

# *The Call To World Evangelism*

By

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## *Introduction*

Have you ever read the book of Acts? If you have, go over it again and again. You will be thrilled by what you read. Jesus had commanded the Apostles to take the gospel into all the world (Mark 16:15, 16; Matthew 28:19, 20), and then He had given them the plan for carrying out that great commission (Acts 1:8) by telling them that they would be His witnesses in Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria, and finally to the uttermost part of the earth. The book of Acts tells that story.

It all began in Jerusalem with the Apostles receiving the power of the Holy Spirit and being able to speak in other languages and to perform miracles! The day being Pentecost, a Jewish feast day that had brought together people from all parts of the world, it was a perfect time to proclaim the gospel of Christ for the first time in fact. As a result, some three thousand souls obeyed God and were added to the church. But this was not just the day in which the gospel was preached for the first time, or the day in which the church was established, but it was on this day that the gospel began to spread to all parts of the world. This was no accident, but it was planned by God and then carried out. People were there from many nations and no doubt many of these were among the three thousand

who obeyed God. After staying in Jerusalem and hearing the gospel again and again, enjoying fellowship with one another, then eventually many of those from other places went home. There they were responsible for planting the cause of Christ in their part of the world. Perhaps the strangers from Rome who were there in Jerusalem obeyed the Lord and then went back to Rome to begin the church; maybe this is why the church was there when Paul was eventually taken there as a prisoner.

After the gospel was preached in Jerusalem, and also Judea, we read in Acts 8:1-4 of a great persecution that came on the Lord's people. As a result of this, the record says that the disciples were scattered abroad and that they went everywhere preaching the word. This is amazing when you consider the fact that you would normally expect them to have slipped away somewhere to remain quiet lest they be searched out and killed. But in spite of the persecution, they continued to preach the word. This, then, helped the Lord's cause to spread. Also in Acts 8 we read of Philip going to Samaria to preach the gospel and many there believed and were baptized. Finally, in the latter part of Acts 8 we read where Philip had the opportunity to teach a man from Ethiopia. This led to his conversion and he went on his way rejoicing. Wonder where he went? I would imagine that he went back to his home in Ethiopia.

What did he do there? Well, again, I would imagine that he planted the cause of Christ among his people.

In Acts 9 we read of the story of the conversion of Saul, who immediately preached Christ as a resurrected Lord. His life continued to demonstrate his great zeal. As we read through the book of Acts we are told of his different missionary journeys, preaching the gospel in Asia and Europe. Because of his work, and those that were associated with him, and the other Apostles and their converts, Paul could say in Colossians 1:23 that the gospel had now been proclaimed to every creature under heaven.

Isn't that a thrilling story? It is a success story. It means that what the Lord commanded the Apostles was possible. The Apostles took Christ seriously and they and their converts went out and did it. They didn't have as many people in those days as we have now, but neither did they have the tools and the means that we have today to do the job. Think about it! Beginning with only a dozen men, within less than thirty years the gospel had been taken to every creature under heaven. During a time of a great deal of persecution, a time in which one could lose his life for his faith in Christ, none of these dangers slowed them up. They were a poor people as a whole. There is some indication that some had some wealth, as we read in Acts 2 and 3 where the disciples sold their possessions and shared

them with those who had need, but generally speaking they were poor people. Still, this did not keep them from evangelizing the world. As a matter of fact, it may very well be that this enabled them to carry out the great commission. Sometimes when people have wealth they allow this to be a deterrent rather than the means of accomplishing a task. It was a time in which transportation was slow and difficult, but still they went forth with the message of salvation. Communication was almost non-existent in comparison to our day, but we are told that they proclaimed the gospel to large gatherings, went from house to house, wrote letters, and so on, until all had heard. No doubt there were many other problems, hindrances, obstacles and difficulties, but we know that in the end they were successful, and that's what counts.

Because of their achievement, the world has never been the same since that time. Can you imagine what our world would be like today if the gospel had never been preached? I wonder if it would even be standing. But sad to say, as far as we know, from that day to this, the gospel has never again been taken into all the world. Why? That's a good question. Wouldn't it be wonderful if we could say that after the Apostles had evangelized the earth in the first century, it was done many times in subsequent years, and that even now the truth continues to be taken



to every creature under heaven. If we could say that, I am sure that the world would be a far different one to live in than we see at this present time. But, again, I am sorry to say that that has not been the case. To find an example of the gospel being taken into all the world, we must go all the way back to the first century and to the days of the Apostles as recorded in Acts. This means that *someone*, that a lot of *someones*, that our *own brethren*, over the years since that time have failed to respond to the words of Jesus when He commanded that the gospel be taken into all the world.

But let's not dwell on our past failures, or even our most recent failures. Rather, let us take a look at our present-day situation and our potential for world evangelism. We still have the same great commission to carry out and we still have a lost world that needs salvation. This means that we have been authorized to do the work, that there is a need for it. It also means that we have the responsibility for doing it, that we are being challenged to do it, and that we and the world will be richly blessed if we will do it.

What about the numbers that are necessary? We are told that there may be as many as three million members of the church throughout the world today. Surely that is more than enough to do the job. Even if we had only one million, or a half million, we should be able to do it. But

what if we had only a hundred thousand, or even ten thousand, or at most, one thousand? We still should be able to carry out the great commission with no problem. That would be far more than the dozen men of the first century. But if we had one thousand who were on fire for the Lord, who would work day and night to carry the gospel to all the world, who would not rest until the job was completed, then what could we do!

One of our problems is that we have not been serious about world evangelism. We have been playing around on the job, toying with it, but not really working at it. Oh yes, it is in style for a congregation to be doing some mission work. We wouldn't want to be caught not doing any of it. What group would say that they don't believe in mission work at all, that they are not going to do any of it, that they are not going to use their money to take the gospel to others? Yet, we are doing *just enough* to say that we are doing *something*. That's why we are not evangelizing the world. When we make up our minds that we are actually going to work toward the accomplishment of world evangelism, we will succeed, but not until.

We have, relatively speaking, peace throughout the world that makes it possible for us to come and go, for us to enter countries in one way or the other to proclaim the gospel of Christ. There are a few trouble spots, and a few countries

in which one might even risk his life if he preached the gospel, but still in one way or the other we can get the gospel message to all areas.

We have the wealth at our disposal to evangelize the world. That does not mean that we are all millionaires. To the contrary, most of us have only a modest living, at least by American standards. Still, we have more than enough to evangelize the world, provided we would only use it to that end. The majority of us use most of what we have on ourselves. If you don't believe me, then just take a look at your own place. We have so much that we are about to be pushed out into the streets. In driving along the Interstates you have probably noticed here and there some newly constructed mini-storage buildings. Now that's where a person goes to rent a place to store his over-flow. I am sure that we buy far more than we need for ourselves and for our good. There are many poor people in this world who would love to have access to all that we throw away. Then with regard to congregations over the country, most of them think that they are giving all they can to mission work. But brethren are bad about following fads. When a congregation succeeds in some particular work, other congregations everywhere rush in and pick it up for their own area. They put a lot of money into it, but not always a lot of work or enthusiasm. Consequently, it usually fails and then they rush off

after something else. I could name any number of things right now in which brethren have invested heavily when they really didn't need to, but it used their money up, and then when the poor missionary comes by for help the average congregation must turn down his request. Now that's where our money is going: on ourselves; and much of it is completely wasted. Again, we have the money to evangelize the world if we will but use it for that purpose.

We have a transportation system today that enables us to go around the world in a matter of hours. Surely this is another reason why we should be able to evangelize the world in our own time. Along with that, we have a communication system today that enables us to quickly and efficiently carry out the great commission any time we so desire. There is TV, radio, the printed page, the postal system, and so on. I am sure that we are not to this day aware of the great potential we have in these areas of communication and that is why we are doing no more than we are to take advantage of them. Oh, how we need to open our eyes and see what can be done and then do it. For years the Communists have been using two major means of spreading their ideology: literature and radio, and they are getting their message across. Brethren, we have the same opportunity as they.

We have a language that is spoken throughout the world and this is to our advantage when it

comes to world evangelism. Imagine the many countries around the world that are stuck with a language that is little spoken outside of their own borders. What if they were trying to evangelize the world? They would be slowed down considerably, to say the least. Even we would want to learn the local languages in the various countries where we might go to work, but with English we can more easily go, get settled, and even do some initial teaching in our own language.

We have a currency that is usable around the world and this is certainly a great blessing when it comes to carrying out the great commission. Most currencies are worthless outside of the countries in which they are issued. Imagine the people of those countries trying to take the gospel anywhere else. They would not even be able to use their own money and therefore they would be greatly hindered. How blessed we are to take the U. S. Dollar and to be able to proceed with the work that the Lord has given us to do in whatever country we happen to be in.

We have the freedom to come and go as far as foreign travel is concerned. Passports are easily obtained. Our government does not restrict us on the amount of money that we can take out of the country.

These, and many other things, are the great blessings that God has showered down upon us, making it possible for us to carry out the great

commission in our time. Would we think for a minute that this is all by accident? Do we think it "just happened?" Would we be so unwise as to think that this will go on indefinitely if we fail to use these blessings to evangelize the world?

Brethren, have you ever thought about all of these things and how they have all come together, for the first time, at *this* particular time? Some of these blessings have come to our brethren at one time, and others at another time, but we of the 20th century have *all* of these blessings and tools with which to work at *this very time*. What a blessing we can be to our country and to the world if we will rise up and take advantage of them. If we refuse or fail to use them, the Lord may very well remove them from us and give them to someone who will be obedient.

As you well know, we are faced with many problems today. Sin is in the world and it is eating away at our very hearts and souls. The problems of worldliness, ungodliness, and immorality are running rampant throughout our country, and throughout the world. The problems of modernism and liberalism are taking their toll among our own brethren. Denominationalism is a problem, and don't think for a minute that it is dead. In other countries there are other religions like Hinduism, Buddhism, and Islam, and they are also working even here in our own country. These ancient religions have a missionary zeal

today that has not been seen for generations. They not only come to our country to work among our own people, and especially among our young state college and university students where they are making converts, but they even raise funds from Americans to do this.

We have, also, the problem of Communism. The Communists have told us numerous times that they are going to destroy us, that they are going to conquer us, that they are going to rule us. Now what is our response to all of this? Well, our attitude as a country has been—at least in the past—one of indifference and unconcern. We have tried to appease these people, to be gentle with them, to give in to them. Our policy has been to do nothing that would upset them or disturb them. Yet, they have said that they are out to destroy us. You know, if someone told me that he was going to kill me, I would want to keep my eye on him, to know his whereabouts, to stay on the defensive, and to do everything in my power to prevent him from being successful in carrying out his threat. My brethren, unless we wake up as the Lord's people and fight back, the Communists are going to eventually defeat us. No, they can never win as long as we stand with the Lord to carry out His bidding, but when we are careless, indifferent, and unconcerned; when we fail to use the power that is at our disposal, then the enemy will succeed. Do you remember

what happened to ancient Israel? God told His people over and over that He would be with them, bless them, fight their battles for them, and make them victorious if they would only obey Him and carry out His will. But they would not listen, and as a result of their disobedience, idolatry, and departure from Him, He allowed the enemy to take them away into captivity. With God we can do all things, but when we forget God, or think we don't need Him, fail to obey Him, refuse to submit to Him, then He may let the Communists or something else come in and take over. Our children or their children may live under such a system one day. Wouldn't it be sad for them to have to say that if their parents or grandparents had only obeyed God, they would not be living in such a godless world?

My brethren, who are we? We are the Lord's people, aren't we? *Who* has the Lord asked to carry His gospel into all the world? He has asked *His* people to do that, and since *we* are His people then this means that He has asked *us* to do it. If the world ever has the gospel, it will be up to us to take it. We have the answer to all the world's problems. We have the cure for man's ills. We have that which will save the world and give man hope. We have that which will turn things around and change the world into the kind of place we would like for it to be. In other words, we have the gospel of Christ. If, we, therefore fail to take it



to the world then the Lord will hold us responsible.

What else can I say? I'll let Brother Roger Dickson take it from here, and believe me, he has a lot to say. Read it and be challenged by it. We don't have any time to lose. May God help us to do His work now while there is still time and opportunity.

J. C. Choate  
Winona, Mississippi  
February 6, 1982

## **THE CALL TO WORLD EVANGELISM**

## *The Call To World Evangelism*

This book is about MISSIONS. It's about the mission of the people of Jesus Christ here on earth. If you're one of those people, then you should be INTENTLY INTERESTED AND THOROUGHLY CONCERNED about the subject of this book. If you're not, then you may be one of those Christians refrigerated in the ice of unconcern. And if you are such, then you are in a very dangerous situation. (Take a look at Revelation 3:15, 16). Now, this doesn't mean that you have to read this book. If you are a Christian, though, you must be interested in the mission of the church, regardless of what you do with this book.

Now let me say something here before we get started. I am going to say some things in this book which you are not going to like. In fact, some of the things I am going to say are probably going to cut to the heart. I must be frank, though. But I feel I must also warn you concerning what you might learn. So when you are halfway through, don't say I didn't warn you. You can put the book down now and go on your way. Or, you can take a chance and read on.

Now to begin, let's say that Christianity is a *going religion*. The gospel is exactly what an angel told some shepherds in a field about two thousand years ago, "Behold, I bring you *good tidings of great joy* which shall be to *all the people*" (Luke 2:10). That's exactly what the gospel is, *Great News*. If it is great news—and it certainly is—then it must be *going news*. If it was not great and good, then it would not be going. You can't spell GOSpel without spelling GO. And if our gospel doesn't make us GO, then we had better check and see if we really have the true gospel, the real gospel of the New Testament.

The motivating motto of every Christian is Matthew 28:19, 20. "Go ye therefore, *and make disciples* of all the nations, baptizing them into the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit: *teaching* them to observe all things whatsoever I commanded you . . . ." Right behind Matthew comes Mark and a similar command of Jesus. "*Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to the whole creation*" (Mark 16:15).

If the above commands of Jesus say anything, they say to *go* and *preach* and *teach* the gospel to the *whole world*. Now if Jesus commanded Christians to evangelize the whole world—and He did—then we can do it. He did

not tempt His disciples with a command that could not be fulfilled. So, those first Christians took His command seriously and got busy. They evangelized the world. They really did it!

And if they could do it, we can do it today! How can anyone today take on the name Christian and not be moved and motivated by those last words of Jesus to evangelize the world?

But wait a minute here. We have a *going gospel*. We have the *Great News* "which shall be to all the people." Someone, though, has put on the brakes! Something has gone wrong since those first century Christians grew and multiplied and turned the world upside down for Christ. That ancient zeal for missions has somehow been lost in a museum or archive of relics. And the proof of it is that we are just not evangelizing the world today. But why? Why?

An old Islamic woman in Bengal asked a missionary, "How long is it since Jesus died for sinful people? Look at me; I am old; I have prayed, given alms, gone to the holy shrines, become as dust from fasting and all this is useless. *Where have you been all this time?*"\* That is an often asked question that should cut us to the heart, "Where have you been all this time?"

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\* Related in the book by Phil Elkins, Lectures on Mission Work (Mission Seminar, Harding College; April 8-10, 1964).

One of our missionaries related to me an incident that took place in Egypt where a missionary was conversing with an elderly woman about the life-giving blood of Jesus. "It is a wonderful story," the woman stated. "Do the women in your country believe it?" "Yes," replied the missionary. But the old woman correctly answered, "Then I *don't think they can believe it, or they would not have been so long in coming to tell us.*"\*

That's a good question, isn't it? Do we really *believe* it? If we do, then why *have we failed* to evangelize the world? Why *are we failing* to evangelize the world? "What's the use of singing 'Onward Christian Soldiers'," wrote one missionary, "and then letting the enemy have it all his own way? What glorious humbugs we are!" We're like the two skeletons that were hanging in a closet. One turned to the other and said, "If we had any guts, we'd get out of this situation." Maybe we don't have any guts, the kind it takes to get the job done.

## THE TASK

Jesus said, "*Lift up your eyes, and look on the fields, that they are white already unto harvest*" (John 4:35). *The world is ripe unto harvest!*

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\* Ibid

It is ripe *now!* And it *must* be harvested *now!*

Sometimes I believe that Christians don't sow the seed because they just don't see the need. They have a hibernated zeal which can't see the masses. Instead of having a hybrid zeal for evangelism, we have hibernated in some distant cave away from the pleading cries of the lost world. We're cloistered in contentment something like the three monkeys who desired to see no evil, *hear* no evil, *speak* no evil.

The world population of souls is astounding! It's incredible! *The need is incredible!* We may content our feeble mission-mindedness with the fact that the United States has reached a zero population growth, but let's never deceive ourselves into lethargy by thinking that that's the way it is everywhere else. We need to take notice of what is really taking place as far as population growth throughout the world.

### *People Packed Cities*

New York City is big. And it's still growing. But did you know that the greater Sao Paulo, Brazil area is now over *eleven million people*? By the year 2000 it is estimated that there will be *twenty-six million* souls swarmed into this area of God's creation. It is estimated that by the year 2000, over *thirty million* souls will be clustered into Mexico City, Mexico. The need for urban

evangelism is one of our most pressing needs of the twentieth century church. There are literally thousands of cities with populations of hundreds of thousands of people which have not been evangelized. We must invade these cosmopolitans for Christ.

### *People Packed Countries*

Jesus said to make disciples of all the *nations*. The nations do not "need" to be evangelized. They *must* be evangelized! We *must* preach the gospel to the twenty-two million souls who live in the South Pacific, to the two hundred thirty-nine million in North America, to the over two hundred fifty-seven million who live in Russia, to the more than three hundred twenty-six million in South America, to the more than four hundred fifteen million in Africa, to the four hundred twenty-six million in Europe, and to the two thousand two hundred eighty-seven million in Asia which represents more than fifty percent of the world's population.

*The nations of planet earth are ladened with souls waiting for the good and great news of Jesus. And we must evangelize them!*

### *People Packed Planet*

The population of the world is exploding with nuclear force. In 1830 it was stated that the



world's population had grown to the fantastic number of *one billion*. But only 105 years later in 1935 the population of the world exploded to *two billion souls*. *Twenty-nine* short years after that, in 1964, it leaped to three billion. And then only twelve years later in 1976 we were told by the *World Book Encyclopedia* that planet earth was crammed full with over *four billion* people. In fact, if all the people of the world were lined ten abreast, a line could be formed to reach around the world about *six times*. It's incredible! But what is even more incredible are the future expectations of the population of the world.

From 1935 to 1976 the world population *doubled*. We are told by the *1977 Reader's Digest Almanac* that it will *double again* by 2019. That means that in the *forty-one years* between 1976 and 2019 the world population will mushroom to *eight billion people*.

The world is being populated with more than *seventy-five million* new souls *every year*. That means that the world population is growing at a rate of 205,479 people every day. That's a fantastic growth rate of 8,561 new souls on this sin infested earth *every hour*. Who says we do not have a gigantic task before us to evangelize the world?

I've been told that there are 221 nations and territories in the world today. It is also claimed by some brethren that 130 have had the gospel preached within their borders in some form or manner. But that still leaves *sixty-five* on a hell-bound journey to a Devil's hell. And too, most of those who have heard the name Jesus or some polluted form of the gospel must still be considered unevangelized by the truth. How will we evangelize those countries with the truth? In seeing this need, who will cry out as Isaiah, "Here am I; *send me!*" (Isaiah 6:8). No, don't say, "Here am I, send *him.*" God wants *you.*

There are over 4.5 billion people in the world today. About 87% of that 4.5 billion have heard of the name "Coca Cola." But only about 50% have ever heard of the name "Jesus."\* Does that stir your soul? Does that effect the way you think in any way? What are you doing now, *right now*, to change that picture? Instead of only 50% having heard the name Jesus, shouldn't it be 100%?

It has rightly been said that "go ye" in Matthew 28:19 really means "go *me.*" And it does! If every Christian is not traumatically

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\* Edward R. Dayton and C. Peter Wagner, Unreached Peoples '79 (Elgin, Ill.: David C. Cook Publishing Co., 1979), p. 20.

shocked into realizing the great need and task set before the twentieth century church, we will not get God's job done here on earth in our generation.

I believe we can evangelize the world. And I believe we can do it in one generation. We'll talk about that later. But let's not think that the task is going to be easy, it isn't. But again, we never became Christians because we thought it was the easy way out, did we? It's the hardest way out, but easiest way through eternity, for "through many tribulations we must enter the kingdom of God" (Acts 14:22).

### THE COMPETITION

Before you read on, you should read Romans 8:31-39. It was in that passage that Paul proclaimed, "*If God be for us, who can be against us?*" It was also in that passage that Paul said, "*We are more than conquerors* through Him that loved us." What he is saying to every Christian is that we can do anything that we want to. If it is God's work and God wants it done, then we can do it, no matter what the odds are. As someone once said, "God and I always make a majority!" If we're on God's team, then we can overcome any and all enemies

of the truth. *We can!* But that doesn't say that we are not against some strong forces of Satan. We are. And here are some of those forces we are against.

### *We Are Against Strong Religious Beliefs*

We must overcome strong religious beliefs of men which have been produced by the deception of the Prince of demons. I'm not talking about a lukewarm and lazy religious attitude harbored by many cold clad Christians in the ranks of the church. I'm talking about world religions that call for the total sacrifice of life and body of their adherents. The zeal typified by many of these religions puts us to shame.

We're against the beliefs of a Hindu Sadhu who will literally self-inflict blindness upon himself by staring at the sun day after day. We are warring against the zeal of the Macumba worshipper who will offer a child as a living sacrifice. We are against the zeal of the Catholic who will attend mass every day of his life. I once stood outside the multi-million dollar cathedral constructed to Saint Guadeloupe in Mexico City. I just stood there amazed as I saw aged men and women, children, mothers and fathers crawl on their knees with tears in their eyes as they approached the altar. All I could do was

to ask God to forgive me of my lack of dedication. These and many other religions are clothed in zeal. It is a blind and useless zeal. But it is zeal. Satan has done his work well. But we must do better. And we *can do better!* After all, "if God be for us, who can be against us?"

The *World Book Encyclopedia* very conservatively states that there are 14.5 million Jews in the world today, 2.5 million Jains, 31.5 million Taoists, and 161,000 Zoroastrians. It is also estimated that there are 250 million Buddhists, 600 million Hindus and 700 million Muslims.\* And added to these major religions there are countless other sects which do not believe in the divinity of Jesus nor accept Him as the Son of God. Christianity is *against* these religions and all who would pollute the gospel of Jesus Christ.

In the book *Unreached Peoples '79*, C. Peter Wagner and Edward R. Dayton stated that only about *one billion people* of the world—that's not quite a fourth of the population—have Christ as the center of their religion.\*\* In fact, they stated—and I have no reason to doubt their figures—that *two billion people* have never heard of the name Jesus.\*\*\* Another *one billion*, they say, *may* have heard of Him.\*\*\*\* But *two*

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\* Ibid, p. 19

\*\* Ibid, p. 19

\*\*\* Ibid, p. 20

\*\*\*\* Ibid, p. 20

*billion people have never heard the name Jesus.* Think about it.

There is a war going on in the world. It is not a war fought with guns or knives or bombs (II Corinthians 10:3-5). "It is not against flesh and blood, but *against* the principalities, *against* the powers, *against* the world-rulers of this darkness, *against* the spiritual host of wickedness in the heavenly places" (Ephesians 6:12). And if you do not realize that war is savagely raging throughout the world, then you just do not know what Christianity is all about. If you cannot smell the stench of the sin of those who are dead in wickedness, then you are in the barracks and not on the battlefield. One of the problems with some churches is that they can't seem to get out of the barracks. And those who always hang around the barracks during the battles never do profit anything in the victory of any war.

### *We Are Against Strong Communist Aggression*

American communists spend 38% of their gross income for their cause. Yes, communists are militantly out to destroy religion. They want to crush every idea of God in today's world. In the book, *Leninism*, Joseph Stalin had stated, "The Party (the Communist Party) cannot be neutral towards religion, and *it does conduct*

*anti-religious propaganda against all and every religious prejudice . . .*” In 1948 the Young Communist League was told, “If you are not a convinced atheist, you cannot be a good Communist or a real Soviet citizen. *Atheism is indissolubly bound to communism.* These two ideas are the pillars of the Soviet power.” And at the Bandung Conference in 1955, Chou En-Lai stated, “*We communists are atheists . . .*”

Christians are against the fanaticism of communistic atheism. I once walked the streets of Lima, Peru. And after living in a country where communism was suppressed (Brazil), I was appalled at the open *preaching* of communism on the streets. Literature was being sold. Communist propaganda was freely proclaimed from proponents of this atheistic philosophy. Communism is *alive* in Latin America! It's hard to believe that at the turn of the century, there were no communist governments. But now, over half the world is ruled by communism.

Yes, we're in a heated battle against the communists. And frankly, we've lost some battles to their cause. But we must never become discouraged. We must wage war against atheism!

### *We Are Against Strong Denominational Missions*

Granted, we do owe a lot to denominational missionaries who have given their lives to open the

doors to many continents, nations and tribes throughout the world. Many of these missionaries have sacrificed everything to preach their "other gospel" to cannibals and communists alike. They have laid the ground work for many of our men who have gone a hundred years too late.

But this will never make false teachings the truth. Let's never forget that. The denomination-  
alists are preaching "another gospel" (Galatians 1:6-9). And we should never compromise with a substitute of the real thing.

Here again, though, we have been put to shame with the zeal of those who are not teaching the truth. In 1900 there were only a few denominational missionaries throughout the world. Today, that picture has changed drastically. There are over 43,000 denominational missionaries who have invaded the nations of the world with their teachings.

These people are spreading their teaching with zeal unmatched by the church. For example, the Morris Cerullo World Evangelism Foreign Missionary Outreach from 1969 to 1978 claimed more than 1,700,000 "decisions for Christ." They conducted over 4,000 crusades which were carried out by nationals. And on top of that, they have claimed that 3,200 new churches have been established as a result of their work. Where is the Lord's church in all this dust? Why is the church



being overrun by such zeal? Why?

The slogan "pray, give or go" used to be circulated among churches a few years ago concerning mission work. But what was really happening was that everyone decided to pray. There were few "givers" and "goers". But in the denominational world, groups like the Friends Missionary Prayer Band of South India are serious. They number about 8,000. At one time they supported *eighty full-time missionaries* in the northern part of India. They prayed, then gave and went.

And then there is the zeal of the Pentecostals. The Pentecostal church is growing faster and is larger in Brazil than in the United States. In the January 1977 issue of the *International Review of Missions*, Norberto Saracco said:

The reason there is so much talk about the Pentecostal movement is not due to its emphasis on charismatic manifestations, not to divine healing, but to its amazing growth in the seventy-five years of its existence . . . . *Evangelism occupies a central place in the ministry of the Pentecostal churches.* The other manifestations revolve around it" [emphasis mine, R. E. D.].\*

After quoting the above statement in the *Church Growth Bulletin*, Donald McGavran added:

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\* Quoted by Donald McGavran, ed., Church Growth Bulletin (May 1977), Vol. XIII, No. 5.

The Pentecostals have grown from nothing in 1905 to more than twenty-five million in 1977, not primarily by speaking in tongues, practicing divine healing, serving the poor or conducting colorful worship services. *They have grown because they have made telling good news to those who have not heard absolutely central to their life* [emphasis mine, R. E. D.].\*

The Mormon church is on the move, too. Membership in the Mormon church worldwide now stands at about *four million*. In 1978, I am told that they added about 223,000 to their number. They have over 30,000 volunteer missionaries at work in over 47 countries. At their present rate of growth, the cult will double its membership *every ten years*.\*\*

Would that every church of Christ made evangelism central to its program of work. Would that every church of our Lord on earth had a reputation for being intensely evangelistic and mission-minded as the church in ancient Thessalonica (I Thessalonians 1:6-9).

Somehow, though, it seems that we're more concerned over building bigger and better "plants" and "holding our own" than over the lost and hell-bound world. It seems that we have

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\* Ibid.

\*\*See Pulpit Helps, Vol. 4, June 1979, p. 22 and Aug. 1979, p. 16.

become more concerned over soiling our new carpets and padded pews than over the millions of souls of the world which have been soiled by sin. What wretched philosophy has engulfed our zeal?

### *We Are Against Ourselves*

Yes, we have many times been against ourselves in world evangelism. It has only been in the last few decades that world evangelism has begun to develop in the church. But in many cases, we have been too late. While we've sat at ease in Zion, Satan has been conquering the world with lies.

I believe that part of the problem is that we are not visionary enough. For example, look at our publication "interests." While we sit around trying to up the circulation of a single brotherhood paper to 5,000 or 40,000, or 100,000, Billy Graham's *Decision* is going into the hands of over *five million*. Norman Vincent Peale's publications reach over *3.5 million*. And Armstrong's publications circulate to over *150 million*.

One of our missionaries in Brazil went to a printer a few years back to see how much it would cost to print about 100,000 copies of a specific tract. The printer laughed and said he didn't work with such *small orders*. He said he had a back log of over *nineteen million* tracts to

be printed for the Baptist church in Brazil. Well, that doesn't make me laugh. It makes me cry when our missionaries there just have to keep cutting back on their publications because churches back home are more concerned over good clothes, good cars and good houses than over God's gospel.

In the Brazilian publication, *O Arauto*, the following conversation was printed several years ago after the communist takeover of China. This is a dialogue which occurred between a missionary and an officer in the Red Army.

Officer: "You missionaries are stupid!"

Missionary: "Why do you say this?"

Officer: "Your methods."

Missionary: "What's wrong with our methods?"

Officer: "Look, for example, at the great conference that you just closed. You had a marvelous opportunity to obtain a victory for your religion, but you didn't take advantage of it. Now, it is lost forever."

Missionary: "I don't understand. What do you mean?"

"You will never again have the opportunity to speak precisely to that same multitude of Chinese leaders. Why didn't you give them literature; something printed that they could understand easily? Before their interest vanished, these

people would have had a printed message related to that which they had heard. Thus, the message would have had an effect for a month or a year, and not just for a few minutes.

"We Communists have been in China less than 10 years, but everyone in this country already knows the name of Mao Tse-Tung and has heard about Communism.

"What you missionaries did not succeed in accomplishing in a hundred years, we did in ten. We have filled China with our ideology. How? We printed our message and distributed our literature by the millions to all of China. One day soon we will have to expel you from our country. We will be able to do this by the power of the printed word."

*Vision?* Is there a dearth of vision in the brotherhood? I believe that the lack of vision has been a key problem in our failure to evangelize the world. We have substituted a "lay-by-the-way-side" Christianity for the "look-unto-the-fields" Christianity of the New Testament. We have a cataract vision of the real needs of world evangelism. Instead of putting on the eyeglasses of Christ to help us see the need, we have put on blinders to control our peripheral vision of what really needs to be done. We have been guilty of

shutting our eyes, turning our heads, claspings our ears and clamping our mouths for Christ. *But we can't do that any more!* Jesus will not have it in His kingdom! He never has.

Let God raise up men of vision. We must have men who *think big, do big and accomplish big things* as the result of *big vision*. "We do not know what the future holds," someone said, "but we do know what holds the future." *We do! The Christians of the world do!* And if we fail to plan, we are just planning to fail in this effort of world evangelism. If we can capture that vision of Jesus which says, "Go into *all the world*", and with that render ourselves completely unto the One who can do "exceedingly abundantly above what we are able to ask or think", then we will take the world for Christ! It is then that we will truly be "bringing in the sheaves!" *Yes, we can really do it!*

## THE SITUATION

Somehow, we've had our share of the problems in foreign evangelism. Some churches have been "burned." And that "burn" has sizzled out the little mission-mindedness that was there at some time in the past. Now, they just sit charred in the chapels of lethargy. Here are a few things that have caused us to fail in evangelizing the world in the past . . . and present, too.

*Lack of Manpower in the Past*

It was reported in the February 1969 issue of the *Gleaner* that we had *eight* missionaries in 1906, *thirteen* in 1916, *thirty* in 1926, *forty-six* in 1946/47, *two hundred twenty-nine* in 1953, *four hundred four* in 1959 and *seven hundred twenty-four* in 1967.\* But something went wrong after those glorious years of the fifties and early sixties.

In the middle of 1978 we could only dig up about 550 missionary families of the brotherhood throughout the world.\*\* In the first half of 1979 it was reported that we were down to about 427 missionary family units. According to recent studies, churches of Christ are *tenth* as far as the number of missionaries they have on the foreign fields compared to other religious groups. The United Methodist Church is *ninth*. We're behind a religious group that doesn't really believe in mission work at all.

What are we thinking about, anyway? We are trying to evangelize the world with so few. We presently have *two missionaries* struggling to evangelize 700 million Islamic peoples. Such expresses our shabby concern for the multitudes.

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\*Phil Elkins, *The Gleaner* (Feb. 1969, Vol. IV, No. 1, p. 2).

\*\*This is the figure given by the World Mission Information Bank in 1979. Write Webb Chapel church of Christ, 13425 Webb Chapel Rd., Dallas, Texas, 75234.

*What has happened to our outreach!*

The problem is not that we do not have the manpower. We have scores who want to go. The real problem is a cardiac situation with supporting churches. The church had a major heart attack somewhere in the middle 1970's and is just now beginning to overcome it. It seems that few since then have really wanted to get involved in missions in any big financial way. Mission programs came to a screeching halt all over the brotherhood after 1967. What has caused this problem? What went wrong? We'll talk about this later.

*Lack of Adequate Training*

Training in mission methods has really not soaked into our heads until the last two decades or so. And we've reaped some pretty bad failures in various mission efforts as a result of our lack of preparation. For example, Jules de Launey went to France from 1886 to 1892. But little or nothing survived from his efforts. Orla Boyer and Virgil Smith went to Brazil in 1927. But because of their unpreparedness in Bible teaching, they both turned Pentecostal and took all the existing churches with them. The same happened to the William McHenry and Samuel Martins who went to India from 1912 to about 1918. They both



turned to the Seventh-Day Adventists. J. R. Jimeney and Ernesto Estevey worked in Cuba beginning in 1937. But we have no longlasting results of their works in existence today. We could go on here with numerous examples. But that would be a sad story.

Failure upon failure has been the typical result of so many of our efforts in past years because we have just not had the right preparation. And it has been a result of not seeing the need of being prepared. We have been guilty of sending out too many who have not been Biblically sound or adequately trained in effective mission methods or culture.

But we can give glory to God that that situation is rapidly changing. In the past fifteen years numerous seminars and schools have arisen which are adequately training our men. Eldershops are rapidly realizing the necessity of training their man before they send him. I think this is one of the most fantastic and exciting aspects of the Lord's church in this decade. We are going forward in training missionaries and I believe that we will see tremendous results from such.

### *Lack of Mission-Mindedness*

Here is the real problem, the broken cog in our mission machinery. It has boiled down to

this: many just do not have any desire to evangelize the nations. As someone once said, "The greatest hindrances to the evangelism of the world are those within the church." And that's exactly right.

We've got a bad case of "homism." All we want is a "mission within driving distance." Somehow we just can't see outside the U. S. borders. In denominational circles, 83% of those trained for foreign mission work stay inside the United States. Only 17% make it to foreign soil. I wonder if that's not the case with our mission programs. And too, it is stated that about 94% of the world's population resides *outside* the United States. Only 6% is within. I've been told that that is about the percentage of our preachers, too . . . *in reverse*, though. Ninety-four percent of our preachers are in the U. S. preaching to only 6% of the world's population. Is that really God's plan for evangelizing the world?

We have become a consumer society. We have bred a consumer church. We have become a church that consumes things to the satisfaction of her own lust. Look at the local church budget. How much of the budget is spent for things for ourselves? Have we spent our blessings upon ourselves? We want our preachers for ourselves, and we want our money for ourselves.

We are becoming victims of our culture. And our culture is in retreat in America. We are pulling back, getting out of foreign involvement, looking to our own needs. In an article in *Reader's Digest* entitled "It's Time to Stop America's Retreat," Ben J. Wattenberg so rightly stated concerning America the following:

*Can our values really flourish in a world where the United States is in retreat? So far, our Western freedoms have represented a mere blip in history. There is no guarantee they will survive, but the chances will worsen if we predicate that our children will live in a world where the Soviet Union is the most powerful military force on earth, and if we and our Western friends are perceived internationally as either "in retreat" or impotent.*

Can we let America's retreatism destroy the outreach of the church? Just because the government wants to pull out doesn't mean that the church has to follow along close behind.

Unless we can implant and graft into the minds of every Christian the intense need to reach out and evangelize the masses of the world, we will utterly fail God in carrying out the great commission. We must become more concerned about people, than "plants." Preachers must search for souls, not better salaries. We must preach Christ, not padded pews. I'll never forget what one elder said to me when I was raising

funds to go to a mission field several years ago. "We've decided," he said, "that it is our mission to fix-up our building to be comparable with other church buildings in the area."

If that's our attitude as a whole, then we just do not understand what Christianity is all about. If that is our attitude, then really, we might as well forget it. Which is worse, having no priorities at all, or having priorities, but having them all distorted and out of shape?

Listen, as a whole, American religious people spend about *two hundred ten million dollars on dog food and dog care every year* and only *one hundred ninety-two million dollars on foreign missions every year*. We feed our dogs and let the rest of the world go to the dogs. Members of the church of Christ spend about *seven cents per member per week* on missions outside their own area. But American communists spend as much as 38% of their income on the promotion of their cause. The communists must think more of Marx than some Christians think of missions. At least, that is what the figures show, don't they?

There are many churches, though, who do not harbor the sin of retreatism. And you can clearly point these out who do not have such a Satanic sown situation of sluggish mission-mindedness. The churches that have come out of

their introverted shell *are growing*. They're enthusiastic! They're evangelistic! And above all, they are growing by the hundredfolds. They are not just holding their own; they're holding the future in their hands. And you just know that the angels in heaven are singing their hearts out because these mission-minded churches are out looking for lost sheep. They'll never stop, either, until they find the last one.

### THE COMMAND

Jesus sees the need of preaching the gospel to the masses. In Philippians 2:5 Paul said, "*Have this mind in you*, which was also in Christ." And then, he goes on to explain what Christ did. David Livingstone said, "God had only one Son—and He was a missionary." That's exactly what Paul says of Jesus' work in Philippians 2:5-11. *The mind of Christ is missions!* And the closer we get to the mind of Christ, the more evangelistic we become. The better we know our Savior the more missionary we become.

If you are a long way from Jesus, then you do not fully understand the "mind of Christ." And I'll guess, too, that you are not all that mission-minded. One can more or less determine how close he is to the mind of Christ by how concerned he is about evangelizing the world.

But let's notice here how central missionary thinking is to Christ and Christianity.

### *Jesus' Missionary Purpose*

Paul said that Jesus was first in heaven and then *came* to this world (Philippians 2:5-11). Yes, the Word was first with God and then it *came* to become flesh and dwelt among men. (Read and study carefully John, Chapter 1). That is a picture of Jesus as a missionary to planet Earth. As Jesus Himself said, "The Son of man came to seek and to save that which was lost" (Luke 19:10). Shouldn't that be our mission, too?

### *Jesus' Missionary Commands*

Jesus' life and *commands* are saturated with evangelism. Those first few disciples were completely engulfed within the evangelistic fervor of their Master. They were soaked for three years in the vat of missions by the greatest teacher of all times. It was in that environment that they constantly heard statements proceed from the mouth of the Master as: "Behold, *I send you forth . . .*" (Matthew 10:16), "*Go your ways, behold I send you forth*" (Luke 10:3), "*Go ye therefore . . .*" (Matthew 28:19), "*Go ye into all the world . . .*" (Mark 16:15), and He "*charged them saying, Go . . .*" (Matthew 10:5).

How could anyone know Jesus and His disciples and not be highly concerned about evangelizing the world. Jesus' commands were thoroughly saturated with missions. And His disciples obeyed those commands unto death.

### *Jesus' Missionary Work Through His Disciples*

If we are going to imitate the lives of those first disciples—and we should—we *must be intensely evangelistic*. “They-went-forth” was the epitome of the ancient Christians (Mark 16:20). “Everyday, in the temple and at home, *they ceased not to teach and to preach* Jesus as the Christ” (Acts 5:42). To the modern Christian its just once a Sunday in the temple, never ceasing to be air-conditioned and tickled by flowery sermons of people pleasing preachers.

When the Jews decided that it was time to cause no little disturbance among the Christians in Judah, those early Christians who were victims of that persecution were scattered. But they, the Christians, “*went about preaching the word*” (Acts 8:4). They went forth throughout the world preaching to the cities (Acts 8:40). Their attitude was collectively expressed by the words of Paul, “As much as in me is, *I am ready to preach the gospel . . .*” (Romans 1:15). And they did. The Holy Spirit urged them to “*preach the word*” and to be “*urgent in season*” and “out

of season" (II Timothy 4:2; cf. Titus 3:8; I Corinthians 15:1).

Those early disciples had the holy heart-burn and were set aflame by the urgency of preaching the gospel to the cultures of the world. They had their obstacles to overcome just like us. But there was no mountain peak too high, no country too rugged and no sea too far to cross to hinder their ardent zeal to preach the good and great news of the Bright and Morning Star that had arisen over the hills of Judea for the salvation of mankind.

Procrastination was a forgotten word of their vocabulary. The world had to be evangelized. And somehow, every individual Christian back then felt it was his responsibility to get the job done within his lifetime. It was not a "let's-do-it-tomorrow" Christianity. It was a "now-or-never" thing that had to be done and done within their own generation. And what is so marvelous about the story is that *they did it*. No one ever told them it couldn't be done. They just took it for granted that because Jesus said to do it they could do it. And somehow, it happened. *They evangelized the world!*

But somewhere between there and here those burning coals of enthusiasm have cooled to dead ashes. Things have changed. Satan has been at work in the ranks. There is the fictitious



story of how Satan and his angels once had a conference to determine how the forces of evil could best conquer the forces of God on earth. Satan gathered all his angels for a conference to determine how they could best represent the cause of evil on earth. He began by asking for ideas. "Who can go among men and best represent our cause," he roared. Angel Pewarmer jumped up and said, "I'll go among men and tell them that there is no hell or heaven." "Good idea," grumbled the Prince of evil, "but that is not effective enough." Angel Nopreacher raised his hand and said, "I'll tell them the Bible is not true." "That's good," replied Satan, "We've used that method to capture some, but it has not deceived enough." And then, Angel Slowdeacon slowly stood and stammered, "I'll go among the forces of God and tell them there is a hell and heaven and that the Bible is true. But, I'll also tell them that *tomorrow will do.*" And you know who Satan sent to earth? Angel Slowdeacon is actively and intensely working in churches today. He may be at work in your life.

We come before God's preached word every week to hear it spoken by His servants. But much of the time such exhortations fall on dead ears. It's similar to Ezekiel's situation when the unconcerned and hardened Jews came before him to hear God's word then. But God said to Ezekiel:

. . . they come unto thee as the people cometh, and they sit before thee as my people, and they hear thy words, *but do them not: for with their mouth they show much love, but their heart goeth after their gain. . . . For they hear the words, but they do them not* (Ezekiel 33:3-32).

We feed ourselves on our own luxury and forget the masses of the lost. Again, it's as God told Ezekiel, ". . . my sheep became prey, and my sheep became food to all the beasts of the field, because there was no shepherd, neither did my shepherds search for my sheep, *but the shepherds fed themselves . . .*" (Ezekiel 34:8). And while we sit and feed ourselves on big beautiful buildings and costly Cadillac cars, the rest of the world is headed toward hell. And who cares. Yes, who cares?

But we can never let tomorrow or materialism or anything else hinder our efforts to evangelize the nations. "The only generation that can reach this generation is our generation." Every disciple must be disciplined to do evangelism. As someone said, "Every heart with Christ is a missionary and every heart without Christ is a mission field." And we must realize the lost state of the lost and act upon that realization, *today*.

If we fail, thousands and millions will be lost to a Devil's hell. They will go somewhere

else in this world looking for something to satisfy their spiritual yearnings if we do not give them an opportunity to hear about Jesus. One of our missionaries reported that an Indian leatherworker stated:

You Christians have what we need, the right kind of religion. It works now for a few of our people. Some who have come to know Christ have proved that chamers (leatherworkers) can be as good and as smart as any people, but you are too slow. We cannot wait. By your program it would take generations for all our people to be rescued. We will have to find a quicker way.\*

That "other way" the leatherworker was searching for usually ends up being communism. And it is true, if we do not rescue the masses, the communists will indoctrinate them with their anti-God propaganda. Will we let this decade, as we have decades in the past, go to meet the Maker without having the opportunity of hearing about the saving blood of Jesus?

Let's be called to the task of world evangelism. We have a great mountain to climb. *Three million* villages in the world are without one person who can tell them of the Savior Jesus. There are *two thousand tribes* in the world which

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\*Eikins, Lectures on Mission Work, op. cit., p. 3.

have not one single word of scripture in their language. There are yet *one thousand languages* into which the Scriptures are yet to be translated. Including the denominational world, 96% of all church funds are used to bring Bible teachings to the 9% of the world's population that speaks English. Only 4% of the funds go to reaching the rest of the 91% of the world's population that does not speak English. And, American Christians spend less than *one tenth of one percent* of their income for foreign missions. That adds up to be about \$3.00 a year per person.\* Is this a picture of our concern for the lost world? We speak of restoration, but have we restored everything concerning New Testament Christianity? What about New Testament zeal for world evangelism?

### LET'S REMEMBER

We have not scratched the surface of world evangelism. We have not scratched it, we have only put a scratch there. But we have not scratched the surface. And there is a difference. We need a hundredfold more scratches to get the world scratched, then we can progress below the surface.

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\*The facts in this paragraph were taken from Pulpit Helps, Vol. 4, June, 1979, p. 22, and Aug. 1979, p. 16.

Our puny efforts in missions has added up to only a drop in the bucket in comparison to that which has to be done. Our short-sighted vision has blinded our eyes to the real needs. We've been guilty of harboring an ostrich faith that has its head in the sand of American isolationism. But it doesn't have to be that way. It doesn't have to stay that way, either.

## ***What Must We Do?***

If you are not an evangelistic minded Christian, then the following thoughts should give you no peace of mind. If your mission-mindedness is dead, then you are spiritually dead, or unknowledgeable—ignorant—of the need for world evangelization. If you are not unknowledgeable—ignorant, again—of the need for foreign evangelization, then your heart has grown ice cold and brick hard to the begging pleas of the millions who are slipping to the brink of hell without the gospel. If you are ignorant—unknowledgeable—of the situation, *then get informed!* Let's get out of our shell of isolation. *Get concerned and get busy!* I'm sure that many brethren are in one of the above situations, that is, spiritually dead or

dead ignorant of this world's plight.

What *must* we do to turn the tide of "un-concernism" that has infested the minds of many crystalized Christians? And don't say we have no problem. Only one who is more than dense would state such. 1975 statistics say that the Mormon church had in the United States about 2,900,000 members. Today, they have over *four million*. And most of their missionaries are two-year single workers. But they have over 30,000 of these "two-year workers" and full-time missionaries in countries throughout the world. Looks like they're serious about their work.

Altogether, it is estimated that churches of Christ have about *four million* members. And by looking behind every bush and under every stone we came up with only a little over 550 missionary family units throughout the world in 1978. Now, we're down to a little over 400. To me, it seems like something is wrong here. We keep going down, down, down. The Mormons keep going up, up, up.

But we must not back off from the challenge. There are hundreds and thousands of cities throughout the world which have *not a single saint*. Literally millions of people of the world *have not even heard of the name Jesus*. Why has the church let this happen? Why have *you* let it

happen? *Is God happy with the unevangelized condition of the world today?* Is He? Everyone of us needs to answer that question.

So what must we do? There are some basic things that must be done *immediately*. These things deal with our *attitudes* as well as with our *actions*. These things we must pray about and act upon.

### WE MUST HAVE A PASSION FOR PEOPLE

Here is the beginning of missions. Here is where we must be honest with ourselves. Do we really love souls? But what should come before we answer this question is, *do I really love God?* John said, "If a man say, I love God, and hateth his brother, *he is a liar*: for he that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen?" (I John 4:20). Actually, John is saying that our love for God is manifested by our love for our brother. But the way some people love their brother you would think they hated God.

#### *The Love of God*

The beginning of any *true obedience* to the Great Commission is an earnest, sincere and devout *love of God*. And "this is the love of God, *that we keep His commandments*" (I John 5:3).

John goes on to say that those commandments are *not grievous*. Jesus said go into all the world and preach (Matthew 28:18-20; Mark 16:15). John is saying that that *is not a grievous commandment*. And if we really love God we will keep that commandment. Yes, Jesus said, "Ye are my friends, if ye do the things which I command you" (John 15:14). Do you really want to be the friend of Jesus?

Love of God produces conviction. And a greater *conviction* will always result in more *conversions*, because a greater *commitment* will motivate us to obey the *commission* of Christ. As someone once said, "We'll have more conversions when we have more convictions." And to that it was rightly added, "We'll never make Christ mean anything to others until we make Him mean everything to us." What does Christ mean to you? Enough to leave lands, and houses, and fathers and mothers to take the gospel to the lost?

If we love God—I mean truly love Him—we will lift our lifeless selves out of those padded pews to preach to the people. The love of God and lack of evangelistic zeal just cannot reside within the same heart. It just can't!

### *The Love of Souls*

To what extent or how intense can one's



love for lost souls really go or be? It is amazing to closely examine an answer to this question as expressed by the following inspired writer, the apostle Paul:

I say the truth in Christ, *I lie not*, my conscience bearing witness with me in the Holy Spirit, *that I have great sorrow and unceasing pain in my heart, for I could wish that I myself were anathema from Christ for my brethren's sake, my kinsmen according to the flesh* (Romans 9:1-3).

As if the Roman Christians did not sense the earnest desire expressed in these words of Romans, Chapter 9, Paul comes back in the first verse of Chapter 10 by saying, "*Brethren, my heart's desire and my supplication to God is for them, that they may be saved.*" What great love Paul had for the lost! What great sincerity!

Paul wanted the Jews saved. The "love of Christ *constrained*" him to preach (II Corinthians 5:14). "*Woe is unto me,*" he lamented to the Corinthians, "if I preach not the gospel" (I Corinthians 9:16). That's love for the lost! That's desire to evangelize! That's solid conviction to convince the condemned of their state of condemnation. And we must have no less conviction today. Not an ounce less. As Paul said, "knowing therefore the fear of the Lord, we *persuade men*" (II Corinthians 5:11). I believe that if every

member of the Lord's church actually knew the "fear of the Lord" there would be no problem in evangelizing the world in this generation. Let us fear God so much that we fear nothing or no man.

But here again, have we grown cold? Ganglioneuropathy is a disease of the nervous system which destroys the sense of feeling. Those who suffer from this disease can feel nothing. If they place their hand on a red hot stove, they cannot feel the flesh burn. They can't smell it burn!

I believe many Christians and churches today suffer from "spiritual ganglioneuropathy." They just can't *feel* the need to preach the gospel to the lost world. Someone once said, "millions dying there have never heard. Millions living here have never cared." What has happened to our "caring"?

It seems that there is more rejoicing expressed in some refrigerated churches over one new church building than over ninety-nine lost souls who repent. Instead of being concerned about carrying the gospel to the world, these cold-clad churches clammer over who is or isn't going to carry the collection plate on Sunday morning. There's more concern in these churches over soiled carpets than over sin-soiled souls.

If our love of the lost will not take our hearts into all the world, then we've had a spiritual heart attack. Someone said, "Your love has a broken wing if it cannot fly across the sea." Yes, a love that will not at least take our minds into all the world will not take us to heaven. There will be no loveless and unconcerned people in heaven.

We must have a love that dedicates, stimulates and propagates the gospel. David Livingstone, a nineteenth century missionary to Africa, once wrote:

I am a missionary, heart and soul. I am ready to go anywhere—provided it be forward. I would venture everything for Christ. *Can the love of Christ not carry the missionary where the slave trade carries the trader?* I shall open up a path into the interior or perish.

Would that every Christian copy that zeal and dedication to a cause. We need missionaries who will give it *all* to take *all* the gospel to *all* the world. We need that expression of dedicated love which was once expressed by one of our missionary wives who wrote back to the States when her son had cholera and her husband was in bed sick, "I would not want to be anyone else, anywhere else, doing anything else, for anything in the world." May God raise up a multitude of thus convicted Christians.

## WE MUST HAVE A BURNING BELIEF

The story is often told of the nineteenth century criminal, Charles Peach, who was condemned to death for his hideous crimes. When the day for his execution came, and as he was being marched to the scaffold by guards, a chaplain was consoling him by talking about the "consolation of religion." When the chaplain explained that Jesus had died on the cross for our sins and that He was the Savior of the world, Peach turned and looked the chaplain in the eyes and said, "*Do you believe it! Do you believe it! If I believed that I would be willing to crawl across England on broken glass to tell men that it was true!*"

And *do we* really believe it? Do we? By our evangelistic lethargy we are saying that we don't. And if we really don't believe it, we'll never take the world for Christ.

But we *must* believe that Jesus is Lord. Paul stated that the faith of the Roman Christians was "*proclaimed throughout the whole world*" (Romans 1:8). Those Christians must have really believed. They must have really become "*obedient from the heart to that form of teaching whereto*" they were delivered (Romans

6:17). One of the greatest passages in the Bible is I Thessalonians 1:8. It was there that Paul complimented the Thessalonian church for its evangelistic fervor. *"For from you hath sounded forth the word of the Lord, not only in Macedonia and Achaia, but in every place your faith to God-ward is gone forth; so that we need not to speak anything."* Could Paul have said the same concerning the church where you attend?

We can't stop and pat ourselves on the back. There's no time for that. We must earnestly believe that Jesus should be the Lord of others. Paul said that Jesus was exalted above all "that in the name of Jesus *every knee* should bow" (Philippians 2:10). The Bible says that "all have sinned" (Romans 3:23). It says that the gospel is the "power of God unto salvation" (Romans 1:16). It states that we should go and preach that gospel (Mark 16:15). Why? Because the gospel is the only cure for a sin-sick world. *It is only in the name of Jesus that men will be saved* (Acts 4:12). And now let it be asked, Do we really believe that? Do we? Listen, this is a soul-searching issue. It is something we should very seriously consider. It is not something for us to lightly read over without any prayerful meditation. Think about it! Pray about it! Then, let's get out and *do something about it!*

If we really believed the gospel we will be missionary in outreach. I once read the statement, "Foreign missions is not an extra to our local programs. They are the acid test to whether or not we really believe Jesus."

Pagans have and continue to believe in their religions. Because of their belief they had in their religion, Hindu widows of India were once bound and burned and buried with their dead husbands. Because of their belief in their religion, some pagans of Africa once threw into the graves and buried alive the wives of the chiefs who died. Because of their belief in their religion, a Brazil preacher and his wife, with the members of his religious group, a few years ago bound two of the preacher's small children and four other children and ceremonially drowned them in the beach waters of Salvador, Brazil. Yes, because of a strong belief in what they thought was right they performed these hideous deeds. Yes, we agonize with horror concerning such atrocities. But those people *really believed* in the erroneous and devil induced religions. It is pathetic, though, that some Christians don't even believe their religion enough to take the gospel to these people who are doing such wickedness.

What about your belief? How strong is it? How much do you believe that Jesus is really

the Son of God? May all of our hearts agonize in prayer with the same words of a father who asked Jesus to cure his son, "*I believe, help thou mine unbelief*" (Mark 9:24). Jesus doesn't ask us to do hideous deeds as the above cults. He just asks us to tell of God's great love story in the Bible to all the world. Just tell someone that Jesus loves them.

Let us with an unwavering belief set out *now* to evangelize the world. Let *nothing* deter us! As Livingstone said let us say, "Nothing earthly will make me give up my work in despair." Let us never give up. "Yes, God," we must all cry, "We believe, but help our unbelief."

### WE MUST HAVE A MEMBER MOVEMENT

If we are Christian, then we are involved in missions. Unless we nurture the Biblical concept that every Christian is a crusader for Christ we will come far short of the King's commission. The "perpetual missions" verse of the Holy Writ is II Timothy 2:2. "*And the things which thou hast heard from me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also.*" If that doesn't say in plain words that every Christian has to be mission-minded, then I don't know how it could

be stated in more simple words. Yes, "missions is taking the whole gospel to the whole world by the *whole church*." And if you're a part of that church, then you should be a part of that "taking."

Cain asked, "Am I my brother's keeper?" Yes, Cain! And a thousand times yes! We are responsible for seeing that the world is evangelized. If it isn't, then the blood of every last soul of our generation is upon the shoulders of this generation of the church.

Ezekiel was made God's *watchman* for the nation of Israel. Every member of God's kingdom today should prayerfully read Ezekiel 3:17-21. Those words expressed in these few small verses should strike fear in every named Christian upon the face of this earth, just like it did in Ezekiel. Essentially, God told Ezekiel to preach to Israel. If Israel didn't hear, Ezekiel would have at least delivered himself. "*Their blood would be upon their own shoulders,*" God had told Ezekiel. *But*, if Ezekiel did not preach, their blood would be upon *his shoulders*, the shoulders of Ezekiel. Talk about an awesome responsibility!

Now the above just wasn't some Jewish concept relegated to the archives when the Old Law passed away. Look at the inspired words



of Paul. He said, "*I am debtor both to Greeks and to Barbarians, both to the wise and to the foolish. So, as much as in me is, I am ready to preach the gospel to you also that are in Rome*" (Romans 1:14, 15). Do you think Paul felt an intense responsibility to preach the gospel? You know he did.

Look at Paul's life and the principle of keeping the blood of other men's souls off his shoulders. In Corinth the Jews rejected his preaching. Notice carefully what Paul said to them: "*Your blood be upon your own heads: I am clean: from henceforth I will go unto the Gentiles*" (Acts 18:6). Yes, Paul had relieved himself of *their blood* because he had fulfilled his responsibility by preaching to them. In his personal conversation with the Ephesian elders, Paul said, "*Wherefore I testify unto you this day, that I am pure from the blood of all men. For I shrank not from declaring unto you the whole counsel of God*" (Acts 20:26, 27). Why was he pure from the blood of all men? Because he preached the gospel.

Again, will this generation of the church go to the grave with the blood of this lost generation upon its shoulders because it failed to ring out the whole counsel of God? With the knowledge of the gospel comes the responsibility to preach it. I once read of a newspaper article

where a doctor was sued because he passed by an accident without rendering one ounce of help to the victims. As a result, one victim bled to death. The courts awarded the suit to the victims who had witnessed the doctor just "drive on by." It was contended by the courts that his knowledge of medicine made him responsible.

But who will be responsible for this sin-sick world if we just "drive on by"? Where are all of the physicians? Will we be convicted by the courts in the final judgement for just "driving-on-by" the bleeding hearts of the masses in this world who are crying out for help?

*We are all debtors to preach the gospel,* to sing out, ring out and reach out to the millions of desperate souls who are clutching for security as they helplessly slip away into a Devil's hell. We need more working Christians and less shirking Christians. We need more engineers on the gospel mission train and less brakemen. Unfortunately, we sing "Trust and Obey" to God when all we do is *rust and decay*. We sing "Standing on the Promises" when all we're really doing is *sittin' on the premises*. "We'll never get others to obey the great commands until we obey the great commission." We will just never, never bring the world into Christ until we take Christ into all the world. *Never!* May every "*blood laden*" Christian cry out the following words:

Oh, for a thousand tongues to sing,  
My great redeemer's praise,  
The glories of my God and King,  
The triumphs of His grace.

My gracious Master and My God,  
Assist me to proclaim,  
To spread through all the earth abroad,  
The honors of Thy name.

(author unknown)

### WE MUST HAVE A SOUL SEARCH

There are millions of truth seekers in the world today. When these hear the gospel they readily receive it, learn it, practice it, and preach it. We must find these honest and sincere hearts before it is too late.

Someone once said that if we are going to take the world for Christ we must have *Acts 20:20 Vision*. It was in that passage that Paul said, "I shrank not from declaring unto you anything that was profitable, and *teaching you publicly, and from house to house.*" That's what we have to do today. From the mountain tops, from the street corners, from under palm trees and from pulpits we must herald the good and great gospel of Jesus Christ.

I read of a newspaper reporter in Akron, Ohio who said he just couldn't figure out why the Baptist Temple church was growing so fast

in that city. He said he attended their worship one Sunday morning to determine what was going on down there. At the close of his newspaper report he said that he found out why they were growing so fast. He wrote that he had been asked *seven times* if he was saved before he could get off the premises.

We must at least have that zeal for souls. Would that our souls were stricken with an agonizing thirst to search and seek for lost souls. Jesus came to *seek* and to *save* the lost (Luke 19:10). And we should *go* and *seek* and *save* the lost. This is not an option to Christianity. It is an imperative!

Don't give us any more Sunday morning Christians. World missions calls for daily Christian preaching. Remember Acts 5:42? Too many times churches are saturated with "past tense Christians." That is, they always say, "I *used* to teach Bible classes. I *used* to study regularly. I *used* to visit." But Jesus said, "If any man would come after me let him deny himself, and take up his cross *daily* and follow me" (Luke 9:23). (Read also the following passages concerning the daily activities of Jesus and the early Christians: Luke 19:47; Matthew 26:55; Acts 2:46; 5:42; 16:5; 17:11).

It's a *daily searching* and *seeking* that we need. Sunday morning Christians were never

ever worth their cost in pews. We need those who will search every house and temple for truth seekers. After the invited guest in Jesus' parable concerning the great supper had refused to attend because of weak and materialistic reasons, the master of the house told his servants, "*Go out quickly* into the streets and lanes of the city, and bring in hither the poor and maimed and blind and lame" (Luke 14:21). Those servants had already realized the *urgency* of the matter and went out. They told the Master that there was still room for more. Then the Master commanded, "*go out* into the highways and hedges, and *constrain* them to come in, that my house may be filled" (vs. 23).

World evangelism is *urgent!* It is something that must be done *quickly*. Every saint must *go out* and *constrain* them to come in. There's no lackadaisical nature about the Great Commission at all. We must go and go and keep on going. We must search and search and find those millions of truth seekers of the nations that God's house be full. Right now there are plenty of vacancies. But we must change that before it is eternally too late.

WE MUST HAVE A SOUL SEARCHING  
SACRIFICE

If we are going to evangelize the world in our generation—and we can—it will call for sacrifice and lots of it. Those who send will have to give more. The number of those who go will have to grow tremendously. *Everyone* will just have to realize that evangelizing the world is the most important thing we must do for Jesus. And when we realize that, we will have no problem with sacrifices.

*Those at Home Will Have to Sacrifice More*

There was the certain wealthy member of a congregation who never gave to foreign mission efforts. And everyone knew it. One Sunday a missionary made a special appeal and the elders called for a special contribution for the Lord's work in the missionary's area of the world. When the collection plate was handed to this certain rich man he whispered to the man passing the plate, "You know that I never give to missions." The man passing the plate replied, "Then take something out of the plate. The money is for the heathen."

The problem is that many Christians are paranoid about money for missions. Everytime they see a missionary they wonder how much he is going to ask for. And everytime the preacher brings up the subject of money the members get scared stiff. It's like the preacher that was

tempted with \$100 to stay in a haunted house overnight by himself. Several others had tried to stay in this certain haunted house but had been scared out of their wits before the night was over. But this broke preacher took the offer and went to the old house. But his friends came around and found him in good spirits the next morning. "How did you do it," they questioned. "Simple," said the preacher. "At 12:00 midnight, a hundred spooks appeared all right. I was scared stiff. All I could say was, 'Let's pray.' I bowed my head and prayed, but when I finished, they were still there. Then, I said, 'Let's sing.' The spooks still remained. Then I bowed my head and said, 'Let's now have the contribution.' When I looked up there wasn't a spook to be seen!!

It takes money to evangelize. Men *must* be supported. Equipment *must* be bought. Those sending will have to give *more*. Those going will have to give *more*. And this can never be just a lop-sided sacrifice. The late Charles Brewer said, "Brethren, I'll sacrifice with you, but I won't sacrifice for you." And that's right. Why should those going have to do all the sacrificing? When we sing "Showers of Blessings" let's stop sluffing off our burdens to sacrifice. Has not God blessed us that we might bless others?

Sometimes, though, we are like the Scotsman that was condemned to death for his crimes. They shot him in the heart and he didn't move. They shot him in the head and he still didn't move. They shot him in the pocketbook and he jumped and yelled.

Our treasures must be placed in heaven. If our treasure is on earth we will never feel that we have enough money. We'll never be content. But if our treasure is in heaven, we will always feel that we have enough money, we'll always be content. And, we'll always have enough money for the Lord's work. But, the problem is that too many Christians have their treasures upon this earth.

But let's remember that world inflation during the five years preceding 1977 increased over forty percent. And it continues to drive the cost of living up. It's not high enough now, though, or ever will be, to cause us to want to pull out of the foreign fields of lost souls. We must *never, never* even consider that.

But in an age where we are appearing to wane in some areas, the denominationalists are doing more and more. There's the People's Church in Toronto that is supporting over 350 missionaries. I heard of another denominational group of about 200 members who was at one



time supporting over forty missionaries. And then there is one denominational group in Boston that has its individual members support missionaries by themselves. A school teacher will live on half her salary and give the other half to support a missionary. That's almost incredible to our thinking in the church. But it can be done. One member of the church in Sao Paulo, Brazil, for example, used to fully support a missionary by himself. I know of a couple in California that worked two years making money, but lived on half what they made. They would then live on the other half of the money for two years while working full-time for the church to which they belonged. Would that this example was followed by brethren nation wide.

Can we send and support more missionaries than we are now? The denominationalists have proven that small churches *can* send many messengers. The two or three color TV's and two or three cars in our garages is evidence that we have the means. We can do it if we really want to. Let's admit it, finances is not the real problem.

### *Those Going Will Have to Sacrifice More*

There's no doubt about it, those going to the nations will have to lay *it all* on the line for Christ. Material things will have to be considered

of no account—and they are, you know. The sacrifices will vary, but we must not let that bother us the least.

Missionaries of the past have left all and given all to preach. Brother W. N. Short, for example, who was in Africa in the 1920's said he went for *seven years* one time without ever seeing a car. He said he had gone *seven months* during one stretch of work without seeing one white man. Such sacrifices almost petrifies some of our preachers and their wives who have been bred and weaned on fine carpets, clean kitchens and costly cars. But dare we count these things greater than evangelizing the world?

We must be willing to go to the limit, even to the sacrificing of our own lives. Paul gave us an example attitude in Acts 21:13. "I am ready not to be bound only, but *also to die at Jerusalem for the name of the Lord Jesus.*" I'll never forget the account of a denominational group (the Basel Mission), I read about a few years ago. In the first nine years of the work of those men who taught *their gospel*, eight of the ten who first went with the mission died. One of the two remaining men, Andreas Rias, wrote back to Stateside churches saying, "Let us press on. All Africa must be won for Christ. Though a thousand missionaries die, send more."

Louis Pasteur once wrote, "Life in the midst of danger is the life, the real life, the life of sacrifice." It was said of John Knox that he feared God so much that he dared not fear any man. Only those who have weathered the heat of life's battle can truly recognize the essence of the courageous life. God needs those who "love not their lives even unto death."

In the early 1950's, Nate and Marj Saint went into Equador for a denominational group to try to approach the Aucas, a very vicious group of Indians in the jungles of Equador\* After several years of hard work they finally had an opportunity to approach the Aucas. At 12:30 p.m. on January 8, 1956, Nate and four other missionaries radioed back to their main camp from a secluded area where they thought they were finally going to be able to make their initial contacts with the Aucas. Nate stated over the radio, "This is the day! Will contact you next at 4:30." Four-thirty came and went for those at the home base who were anxiously awaiting word. But that word never came. Nate Saint and the four other missionaries were brutally hacked to death with Auca machetes. They had given their lives for their mission.

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\*Read the book, Jungle Pilot by Russel T. Hitt (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Zondervan Publishing House, 1974).

Three years later after the above tragic event, some of the wives of the five missionaries that had been unmercifully massacred finally made a breakthrough in teaching the Aucas. They sat and talked about the Bible with those who had only three years earlier killed their beloved husbands.

Evangelizing the world in our generation will call for no less sacrifice, no less dedication, and no less determination as the above. We must be willing to lay our lives at the feet of Jesus and say, "Speak Lord, thy servant heareth." "Take my life and let it be, consecrated Lord to thee."

### LET'S REMEMBER

I always liked what Ivan Stewart used to say, "Don't say I'm gonna convert somebody someday. 'Gonna' is not in the dictionary. 'Somebody' is not in any phone book, and 'someday' is not on the calendar." World evangelism calls for *immediate* action. There is an *urgency* in carrying out Christ's commission. It is an urgency like no other urgency.

II Kings 7:1-9 illustrates that urgency. In the context of this passage Syria is warring against the city of Samaria. The siege had gone

on for weeks and there was a great famine going on within the walls of the city. Men and women and children were dying from starvation. At the entrance of the city gates sat four lepers. They didn't want to go into the city because the famine was there. So they decided to go to the camp of the Syrians and ask for mercy.

What those four lepers didn't know was that the night before, God had caused the Syrians to hear the sound of chariots, horses and a great army. The wits were scared out of every last Syrian, and they all fled for their lives like frightened rabbits. When the four lepers arrived, they found the camp completely deserted. And like materialistic madmen, they ran from vacant tent to vacant tent grabbing and eating bits of food. They collected gold. They collected fine garments and shag carpets. But finally they came to their senses and remembered the pitiful condition of their brethren back in Samaria. II Kings 7:9 rings out their realization. It should also echo our cry of urgency to spread the good news. *"Then they said one to another, we do not well; this day is a day of good tidings, and we hold our peace: If we tarry till morning light, punishment will overtake us; now therefore come, let us go and tell the king's household."*

There is no less urgency today to preach

Jesus to the nations. They are literally starving for the truth while we sit around collecting garments and houses and lands. Yes, "This day is a day of good tidings *and we hold our peace.*" We need to stop singing "Victory in Jesus" if all we're doing is vacationing in Jerusalem. What is wrong with the Christian who is more concerned about the rising food prices at the local grocery than over the awesome famine of truth that has permeated every nation of the world?

We *must cry out* to the dying world. The story is told that when King Cyrus of Persia stormed the capitol of Lydia, the Lydian king put on his robes to await death on the throne. As a Persian soldier was about to thrust a spear through his heart, the king's small son who previously could not speak, cried out, "Persian, spare my father." In seeing the imminent eternal death of millions of lost souls, let us cry out until our last dying breath.

As the Devil takes this sin-ridden world on his way to doom and destruction, *we must cry out!* We must cry out the good news to earth's inhabitants. For them and for us there is no other hope than the good news. When the Samaritan woman finally realized that Jesus was more than just any man, more than just any

prophet, she *left her waterpot, and went away into the city, and saith to the people, come, see a man, who told me all things that ever I did; can this be the Christ?*" (John 4:28, 29). Let's leave our waterpots, and go into the world to tell men that *this is the Christ*.

We must get excited about evangelism, about Jesus and His gospel. Someone said, "We'll never get excited over sowing the seed until we get excited over seeing the need." And too, "We'll never have faith in the mission before us until we have faith in the Master behind us." Let us *go out and cry out*. Let us sacrifice all. Let us be motivated by an intense love of souls. Let us be driven by the burning belief that Jesus really is the Son of God and that *no one* can be saved without the gospel. And let every member of Christ's church become thoroughly and individually involved in this world-wide intensification to search for truth-seekers. God calls for nothing less. And we must not settle for anything that is short of what God desires.

## ***Trouble Shooting In Missions***

Now then, let's get down to the heart of the problem. What are some of the specifics that are plaguing our mission efforts? Why have some

churches let the standard fall? Why do some elders say, "We don't do foreign mission work any more."

Paul said, "If God be for us, who can be against us" (Romans 8:31). *Those are not words of failure.* "We are more than conquerors through him that loved us" (Romans 8:37). *These are not words of failure.* Christianity is a conquering religion. It is one that *overcomes*. That is its essence. It is not to be in *retreat*. It is to be on the march for victories. The church is an institution that must be advancing *at all times*. If it ceases to advance, then it ceases to be that institution we read about in the book of Acts.

We thank God that He planned that institutions apart from the church should not become a substitute for doing the work of the church. He never meant that any parachurch society should do what the church should be doing. Those man-made institutions as a substitute for God's original plan have never produced what they are always said to produce. God has only one "missionary society" and that's the church.

The church, however, is made up of people. And when we are dealing with people we are dealing with problems, for all people are fallible. There are no few problems that are a constant



threat to on-going mission efforts in the church today. We need to approach these problems, these failures that constantly destroy mission efforts of local churches.

If we are going to evangelize the world in our generation—and we can if we want—then we must face these problems eye-to-eye. Only in recognition is their salvation. I do not have space here to mention all the problems involved. These are some, though, that I feel have become major broken cogs in the machinery of past foreign evangelism.

### *The "Loss-of-Support" Problem*

We might as well start with enemy Number One here. Let's illustrate this. There was one group of four missionaries that went to Brazil several years ago. Within *two years*, two of the families had lost their monthly support. There was also the missionary who received a letter saying that his support would be terminated in December. The sponsoring elders had sent the letter the last part of December and it did not reach the missionary until February. The missionary had no money in the bank and was in serious financial trouble. And then there is the example of the long-term missionary who went back on furlough. As soon as he arrived in the States he was informed that his support

would be terminated. Examples could be listed here over and over. In fact, almost every missionary has had problems in this area at one time or another. This could easily be the *biggest problem*—failure—of missions in the church today. This support thing is a major thorn-in-the-flesh to the church's world-wide outreach.

The reasons for the above problem are many. Sometimes the missionary is just not doing his work, or he may not be doing the work the sponsoring elders want him to do. There is also the problem of inflation. Mission efforts, we are told, just get too expensive. There is also the lack of sticktoitiveness on the part of Stateside churches. Some churches just get tired or become disinterested in supporting mission efforts and pull out. I believe that the problem is mostly a problem of *attitudes* and not mechanics.

I believe that the problem we are discussing is centered around the following wrong attitudes that have made their way into the ranks of the saints: (1) *Localism*, the attitude of a Stateside church being concerned only with its own local scene. They want to just "hold their own." (2) *Unconcernism*, the attitude of not being concerned about taking the gospel to a world that is unevangelized. (3) *Non-aggressiveness*, the attitude of just not being militant in evangelism, not being motivated to missions.

In other words, those stricken with this sickness are just sitting around waiting on heaven. (4) *Retreatism*, those who have unfortunately been influenced by our political situation of pulling our troops home and not being involved in foreign efforts. (5) *Statesideism*, the attitude that we want mission works only "within driving distance," something we can keep our eye on. *These are the devil's attitudes working against the foreign mission efforts of the church today.* Churches are pulling their support out of foreign mission efforts because of these unbiblical attitudes. Don't let them influence your thinking!

To rectify our problems in this area, we need to make some drastic changes in our thinking. We can begin by *making definite time commitments to specific mission efforts.* Churches should make long-term commitments to foreign mission support. This would settle most of the problems. Examples of this would be the Central church of Christ in Amarillo, Texas which has financially stood behind the Sao Paulo, Brazil work for over *twenty years.* The Woodlawn church in Abilene, Texas supported the Glen Loopers in the mission field for over *eighteen years.* The Broadway church in Padukah, Kentucky supported the Bible correspondence program in Brazil for over *eleven years.* The

Walnut Street church in Dickson, Tennessee supports men with a commitment of *twenty years* or more. Several other examples could be given here showing churches which have stood behind specific foreign efforts *ten, fifteen or twenty years*. And that's exactly what it takes to be effective. We must stop this short-sighted thinking of just being involved in a specific foreign effort for two or three or five years. Let's stay until the church is established in an indigenous way. If it takes ten years, *then stay ten years*.

Along this same avenue, churches should *personally* know the living circumstances in which their missionary lives and support him accordingly. The cost of living outside the United States is high in many areas of the world. Three or four dollars for a gallon of gas is not uncommon in many of the countries of the world. In Nicaragua gasoline was at one time \$14.00 a gallon! Monthly rent for a house at \$400 to \$600 is not all that uncommon in many of the large cities of the world. (This is not high when we admit that a lot of brethren in the States are forking over at least that much every month on their house payments.) And then, buying transportation at \$11,000 or \$12,000 is not cheap. But again, many brethren wouldn't think twice before they bought a car *for themselves* for

that price. Listen, let's be fair with our missionaries and provide for their needs so they can do our work in evangelizing the world.

Sponsoring churches should *feel* and *be* responsible for the support of the missionary. If his support is coming from different sources and he loses some of that support, then the *sponsoring church*, not the missionary, should be primarily responsible for replacing it. That would improve the situation in this area a hundred-fold!

Let's keep our men on the field. Why bring a family thousands of miles home to raise once again their support *when the sponsoring church is at home already*? If a sponsoring church expects their missionary to come home and raise lost support, is this not the old attitude of a church thinking that this is the missionary's work and we are just a *figurehead sponsor*? If churches want to be sponsors, then let them function as sponsors.

### *The "Discouragement" Problem.*

Here's another shiny tool of Satan to destroy foreign missions. Satan wants to discourage missionaries. He wants to discourage churches, too. He wants us to give it all up. But let's not fall for such a trick, not for one minute.

There are several reasons churches and

missionaries become discouraged in a specific mission effort. Sometimes we count baptisms too much. Now I know that if we do not have baptisms we should pull out and go to fields that are more ripe. But we should never do that when entering a new field. And what I mean by entering, is the first one or two or even three years of evangelistic effort in a new area. Much seed needs to be sown before the crop is produced. Some churches, and missionaries, want to pull out when there may be only a few baptisms that first year. Such is unfortunate and usually shows an ignorance of how the seed of the kingdom really works in the hearts of men.

We must know the field to which we go. If we do not know it, it will take two or three years to determine if it has ripe fruit. Only after patient planting and watering can fruit come forth in most areas. We should be patient, but at the same time not waste our time on unfruitful and stale soil. Of course, it's hard to determine when to stay and when to pull out. That's where we need to ask God for wisdom.

We need, though, to be careful about using baptisms as a mark of success or failure that first year or so on the field. If few conversions come that second year, then we better check our methods, man and the receptivity of the people. If the problem is with the method,

then change it. If the problem is with the man, then change him. If the problem is with the receptivity of the field, then change fields. But before we become totally discouraged with the effort, let's do some thorough investigation.

Churches need to recognize that any missionary becomes discouraged with his work at times. To keep him encouraged, keep him pumped up with letters or visits. Send a messenger to him to let him know that you are still behind him. That is exactly what the Philippian church did for Paul in sending Epaphroditus. Notice how Paul rejoiced. "*But I rejoiced in the Lord greatly, that now at length ye have revived your thought for me . . .*" (Philippians 4:10). Now brethren, if it worked for Paul, it will work for you and your missionary. And, if Paul became discouraged, you know that your missionary will. Send him an "Epaphroditus." It is interesting to note also that the Colossian church did this same thing (Colossians 4:12). Could this be a Biblical principle of good missions?

Few Stateside members of the church really know the fiery trials through which the missionary has to go. But just a sign of encouragement from back home does help. Let's never fail in a mission effort because we let our missionary become discouraged.

### *The "Weak Missionary" Problem*

Sometimes we fail in foreign mission efforts just because of a weak missionary. He may have a weak family. He may be weak in wisdom and prudence. Or, he may be physically sick. And then, there are those who are weak in doctrine. Such could be devastating to the church. I recently talked with a church that had sent a young man to Italy. Only after about one year the man was overtaken in false doctrine. That was an unfortunate failure. Such could probably have been prevented if the sponsoring church would have worked with the man before he went.

Sponsoring churches should *thoroughly* check the doctrine of the man they send. Don't send a liberal or modernist into the field. If he can't get his doctrine straightened out back home, then he will surely not get it straightened out on the field where he has no elders or sound members to give him feedback on various teachings. The mission field demands only sound men.

Missionaries should be the strongest men in doctrine and faith we have. They should be able to "preach *the word*" (II Timothy 4:2) and speak the "things which befit the *sound doctrine*" (Titus 2:1). They should "be strong in the Lord, and in the strength of his might" (Ephesians 6:10). And sponsoring churches should determine



this before they send any man into the field. This would solve many of the problems and would have prevented many of the failures we have had in various foreign mission efforts.

### *The "Inability-to-Identify" Problem*

This is a missionary failure. Some missionaries in the past have just not adapted to the foreign culture in which they lived. As a result, they were home-bound only after a year or so on the field. Or, they just lived in a cloistered shell on the field without ever reaching the people. This has discouraged many home churches in supporting foreign missions.

The reasons for this failure to adapt are many. But primarily, it is a deficiency on the part of the missionary family to give up the "good life" of the States and settle for the new culture. I know of one missionary who personally told me that he was going to call home and have his church send him a case of Root Beer. I don't know if he ever did. I hope not. Because of materialistically seated attitudes, some American missionaries are unable to recover from culture shock which is usually the shock of giving up the "American way of life." The only relief they can find from their great anxiety is to just go home. And there they go.

If we are going to evangelize the nations,

we *must* have Christian families that will willingly give up houses, and lands and anything else for Jesus. Missionaries do not go into countries to buy and sell and get gain (James 4:13, 14). And above all, they should not love the things of this world (James 4:4; I John 2:15). They should learn to condescend to men of lower estate. "Becoming all things to all men" is a principle easy to talk about while sitting on a padded pew, but it is hard to practice while trying to maintain comfort on a wooden bench or tree stump. Missionaries, though, must learn these vital aspects of Christianity. Such lessons of the Christian life will expedite the identification process of going to the mission field.

Cultural preparation before going is a must. We must train our missionaries to be the best ambassadors for Christ they can be. Sending an unprepared family into the mission field is like putting a mouse in a cat cage. We have bungled so many mission efforts in the past that it looks like churches throughout the nation would realize the seriousness of this matter. It takes a lot of Bible to be a missionary. But it takes brains, too. And Bible without brains equals bungle. Let's train our missionary families in mission methods and cultural anthropology. And let's never send one unless he has been academically and spiritually trained at home.

*The "No-Communication" Problem*

I'm not talking about communication with churches back home or churches with missionaries. It's foreign languages that are the problem. Some missionaries have failed in that they have not learned the language of the peoples among whom they are working. Such is nothing less than a failure in communication. Such leads to ineffectiveness and few converts.

The reasons for this failure could be many. Some missionaries have felt pressured that first year on the field to produce results. They have therefore let language studies lag to just get by and get that first convert. Others have just had a lack of initiative or have gone into culture shock and stayed there. And then there are those cases where the missionary was crippled for lack of funds because his home church did not see the real need of language study. And then there are those who never intended to learn the language of the people to whom they went. They used an interpreter. Listen, if the missionary you intend to send to the field for a length of time does not plan to learn the language of the people to whom he is going, don't send him.

The solution to learning any language falls nothing short of good and hard study. At least the first six months of any effort should be dedicated to language study. Sufficient funds should

be provided. Patience should be exercised both by the missionary and by the home church. After all, if one cannot speak the language of the people to whom he goes, then why go?

### *The "Spiritually-Drained-Missionary" Problem*

Missionaries become spiritually drained for several reasons. They are constantly feeding others. Their time is at the mercy of the sin-sick society in which they live. They often fail to keep up with their personal Bible studies. They fail to receive encouragement from back home. Yes, this could go on. But the thing to remember here is that missionaries do not have a superfaith that is un-touchable by discouragement.

The Bible is God's gift to produce faith in man. "So belief cometh of hearing, and hearing by the word of Christ" (Romans 10:17). That passage was true when it was written and it is true today. If we are going to have faith in the mission before us, we must have faith in the message in us and the Master behind us. And that faith comes from God's precious Word. The missionary that does not realize this will not last long on the field.

### *The "Spread-Too-Thin" Problem*

Why do we always think a city with a population of a hundred thousand is evangelized

if we have only one lonely evangelist there? Sometimes we satisfy our cold concern for the nations, by calling *an entire nation evangelized* if we have a lone missionary struggling within its borders. Somewhere here we have lost contact with reality. Can you imagine your city or state evangelized with just one preacher of the gospel located in it? Think about it.

We spread our missionaries over the face of the world like a thin layer of butter over toast. If we get them within five hundred miles of one another we feel like we have bunched them too close together and are afraid that our efforts will overlap. I've actually seen sponsoring churches feel that "their territory" was being infringed upon by the work of another church. In the Caribbean there was those churches in the States who in the past acted like they "had claim" to various islands. No one could send a missionary there without consulting them. Such foolishness is not only childish, but right down unscriptural. I do not see any New Testament churches "laying claim" to a specific area.

We need a rude awakening in the church on this point of concentrated evangelism. We need to send forth hundreds of evangelists. We need to send them in team efforts to concentrate our emphasis. Let us never spread our men so thin that they become almost ineffective. We would

never send soldiers into a heated battle one by one or too spread out to do anything of a concentrated nature. And neither should we do that with missionaries.

But on the other hand, this "spread-too-thin" philosophy is also a problem with some missionaries themselves. Somehow, there are those missionaries who think that they have to do it *all* on their own. They do not want to work with anyone. And usually, they don't want to work with anyone because they can't work with anyone.

I have heard a few missionaries say, "If you want something done right, you have to do it yourself." That attitude has sent many torn, bewildered and frustrated men back home never to return to the field. He went to the field thinking he could do it alone. The nationals let him do it on his own. Other missionaries who tried to work with him let him do it on his own. And he went down on his own. If we were meant to do it on our own, then why does the New Testament talk about Christians being *fellow-workers* in the faith?

We must send harvesters into the harvest *together*. Let them work together. Let them go with indigenous principles and a determination to preach, baptize, teach and leave for other fields. We must plant churches. That's an absolute

necessity. But we must plant churches that will allow us to plant other churches without our help. If those initial churches are not trained to allow the missionary to go to other areas, then the missionary will be spreading himself too thin or will see himself as a permanent fixture in a mission work. And in such a situation, he finds himself "holding hands" and "keeping house", not evangelizing.

### *The "Plum-Tired-Out" Problem*

This point is directly related to the above. Many times we let a missionary work himself to the marrow of the bone. He either goes home permanently or goes crazy, whichever comes first. Such is a failure in missions.

Good planning, good organization and good vacations add up to good results in missionary work. The missionary is not only under the stress of the work but he at the same time has to bear the burden of being in a foreign culture. And that can destroy those who are not prepared for the situation. Doing evangelistic work in a foreign culture is nothing short of hard work.

Every missionary should go on a vacation every year. And he should go on a furlough every two or three years. That yearly vacation—somewhere in the country but away from his work—and that furlough is not wasted time. It is saved

time when one considers how much more effective he will be being in a healthy mental state on the field. Let us make sure that our missionaries have time to rest.

### *The "Fund-Finding" Problem*

I have saved this point as the last point because this is a major problem in our mission efforts. I think we have produced some unnecessary failures here, maybe as one missionary called it, "a monster of our own making." Some cases I personally know have been unhappy and unnecessary. These are cases where a perfectly qualified man could not raise his support to go to the mission field because he was at the wrong places at the wrong time. And there are also cases where a good man on the field had to come home because some church wanted to pave the parking lot. Whatever the case, something is wrong here, bad wrong. Let's examine this closely.

Our usual method of raising funds to go to the field is to force a young man and his wife through the frustrating practice of "church begging"—at least, it often develops into this. They are supposed to go from church to church to talk elders into "forking over" part of the "savings account" of the church for mission



work. After a year or so of burning beggars role, the young family *may* manage to scrape together what is needed—\$25 here, \$50 there. Most of the time they don't. That's a *fact!*

But if the missionary does not get the needed support, then some "good" brother will usually say, "Well, I guess it wasn't God's will that he go." Pshaw! I would certainly not like to think that God's will to evangelize the world depended upon the dead-headed mission-mindedness of some brethren. *Is it God's will that we have less than five hundred missionary families throughout the world? Is it God's will that about 94% of the preachers of the gospel preach to about 6% of the world's population? Is it God's will that about 6% of the gospel preachers preach to 94% of the world's population? Is it God's will that millions of souls be jerked into eternity by death every year without even hearing the sweet name of Jesus? Is it God's will that churches go along unconcerned about the lost world? Is it? Is it? If it is, then let's give up this futile effort of trying to evangelize the world. Let's just tear Matthew 28:19, 20 out of our Bibles and be done with it.*

*Brethren, the problem is not in the fundraising missionary, nor is it a matter of God's will. The problem is that the senders have become*

*unconcerned about the commandments of Jesus and the lost souls of men!*

Fund raising for missions would be right down humorous if it were not for being a work for the most serious matter in the world. I remember one instance where a friend of mine was promised to have *ten minutes* during the announcements to make his "appeal." When the time came, the announcer got up, made the announcements, called for the closing prayer and dismissed the audience. And there sat the dumbfounded missionary on the front pew. *The announcer had forgotten about him!* Now, I wonder if that is the type of treatment we should put our men of God through before we send them to the fields?

We need to re-think our system in this matter. Is it getting the job done? I know of one missionary family that drove 65,000 miles—wore out their car—to raise funds. He was a good man, too. But the last straw was when a church wouldn't give him *ten dollars* to buy some gas to get home. Now you tell me if that is right.

On the positive side, our system of fund raising does allow some to raise the necessary support. If the missionary is a Dale Carnegie graduate and stubborn enough to overcome

the onslaughts of some brethren, he may conquer this barrier. He can make it, and many, many have. So there is hope for those who are presently in the process of wearing out their cars for Christ.

Let's never brush off our responsibility to evangelize the world by telling some prospective young missionary that it was God's will that he not go to the mission field. Now I do not contend that just every "Tom, Dick and Harry" should be a missionary. Let's do not go to the extreme here. Each sponsoring church, though, should develop its own method for determining which men should be supported and which ones should not be supported. If they determine to sponsor a man, *then let them take the lead in the fund raising. What I am saying is that the manner of determining whether or not a man should go to the field should not be determined by whether or not he can raise his funds.* Whether or not a prospective missionary can pass through the valley of fund raising is not a good test as to his worthiness, or his faith, either. Thus, I would like to suggest a better plan, one that is incorporated by several churches throughout the brotherhood.

*Churches should pick their missionaries. Prove their quality. Train them. And then, send them forth.* If extra funds are to be raised from

sister churches, let that sponsoring church, *the elders*, take the lead for the raising of those funds. Don't make the missionary do all of the fund raising. I am saying that it is the church's responsibility to evangelize the world. And that places the responsibility of choosing, training, providing and sending the laborers right on the back of the sending churches, not just the ones who are sent.

Actually, it's not the church supporting a missionary so the missionary can do "his thing" as a missionary. It's the church's work. And the church is only using hand picked families to accomplish its work abroad. When extra funds are needed, let the elders and deacons approach sister churches.

I know of one instance where a small congregation wanted to send their preacher into the mission field. They could not provide all of the financial needs themselves and also hire another preacher at the same time, so *the elders* approached sister churches and asked them to make this their mission effort also. Within *ninety days* the elders had all the support necessary to send their preacher to the mission field. And they had encouraged other churches to do mission work also. Now isn't that a better picture than what we many times force our missionaries to do today in raising funds?

We need a complete revolution here in the thinking of some churches. Churches must realize the responsibility that world evangelism is upon *the shoulders of the church*, not just a few missionaries. We must restore that New Testament zeal of congregational responsibility in motivating missions. Unless we do that, we will be deadlocked into our present situation.

### LET'S REMEMBER

Sure, many of our past mission efforts have been crippled by failure. But that doesn't mean that any despicable aspects of the past must continue into the future. We can and must correct our course. We must restore that New Testament approach for missions.

I can't read of one example in the New Testament where a missionary went about from church to church raising his personal support. *Not a one!* For benevolence, yes. But for support to go into a mission field, no. Have we developed a questionable practice in the church for sending missionaries?

It seems that Paul's support came as a result of churches realizing the need to evangelize the world. That support came naturally, as a result of individuals realizing that what God had

done for them He must do for others also. That is the attitude we must restore in the church today. That zeal, that love, that concern for the souls of the world *must be restored*. And unless we are gripped by that realization we will never "turn the world upside down" in our generation for Christ.

## *Missions and the Home Church*

To restore that New Testament way of evangelism, we must concentrate upon the local church. We must focus our attention on the real problem. Every church must re-define its purpose. I believe many members of the church have no idea what the work of the church is. The mission of the church is being drowned in the ignorance of those who have forgotten the law of God.

*Evangelism* is the central thrust of every church of our Lord Jesus Christ. At least, that's what the Bible affirms. Leslie Lyall once wrote:

The church's primary duty, therefore, quite contrary to much current practice, is to evangelize the world by multiplying itself in tens of thousands of local churches so situated that the entire population of the world is brought within the sound of the gospel; not through thousands of foreign missionaries but through thousands

of congregations of people proclaiming that gospel in the language of their own country, region, or tribe.

Yes, the church is the mission agency of God to take the gospel to the world. It is not just the responsibility of a few, the missionaries. Every Christian must get involved in this outreach. *Everything—every program—of the church*, must be built around this permeating purpose of Christianity.

If the local programs of the church are not based upon Matthew 28:19, 20 and Mark 16:15, then we *will not* have an evangelistic and growing church. In fact, we may not have *the* church at all. True worship must be in *spirit and truth* (John 4:24). Now worship can be vain if it is in truth but not in spirit. Or, it can be vain if it is in spirit but not according to the truth. Can a church be “in vain” if it turns *lukewarm*? I think it can. And I think many churches are on the verge of being spewed out of the mouth of our Lord because they have forgotten their work and grown cold (Revelation 3:15, 16).

Christians have been entrusted with the word of reconciliation (II Corinthians 5:18, 19). And unless we realize that that reconciling word must be preached to every creature under heaven, we're going to be evangelistic deadheads surrounded by the profiles of brick and mortar

We must never be diverted from evangelism to pursue the social gospel.

### THE GREAT DIVERSIONS

Let's get more specific with this social gospel outreach. Having good benevolent programs is good. Having good programs for our youth is good. Baking pies is good and necessary, too. This is what the Bible commands us to do. Paul wrote, "So then, as we have opportunity, let us work that which is good toward all men, and especially toward them that are of the household of the faith" (Galatians 6:10). But are we missing the point if the true purpose of our programs is not the saving of souls for eternal heaven?

Any church program, other than direct evangelistic programs, that becomes an end in itself is a diversion of Satan. Is this true? I believe it is true to a certain extent. Sometimes "church programs" become deceptive diversions used by Satan to keep our minds off the work of the church. And no few churches in the brotherhood today have fallen head-over-heels for Satan's distractions. Satan wants us to believe that the social gospel is true. He wants us to believe that this is where all of our energies should be spent.

Let us remember, Satan is not going to



stagnate the church by causing the church to commit adultery, or make it steal, or become a mass clan of deceivers. What Satan does, is use good works the church should be doing, but changes the direction of those works slightly to lead astray the involvement of zealous Christians. He'll get Christians super involved in politics, for example, to keep their energies away from preaching to people. Or, he'll get Christians involved with programs that serve themselves to the point that they have no time for teaching lost neighbors. Deceiving churches into preaching the social gospel is Satan's greatest weapon against zealous churches.

Well, let me get even more specific. Here's another more common example of this tragic situation. I'm going to use one of the most common killers of mission efforts as an example here. It is one that missionaries are faced with every week as they stand before congregations and sit facing elders who have loaded their budgets with this "killer of missions." Yes, you may have guessed it by now. If you are an experienced missionary, you know what I am talking about. Yes, the local program that kills its share of missions in a big way is the *local building program*. Oh, how many missionaries have had their aspirations dashed to pieces by bricks and chandeliers.

Now listen, I'm not against church buildings—really. I've worshipped under enough palm trees and in enough leaky shacks to really appreciate good roof-proofed church buildings. But haven't we carried this thing too far? Have we lost the real purpose for the building of church buildings?

Unless our budgeting and building of church "plants" is for the purpose of evangelism, I believe our plants are dead factories. Satan has diverted us. When we are more concerned about padded pews, clean carpets, pretty pulpits and wonderful windows than in saving souls, then I believe the Devil has diverted us from our purpose. Why is it that the first thing that is usually cut from the budget in an effort to fund a new building is some unfortunate missionary family. Are we not being diverted?

Some brethren say they build a new building for evangelistic purposes. Yet, they drop the support of some missionary to pay for it. Not much consistency here, is there? We need to have a real soul-searching consideration for new buildings. I suppose that missionaries have contributed to the construction of more new buildings than any one else in the church. They have done so by losing their support from a "diverted church" which has become more concerned about masonite than missions, more concerned

about pews than preaching.

### THE RELATIONSHIP

But the relationship between true New Testament churches and their mission cannot be severed, for true New Testament churches are "missionary societies" by nature. We cannot let Satan slip in and destroy this relationship, either. For if you destroy the mission, you destroy the church. We *cannot* have a true New Testament church without New Testament missions. Let us never think that we have fully restored the New Testament church when we have let that first century zeal and practice of evangelism lay somewhere in the ecclesiastical archives of ancient church history.

That relationship that exists between the church as a body of people and the church as a dynamic evangelistic force must be guarded. We cannot have the church as a dynamic, evangelistic force without the members being dynamic and evangelistic. But we can have the church body of people without the evangelistic outreach force, at least for one generation. Has this generation of the church lost that dynamic outreach? Maybe James Woodroof was right when he said that we have too long limited "the proclamation of the gospel to one focal

point (the church edifice) and to one vocal point (the preacher in the pulpit)." Maybe, we have encased the dynamic evangelistic outreach of the church within a tomb of stone walls.

But the relationship between the church and its work must be nurtured and lovingly developed. An example of this relationship can clearly be seen in the closeness established between Paul and the church at Philippi. Here is a true example of a mission church. Notice the following words of Paul to that church: "*Wherefore, my brethren beloved and longed for, my joy and crown*" (Philippians 4:1). That feeling was mutual, for Paul said of them in Chapter 4, verse 10, "I rejoice in the Lord greatly, that now at length ye have revived your thought for me; wherein ye did indeed take thought, but ye lacked opportunity." In verse 15 of Chapter 5, Paul says that the Philippian church was the only one that had fellowship—that's financial support—with him when he went to Macedonia. Certainly, the relationship between this church and Paul is an example of love and concern that should be mutually expressed between churches and missionaries today.

But unfortunately something has gone wrong in this area in many churches. Misunderstanding and mistrust have destroyed the

relationship between missions and local supporting and sponsoring churches in many instances. Something has entered the picture here that has blinded the minds of the believing. It has developed to the point where it is almost impossible for mission support to be raised from some churches. These churches have turned off any appeals for mission efforts.

I do not know all the reasons for this unfortunate and anti-New Testament practice, but I do know that it's the work of the Devil. Some past blunders in missions have completely turned cold the hearts of some churches. When a church forgets its mission, though, has it not ceased to be that dynamic New Testament church found in the Scriptures? How can we find any parallel between that first century church that "turned the world upside down" and some twentieth century churches that have turned inside to their own selves?

This destruction of relationship between the church and its mission, or missionaries, may be the fault of missionaries. Or, it may just be a mutual misunderstanding of real mission work in general. Does anyone really know? Accusations are made both by the senders and by the ones sent. The following example letter from a church to a missionary may illustrate that the problem could be with some missionaries. Or,

it could be the problem of churches who send. Read it and see what you think.

Dear Brother,

We appreciate your desire to do mission work for our Lord. Such is a noble effort and desire. But as you surely know, we are constantly flooded with requests for support from many missionaries. However, we make it an effort to answer all who make such requests, though we are financially able to help only a few, being we are trying to pay off our present building and are in the process of establishing a new building fund. But we feel that it is our duty to help in giving good sound advice to those missionaries we cannot help financially. We would like to do the same for you. We enjoy the privilege of being frank and straight to the point. So with such open-mindedness we feel we need to reply to your request for funds. We feel you need our humble advice.

Frankly, we are surprised that you are even desiring to continue to do mission work at all. From the reports we have heard concerning you and by contacting the references you gave, we feel obligated to let you know why we will not give you the opportunity of being supported by this church.

First, we were utterly shocked when we heard that you had opposed the teaching and practice of a well-known and respected preacher in one of our principle churches of the brotherhood. We were told that you even went so far as to withstand this man publicly, even before the whole church. And in another city we were told that you vigorously opposed one of the outstanding businessmen of that city. As a result the whole city was turned against you. You should know that such practices will not help in the furtherance of the gospel. You should

try to become good friends with the key figures in every city, and not disturb that friendship with controversial debates about religion. Why don't you join several civic clubs and give as many PTA speeches as possible to become popular as a civic leader? You really need to rub shoulders with city officials. But don't rub them wrong. Don't get into theological discussions that cause any type of debate.

To further exemplify your apparent inability to get along with people, we have a sworn affidavit from one man, a brother Demas, who said it was impossible for you to get along with him or anyone else. And, he cites many other cases to prove his point. One of which was a case with a well-known brother of good report by the name of brother Barnabus. We heard that you broke up an effective missionary team effort because you just would not agree to his methods. We want you to know, though, that he is doing an outstanding work without your company.

Concerning support, we have heard that you have worked part-time on the side to support yourself. Why did you quit preaching? We wonder if this may be an indication that your reputation is so bad among churches that you are unable to raise sufficient support. (We have heard also that your sermons are far too long, stretching into the night. We would recommend that you immediately enroll in a Dale Carnegie course to learn how to maintain the attention of your listeners.)

Concerning your support, we read in a letter that you had written to the church at Philippi, that that was the only church which was supporting you at one time. We really wonder why this was the case being that it usually takes several churches to support one missionary in our brotherhood. But from your record,

we can understand why churches have refused to support you or have dropped your support.

As a further reason why we will not allow you to give us a presentation of your work, we noticed in your resume that you hold no degrees, nor were you a graduate of one of our noted Christian schools. We cannot accept the fact that you say you have done much personal study on your own. You said that you spent some time studying in a place called Arabia and Damascus, but we cannot accept this at your word. We have made it our policy to not support any missionary that does not have a degree from our recognized schools. And as far as that goes, we have made it our policy not to support any man who does not have a degree, even though he has a past record of hard work and sacrifice. We want degrees, not just dedication and experience.

And another thing, we just cannot accept your practice of disturbing churches where you formerly preached by writing them accusing letters on doctrinal and moral matters. You even accused one church member of living with his father's wife. The church was so disturbed as a result of your letter that it followed your questionable advice of kicking him out of the church. Such advice surely manifests your inability to get along with people and certainly doesn't influence people and make friends.

And in another case you disturbed a whole church by talking too much about the second coming of Christ. Why can't you preach more on love? We have received authenticated copies of all your letters you have written to churches, and in all of them together we find only a few scanty passages truly dedicated to the subject of love. Most of the time you are usually jumping on someone about doctrinal error, immodesty or some other



hobby subject of yours.

Worst of all concerning your past missionary work, we have before us your police record. We feel that this is the final crushing blow to your effectiveness. We see that you have been jailed in many places for disturbing the peace as a result of contentious debating about the gospel. Yes, we do realize that you did actually baptize the jailor of one prison. But how many others could you have baptized if you were out teaching cottage classes during the time you were sitting around in jail? Such ought to be a lesson to you that contentious debating about the gospel is unprofitable, undesirable and completely unacceptable to us.

We have received several letters and notices from reliable brethren concerning some of your uncouth practices and habits. We deplore the incident of leaving a city by being lowered over the wall in a basket at Damascus. Such over-the-wall escapism is completely out of harmony with the dignity which should be characteristic of our missionaries. We also feel that it was completely undignified of you to play with snakes in Malta, as some brethren have reported. And what about this idea of yours in going on a wild goose chase to Spain? Don't you know that you cannot evangelize the whole world yourself? And then, we have heard by reliable sources that you scared a whole crew on a ship into going on a forced diet. You should be more concerned about preaching than weight-watching diets.

Brother Paul, of all the missionaries from which we have received requests for support, yours appears to be the worst. It is our worthy advice that you come home immediately, straighten out some of your personal problems, and then, we may reconsider your needs. But

until then, we strongly advise that you see a psychoanalyst immediately.\*

Sincerely,

Dr. Justas Unconcerned,  
Head of the Missions Committee  
100 Million Lost Street  
Donothing, Tennessee

### WHAT THE CHURCH CAN DO AS A WHOLE

What can Christians as the body of Christ do to develop and nourish a better relationship between themselves and the missionaries they send forth to accomplish the work of the church? Let's deal with this question. We need to grapple with this because this is a real problem with mission-void churches. The problem here centers on why many churches fail to be real New Testament churches in the spirit of mission zeal. The following are a few things *that must be done* to get the world evangelized by getting the church related with its work..

#### *Missions in the Elders and Deacons.*

If the leaders of a church are stale on mission work the membership is going to be an inert

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\*This letter is adapted from other letters the author has read with similar content.

corpse also. Elders will have to provide the local church with every opportunity possible to hear missionaries speak. If we're going to energize the church, it will have to be informed and stimulated. And missionaries are best at that. Just give them a hearing.

Why some elders are always afraid to let a missionary come and make an appeal I will never know. Some elders stand over the collection plate like hoards over a newly discovered treasure. They need to learn to let go. If a mission effort cannot be supported on a regular basis, then have a special contribution for every missionary that comes by. And, you are not going to "drain the church of money." When will we realize that special contributions for mission works help local contributions? That's right! Give a congregation a chance to make special contributions and the regular contributions usually stay up.

And then, even if there was that possibility of "draining the church of money" wouldn't it be for the right cause, saving souls. I would like to ask also, from what are we draining the money? I believe the real answer to that question is that we are afraid of draining money from "consuming-it-upon-our-own-lust."

Church leaders should saturate the minds of the members with literature on missions. Put every family of the church on the mailing list of

such publications as *World Radio News* and *Contact Magazine*. Just keep the membership informed on what is going on in the world with the mission of the church.

But here again, some elders and preachers are gripped with a cold fear that if the local members start thinking about foreign fields more than the local field, the local efforts will suffer. Nothing could be further from the truth. In fact, a truly evangelistic home church is never such unless it is truly engrossed in mission efforts. I've yet to see a truly evangelistic local membership that was not also highly concerned about the masses of the nations that are breeched from heaven by lack of opportunity to hear and obey the gospel.

Local church elders and deacons need to constantly inject mission thinking into the minds of the members. The local programs of work must be centered around evangelism. Let a missions committee give regular reports on missions. Let elders make pleas for special efforts. Let classes on missions be started. Let the leaders make survey trips to possible fields of work. Just keep the mission-mindedness of the church alive.

### *Put Mission Thinking Into the Pulpit*

Any highly concerned eldership that is serious about mission work will be sure that

frequent sermons come from the pulpit on the subject of world evangelism. Any highly concerned preacher will make sure he preaches such, too. If there is no evangelistic emphasis coming from the pulpit of your church either by the elders, preacher or deacons, then something is wrong. *How can preachers preach the teachings of Jesus and forget the mission of Jesus?* We must put the mind of Christ in our sermons. And that mind is "seek and save the lost."

Let every church thoroughly encourage its preacher to be evangelistic minded. Send him to mission seminars. Send him on survey trips to mission fields. It has always been my conviction that the local church should send its preacher and elders, if possible, on a *foreign campaign at least once a year*. If you haven't been doing that, try it and you will be thoroughly surprised at the results. On the other hand, you will be doing such at your own risk.

But here again, we have developed some unfortunate attitudes in preachers. I'll be frank here and to the point. Watch out! Some preachers are scared to death to let a missionary come in and make an appeal to the congregation for which they are preaching. Why? They somehow have the diabolical imagination that such an appeal will take the member's minds off "their" local work. Any contribution to "those mission

efforts" will automatically subtract from "their" local programs. As a result, no few missionaries have found the local preacher standing in the door of church buildings, blocking their efforts to raise funds.

When I first started raising funds to go to the mission field, various older missionaries counseled me not to contact the local preacher first to get an appointment for giving a plea to a church. I thought that this was odd advice at the time. Were not the preachers the ones who were supposed to be concerned about evangelizing the world? Were they not the ones who were trying to encourage brethren to evangelize lost souls? Well, it didn't take long to find out that the advice of the older missionaries was solid truth.

Why is it that some preachers can't wake up to the fact that missions is the work of the church, the cause and commission of Christ. Any preacher who would hinder such is "fighting against God" (Acts 5:39). *Any pulpit that does not push world evangelism has lost contact with the mind of Christ.* Remember, Jesus said to preach, baptize and teach (Matthew 28:19, 20). And in the context of that thought he said to do it unto "*all the nations.*" I would plead with some of my fellow preaching brethren and exhort them to understand that the

ministry of the gospel is more than cleaning mimeograph ink out from under our fingernails. *The world is lost and doomed to hell! Wake up the church to that eternal fact.*

### *Missions in the Bible School Teacher*

The Bible school program is the training school of future missionaries. We could evangelize the world if we could convince every Bible school teacher in the church that we have the power to evangelize the world sitting in our classrooms. Paul told Timothy to teach other men the things that he had been taught (II Timothy 2:2). And he told Titus that he should teach the things of the gospel constantly, for "these things are good and profitable unto men" (Titus 3:8). If our goal in teaching is not to teach others to teach others also, then our purpose in teaching is not truly complete.

This is the real scope of any effective Bible school program. We must teach others to be able to teach others about Jesus Christ. That's missions. Let every Bible school teacher emphasize evangelism. Locate your missionary and the country in which he is working on a map in the classroom. Write the missionary as a class. This is encouraging "evangelism" thinking in the class.

There is no better way to establish the

relationship between the local church and missions than to get our children thinking about missions. And we must do that. We must build up mission thinking, not break it down in the classroom. The young pupils we have in our classrooms are the future ambassadors of Christ to tomorrow's lost world.

### *Good and Consistent Financial Support*

We should never let money be the test of a missionary's faith or the limit of our faith. God's work is not limited by money. The "all mighty dollar" does not control His work.

Let us never develop the attitude of seeing how little we can support our missionaries. Unfortunately, there are those brethren who try to see how cheap they can get by in supporting missions. That's not fair to the missionary.

If a missionary says he just can't live off the amount he is receiving, let's not question his faith. Let's be reasonable about this thing and really do some research on the matter. There are those brethren who try to see how many missionaries they can support by making the missionaries do all the sacrificing. The true financial sacrifice comes from the missionaries in these instances and not from the local members. We should never ask our missionaries to do our sacrificing.



No true relationship can be established between the missionary and the local church if the brethren are trying to "starve out" the missionary. Listen, we just can't drive Cadilacs at home and expect the missionary to drive Volkswagons.

In supporting missionaries, the most important rule to be observed is Matthew 7:12. It was there that Jesus said, "All things therefore whatsoever ye would that men should do unto you, even so do ye also unto them . . . ." The missionary should sacrifice *with* the church, if sacrificing is needed. He should never be made to financially sacrifice *for* the church.

We should never expect the missionary to financially suffer because we are just too covetous with our money. After all, he's over there as *our* messenger. We sent him there to accomplish *our* work, the work of the church. And he *must* be there, for we *must* evangelize. Let us never be deceived into believing the Devil's doctrine that only missionaries have the responsibility to evangelize the lost world. It's ours, brethren, *ours!* Let's support it like it is ours.

The Philippian church supported Paul well. Here's a good example for us today. In Paul's letter to the Philippians he stated, "*I have all things, and abound: I am filled, having received from Epaphroditus the things that came from you,*

an odor of a sweet smell, a sacrifice acceptable, well-pleasing to God" (Philippians 4:18). Supporting missionaries is a "do-unto-others-as-you-would-have-them-do-unto-you" relationship. This is the type of relationship that tied Paul and the Philippians so closely together.

Paul had all things necessary for living when he wrote the Philippian letter because he had a church supporting him that cared for his welfare. They were concerned about evangelizing the world, but they were concerned about Paul's well-being also. And, a good lesson here for missionaries is that Paul told this supporting church that he was "full", he had all things he needed. When churches do adequately support a missionary they need to be told such.

We must remember that the day of "cheap" missions is over in some areas of the world. Inflation is a world-wide problem. The dollar has fallen. According to a *Time* magazine article (May 22, 1978) the cost of living in comparison to New York is 21% higher in Paris, 34% higher in Bonn, 41% higher in Geneva, and 56% in Tokyo. That's just an example and warning that elders need to be up on the cost of living of the area in which their missionary is working.

The missionary's support needs to be adjusted regularly to the rise in the cost of living.

I have found that it is usually unwise to determine the support of any man who is going to work in a foreign country by the cost of living in the United States. There is so much difference between the cost of living in the United States and foreign nations that invariably the allowances for funds will be wrong.

Of course, there are several other points that could be added here to explain and emphasize the missionary-church relationship. The overall and crucial matter is that missions *must be laid before the mind of every Christian, that it is his responsibility to see to it that the world be evangelized in his generation.* It is that urgent! Every soul that takes on the name of Christ is a missionary. Every soul that does not, is a field of missionary concern. And we'll never get the job done of evangelizing the world until we realize that.

### WHAT YOU CAN DO AS AN INDIVIDUAL

Not every member of the Lord's church can sail the seas to preach Jesus to the nations. Someone has to do the sending. Someone has to stay at the home ports to man the local attacks of the Devil. That's the way God intended it to be.

But what can those who do the sending do at home to encourage and maintain missions abroad? What can Christians do individually to

evangelize the world even though they cannot make the trip into foreign areas themselves. Here are some suggestions.

### *Support Missions With Money*

The first and most obvious is that the "stayers" can *send* the "goers." This means money in missions. Paul was supported by a sending church (Philippians 4:18). We must do the same today. We must send, send and keep on sending! That means spend, spend and keep on spending until the job gets done. Let's put our money where missions should be. Let each one of us "lay by in store" for Jesus (I Corinthians 16:1, 2). Let's sell one of our two cars, seek loans from banks, and truly give our whole selves in sacrifice to the commission of Jesus. After all, we would do all this if we really wanted some material possession for our own selves. Evangelizing the world will call for no less a sacrifice.

### *Pray With Sincerity*

Let every member of the church lift up his voice to the heavenly Father on the subject of missions. Jesus said to His disciples, "The harvest indeed is plenteous, but the laborers are few. *Pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that He send forth laborers into His harvest*" (Matthew 9:37, 38). That's something *every Christian is commanded* to do individually.

How long has it been since you prayed for more missionaries to evangelize the world? Remember, Jesus commanded that we should pray for more missionaries. This is an imperative command. Isn't it strange that one can visit churches brotherhood wide and rarely hear this petition made in the pulpit and public assemblies of the church? Is this the forgotten commandment?

Prayer is something anyone can do. And everyone *must* do it. Paul mentioned specifically that widows should engage in this aspect of work. He wrote, "Now she that is a widow indeed, and desolate, hath her hope set on God, and *continueth in supplications and prayers night and day*" (I Timothy 5:5). Would that we really believed in that aspect of mission work. Our widows *must* be recruited and encouraged to pray night and day for foreign evangelism. *Their prayers are desperately needed!*

Missionaries usually do their share of praying night and day. What is really needed is the continued and fervent prayers of those who are at home. I feel that one of the greatest strengthening factors in my work as a missionary is the fervent prayers of my sponsoring and supporting churches. It thrills my heart to no end to know that they are praying for me. When brethren are behind you with prayers, you know that God is behind you also. So, *we must have those prayers!* Prayerless missions, are powerless missions.

### *Write Letters to Missionaries*

Every Christian can become involved in missions through *the mail*. Write your missionary. Encourage him through the mail. Tell him you are concerned. Let him know that it is not only he that has to bear the burden of concern for a specific mission effort. Let him know that we are all in this together. Oh, how missionaries receive little or no letters from their supporting and sponsoring churches. It's especially unfortunate when elderships do not communicate with the men they are supporting. How can we be concerned about missions if we do not try to communicate with our man over there? He is working to bring forth fruit unto the account of the sending Christians (Philippians 4:17). Let him know you appreciate it. Hold up his hands with a postage stamp.

### *Get Involved in World Bible School*

What is World Bible School? This is an effort by various churches to take the gospel to the world through Bible correspondence courses. Over 50,000 Christians have been or are involved in this effort. Over 2,000,000 people have been taught or are being taught in the program. In 1978 over 23,000 people were baptized as a result of this outreach. In 1979 over 25,000 were baptized. Charles Landreth was right when he said of the WBS program, "World Bible School is without a doubt one of the best and most

successful evangelistic tools we have in our brotherhood today. We need to utilize it to its greatest extent." For more information on this program write: World Bible School, 13425 Webb Chapel Road, Dallas, Texas 75234. Write them today and tell them you want to become a World Bible School teacher.

### *Talk With Your Children About Missions*

What can you do to evangelize the world even though you cannot go to the fields? Simple. You can start with your *children*. This is the real sacrifice. On the other hand, maybe this is why parents do not want missionaries around. Maybe they are afraid their children will be talked into going to the foreign mission fields.

I'm not being hypothetical here. I have had parents say this for fact. In the book *The Spreading Kingdom*, George Gurganus rightly stated, "*Perhaps the number one deterrent to prospective missionaries is an unwilling and selfish parent.*"\* Gurganus gave the following example which could be repeated a hundred times over! "On one occasion a young couple from Chicago were all set to go to Japan, a sponsoring church had been found, and the way seemed clear; however, when the mother of the wife put her foot down, the worthy mission was abandoned."\*\*

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\*Page 146.

\*\**Ibid.*, p. 146, 147.

How many mission efforts have been abandoned because some parent put his or her "foot down."

When we stand before the judgment seat of Christ let us never, never have to give account of one single word of discouragement we might have uttered in this world to stimate the work of Jesus on earth. What will you have to answer when Jesus asks you, "Did you encourage or discourage your children in taking My gospel unto all the world?"

Yes, we must commit our children to the task of evangelizing the world. Gurganus continues on this subject by saying, "If the world is ever won for Christ, the home must be changed. Parents must not only be willing for their children to go to foreign service for the Lord, but actually train and encourage them to do so . . . . *The home is the breeding place for missionaries.*"\*

One of the greatest encouraging factors I received from my Christian mother when I decided to go to the foreign fields was that *she did not discourage me*. Though she did not like the idea of having her son, daughter-in-law and four grandchildren (two were still in diapers) thousands of miles away, she said not one word of discouragement. *Not one single word!* I pray that God will raise up thousands of such mothers. We somehow must realize that the mission of Christ is far more important than any earthly relationship.

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\**Ibid.*, p. 147.



We must encourage our children to grow up to be missionaries. We must play up, not play down missions. We must upgrade, not downgrade missionaries. Theodore Roosevelt said to a good friend who was sending his son out as a missionary, "As high an estimate as I have of the ministry, I consider that the climax of that calling is to go out in missionary service, as your son is doing."

Let's let our children go for Christ. Jesus said, "There is no man that hath left . . . *children* for the kingdom of God's sake, who shall not receive manifold more in this time, *and in the world to come eternal life*" (Luke 18:29, 30). Parents, do you believe that?

### *Be Missionary*

Being missionary does not necessarily mean going to foreign soil. It's being mission-minded. It's being evangelistic and highly concerned about lost souls. It is putting into action that concern. After Dwight L. Moody preached a stirring sermon, a man came up to him afterward and asked, "What can I do?" Moody replied, "Is your newsboy a Christian?" Yes, every member of God's church here on earth is a missionary. Every member is to be doing something to evangelize.

I once had a conversation with one of the members of the White's Ferry Road church of Christ in West Monroe, Louisiana. He related to

me a very interesting conversation he had had with a non-member of the church who lived in the area. During the conversation the non-member of the church made the statement after the Christian said he was a member of the White's Ferry Road church, "Is it true that they teach down there at your church that every member is a minister of the Word?"

Until every church of Christ throughout the entire world realizes that every member is a minister of the Word, we'll only scratch our responsibility to tell the world of the *Great Love Story* in the Bible. *If you are a Christian you are a person with a mission. And that makes you a missionary.* And all the time you thought you could hire someone to do your mission work for you.

We have no such thing in the New Testament church as "professional missionaries." Let us forever strip our minds of such clerical thinking. If you're a Christian, a real Christian, that is, then you are a missionary. For you see, the very term "Christian" assumes that one is following after Christ. And following after Christ is to follow His example. And remember, "the Son of man came to seek and save that which was lost."

Christianity is a group of slaves searching for sinners to save. And you are one of those slaves if you claim to be of Christ. That means it is *your* duty to evangelize. Now how you go

about doing that is another matter. But if you are not intensely concerned about evangelism, then something has seriously gone wrong with your Christianity. Somehow, that first and zealous love you had for saving souls—if it was there in the first place—has screeched to a halt. Well, revive it! *Get concerned! Get involved! Participate! Pray!* Practice the precepts of Jesus! Become a part of those who are trying to take the gospel to every creature in the world.

### WHAT YOUR MISSIONARY CAN DO FOR YOU

I have previously been emphasizing the point of what the “senders” can do for the sent. But it is necessary to also stress some things missionaries can do to better the relationship between churches and missions.

One of the first things to do here is to have the missionary work with the church for a period of time before he goes into the field. This will certainly help the sending church to better know the missionary, and vice-versa. Local supporting churches *should know their man*.

Also, missionaries should regularly send reports to the supporting and sponsoring churches. This could include a newsletter, the sending of pictures, slides or anything else that would encourage the home church. Missionaries need to realize the necessity of communicating with their

home churches. They must do such even though they may receive no communication from the supporting churches. For a church to remain interested in foreign evangelism it must receive communication from the missionary.

The missionary should be brought back home periodically to report to the sponsoring church. The missionary should be allowed to freely communicate with the church on the subject of missions. This is the real opportunity of the elders to regenerate mission-mindedness in the minds of the members. Remember what Paul did with the church in Antioch after his first missionary journey. Acts 14:27, 28 reads, "And when they (Paul and Barnabas) were come, and had gathered the church together, *they rehearsed all things that God had done with them*, and that he had opened a door of faith unto the Gentiles. And they tarried no little time with the disciples."

### LET'S REMEMBER

A strong relationship *must be established between the church and its work*. The church *must* be made to realize that the work of the church is *missions*, not some of the diversions that Satan is using to keep our minds off the lost of the world. It is not just the missionaries' work to evangelize. It's the work of the church as a whole to carry the gospel to the whole world.

A relationship should be developed between the home church and the missionary to

the extent that the hearts of the local Christians really and truly go with the missionary. Foreign missions, therefore, is not the church supporting one member to "do his thing" as a Christian. It is the church as a whole using hand picked ambassadors to do its work as a whole.

Christianity is missions. And until we fully realize that every soul who claims a piece of Christianity is a missionary, we will never complete Jesus' commission to take the gospel to all the nations. If you're on Jesus' side, then you are on the side of world evangelism. If you claim Jesus as your Lord, then you must claim *all* His gospel. And that gospel is in essence, evangelistic; it's good news for all the people. And the fact that it is good news necessitates that it be told to every living soul in the world.

Jesus never left us the choice of just taking what we wanted out of Christianity and discarding the rest. His gospel involves evangelism. The very fact that we have obeyed the good news necessitates that we spread the good news. And when it comes to determining whether or not we have that good news "dwelling in us richly," we will have to honestly ask ourselves if we really care about the lost world. Do we really care about those hell-bound souls who have yet to hear the sweet name of Jesus?

## *The Missionary*

Yes, there is no greater urgency today than to reach out with the good news of reconciliation to those tossed helplessly in this storm-torn world. Let's never let anything become a substitute for that need, that urgency. There is no substitute work in the world. The world *must be evangelized!*

But what about the actual missionaries who make their way to those far-off corners of the world? Let's turn our minds to this subject, the subject of the missionaries themselves. We need more of these message carriers. We need more saints to stand and accept the challenge of world evangelism. We need more lives that are lights, more world cross bearers. And too, we need to recognize that God will bountifully reward those who go and sacrifice and win souls for Christ.

Missionaries are one of the most misunderstood groups of people in the world. Countries have blocked their entrance and fought their interest because they have failed to recognize the message borne by them. In the *Dictionary of Foreign Words* published by the Soviet government in Moscow (1951), the Russians once defined the missionary as "a person sent by the ruling church (in the majority of cases with the support of the government) for religious propaganda among backward peoples (for example, in

colonial or semicolonial countries); he is usually an advance espionage agent of imperialist usurpers." Now there is a good example of misinterpretation and misunderstanding. I would say that the real missionary is the opposite of this definition. Wouldn't you?

But putting misunderstandings aside and refusing to let obstacles block doors of opportunity, *we must march forward*. Doesn't the song say "Onward Christian soldiers"? This is the epic of *intensification*, intensification in *world evangelism*. "Now is the acceptable time; behold, now is the day of salvation" for the world (II Corinthians 6:2). And "as we have opportunity, let us work that which is good toward all men" (Galatians 6:10). And what could be a better good toward all men than to tell them of God's salvation through His Son.

*We must mobilize our missionaries to evangelize the masses*: When it comes to doing such we must never let a "tomorrow" attitude be a substitute for a "today" urgency. It's time we stop putting off our responsibility to evangelize the world. We need *proclamation*, not procrastination. We need preaching, not petrification. We must have more *sending out* and less *sitting around*. As Paul was willing, we must also have more today with the attitude of being willing to "spend and be spent for your souls" (II Corinthians 12:15).

## THE NEED OF MISSIONARIES

When Isaiah saw the glory and power of God and the doom of Israel, he cried out, "*Here am I: send me*" (Isaiah 6:8). God had asked at the end of Isaiah's spectacular vision, "Whom shall I send, and who will go for us?" Isaiah recognized the urgency of the matter. He recognized the need. And, he recognized his responsibility. Something had to be done and done immediately.

The situation is no less urgent in the world today. That question of God is still valid and should cut to the heart of every Christian: "Whom shall I send, and who will go for us?" Who will go? *Who will go? Will it be you?*

Somehow, we are not heeding that urgent call today. Just as a reminder, it was reported that we had about 724 missionary units in 1967. In the middle of 1978 it was reported that we had fallen to about 550. And then the World Mission Information Bank in Dallas, Texas reported that in the first half of 1979 we had about 427 missionary family units. What's wrong? What is happening to our mission emphasis? I am reminded of what God said to Israel in Jeremiah 7:24: "But they hearkened not, nor inclined their ear, but walked in their own counsels and in the stubbornness of their evil heart, *and went backward, and not forward.*" Is the church going *backward* and not *forward*?

One missionary rightly stated, "If you feel God wants you on the foreign mission field, neither



your money or your prayers will be a substitute." The more one recognizes that "now is the day of salvation" and that the "night cometh, when no man can work", the more missionary he becomes in attitude. And there is that song which is so right, "If the Name of the Savior is precious to you, If His care has been constant and tender and true, If the light of His presence has brightened your way, *O will you not tell of your gladness today?*"

We must encourage our young to fulfill this noble call. Being a missionary is a great work. It is one that must be glorified before the minds of those we want to mold into messengers for the Master. "The work of winning the world to Christ," said one missionary, "is the most honorable and blessed service in which any human being can be employed." John Williams once said, "I am in the best of services for the best of Masters and upon the best of terms." Franklin D. Roosevelt was right when he stated:

Since becoming President, I have come to know that the finest type of Americans we have abroad today are the missionaries of the Cross. I am humiliated that I am not finding out until this late day the worth of foreign missions and the nobility of the missionaries. Their testimony in China, for instance, during the war there, is beyond praise. Their courage is thrilling and their fortitude heroic.

We must have volunteers who are slaves of

the Cross. We need dedicated men and women who will willingly will their ways to Jesus. Men and women like brother and sister H. B. Frank who courageously labored in France. They both had polio. But that didn't make any difference to them. They went forward. And we must, too!

We must have parents who are willing to give their children to the evangelization of the world. Parents can be one of the biggest encouragers for missionaries but they can also be the biggest discouragers. Somehow, "Christian" parents feel they must keep their children within driving distance. I have heard, as previously stated, no few prospective missionaries say that when they told their parents that they were going to the foreign fields for Jesus that their parents actually discouraged them from doing such. I pray to God that He forgets such earthly vanities of parents. Don't we realize that we have eternity to spend together?

Now then, do not let anyone misunderstand me here. I am not saying that sons and daughters should not take care of their elderly and aging parents. They should. That's a Christian responsibility. It's those healthy ones, though, that I'm worried about, the ones who do not need to lean on their children because of health reasons. But on the other hand, even these can sometimes be taken care of, *on the mission field*. One could do as the Glover Shipp's and Joe Lee's. They just took their parents to the mission field with them! How about that?

But when children try to deliver themselves from the blood of men by preaching the gospel, why would any Christian parent want to endanger the soul of that child by discouraging him or her from doing such? Yes, there will be many parents in the judgment who will have to answer for the sin of fighting against and discouraging the fulfillment of the Son of God's commission to evangelize the world.

I do not think many realize the seriousness of this matter. Everyone should earnestly consider what Jesus said in Matthew 19:29. If you're a parent who has or is discouraging the missionary strivings of your son or daughter you need to pray about this passage. Jesus said, "*And every one that hath left houses, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or children, or lands, for my name's sake, shall receive a hundredfold, and shall inherit eternal life.*" And then Jesus got to the point in Matthew 10:37. "*He that loveth father or mother more than me is not worthy of me: and he that loveth son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me.*" Now the point Jesus is making in the context is that nothing should hinder an individual's obedience to the gospel.

These are pointed and direct statements of Jesus concerning one of the attitude problems we have today in the church. It is an attitude problem toward world evangelism. But specifically, it is a problem of parents who are discouraging Christian sons and daughters from being

disciples of Jesus in carrying out His commission to evangelize the world.

In conjunction with the above, another big hindrance to missions is *wives*. I have personally known several men, including preachers of the gospel, who wanted to do foreign mission work but their wives didn't. Much of the problem was that these wives just loved the finer things of life more than the call to evangelize the world. Such is extremely unfortunate. Wives can be one of the greatest helps in mission work, but they can also be one of the greatest "thorns in the flesh" in God's efforts to get the good news to every ear in the world.

And on the other hand, I've seen husbands who didn't want to go when their wives wanted to go. Some preachers have been so caught up in having a "big church" that the struggles of the mission field are counted unworthy. Having a big salary seems more important to some than big savings . . . saving of souls, that is.

Much of the problem is materialism. Every American is subject to this unique 20th century curse of the American culture. We live, as Americans, in a padded cell culturally. This cell has a big iron door, but the lock of the door is on the inside. The rest of the world, the real world, is blocked out. But inside there are those few—the Americans—of the world who have the fine carpets, the dishwashers, the political stability, the wonder drugs, the boats, the ease of life and money,

money, money. It's all in the cell, all the finer things of life.

The rest of the world is locked out of the cell, secluded or relegated to darkness. And as far as many Americans are concerned, they can stay out there. If anything disrupts our padded cell, we feel intensely threatened. We like what we have and we are going to keep it that way. But when the Arabs start working the hinges off the door with screw drivers of oil, we feel threatened. When the communists land troops near-by, we are angered more by the thought of losing our "fine way of life" than our moral values. Yes, we're in a padded cell. We're protected. This is where we find our security. And we like it that way.

But unfortunately, affluency is killing us. In saving ourselves physically, we are killing ourselves spiritually. And it's killing the missions of the church, too. We've reared up a gutless generation of fair skinned sluggards that have never had dirt under their fingernails nor callouses on their hands. We've nurtured a new society that knows not what it is like to do without carpets, and hairdryers, and washers and TV's and all the rest that goes with an affluent infected culture nurtured on the poison of materialism.

We've reared up a new generation that "knows not sacrifice." It is a new generation that knows not that it is "through many tribulations we must enter into the kingdom of God" (Acts 14:22). This new generation knows not the real

world because it has been bred in that padded cell with the rest of the American society. And sadly, that's one of the reasons why the mission work of the church is hurting. We can't get people out of that padded cell to face the real and lost world outside in darkness. We just keep building walls to keep the salt in.

Jesus exhorted, "Ye are the salt of the earth . . ." Christians and their message are the preservative of the world. They're earth's last hope, last chance. But why is it so hard to get some preachers unto "the whole creation?" Why is it hard for them to come out of that cultural cell?

There are a number of reasons why I believe some preachers do not want to do foreign mission work. Well, at least, there are some classic excuses preachers give for not going. Preachers can make excuses just like "regular Christians." And their excuses are plenty when it comes to offering reasons for not going into all the world. Here are just a few examples.

*"There are better schools in the United States and I want my children to have the best possible education."* So stated one preacher. Not only is that not true, but is education really worth more than the souls of men? Again, according to Dayton and Wagner there are about *two billion* people in the world who have *never heard of the name Jesus*. And *"how shall they hear without a preacher?"*

*"I don't want to learn another language."*

So stated another preacher. But aren't those *two billion souls* worth the effort of learning their language that we might communicate to them the sweet name of Jesus? Will we let this barrier be another stone in the wall to close in the salt in our padded cell?

*"Health wise, my family is very fragile."*

So stated the preacher with a sneeze when asked by a missionary friend to consider helping him in a foreign field. But will we let the family doctor keep the message in America? Paul had a thorn in the flesh. I don't exactly know what that thorn was, but it evidently was something physical. He still, though, went and preached.

*"The church here needs me,"* stated one preacher. We would all probably be very surprised if we knew of all the preachers who thought that the church for which they preached would crumble if they left. Didn't God entrust the church to His Word and not to the local preacher? (cf. Acts 20:32). It's only an ego trip if we think the home church will fall apart without us preachers. But what will happen to those *two billion* who have never heard? Aren't they the ones who are "falling apart?"

*"My parents need me."* But Jesus says that whosoever loves father more than me is not worthy of me. If this be a valid reason for missionaries not going into all the world, then the Lord evidently cannot have any missionaries who have parents. (Missionary, the next time your parents say something to you about staying close

by, just tell them to pack their suitcases and come on).

*"I don't think I could live without going to a shopping center."* Yes, believe it or not, I have heard preachers' wives make that very statement when asked about going overseas. It's just another stone in the wall to seal up the salt of the gospel in America.

*"We must hold high the light of the truth here in America."* Why is it that those who are often so militant to defend the faith are so non-militant in taking the gospel to all the world? We preachers have a great tendency to hide within our militant cloisters without ever raising a hand to take the gospel to the lost world. But doesn't the light of the truth deserve to be held up before the *two billion* who have never heard of the name of Jesus?

"Well," one preacher said, *"I always wanted to have a church for which to preach and I now have it."* That sounds like some denominational preacher. Is it the mission of the gospel preacher to "have a church?" Listen, I've heard that statement come from the mouth of some preachers. But is it the mission of the preacher to motivate the church to take the gospel into all the world? Or is it the mission of the preacher to motivate the church to build a fine building and fine office for himself while all the time there are *two billion* out there who haven't even heard of the name of Jesus? Which is it? Are we not building a wall around the salt,



the salt of the word which could preserve the world? Yes, it belongs to the world, not just to American churches. There are no excuses to keep the salt, nor the salt shakers, in America. Problem is, too many of our salt shakers have their holes stopped up. The salt can't get out.

We should never let anything come between us and our Master's work. We need to "come out." There is no sacrifice too great to be paid in service to Jesus. Remember Matthew 6:33? It was there that Jesus said, "*Seek ye first his kingdom, and his righteousness . . .*" Christ needs more "seek-ye-first-the-kingdom" families. We must have more families that "love not the world, neither the things that are in the world." John exhorted, "If any man love the world, *the love of the Father is not in him.*" Let us never let carpets and cleaners and cars keep us from attacking the spiritual crisis of the world.

### THE CHALLENGE TO MISSIONARIES

Yes, we need missionaries but the missionaries we need must be made of good stuff. Therefore, not just everyone can be a foreign missionary. Not everyone is made of the stuff that makes good missionaries. (I'll let some of my fellow preachers off the hook here.) There are those who need to keep their tender feet on the mellow carpets of home. When we talk about missionaries we are talking about a special breed. The kind

that can accept the challenge of "tuff" adventure, men of "true grit." And it takes great men and women to meet that challenge. Theodore Roosevelt once said to a personal friend of his whose son was going into foreign mission work:

It takes mighty good stuff to be a missionary of the right type, the best stuff there is in the world. It takes a good deal of courage to break the shell and go 12,000 miles away to risk an unfriendly climate, to master a foreign language, to adopt strange customs, to turn aside from earthly fame and monument, and, most of all, to say good-bye to home and the faces of the loved ones, virtually forever.

It does take Christians made out of good stuff to do that. It takes a real Christian. It takes those who can say, "It is no longer I that live but Christ liveth in me" (Galatians 2:20). The following are just a few qualities that that kind of missionary must possess.

### *Missionaries Have To Be Courageous*

Missionaries many times have to be courageous in sacrificing the securities of modern living. And that can often be "dangerous" in some mission points of the world.

An incident that happened to J. D. and Helen Merritt in Africa several years ago would indicate that mission work needs courageous individuals who are willing to face the challenge

of rugged living. Brother and Sister Merritt once had a small cat that became a pest as Sister Merritt was doing her daily work around the house. After about twenty blood curdling screeches from the cat after it had accidentally had its tail stepped on, Sister Merritt asked Brother Merritt to get rid of the cat. But one night both of them were suddenly awakened by the cat making a terrible screeching sound. Brother Merritt turned on the light and saw a cobra coiled up beside their baby in the baby bed. The cat was in there, too. And the cat didn't like the idea about the cobra being there with him. Brother Merritt got a gun, praying that the baby would not awaken. He killed the cobra and you guessed it, the cat stayed.

The peril of death has hung over the head of no few missionaries. Paul walked in the shadow of death constantly. And he was "ready not to be bound only, *but also to die . . .* for the name of the Lord Jesus" (Acts 21:13). Men in modern times have felt the same as they have faced constant dangers in preaching Jesus. Several years ago in Vincent Guerro, for instance, brother Ernesto Reeves stooped to pick up a song book and a bullet smashed through the window just missing his head. Bob Brown, while in Trinidad, had an unfriendly Trinidadian come after him with a machete. It was a good thing that Bob was bigger than the man with the knife. But others face constant danger as they traverse dangerous

roads and country in order to take the gospel to lost souls. They have often been faced with certain death. Most have been delivered, but some haven't.

You have probably never heard of Douglas Dabangana. Brother Dabangana was a graduate of the Umtali Bible School and a preacher of the gospel in what used to be called Rhodesia. During the conflict there in recent years he was captured by the terrorists who were constantly spreading terror and death to that region of the world. These terrorists commanded Douglas to drink beer. He said he wouldn't because he was a Christian. The terrorists shot him dead on the spot because he refused to obey their orders. Sometimes, it takes all we have to be a preacher of the gospel on foreign soil, even our life. That's what it cost Paul. And yes, that's what it cost our Lord.

There is also the story of the missionary who had been caught by cannibals several years ago. The missionary said to the chief as they traveled down a narrow path toward the native's village, "Going to eat me, I presume?" The chief just grunted. The missionary then said, "You won't like me." He then reached under his pant leg and cut off a piece of his leg with his pocket knife. The missionary gave the piece to the chief who took a bite of it and choked. Subsequently, the chief decided to let the missionary go. As a result, that same missionary I am told was able to work in that area of the world for over fifty years. Oh yes, I must add that that missionary

just happened to have an artificial leg made out of cork from which he had cut a small piece to give to the chief.

Every missionary knows what Peter was saying in I Peter 4:16. "If a man suffer as a Christian, let him not be ashamed; but let him glorify God in this name." And if that is what it takes to evangelize the world, then let us suffer willingly. Paul told Timothy, "I suffer hardship unto bonds" (II Timothy 2:9). He told Timothy, as he tells all, "Suffer hardship with me as a good soldier of Christ Jesus" (II Timothy 2:3). Yes, said Paul, "All that would live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution" (II Timothy 3:12). It will only be "that through many tribulations we must enter into the kingdom of God" (Acts 14:22). We need more of the type of soldiers who are willing to carry their cross until they are wearing their crown.

### *Missionaries Have To Be Persevering.*

Missionaries have to hang in there like no other group of people. They must be enduring in doing. Communists are also very persistent. And it has been the result of their persevering attitude that they have conquered much of the world with their lies. In the French communist paper, *Peace And Liberty*, a communist wrote:

The Gospel of Jesus Christ is a much more powerful weapon for the renewal of society than is our Marxist doctrine. All the same we will beat you. We communists

do not play with words. Of our salaries we keep only what is strictly necessary, the rest we give for propaganda purposes. You Christians give only a little time and hardly any money for spreading the Gospel of Christ. *Believe me, it is we who will win, for we believe in our Communist message and are ready to sacrifice everything, even our lives. But you—you are afraid to soil your hands.*

Is that true? Are we giving in? Are we afraid to “soil our hands?” Not doing anything is giving in. And there are a lot of churches that are just not doing anything to save the world from sin.

Communism is Satan's greatest tool in the political world to destroy Christianity. And if we sit around warming pews and worrying about how beautiful we can make our church buildings, communism will beat us. *It is beating us!* It is spreading like wild fire because communists are diligently engaging themselves against capitalism and Christ. And while we sit around with a lethargical religion and a spineless attitude, communists are infiltrating the minds of the world with satanic atheism.

Determination and zeal to keep on keeping on is central to any evangelistic effort. Look at the zeal of the denominational missions. Notice what they went through to conquer the New Hebrides Islands. In 1839, John Williams, known as the “apostle to the South Seas,” and a man named Harris were the first to sail to the New Hebrides. Upon their arrival, they were met and

clubed to death by savages. In 1861, G. N. Gordon and his wife went to the islands. When they arrived they were killed. In 1872, G. N. Gordon's brother also went. But he too was unmercifully killed. And later, two men by the name of Turner and Nisbet went but had to flee for their lives. After the above history of rejection and death, John G. Paton went to the New Hebrides and converted over 16,000. There is *power in persistence*.

It was reported that it took the Presbyterian church thirty-six years to have their first converts in Thailand. It is also said that it took the Baptist about seventeen years to have their first converts in Thailand. But they stayed and worked to conquer.

In Venezuela the Presbyterian church labored for *eighty years* before they could reach a membership of *six hundred*. In the same country the Plymouth brethren worked fifty-six years to achieve forty churches and four hundred members. At least we have to commend the dogged determination of these groups in their efforts to go and stay and stay. And too, this is at least the determination we must have to face the task today of taking the truth to all the world. *We must be persistent! There is power in persistence!*

## THE LIFE AND WORK OF A MISSIONARY

The life and work of a missionary is a life

and work of *example*. Jesus said such. "Let your light shine before men" (Matthew 5:16). Missionaries are the "salt of the earth" (Matthew 5:13). They preach the only preservative that can give the world any real hope, the gospel of God.

The life and work of a missionary is a life of *teaching*. Paul had taught the Ephesians "publicly and from house to house" (Acts 20:20). The very first Christians were "every day, in the Temple and at home" teaching "Jesus as the Christ" (Acts 5:42). They "went about preaching the word" (Acts 8:4), the "good tidings concerning the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ" (Acts 8:42). They taught so much throughout the world that the unbelievers stated, "These that have turned the world upside down are come hither" (Acts 17:6).

The life and work of a missionary is an activation of Galatians 2:20. It was in that passage that Paul wrote, "It is no longer I that live, but Christ liveth in me." The missionary is a person who has sacrificed his life to God as a "spiritual service" (Romans 12:1). The missionary is the one who really knows what it is like to "*deny himself*, and take up his cross daily" and follow Jesus (Luke 9:23). One missionary wife once said:

When my husband and I set up this house we agreed that one principle must never be violated. We would have nothing in our house—its furnishings, its arrangement—nothing that would keep the ordinary poor people among whom we work from coming in, or that would make them feel strange.



The above statement many times takes a lot of sacrifice, especially when one considers the fact that Americans are accustomed to living on a higher standard of living than the rest of the world. But things of the world must willingly be sacrificed by those who desire to be missionaries. Not always, though, will one have to sacrifice the "conveniences of life." But if there are souls located where there are no conveniences, then we must put Christ above conveniences. Just because I cannot plug in my affluent culture in a certain area of the world doesn't mean that I can't be a missionary there. Our missionary outreach should go farther than the length of the cord on our hairdryers.

### THE REWARD OF A MISSIONARY

Mark 10:28, 30 is a promise of Jesus to those who willingly leave houses, lands, parents and all for His cause. Jesus said that those who leave the things of this world for the name of Christ "shall receive a hundredfold." "And in the world to come," Jesus continued, they shall receive "eternal life." Now there are two promises, two rewards, for those who willingly leave it all for Christ. The missionary has a double reward. He has a reward on earth and a reward in heaven.

#### *The Reward On Earth*

The reward here on earth of the spiritually minded Christian is not necessarily literal houses

and lands. It's a spiritual house. He is in the business of building the house of God (I Timothy 3:15). And whenever one more stone is laid to the construction of that house it is a spiritual satisfaction of accomplishment far above anything that could be provided by material things. Yes, "set your mind on the things that are above, not on the things that are upon the earth" (Colossians 3:2). That's what it is all about in the missionary's life.

*Converts* are the crowns here on earth to the true man of God. Paul said of the work that he had begun with the Philippians, "Ye are seen as lights in the world, holding forth the word of life; *that I may have whereof to glory in the day of Christ*, that I did not run in vain neither labor in vain" (Philippians 2:15, 16). For Paul, the Philippian church was his "joy and crown" (Philippians 4:1). The real glory, the real reward of God's servants are converts.

Walter Lapa was a dope pusher in Sao Paulo, Brazil. But one day he was handed a tract by a thirteen year old boy by the name of Lucas Vasconcelles. Walter was interested in what the tract said but continued to smoke and sell marijuana. He asked for, and completed a Bible correspondence course. He continued on drugs even though he began a personal Bible study with the missionaries. But Walter's life of sin didn't last long in its confrontation with the gospel. He obeyed the truth. He lived it, and today, Walter Lapa is a faithful gospel preacher in Sao Paulo.

(That young boy, Lucas, is also a gospel preacher today in Brazil).

Stories as the above could be listed by the thousands. They are the true reward here on earth of the genuine missionary. John said, "For I rejoiced greatly, when brethren came and bore witness unto thy truth, even as thou walkest in truth. *Greater joy have I none than this, to hear of my children walking in the truth*" (III John 3, 4).

#### *The Reward In Heaven*

In Mark 10:30 Jesus said that a "living sacrifice" would receive eternal life in the age to come. That's nothing short of heaven, the final resting place of the weary laborer. John recorded, "I heard a voice from heaven saying, Write, Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord from henceforth: yea, saith the Spirit, *that they may receive rest from their labors, for their works follow with them*" (Revelation 14:13).

Paul had fought the good fight of the faith. He had remained faithful. "Henceforth," he comforted Timothy, "There is laid up for me the crown of righteousness" (II Timothy 4:7, 8). And he said that that crown of righteousness is there waiting for every faithful Christian soldier (II Timothy 4:8). Let's never forget that. For the battle worn infantrymen of God's army there shall be a "home leave" like nothing else. Imagination cannot conceive of the wonders prepared for those who have diligently and faithfully left all to sing out the sweet name of Jesus in foreign lands.

## LET'S REMEMBER

There is a *demanding need* for more missionaries today. We need more soul searching saints, more Christ called Christians. Enthusiasm must be caught and recruits sought to take the great news of God's invasion into this world unto the world. That invasion must be proclaimed throughout planet earth. We must have those living sacrifices which have been presented to God as a spiritual service. We must have that daily cross bearing of Luke 9:23. And God needs such *now, today!*

Several years ago there was a young boy in Abilene, Texas who was asked to give his blood that his sister might live. The sister was critically sick and had a very rare type of blood. In fact, the brother was the only one found or known to have that blood type in the Abilene area at that time. So the young brother was asked to give his blood that his sister might be able to live.

When the doctor laid the young boy down on the bed to begin the process of transfusion, the boy turned unusually pale. The doctor asked, "What is wrong, son?" And in all innocence, the young boy replied, "Sir, will I die now? Will I die now?" There was a true and devoted brother who had thought that for one to give his blood he had to give his life. He was willing to give his life for his sister.

God needs those today who will willingly lay down their lives for the cause of eternity. He

needs the courageous, the brave, the strong. Jesus said, "And he that doth not take his cross and follow after me, is not worthy of me. *He that findeth his life shall lose it: and he that loseth his life for my sake shall find it*" (Matthew 10:38, 39). Are there not scores among the churches today who will lose their lives for Christ in evangelizing the nations of this iniquity stricken earth? Where are the valiant? Where are the brave? Where are all the cross-crucified Christians who are so desperately needed to crusade for Christ in this world crisis of sin? "Here am I," Isaiah answered, "Send me!" Would you answer the same? Yes, we can evangelize the world if we find those who will answer "*Here am I, send me!*" or "*Here we are, we will send.*"

## *We Can Evangelize The World!*

I believe that the time has come for the church to arise and conquer the forces of darkness. And deep down inside, I believe that a sleeping giant in the church is about to be awakened. The church of our Lord is the most powerful force on earth. If it can be awakened—and I feel it can—then things are going to happen and happen quick.

At the beginning of the 1964 Pan American Lectureship in Mexico City, Mexico, Reuel Lemmons stated:

We must get out where the people are with the gospel. It is not enough to build and pay for comfortable church buildings in which to preach it. *The church was planned by the councils of heaven to be an aggressive, militant force whose chief aim was, and is, the penetration of the kingdom of darkness and the conquest of it.\**

Millions in the world today have yet to hear the gospel. And they will hear it. The Bible has been translated into over 1685 languages and dialects. There are brethren now who have made it their goal to see that all languages have a copy of the scriptures. Work is going on right now to see that the world is evangelized.

There are countless open doors for the gospel in the nations of the world. *We must enter these open doors now! The gospel must be preached to these nations!* Countries as South Africa, Kenya, Australia and countless others will let us come. Some say doors are closing to the gospel. Mabe so. But there is always one opened for every one that is closed. There are always opened doors to the nations if we will only have the vision to see the spiritually starving souls within. If there is that vision we can have invasion, an invasion of the gospel. And we will invade. If there's a desire to evangelize, God will give us an Empire to be evangelized. We must never forget the words of Jesus, "Lift up your

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\*The Spreading Kingdom, pp. 3, 4.

eyes, and look on the fields, that they are white already unto harvest" (John 4:35).

We *can* evangelize the world. We can! Don't say we can't. "Can't" should never be a word in the Christian's vocabulary. "If God be for us, who can be against us." Remember those words of Paul? "We can do all things in him that strengtheneth us." God can "do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think."

In Genesis chapter eleven mankind had *determined to build* a great power. It's interesting to note what God had to say about the ambition and determination of those people. In verse 6 God said, "Nothing will be withholden from them *which they purpose to do.*" That's *God's recognition* of man's drive and determination. Let us use that same drive and determination to evangelize the world. And we can do it! Let's just never say we can't.

We don't want to build towers. We don't want to build monuments, either. We want to build roads to heaven in every nation under heaven. If there is a lost soul somewhere, the gospel must go there. Everyone has the right to hear the gospel at least once. The blood of this generation of lost souls is upon the shoulders of this generation of the church.

And again, we *can do it. We can!* We have the *mission*. We have the *men*. We have the *money*. And we have the *motivation*. Let's evangelize this generation and let's do it within this

generation. The only hope of this generation of souls is this generation of Christians. Today's Christians are today's generation's last hope.

### MISSION: WE HAVE THE COMMAND AND PURPOSE

We know our mission. That mission is Matthew 28:19, 20. Christianity is a Matthew 28: 19, 20 religion and nothing short of it. The church is a militant group of soul saved saints with the attitude to sow the seed of the Savior in every section of planet earth. And there is urgency in that movement.

If every member of the church could somehow be endowed with a sense of urgency in saving souls of men, it would be a wonderful day for the church. After all, these souls are being lost every day. We say we believe a single soul is more precious than the combined riches of the world. If we actually believed it, none could keep us from going with the gospel.\*

With the command to go, go and keep on going, Christians have the power of the gospel. This exemplifies the need of going. Is there salvation without Jesus? *No*, and a thousand times no, "*For neither is there any other name under heaven, that is given among men, wherein we must be saved*" (Acts 4:12). Salvation is in Christ (II

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\**Ibid.*, p. 6.



Timothy 2:10). And men must be brought into Christ by the *power of the gospel* (Romans 1:16).

Christians have the word of reconciliation (II Corinthians 5:18, 19). Shall we carry it around under our arms and claim we have the truth without one ounce of concern for the lost? May every Christian be stricken with the words of Paul, "Woe is unto me, if I preach not the gospel." We have scores of Christians today in the church who are excited about teaching Jesus to others.

If we recognize the *commission* of Christ which was given behind us, we will have the *conviction* of Christ before us. If we recognize the *cause* of Christ which was expressed by Christ behind us, we will have the *courage* of Christ within us. And if we recognize the *power* of the gospel entrusted to us, we will have the *proclamation* of the gospel from us. We must adopt the sense of what E. H. Ljams, former president of David Lipscomb College, said, "The *whole* gospel, to the *whole* man, to the *whole* of mankind." And when it comes to preaching the gospel, anything less than *whole* gospel, *whole* world by the *whole* church just will not do.

There are thousands of Christians who are letting the word of Christ dwell in them richly (Colossians 3:16). They are obedient from the heart unto it (Romans 6:17). They have the real mind of Christ within them (Philippians 2:5). They are soul-minded because they are Christ-minded. And because of that, they are reaching out with *world evangelism*.

Would that their number was multiplied a thousand times over. We must look unto these as leaders in the church. We must lift up our eyes and follow the example of those who are doing the work of evangelizing the world. The churches that are making definite strides to evangelize the world must become our patterns. It is exciting to watch these churches and individuals go and grow. We must follow these leaders of world evangelism.

### MEN: WE HAVE THE MANPOWER

There is a great movement in the church today toward missions. After World War II unto the latter part of the 1960's the mission efforts of the church grew fantastically. During the 1960's the church of Christ was one of the fastest growing religious bodies in the world. But something went wrong. We started pulling our men home. As a result, missionaries fell like flies from the field.

But this sad picture of the past decade seems to be changing. At least there are some indications that we are pulling out of the slump. Young people are interested in missions. Such programs as *AIM*, *MARK* and *SHARE* of various schools are sending multitudes of two-year workers into the field. Invariably, some of these will become missionaries for life. This is one of the most exciting aspects about the future of the Lord's church.

It is a thrill to read in a brotherhood paper of a church seeking out a family to send into the mission field. These churches are recognizing the call of God. They are realizing their responsibility to send. They, the churches, are the ones going forward. It's just great to see these churches doing these great works to evangelize the world. When scores of others join their number, then, yes then, we will evangelize the world.

I once attended a missions seminar where all the men in that particular assembly of about seven hundred, who were planning to go to the mission field, were asked to stand. About *fifty men* stood! I'll never forget my personal feelings at the sight. I felt good. I knew that God was going to raise up a great army. Now, if we can get churches behind these dedicated families, things are going to start happening.

We can thank God that the bleak picture of the past is changing. Let us ask God to forgive us of our past stagnation in evangelism. Millions of souls have already lost their chance to eternal life because of lethargical laziness in the past. But praise be to God for those churches that have repented and returned to do their "first love."

Yes, we are going into a new epoch of missions in the church. Schools for preparing families to go are growing throughout the land. Our mission conscious and brave ones are being prepared to go. At the time of this writing several teams are planning to go to Brazil and the rest of

Latin America. It's just exciting to see such advancements.

Thank God that more families are being sent to the ripe fields of Africa, Europe, the Caribbean and the South Seas. *We are going into an exciting and dynamic age of missions!* Let every church join in! Let every capable and qualified man say, "Here am I, send me." *The church is going forward once again!*

### MONEY: WE HAVE THE MONEY

The exciting thing about the above is that we have the financial basis to send out missionaries by the thousands. The two or three cars, two TV's and fine foods in our luxurious houses say we have the money. If we get excited about this matter we can do tremendous things, for we can always do more if we are excited about doing something. *So let's get excited!*

Let us not be like the congregation, though, that became very excited about the sermon on Sunday morning of their preacher. The preacher shouted, "This church is going to *walk!*"

The whole congregation replied, "Let her *walk!*"

The preacher then exhorted, "This church is going to *run!*"

The whole church replied, "Let her *run!*"

The preacher proclaimed, "This church is going to *fly!*"

Again the church replied, "Let her *fly!*"

The preacher yelled, "*This church is going to need money!*"

The church responded, "*Let her walk!*"

Well, if you are still skeptical about this matter of money, then let me give you a few examples. First, let's use a church of say fifty families. If each of these families could miss a meal which would probably cost around \$5.00—this may be a pre-inflation figure—this church could support a missionary for \$1,000 a month. And, it could do that for just five extra dollars a week coming from each family. Not bad, huh?

If *two hundred persons* could give *ten cents* a day look at what could be done. This amount would come to \$140 a week and \$560 a month. That would support a single worker on the mission field. Just think, for *ten cents a day* a congregation of 200 could support a missionary.

Still not convinced concerning what we could do? Just suppose now, that we could convince 1,000,000 members of the four or so million members of the Lord's church to give *fifty cents a day* for the purpose of world evangelism. Now this would be equivalent—according to the cost of gas today—to an excess trip to the store in the car. Or, it might be a candy bar, a coke or something else we could just as well do without during the day.

The above would add up to be a \$3.50 contribution per member per week to the cause of

carrying Christ to the cries of the world. This would also equal \$500,000 a day in contributions by the 1,000,000 members, or \$3,500,000 a week, or \$182,000,000 a year. Fantastic? Yes! Think about it. Think about what could be done.

We could support 20,000 missionary families on the field with an average monthly salary of \$1,500. We could give each family \$5,000 for moving expenses. We would have enough left over to send 10,000 single workers overseas supported with \$600 a month.

Now this would still leave us sufficient funds to build *ten strategically located radio stations* at \$1,000,000 each. We could also set up *five key print shops* for \$1,000,000 each a year for operation. We could spend another \$4,000,000 on *planes, boats and cars* to get our highly trained men around. Well, we could put another \$10,000,000 a year in buying time on *commercial radio stations*. We would still have enough left over to put \$2,000,000 into *Bible Correspondence Programs* directed specifically to foreign cultures. And we could use another \$3,000,000 for *survey trips* for prospective missionaries and elders. We could use \$1,000,000 for postage stamps for members to communicate with their missionaries. And another \$1,000,000 could be used for *telephone calls* between missionaries and their supporting churches. The \$20,000,000 we would have left over could be put in a rotating fund for foreign churches to borrow from in order

to build their own church buildings. They could pay the money back so other churches could use it also.

Is this just a big dream? *Not so!* It can be a reality. *It is a reality!* That money is there. The members of the Lord's church have it. It is just sitting around, not being used. For just fifty cents a day we could evangelize the world in this generation. Think about it.

No nation of churches can evangelize the world like the churches in the United States. Missions takes money, and God has providentially placed within the hands of the stateside churches the financial strength to send forth *hundreds and thousands* of missionaries into the white fields. It is not a matter of whether or not we have the money. It is a matter of whether or not we have the motivation to move that money into missions. That is a grave responsibility. And it is one upon the shoulders of churches in the United States. God has given us the means and the mission. He has given us the money. What will we do with it?

We have proved to ourselves that if we get excited about something, it will happen. Nothing can be withholden from us if we have determined to do it. Special contributions have proved this in the past few years. Look what denominational churches are doing. The People's Church in Toronto has a *one million dollar special contribution every year for missions*. These people are excited about foreign evangelism. In the church,

the Sunset Church of Christ in Lubbock, Texas has contributed hundreds of thousands of dollars toward foreign evangelism every year in special contribution drives. Reuel Lemmons, Carl Mitchell, Cline Paden and others are encouraging churches brotherhood wide to make a special contribution in October for foreign evangelism. Congregations everywhere have seen the light on this matter and are putting forth thousands of dollars for mission efforts. It's great to see churches come alive, to challenge themselves in this manner of contribution.

#### MOTIVATION: WE HAVE THE MOTIVATION

Do we have the motivation to evangelize the world? Do we have the vision? If the revelation of Jesus means anything to us at all, we do. Every Christian is in contact with God through the Word of God. And it is through this word that we recognize some vital motivating factors central to Christianity.

Through the Word of God the Christian is shocked into realizing the *value of just one soul*. Jesus said not to fear the one who could destroy the body. But rather, said He, "fear him who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell" (Matthew 20:28). Emphasizing the great value of the soul, Jesus said, "For what is a man profited if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? Or what shall a man give in exchange for his



soul?" (Matthew 16:26). Every Christian should realize the preciousness and value and eternity of just one lost soul.

Through the Word of God the Christian is brought into close contact with the destiny of the lost. That destiny is a Devil's hell of eternal flame and punishment (Jude 14, 15; Revelation 20:15; 21:8). It is an everlasting destruction from the presence and face of God (II Thessalonians 1:7-9). Such is a terrible picture of the state of lostness. And any Christian that is not motivated to missions by such a horrifying picture is frozen in the sin of "unconcernism." If you knew—and you should—that your mother, or father or son or wife was going to be lost in a Devil's hell, wouldn't you be moved? Just carry that motivation to the millions and millions of the world who are being thrust into eternity every day without hope. If that doesn't bother you as a Christian, then you had better question your own state.

Through the Word of God the Christian is made to realize the just "terror of the Lord" (II Corinthians 5:11). God is a just God. But He hates the hideousness of sin. God is a God of grace and salvation. But He is just in giving grace and salvation only to the obedient. To those who either willfully or ignorantly go through life without Him, there is reserved an eternal separation from His presence. That realization of God's justice should motivate us to missions. Paul

was moved by such. He said, "*Knowing therefore the terror of the Lord, we persuade men*" (I Corinthians 5:11, KJV).

Through the Word of God the Christian is brought into contact with the length of eternity. The wicked will suffer *eternal destruction* (II Thessalonians 1:9; Matthew 25:41). The righteous will enjoy *eternal* bliss (Matthew 25:46).

Eternity is a long time . . . beyond our comprehension. But just suppose an ant could walk from earth to the sun, which is 93,000,000 miles away, at the speed of one-half mile per hour. It would take that ant 10,616 years to make one round trip. Suppose that ant took a grain of sand with him on his way to the sun, left it there and returned to earth for another. How long would it take him to transport the entire earth to the sun? I don't know. But that amount of time would not even begin the time of eternity. The Christian comes into contact with the length of eternity through the Word of God. And that contact should move us to missions, for every soul is in existence for eternity. Some will end up in eternal hell. Others will be in eternal heaven. And we have the opportunity *in this generation* to give every creature on earth the chance to rest in eternal heaven.

Through the Word of God the Christian is made to realize the *fruit of unrighteousness*. At the close of the parable of the talents, Jesus said of the unprofitable servant, "Cast ye out the unprofitable servant into the outer darkness: there

shall be the weeping and the gnashing of teeth” (Matthew 25:30). That will be the result of disobedience, of laziness and of unprofitability in the Lord’s kingdom. The following poem was once written to exemplify the attitude of some Christians in the church toward the mission of the church.

He wasn’t much for stirring out,  
It wasn’t his desire.  
No matter what the others did,  
He was sittin’ by the fire.

Same old habit, day by day,  
He never seemed to tire.  
*While others helped to build the church,  
He was sittin’ by the fire.*

And when he died as all must do,  
They said he went up higher.  
But if he’s doing what he always did,  
He’s still sittin’ by the fire.

(author unknown)

Through the Word of God the Christian is cheered by the *hope of heaven*. Christians “have a strong encouragement.” That encouragement is the “hope set before us” (Hebrews 6:18, 19). And that hope is an anchor to our souls. It is something promised by God (Titus 1:2), to those who render their lives in obedience to God’s commands (Romans 6:17; 8:24, 25).

But there are millions in the world today who have no hope. And unless we take the gospel to these without hope they will remain in hopelessness. They will remain in the shadow of despair and the clutch of the second death. Who will be motivated to take or send the eternal light, the everlasting hope of Jesus, to these bewildered and lost souls?

### LET'S NEVER FORGET

We have an opportunity in this generation like no other generation to evangelize the world. Technology has made it possible for us to reach out through mail and radio to the four corners of the earth. Air travel has made it possible for us to mobilize our missionaries and elders to every city on earth. We have an unbelievable opportunity. Are we going to drop the ball of opportunity? Are we going to close this open door?

In A. D. 1269, Marco Polo recorded the incident of the Mongol Emperor Kublai Khan who requested missionaries from Rome to come and teach his people. Khan ruled major portions of western and central Asia and modern day Russia and he requested that the Pope of Rome send *one hundred missionaries* unto his capitol to evangelize and train his people. At the time of his request, the papacy of Rome was vacant and there was discord over who would fill it. Finally, after *two years* Gregory X sent *two friars* in

answer to Khan's request for one hundred missionaries. After many hardships in the journey they reached as far as Armenia and turned back to Rome. An unimaginable opportunity for Rome was lost.

Let us never, never make that kind of mistake with this generation. The opportunity is here. In 1980, the New Guinea government approved space for 80 missionaries to enter their country. At the time of this writing only 24 of those spaces have been filled. Who will go! Places like Nigeria, Venezuela and countless other countries will allow missionaries to come in and evangelize their peoples.

We must act *now*. Now is the day of opportunity for the millions of the world. This is our day of victory. Let us have more actions and less factions; more conversions, less conversation; more sowing the seed, less soiling the seed; more encouraging missions, less discouraging missions; more faith, less fooling around.

Several years ago a member of the Jardim das Flores church in Sao Paulo, Brazil was walking along the beaches of Santos, Brazil. To her complete surprise she walked upon an abandoned baby which had been deserted on the beach. The baby would only whimper because of the lack of nutrition. The flies had gathered as it lay in its own excretion. That pitiful sight struck compassion in the heart of the woman. She took the child, the real mother could not be found. She

washed and loved and cared for that deserted and desperate soul. That was thirteen years ago. Today that child has been washed again, washed in the blood of the Lamb.

The millions of the world are in no better a condition spiritually than that deserted child. We have the cleansing gospel. We are the ones which have their opportunity for salvation.

The church of our Lord Jesus Christ is sitting on the verge of one of the greatest epics of its history. God has opened a door of opportunity for more souls than any time in history. And He has blessed the church with more means than at any time in history. The next two decades of the church will be great. They will be times of victory, times of salvation. I just believe that the sleeping power of the giant within us can evangelize the world.

When I say unto the wicked, Thou shalt surely die; and thou givest him not warning, nor speakest to warn the wicked from his wicked way, to save his life; the same wicked man shall die in his iniquity; but his blood will I require at thine hand. Yet if thou warn the wicked, and he turn not from his wickedness, nor from his wicked way, he shall die in his iniquity; but thou hast delivered thy soul. Again, When a righteous man doth turn from his righteousness, and commit iniquity, and I lay a stumbling block before him, he shall die: because thou hast not given him warning, he shall die in his sin, and his righteousness which he hath done shall not be remembered; but his blood will I require at thine hand. Nevertheless if thou warn the righteous man, that the righteous sin not, and he doth not sin, he shall surely live, because he is warned; also *thou hast delivered thy soul.*

Ezekiel 3:18-21