

- ★ Radio and short-wave radio make it possible for people everywhere to hear the Gospel.
- ★ Printing presses, computers, and copiers mean that duplication of the message can be done inexpensively, anywhere.
- ★ Television has opened the world to the visual preaching of the Gospel, via satellite.
- ★ Cell phone service is available almost everywhere, and at very reasonable cost.
- ★ The internet is increasingly available to even the most isolated people. Churches have web sites with archives of thousands of lessons available to those who can access them.
- ★ CDs and DVDs are inexpensive tools for recording volumes of materials — the Bible in different languages and versions, commentaries, concordances, and other reference materials so that even those who have no access to religious books and libraries can study God's word.

Every day the arsenal of tools increases. Yes, they may be used secularly, but in reality *these are provisions supplied by God to enable His church to bring the Gospel to every creature of all the world.* Will we pick them up and use them?

The story is told that after Jesus' return to heaven, Michael the archangel came to Him in tremendous excitement. "Now we know what You have been doing since before the creation

of the world! Let me summon the host of heaven so that we can go out and tell everyone the glorious news of the Gospel!"

"No," the Lord answered. "This is not your work."

"Then whose is it?" Michael asked.

"I have left it in the hands of My disciples."

Michael was stunned. "You've left Your work of the ages in the hands of *men*? But, Lord, You know that men can't be trusted. Adam brought sin into the world. Peter denied You. Judas betrayed You. What if they fail You again? Surely You have another plan, just in case they fail You again?"

"No, Michael," Jesus answered. "***I have no other plan.***"

What will we, as individual Christians, and as congregations, do with the trust committed to us?

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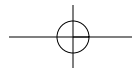
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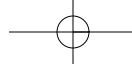
Why Are Christians Left in this World?

J.C. and Betty Choate

Imagine this: a person hears and understands the Gospel, he repents of his sins and is baptized into Christ. Immediately, God transforms his body into immortal substance, and he goes to his eternal home. Wouldn't that be wonderful?! No struggles. No temptations. Not one soul ever being lost! What a perfect plan!

Why didn't God think of that?





But, wait! If every Christian was taken to be with God the moment he was born into the Family, who would be left in the world to bring that message of salvation to others? No one! So the saving power of the Gospel would have ended on the first day of the beginning of the church, and the world would have been lost in total darkness ever since then!

So, *that* is why we live in this alien environment, in this world whose lord is satan — so that *each one of us* can be the light of Christ, shining in all the darkness of sin. Think back to your own conversion: in most cases, was it not the result of some caring Christian loving you enough to teach you the Truth? *That* explains why you are here, facing whatever trials and troubles satan brings into your life. **You are here to bear fruit in the form of souls saved from eternal damnation.**

Jesus' farewell words to His followers included the all-important command, "*Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature. He who believes and is baptized will be saved; but he who does not believe will be condemned*" (Mark 16:15,16). In time, as a result of their obedience to that command, great persecution occurred, and "*... those who were scattered went everywhere preaching the word*" (Acts 8:4).

Through the dedication of those first Christians, in less than one generation, the apostle Paul could write by inspiration: "*... the word of the truth of the gospel, which has come to you, as it has also in all the world...*" (Colossians 1:5,6).

Even though almost 2,000 years have passed since that time, neither the command to Christians nor the work we have been left in the world to do has changed.

But the population has changed! How can the relatively small number of Christians take the Gospel to almost seven billion people? Is it humanly possible?

If the work was to be done solely through the efforts of humans, it would not be possible. But Jesus promised, "*... lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age*" (Matthew 28:20). In John 14:18, He promised, "*I will not leave you orphans.*" What is the message? That this work He has entrusted in our hands is still *His* work, and that He will be with us every step of the way.

In practical terms, what does that mean? If we look back at history, we can see: In every age, God has provided the tools the church would have to have to evangelize the world. God does His part: He lays the tools on the table; then it is the decision of Christians and the

church as to whether or not we will use the equipment He has provided.

★ Today, to evangelize such a large population, a nucleus of Christians is vital. We have just such a nucleus in the U.S.

★ In order to "*go into all the world*", the Christians must be able to travel abroad. We have that freedom.

★ Those Christians must have a currency that can be used wherever they go. We have that currency.

★ English has become the world's primary language, and it is our "mother tongue".

In these vital points, God has blessed the church here in the US with the necessary basic tools for going into all the world with His message of salvation. But, with so many souls, today, He knows that first-century tools will not be enough, so what equipment has He laid in our hands that the early Christians did not have?

★ The Bible is available in all major languages of the world, and most of the minor ones, at very little cost. Through the circulation of the printed Word, the message has gone before us and has helped to "make a highway in the desert".

★ The postal system is a reliable method for taking letters, Bible courses, and books to every corner of the world.

