our hearts and hands together that the work is being done.



J. C. Choate

Of course, very little of lasting good would have been accomplished without the conviction and dedication of souls in those countries in which all of us have worked. Individuals have grown into congregations, brethren with the knowledge and perseverance to carry on into the future decades, whether or not foreign workers and funds are available. All of it is God's work in His kingdom, and we are only thankful to have been privileged to have a small part.

LOOKING TO THE DECADES AHEAD

The words of our Lord are still ringing in the ears of the church: *“Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature”* (Mark 16:15). Never, as long as time stands, will we be free of that responsibility.

It is a burden on the soul, but as we have seen in looking back over the past decades, we don't carry the burden alone. In fact, God Himself is the visionary and the enabler, so that it is possible for us to do in this 21st Century what the church of the first century did! How can that be possible?

Originally, Jesus spoke to His apostles — twelve men! Today, there are literally millions of Christians in the world, with hundreds of million copies of the complete Word of God! What advantages we have!

But there is much more! Through seas, rivers, roads, and airports, the entire world is accesible to us, wherever we may choose to go: just buy a ticket, get on that plane, and in a matter of hours you can be almost anywhere in the world, with access to those citizens.

When you get there, you have many tools for evangelism: word of mouth, advertisements through many mediums, radio, TV, printed materials, and public gatherings.

But look at the many great additional tools God has supplied for our use, just in the past two and three decades: We have the Internet, YouTube, Facebook, individual Websites, and other mass-media methods of connecting. Many churches today are putting their worship services on the Internet, making the lessons available for people all over the world! Countless sermons have been shared over YouTube and on individual church websites. Through Facebook, thoughts and even lessons can be shared with “friends” everywhere, inviting responses and interaction. Souls can be introduced to the Truth and can be won to Christ through these exchanges.

We also have great avenues through World Video Bible School, World Bible School, World English Institute, House to

House printings, Apologetics Press, Focus Press, Search for the Lord's Way, Mission Printing, Gospel Broadcasting Network, and other organized works too numerous to name. If all of us, continuing our individual works but also pooling our talents and materials to develop the needed TV channel for the church, it could be done easily!

So, if we just stop to consider the tools God has provided for us to use in evangelism in this generation, and throughout the world, there is no reason why we cannot do in this age what the First Century Christians did: **WE CAN EVANGELIZE THE ENTIRE WORLD!!!**

I am compelled to think of one point J.C. made in his appeals for help with the work he wanted to do: He said that if each American Christian gave just \$1.00 more each Sunday, to be set aside in the treasuries for the sole purpose of world evangelism, there would be approximately \$1,250,000 additional dollars *more* EVERY WEEK for world evangelism! In a year's time, that would be about \$62,400,000, with not one penny subtracted from the local budget!

Now, what could be done with that money, accumulating every year? **THE CHURCH COULD HAVE ITS OWN WORLD-WIDE 24-HOUR-A-DAY TV CHANNEL!** Sufficient funds would be continually given to provide man-power to keep everything going smoothly, and for the necessary follow-up tools! With all these other provisions already in place to reach the world, **THIS ONE LAST GREAT STEP IS THE ONE WE NEED TO MAKE. AND THE WORK CAN BE DONE!**

Brethren, I beg you to listen to this idea and to set in motion this great work in the congregation of which you are a member. Convince the Christians under your influence to partner with us, so that our Lord's parting command to His people can be obeyed. Please contact us with your commitment to work together:

**World Evangelism
P.O. Box 72
Winona, Mississippi 38967
662-283-1192**