



COMMITTED TO GOD'S WORLD

**A Foundational Study of How
God Changes the World**

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Welcome
to
Committed to God's World
*A Foundational Study of How God
Changes His World!*



The Purpose of this course is to introduce you to the Biblical mandate for changing our world - World Missions. We believe that Missions is not just a side issue for the Church, but rather the central theme of all of the activity of God upon the earth. It is the theme of the Bible, the theme of history, and the mission of the Lord Jesus.

"There is no argument for missions. The total action of God in history, the whole revelation of God in Christ - this is the argument."

James S. Stewart

This study will be an important key to understanding God's heart for the world. When this course is finished you will have:

- **Discovered the biblical mandate for commitment to God's world.**
- **A deeper understanding of how the church has achieved its commitment to God's world historically.**
- **Motivation for a higher commitment to reaching all the people of God's world.**
- **Taken a significant step in identifying your personal commitment to God's world.**

SESSION 1

Notes

The Early Beginnings Of Commitment To God's World

Objectives of This Session:

- 1. To understand God's covenant to Abraham and realize our mandate is the same as Abraham's – to be committed to God's world.**
- 2. To acknowledge that a commitment to God's world is the central theme of the Bible.**
- 3. To accept our responsibility and get committed to God's world.**
- 4. To adopt the Great Commission as our priority.**

Important Scriptures:

Genesis 12:1 – 3

Acts 3:25

Galatians 3:6 – 9

Matthew 28:18 – 29

Introduction:

Notes

The Effects Of Sin

The Bible is the amazing story about how God, in love, created man and woman to be a part of His family. Satan and sin separated God from man and woman and hence from all mankind. The first 11 chapters of Genesis speak about the desperate situation of humankind and culminate in man building the Tower of Babel as a statement of his pride and achievement.

God Scatters People All Over The Earth

As a result, God created thousands of language and people groups as He confused speech at Babel. This was a strategic event in history and set the pathway for the next 4000 years right up to today. God replenished the human race from the seed of Noah and then divided it up into different language groups, so that the glory of His name and His kingdom could expand to all peoples.

God Begins To Reveal His Plan To Touch All Nations

We then see the remarkable story of Abraham in Genesis 12 where God says, "I will bless you". Abraham was God's representative to take His love to other people. Chapter 12 introduces God's plan to touch every tribe, tongue, people and nation. Revelation 11:12.

The Bible Is The Story Of God Taking This World Back

From Genesis 12 to the end of Revelation, the central theme of the Bible is the invasion of this evil world by God's kingdom, bringing God's love and righteousness to all that will accept Him.

God Is Using His People To Carry Out His Plan

God chose a people to become His missionary force, to push back the darkness and sin that had invaded the earth. This started a mission that spans the entire story of the Bible - the whole of history - and still continues today. The Bible is not only a history of this missionary force, but also an instruction book on how God's people should carry out this strategic missionary plan.

God's Call to Abraham

Abraham Was God's First Missionary

He was sent out to represent and announce the kingdom of God and God's love and desire for all people. Abraham was sent out so that through him, this unique "blessing" would come to all nations, tribes, and people on the earth. God sent Abraham to Canaan, because it was strategically located in the largest landmass of the world, and at that time, was a key to the centers of trade and communication. Abraham went out by faith. The kind of faith that as Hebrews 11:1 puts it is, "*The evidence of things not seen.*" It was not just blind faith, because God gave him a deep internal confidence that He would do as He promised. God would provide for all the needs of Abraham to achieve His Divine plan. *God often calls His people from their comfortable surroundings to take incredible steps of faith to touch His world.* It is what the Bible calls "the obedience of faith", and it is foundational to both the Old and New Testament. (See Acts 6:7, Romans 1:5, Romans 16:26).

God's Covenant With Abraham

Abraham Is Blessed To Be A Blessing

***"And I will make you a great nation and I will bless you. . . And so you shall be a blessing . . . And in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed."* Before Abraham could be a blessing, he had to take the huge step of faith to leave his country, his people, and his father's household. The strategic plan of this missionary endeavor is to push back the kingdom of darkness and bring in God's amazing power and salvation for all people. *This is God's call to His people today - to invade enemy territory and take up occupation there.* This is how we become a blessing to the nations. God has blessed us, so that we in turn can take huge steps of faith and bless others and see His kingdom expanded and His name go forward to all nations. (Galatians 6:3 - 9; Acts 3:25)**

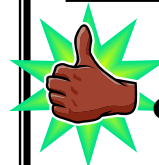
Notes



Genesis 12:1 - 3

Many times God calls us to step out in faith when we cannot see very far ahead. In our calling, God has always given us that special confidence that He will show us the next step in due time. After 25 years of ministry, as we look back at our lives, we have taken huge steps of faith, always with the sure confidence that God was with us. Up to this present time, He has never failed or disappointed us yet.

Reflection



Genesis 12:2 - 3

God's Commission To Abraham's Children

Notes

Our mandate is the same as Abraham's

You ask, "Are we all called to be missionaries?" Of course we are! Not all of us will go to foreign fields, but we are all responsible to pass on the blessings of Abraham to our friends, family and communities in which we live. The Bible says that those who come to Jesus Christ become part of that missionary nation chosen to reach the world. This first appearance of the Great Commission in the Old Testament (commonly called the "Abrahamic Covenant") is repeated 3 times to Abraham (Genesis 12:1 - 3; 18:18; 22:18), and once to Isaac, in Genesis 26:4.



Genesis 28:14 - 15

From Abrahamic Covenant To Great Commission

In Genesis 28:14 - 15, the Lord said to Jacob, "...All the people's of the earth will be blessed in you and your descendants... I am with you...until..." This is most likely the same passage Jesus was paraphrasing when He gave His disciples the Great Commission in Matthew 28:18 - 20, "Go and disciple all nations...I will be with you...unto..." Genesis 28:15 was used widely in Jesus' day and is closely paralleled to Matthew 28:20.

The Central commitment of God to the world is that He desperately desires to bless ALL nations.

Application



The commission given to Abraham is clearly the theme of the whole Bible. There is NOT a biblical basis for missions in the Bible, but rather, becoming a missionary people for God is the overriding theme of the whole Book.

From the Abrahamic Covenant (4000 years ago) until now, God has strategically directed world events and His people - the children of Abraham by faith - to establish His kingdom in all nations.

If we truly love the Lord and live close to Him, we will have a desire to join Him in bringing His blessing to all nations! We are all Abraham's children by faith and we too have inherited his blessing - and also, his calling.

SESSION 2

Notes

God's Unchanging Commitment To His World

Objectives of this Session:

- 1. To understand how rapidly the world is changing and yet God's commitment to His world is still the same.**
- 2. To recognize how the theme of commitment to God's world runs through the Old and New Testaments.**
- 3. To seek ways and means that we can employ to bless the world by our personal commitment to God's world.**

Important Scriptures:

Romans 15:8 - 9

Psalms 67:1 - 2

Introduction:

We are living in a changing world. Information doubles every 12 – 18 months. People’s loyalties are constantly changing. People move houses more rapidly, change jobs, colleges, and even churches. It seems that everything around us constantly changes.

Notes

God’s Commitment Never Changes!

The comforting thing to note is that God *never* changes. This is a foundational truth of our life and faith. Even when the political, social and economic arenas are changing, God, His purpose, and His commitment to the world remain the same. God has a purpose for the nations and He is absolutely committed to seeing it accomplished in the midst of our changing world.

Abraham Was Part Of God’s Plan

We saw in Genesis 12:1 – 3 God’s purpose taking shape as He told Abraham to move to a new land and become a great nation. God’s commitment to Abraham had two phases. Firstly, God would bless Abraham and his descendants; they, in turn, would work to release that same blessing to all the families of the earth.

After God tested Abraham and he showed his absolute obedience to the point of being prepared to sacrifice his own son, God in turn repeated His plan to bless all nations of the earth through Abraham’s descendants.



Genesis 22:15 – 18

God’s Strategic Plan

God’s plan is really very simple. He reveals Himself to a people, brings them into covenant with Himself and then blesses them like crazy. They in turn often leave their land or people to carry that covenantal blessing to others – to the nations that don’t know Him.

The World Is Changing

From the onset of the Industrial Age, the rate (or pace) of change has been constantly increasing.

- **Urbanization**
- **Development of World Village**
- **Information Technology**
- **Post Modernism**
- **Ethnic Identity**

The Church is Changing

During this same span of time, changes in the Church have been no less staggering.

- **Approach to short term missions**
- **Renewal of Spiritual Warfare**
- **Trans Denominationalism & Apostolic Reformation**
- **Revival**
- **Leadership**

God's Commitment Is Unchanging

Notes

God's commitment to the world through His covenant people is very evident in the Bible. Let's look at some examples of how God blessed the Gentiles through His covenant people.



Abraham left his family and home and blessed many other nations as he went to them and entered the presence of their kings and rulers (Genesis 14:21 -24, 20:17 - 18, 21:22 - 34, 23:1 - 20).



Joseph left his home and became Pharaoh's Commander in Chief and saved that part of the world from a great famine (Genesis 41:41 - 57; 47:13 - 26).



Moses left his home and brought his Midianite Father-in-law, Jethro, into God's sovereign plan for the Hebrews (Exodus 18:1, 9 - 27).



Some of the Egyptians witnessed the ten plagues of Egypt, and saw the counterfeit miracles of the court magicians and in contrast the greatness of the God of Israel (Exodus 8:19; 9:27 - 28; 14:17).



Ruth, the Moabitess, was blessed by God through her Hebrew Mother-in-law.



Daniel was a great source of blessing to both Babylonian and Persian leaders.



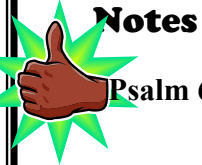
God used a simple Jewish woman, Esther, in the Persian kingdom to bless many, especially the King - her husband (Esther 1 - 10).



Jonah, the reluctant missionary was a blessing to Ninevah as they repented and turned to God

God's Commitment To "All Peoples"

Many of the Psalms speak of God's purpose to bless all nations. See Psalm 47, 57 and 67. Let's note specifically Psalm 67:1 – 2 – ***"May God be gracious to us and bless us and make His face shine upon us that your ways may be known on earth, your salvation among all nations."*** God's unchanging purpose throughout scripture is that all people everywhere would be blessed through those who know Him.



Notes

Psalm 67:1 – 2

Even the prophets spoke of Israel's purpose. – ***"It is too small a thing for you. . . to restore the tribes of Jacob and bring back those of Israel . . . I will also make you a light for the Gentiles, that you may bring my salvation to the ends of the earth."*** Simeon quoted this passage at Jesus' dedication proclaiming Him as salvation to the Gentiles.



Isaiah 49:6

Paul – One Who Understood God's Purpose And Commitment To His World

Few people have understood God's unchanging purpose for **all people** to be blessed through His followers like the Apostle Paul. Paul wrote: ***"The scripture....announced the Gospel in advance to Abraham: 'All nations will be blessed through you'."***



Galatians 3:8

He came to understand that Jesus Christ and the good news of His Kingdom coming to individuals, villages, and whole people groups was the essence of the entire blessing of God to the world. It was the Gospel!

The letter to the Romans was an urgent appeal to the Roman church to understand God's great plan and participate in it fully. He begins and ends the letter stating the great purpose: ***"To bring about the obedience of faith among the Gentiles"***





Rom. 1.5, 16.26

Paul also showed the scriptural validity of this purpose by citing many Old Testament passages.



"Therefore I will praise you, O Lord, among the nations" (II Samuel 22:50);

 **“Rejoice, O nations, with His people”
(Deuteronomy 32:43);**

 **“In that day, a root of Jesse will stand as banner
for the peoples; the nations will rally to Him...”
(Isaiah 11:10).**

Finally, Paul showed how he planned to fulfill this purpose as he *“fully proclaimed the gospel of Christ” from Jerusalem to Illyrichum* (the region we used to call Yugoslavia; Romans 15:19, 20). Not every person became a believer, but churches evangelized people. In every sense of the word, Paul was a pioneer missionary, going to places where there weren’t many .

How does this apply to our lives?

Application



We have had incredible blessings in the form of Bibles, preachers, teachers, and numerous Christian resources. Through one or many of these means, we have had the opportunity to know God and His Son Jesus Christ.

We have an incredible responsibility to our world. We cannot take on the whole world, but we can take on part of it. Our task is to discover what our unique purpose in God’s world will be and join Him in fulfilling His great commitment to bless all the peoples of the earth in Jesus.

SESSION 3

Notes

JESUS, GOD'S SUPREME COMMITMENT TO HIS WORLD

OBJECTIVES OF SESSION 3:

- 1. To understand that Jesus Christ is the fulfillment of God's commitment to the world.**
- 2. To explore how the Jews of His day clearly misunderstood God's commitment to His world.**
- 3. To expel any misunderstandings we may have of God's unchanged commitment to His world.**

IMPORTANT SCRIPTURES:

Luke 4:16 – 30

Luke 9:23

Luke 24:47

Jesus - Seed Of Abraham

God's Purpose As Seen Over 4000 Years

Over 4000 Years ago, at the age of 75, Abraham was given the promise that the world would be blessed through him. Toward the end of his life after he had offered up Isaac, God said to Abraham, “Because you have done this thing, and have not withheld your son, your only son, indeed I will greatly bless you, and I will greatly multiply your seed. . .and your seed shall possess the gate of their enemies. And in your seed all the nations of the earth shall be blessed.” Through this promise, God furthered extended the power to carry the blessing to Abraham’s ‘seed’ - the descendant of Abraham.

Jesus is that Seed, (“Now the promises were spoken to Abraham and to his seed. . .that is, Christ.” Gal. 3.16) Through Jesus all nations were to be blessed and, when he appeared, the fullest meaning of Abraham’s blessing came into focus.

Jesus - Savior To The World - Jews & Gentiles

The Heavenly Commitment Before the World Began

Before there were any nations created, God committed His Son to bring forth life to people. In Daniel 7.9-14, the incredible scene takes place and Jesus is given full responsibility of bringing forth people unto His Father.



Jesus' Arrival Reveals God's Commitment

When Jesus was born, God began to reveal His commitment to all nations and people. His humble entry into humanity broke all barriers of fear between sinful man and the Holy God. A humble baby in simple surroundings would intimidate no one.

Notes



Gen 22.16-18

What is God's Commitment?

--To bless the peoples of all nations, tongues, & tribes. God is a good God and He desperately desires to bless people!

- ✓ **In the Old Testament times His blessings appeared as care for all of the external needs of life.**
- ✓ **Through Jesus, God still cares for all of the externals of our lives, but He goes on to offer the incredible gift of eternal life - intimate fellowship with Him, the life of God in our souls, and His own purposes and power operating in lives.**

His Life Reveals He is Not Just For Jews

Luke stressed in his writings that Jesus was not just the Messiah for Israel, but for all peoples. He tells of Simeon, a godly man, who was looking for the “fulfillment of Israel”. Simeon, knowing what the Scripture said about the Messiah quoted Isaiah 49:6 that Jesus would be “a light for revelation to the Gentiles”.

The Promise Was Always Intended For Gentiles

In chapter 4, Luke continues to portray Jesus as the Messiah for all peoples. At the outset of His ministry, Jesus preached a message using an illustration of two Gentiles who were blessed by God. That made the congregation furious. He spoke of Elijah and Elisha whom God used to bless two individuals from Gentile nations. The one was the widow of Zarephath; the other was Naaman, the leper from Syria. When Jesus mentioned Naaman and the widow, they felt that He was betraying His own people, the Israelites.

When the people heard this, they tried to throw Jesus over a cliff. These people had forgotten their “missionary responsibility” under the Abrahamic Covenant that through them all other nations would be blessed, and their hearts were cold at the mention of any foreigner being blessed. Jesus was revealing from the very start that God had sent Him to bless **ALL THE NATIONS of the earth.**

Reflection



Notes

Most of the Jews did not listen to Jesus' words. They felt God had betrayed them by allowing foreigners into their land.

Do we sometimes respond in the same way to foreigners that crowd our cities and nations? We should never see them as invaders, but as people we can reach with the gospel.

Jesus Ministered to Gentiles

Jesus at times ministered to Samaritans, an unreached people, and to the peoples of Decapolis, Tyre and Sidon, and Phoenicia, all areas with a large concentration of Greek speaking people. Many Bible scholars believe that Jesus was bilingual and ministered in Aramaic to the Jews, and in Greek to the Gentiles.

Luke makes it clear that it was the Gentiles who received Him. This is brought out in many of Jesus' parables, and graphically portrayed in the parables of Luke 15. Also, in the parable of the vineyard tenants, the

Bible makes it clear that the Kingdom of God would be taken from the Jews and given to the Gentiles. Jesus said, “*the Kingdom of Heaven will be taken from you [Jews] and given to a nation producing the fruit of it.*” (Luke 20:9 – 19; Matthew 21:33 – 46).

Notes

The Cross – the Ultimate Revelation of God’s Commitment

At the cross of the Lord Jesus, God makes the ultimate revelation of His commitment to the peoples of the world in surrendering and sacrificing His Son for the nations. The Bible says, “*But God demonstrates His love for us in that while we were still sinners Christ died for us. . .for He is the payment for our sins, but not ours only, but for the sins of the whole world!*”



Rom. 5.8, 1 Jn 2.2

WOW! What a revelation. God is so committed to bring His blessing to His world that He would give His Son to make it happen.

You Are Now God’s Commitment to His World

As we have already seen, God has promised to bless all the nations of the earth through the *seed* of Abraham. Christ is that seed. He is God’s ultimate commitment to the world. Now, let’s look one step further: “*And if you are Christ’s, then you are Abraham’s seed. . .*” God gives us one last word of how He is determined to bring His blessing to the nations of the world – through YOU! All children of God have become Abraham’s seed through Christ and now the promise that “*through your seed, all the nations of the earth shall be blessed*” has passed to us.



Gal. 3.29

We have become God’s great commitment to His world! We hold within our very being, the very destiny and power of God to carry His blessing to all peoples.

Jesus gave His life a ransom for all and in so doing, challenges us to give our lives for all peoples.

Application



The question is:

Will we unselfishly and sacrificially forsake material comfort, family and friends to reach the needy people of this world?

The Choice is ours – the command is GO!

SESSION 4

Notes

The Advancement of God's Kingdom in His World

Historical Overview Of Missions From AD 70 -1800

OBJECTIVES OF SESSION 4:

- 1. To see the growth of God's kingdom throughout the ages.**
- 2. To understand the strategies God has used to accomplish His purposes.**
- 3. To motivate thought as to how we can further accomplish God's purposes in His world.**

IMPORTANT SCRIPTURES:

Galatians 4:4-7

Romans 10:14-15

Introduction

Ever since the Fall in the Garden of Eden, God has been concerned about bringing people back to Himself. God chose Abraham and his family to be missionaries to all nations. Through them, these nations would learn about God's salvation.

Old Testament "Super Centuries"

The 2000-year Old Testament period can be viewed (*very roughly*) as six "super-centuries" of 200 - 400 years:

Years BC	Period
2000 - 1800	The Age of the Patriarchs
1800 - 1400	The Captivity in Egypt
1400 - 1000	Joshua & Judges
1000 - 600	The Kings
600 - 400	Babylonia Captivity
400 - 0	Inter-Testamental Period

This lesson covers the expansion of Christianity from the time of Christ until AD 1800. It can be divided into the following "super-centuries":

Years AD	Period
0 - 400	The Romans
400 - 800	The Celts and Goths
800 - 1200	The Vikings
1200 - 1600	The Muslims (Crusades)
1600 - 1800	The Ends of the Earth

Notes

Missions In The Roman Empire AD 0 – 400

Notes

During the first few hundred years of Christianity, many factors helped to spread the Good News. Rome had conquered lands from England to Babylon, and the Roman occupation brought a long period of peace known as the "Pax Romana." This era of Roman rule created a great setting for the launching of God's plan.

Gospel Expansion Under Rome

God chose to bring forth His Son and launch His great missionary in-gathering church in the midst of the time and the lands of the Roman Empire. Why? What were the conditions like that He chose this time and this place fro the Bible says, "But when the fulness of the time came, God sent forth His Son. . ."

- **Peace: Because of the powerful Roman rule, the lands of the empire enjoyed a period of peace and stability.**
- **Greek Language: Before the Romans, Alexander the Great had conquered territory as far as India. This together with the Romans gave the world the common language of Greek. An ideal setting for the Gospel. When both the Old and New Testaments were available in Greek, it was easily understood.**
- **Travel: Under Roman rule a vast network of 250,000 miles of roads were created from Babylon to Spain to move armies and for trade. These roads provided safe travel for the expansion of the Gospel.**

These factors -common language, peace, good roads- were part of the "fulness of time" into which Jesus was born .

The Roman period started with the persecution of Christians by the Empire. The Christian church was forced to go underground into Catacombs. The Apostle John was banished to the Island of Patmos, but history tells of his release and move back to the city of Ephesus. This led to a 200 year spread of the Gospel out of Asia Minor that covered much of that part of the world.

History reports that John walked into the Temple of Diana, the most worshipped deity of the empire, and confronted the dark powers in the name of Jesus. The statue of Diana crumbled, much of the temple fell down and within 50 years, the worship of this evil power was almost non-existent. God had won a mighty victory and the gospel exploded to the nations.

A little after 300 AD, Constantine (whose mother was a believer) won control of the Roman government and he liberated Christians from their persecution. However, once persecution was over, new problems arose: debates over heresy and doctrine, replacing repentance and personal faith with sacraments, building buildings instead of preaching the gospel.

Missions to the Celts and Goths (AD 400 - 800)

At the start of this period, Barbarians flooded into the Roman territories and took control as the empire crumbled from within and without. Barbarians had been "Christianized", somewhat, but their understanding of Jesus was minimal. However, their contact with Christianity gave them a respect for the message of the Bible. Eventually they were won over to the theology of the ones they invaded. Their captives witnessed to them and brought them to the Gospel.

Patrick

Pagan Celts (from what is now called Ireland) invaded the Christian settlements in Wales and Cornwall and killed many of the inhabitants. On one such raid, they captured Patrick, whose father and grandfather were believers. Patrick was perhaps a believer, but his faith grew even stronger as he served as a slave to an incredibly cruel master. God eventually helped Patrick to escape in a ship and providentially he landed at a monastic house where he stayed and studied God's Word becoming a mature man of God. He went back to England at which time he had a vision in which a man from Ireland said, "*Holy child come and walk amongst us once more.*" After his Macedonian-type call, Patrick returned sending his followers out to tell the Gospel from place to place and perform many works of power. The nation responded to the gospel over 100,000 were baptized and 200 churches were planted.

Columba

One young man within the Celtic church, Columba, made his own copy of the scriptures for which he got into serious trouble and was banished to Iona. There he started the first missionary training institute. For 1000 years, the institute and a similar organization in Lindisfarne (on the north-east coast of England) sent scores of missionaries to England reaching as far as

Hungary and Italy. These communities had a great understanding of the Great Commission.

Notes

Missions to the Vikings (AD 800 - 1200)

The Vikings were a barbaric people, who sold their own women as slaves in Northern Africa. They pushed their way into English towns and slaughtered people in the most bloodthirsty way. Winston Churchill once said, "Their ships were beautiful to the eye, but they had the scent of murder about them." The Vikings were eventually Christianized by the godly girls they captured, just as Naaman, the Syrian learned of Israel's God through a captured woman believer. God often uses people whether they are voluntary missionaries or not.

Eventually the Vikings settled in England and Normandy. When the call came to go out on crusades, to take over the Holy Land, many of the Viking believers volunteered.

Missions to the Muslims (AD 1200 - 1600)

The Crusades cannot be viewed as a time of missionary expansion, because their zeal was misdirected and they misunderstood what the Great Commission was all about. The Crusaders plundered and murdered rather than sought to extend the Gospel to other nations. God did not bless their misdirected zeal.

Francis of Assisi

Francis, an intensely religious young man, accompanied the Fifth Crusade. He felt God wanted him to start a new order in which he and his followers would preach to common people rather than spend years in study. The Muslims were impressed by Francis, but could not avoid dealing with the armed Crusaders. Many of the Franciscans were missionaries in the Middle Ages and later. They numbered tens of thousands.

Renaissance

The returning crusaders took home a fascination with art and architecture, thus the beginning of the Renaissance or the 'rebirth' of European culture. They observed the culture of Greece and while in Constantinople, saw the stunning Sophia mosque, which had been built as a Cathedral by a believing Emperor and

was later taken over by the Muslims. This led to the desire for Cathedrals in Europe. All the major Cathedrals in Europe were begun within a 50-year period. It became the major focus of the church and evangelism/mission was pushed aside.

Scandal in the Church

At this time there was a lot of debauchery in society. Many Popes openly kept mistresses and people were poisoned and their bodies littered the streets of Rome. Massive fundraising schemes were concocted within the church to fund the building of the great cathedrals. As a reaction to this debauchery, interest in the Bible grew amongst some people. In 1450, the Bible became available through Gutenberg's type of printing press in many new places. The Bible opened their eyes to the darkness around them.

Reformation

John Hus and others initiated reforms, but civil or ecclesiastical authorities often persecuted them. Many church leaders were corrupt. This contributed to the need for the Reformation.

The Reformation was not an Evangelistic movement. It was more of a return to the faith of the Bible and the priesthood of all men. Some reformers believed that the Great Commission did not apply to them.

The spread of the Gospel was aided by the age of exploration; Christopher Columbus opened up the New World to travel and Prince Henry of Portugal sent ships (forbidding slavery) way down the coast of West Africa. This global expansion made possible our last era: The Ends of the Earth (AD 1600 - 1800).

Missions to the Ends of The Earth (AD 1600 - 1800)

Godly friars traveled the earth not realizing their time was limited by the American and French revolutions, which would cut the root of Catholic missions. Just before the American and French revolutions, the preaching of John Wesley and George Whitefield began the "Great Awakening", which fueled missionary expansion. Wesley and Whitefield taught people that they could have an assurance of the salvation. This provided a catalyst for the spread of the Gospel and

thousands were converted. Under Wesley, a mighty church planting and reformation movement began in England and spread to much of the known world in the years to come. The fruit of the "Great Awakening" enhanced Protestant missions, which eventually caught up with Catholic missionary effort.

Zinzendorf and the Moravians

Count Nicholas von Zinzendorf, a contemporary of Wesley and Whitfield, left a life of nobility and in 1722 founded a small refuge for persecuted believers from Moravia on his German plantation which became known as Hernhut. People heard of the place from across Europe and fled persecution to join Zinzendorf and his Moravian friends. In 1727, the Spirit of God brought revival into their midst and the '100 year prayer meeting' began.

As a result of this new spiritual impetus, the spirit of missions was fueled and a great missionary army was mobilized out of Hernhut and the Great era of Protestant missions was launched. In the next two decades, the Moravians sent forth more missionaries than all of the rest of the Protestant faiths combined.

There have been many who have gone before us. They have sacrificed and risked their lives for the sake of the Gospel. We have such a rich history and great witnesses calling out to us to run the race, but the real question is:

Application



- *Will we get in the race and make our contribution?*
- *Who will be the next Patrick, Wesley, Zinzendorf?*
- *Will our nation see breakthrough?*
- *Who will give their life for the Cause of Jesus Christ?*

SESSION 5

Notes

The Advancement of God's Kingdom in His World

The Birth of Modern Missions

OBJECTIVES OF SESSION 5:

- 1. To examine the three ages of Protestant World Missions.**
- 2. To identify the four men God used so remarkably in these eras.**
- 3. To understand the biblical link between evangelizing our world and the return of Jesus.**

IMPORTANT SCRIPTURES:

Matthew 24:14

Introduction

Notes

Nearly everything you read in the Bible occurred within the first six “super-centuries” (BC 2000 – AD 400). Abraham appears in the earliest pages of the Bible. Ninety eight percent of what we know of history has occurred since the time of Abraham. This session will focus mainly on AD 1800 – 2000.

Eras of Modern Missions & The Apostolic Movement Today

During these last 2 centuries, we see the following eras:

- 1. First Era: Coastlands**
- 2. Second Era: Inland areas**
- 3. Third Era: Unreached peoples**
- 4. The Apostolic Church Planting Movement**

These movements all overlap, and mission’s activity in all of these eras went through the following four stages:

- 1) Pioneer Stage: The missionary is the only believer amongst non-believers.**
- 2) Paternal Stage: As people turn to Christ, they become learners. The missionary develops a paternal relationship with the follower. This must not be seen as a negative relationship.**
- 3) Partnership Stage: Believers begin to grow in their faith. Nationals become co-workers with the missionaries, and the two work together.**
- 4) Participation Stage: The national church now stands in its own right, and missionaries are invited guests. These nationals are capable people and lead their churches very capably, they no longer need the direction of missionaries. Foreign missionaries participate with these churches, but these new churches are not necessarily ready to send missionaries to other nations.**

Each era also had several student movements in which young men and women made tremendous sacrifices for Christ and His gospel. The first era included the Student Missionary Inquiry and the Haystack Prayer Meeting. The Student Volunteer Movement was very active in the

second era. In the third era, we see the work of the Navigators, Inter-Varsity Christian Fellowship and the Caleb Project, and other student movements that push into the frontiers.

Early Beginnings – Coastal Regions

William Carey

When William Carey was not even 30 years old, he addressed a group of senior ministers and challenged them to take the Great Commission seriously. He was severely rebuked by an older minister who said, “When God chooses to win the heathen, he will do it without your help or ours.” He was not able to speak on the subject again and so he put his thoughts on paper, “An Enquiry Into the Obligations of Christians to Use Means for the Conversion of the Heathens.” The little book stirred the hearts of some of his friends and they created a tiny missions agency. It was a fledging and weak agency that provided minimal support for Carey to go to India. However, this man’s example touched many throughout the English speaking world, and his little book became the Magna Carte of the Protestant Mission Movement.

William Carey was not the first Protestant missionary. The Moravians had been sending people to Greenland, America and Africa for years. But, the combination of the Evangelical Awakening and Carey’s little book challenged and motivated men and women on both sides of the Atlantic. A second missionary society was founded in London; two in Scotland; one in Holland; and another in England.

William Carey’s Influence

Five college students in America were so inspired by Carey’s book they met to pray for life direction. This resulted in a meeting known as the “Haystack Prayer Meeting”. More importantly, they began a student’s mission’s movement, which became a great example and forerunner of other student movements in missions up to this present time.

During the first 25 years after Carey set sail for India, a dozen mission agencies were formed on both sides of the Atlantic, and the first era of modern missions had begun.

Realistically however, missions in this era were still pitiful and small in relation to the needs of the world.

Carey's influence led some women in Boston to start women's missionary prayer meetings, a trend which led to women becoming major partners in missions around the world. Women even began to go to foreign fields as single missionaries. By 1865, un-married American women established women's mission boards, which, sent out single women as missionaries and were led by single women at home.

Highlights Of This First Era

The two highlights of the first era are:

- 1. *Amazing sacrifice and love* on the part of those who went as missionaries. Africa, was a dark continent and all mission outreach to Africa, prior to 1775, had failed completely. Of all the Moravian and Catholic efforts, nothing remained. There was not one missionary on the continent of Africa on the eve of the first era. The gruesome statistics of sickness and death did not daunt the decades of truly courageous missionaries who went out after 1790.**

A stream of missionaries that cannot be matched by any other era or any other cause went out to Africa knowing that their destiny was unsure. Few missionaries to Africa in the first 60 years survived for more than two years. The devotion and commitment of these missionaries was incredible and nothing less than totally sacrificial. What an example they left for future generations.

- 2. There was a development of great insight and strategy and planning into missions. Although the labors of the missionaries in the first era were slow and sometimes heartbreaking, they did bear fruit and the familiar series of stages can be observed which goes from no church in the Pioneer Stage to infant church in the Paternal Stage and then onto the mature church in the Partnership and Participation Stages.**

Further Expansion – Inland Regions

Notes

Hudson Taylor

The second era in 1865 began with a young man like Carey under 30 who was given very little attention, but brooded over charts, maps and statistics. This young man suggested that the inland people of China needed to be reached. He was told you could not get there, and asked if he wanted to carry the blood of young men and women on his hands. This troubled the young man until God spoke to him and said, “You are not sending young people in the interior of China. I am.” Immediately, the load lifted and he realized this was God’s project, not his alone. With no university experience, no missiological training and only trade school medicine, this young man was one of the weak things God used to confound the wise. Hudson Taylor had the sovereign God accompany him as he went to China, and began the China Inland Mission – that eventually served over 6000 missionaries, predominately in the interior of China.

One of the reasons this era began so slowly was the questioning of many people. There were already many missions in existence. Why more? Taylor pointed out that all existing agencies were confined to the coastlands of Africa and Asia, or islands in the Pacific. People wondered why missionaries should go into the interior when there was still work to do on the coast.

Hudson Taylor’s Influence

Taylor not only started an English Frontier Mission, but also challenged many others to do likewise. As a result, over 40 new agencies took shape to compose the faith missions that rightly should be called Frontier Missions as the names of so many of them indicate: China Inland Mission, Sudan Interior Mission, Heart of Africa Mission, and Regions Beyond Missionary Union. For Hudson Taylor, the cause of Christ in the world was his ultimate passion and concern.

During this time, student movements were also born – the Student Volunteer Movement for Foreign Missions, histories single most powerful mission organization. The Student Volunteer Movement netted 100 000 volunteers who gave their lives to missions. 20 000 of these went overseas while the rest served in large

capacities expanding the gospel within their home nation. These young people didn't always work in the most strategic ways and often set missions back in certain areas, yet their zeal and courage for God was an inspiration to all.

Decline of the Second Era

By 1925, however, the largest mission movement in history was in full force. By then the second era missionaries had learnt the basic lessons they had first ignored, and produced an incredible record. They had planted churches in a thousand new places, mainly "inland", and by the 1940's, the reality of "younger churches" around the world was widely acclaimed as the "great new fact of our time". This led national leaders and missionaries to assume that all additional frontiers could be mopped up by the ordinary evangelism of the churches scattered around the world. People wondered if, in fact, missionaries weren't needed so badly! As in 1865, missionaries began to go home from many areas of the world.

Another era was beginning to unfold.

The Modern Age - Uttermost Parts of the Earth

Cameron Townsend

This era was started by two young men from the Student Volunteer Movement: Cameron Townsend and Donald McGavran. Cameron Townsend didn't finish college, because he just wanted to get to the mission field. He went to Guatemala as a "Second Era" missionary, building on the achievements of past missionaries. Townsend noticed that most of the Guatemalans were not Spanish speaking. He realized that these people would not be reached with Spanish Bibles. One day an Indian man asked him, "If your God is so smart, why can't He speak our language." This really drove the point home to Cameron Townsend. Many of the older missionaries had also realized the indigenous "Indian" populations needed to be reached in their own languages. He was only twenty three when he started motivating this philosophy of missions.

Townsend saw that there were unreached frontiers, and for half a century was the voice for these people. He started Wycliff Bible Translators, which is dedicated to reaching these new frontiers. At that time he thought there were about 500 languages in the world. Later he revised this figure to 1000, then 2000, and up to this point, it is more like 6500. His organization grew dramatically and today numbers over 6000 workers.

Donald McGavran

As Townsend was discovering tribes; McGavran discovered a more nearly universal category he termed "Homogenous Units", - today called "people groups".

McGavran's efforts and many writings started both the church growth movement, and the frontier mission movement, the one devoted to expanding already penetrated groups, the other devoted to the remaining unreached groups.

As with Carey and Taylor, for many years, McGavran and Townsend gained no attention. But, by the 1950's, people were recognizing both of them. In 1980, a conference was held focusing on the groups these two men emphasized. The Edinburgh - 1980 World Consultation of Frontier Missions was the largest mission meeting in history. Fifty-seven third world agencies also sent delegates. Simultaneously, the International Student Consultation on Frontier Missions, paved the way for all future mission meetings to include the involvement of young people.

Identifying Unreached People Groups

Tribal peoples are not the only forgotten peoples. Many organizations realize that some groups, in the middle of partially Christianized areas, have been completely overlooked. They are referred to as "unreached peoples" and are defined by ethnic or sociological traits that are so different from the cultural tradition of any existing church that specific mission strategies are necessary for the planting of indigenous churches within their particular tradition.

The third era is characterized by what has been called "unreached peoples" - *people and areas not yet reached*

with the gospel! Because the concept has been difficult to define, this era has had a slower start than the previous one. Townsend and McGavran called attention to “unreached peoples” 40 years ago, but until recently, little attention was given them. Tragically, we have forgotten many of the pioneering skills of the first two eras, and almost need to start all over again in learning how to approach and evangelize “unreached peoples”.

We know there are approximately ten thousand “unreached people” groups in this world. Each group requires a unique and strategic approach and each group must be reached with the Gospel.

The Modern Apostolic Church Planting Movement

Jesus, after a great night of ministry in a village, looked at His followers as they urged Him to continue the work there and said, “I must go to the next towns, for that is why I came.” Within these thoughts of the Lord, we find the birth of another great movement in our days – the national church planting movement.

Around the world today, men and women are giving themselves to missionary life and mission within their own nations as they take on the NEXT TOWN mandate of Jesus. They are recognizing that there are huge pockets of minimally Christianized nations that have no viable witness or ministry. They are committing themselves to live with the same missionary zeal and pioneering spirit as they go into town after town, and village after village seeing pioneering works for God opened up.

One example of these great movements, is the Chinese House Church movement with thousands of churches being planted a year. Young men and women (often teenagers) are giving all in pioneering churches in unreached areas.



Application

Can we finish the task? Yes, if Christians from every continent of the world become involved.

We in this era have so many advantages over past eras. We have a worldwide network of churches that can be motivated to their great mission.

This should be the final era. No one can overlook the strategic importance of the Great Commission.

SESSION 6

Notes

The Advancement of God's Kingdom in His World

The Final Frontiers

OBJECTIVES OF SESSION 6:

- 1. To identify major missions opportunities of the modern era.**
- 2. To develop appropriate vision and strategies to reach the world.**

IMPORTANT SCRIPTURES:

Acts 1:8

2 Peter 3:9

Revelation 7:9

Introduction

Notes

The world has changed dramatically in the past one hundred years. This is true both as far as the spread of Christianity is concerned as well as in almost every other area of human life.

If we examine the achievements of Christian mission we discover great success in crossing barriers to take the Gospel to all nations. (*Ethne*). For example in 1884 there were no Protestant Churches in Korea. Now 25% of the population is Christian. In Seoul, the largest city in South Korea, there are over 17,000 churches including the largest church in the world.

Latin America

In Latin America there were only a handful of persecuted churches in 1900. Today there are over 40 million Christians and the Christian faith is growing at over three times the natural birth rate. In Brazil at least 5000 new churches are started each year!

Africa

Meanwhile in Africa there are places where the Christian population has grown from as little as 3% of the population in 1900 to over 50% by the end of the C20. By the 1970's 85% of all schools in Africa had been started by Christian missionaries. Now Africa has literally thousands of training centers raising new leaders. Most of this expansion represents the second era of modern missions when mission moved from the Coastlands to the Inland.

The Focus Of The Third Era Brings Us To Now

The third era in missions began around 1930. People such as Cameron Townsend began to deal with language barriers. He started Wycliffe Bible Translators, which is still one of the largest and most effective mission organizations in the world. A few decades later Donald McGavran who was a missionary to India became concerned about crossing social barriers especially in societies that kept certain segments from being reached with the Gospel. He introduced the concepts of church growth and then unreached people groups. This brought great focus and momentum to missions in the late C20 as

over 11000 people groups were identified as being unreached and efforts were made to reach them.

As we enter the C21 we face new barriers and challenges. We call these the FINAL FRONTIERS.

The Challenge of Urbanization

In 1900 about 30% of the worlds population lived in cities with fewer than ten cities worldwide numbering more than 2 million people. At the close of the century, 70% of the worlds population lived in cities many of them in very poor circumstances. Additionally there are now at least twenty-five cities with a population exceeding 10 million, some with populations well over 20 million. This has created a brand new challenge.

Poverty

Firstly, there is the obvious challenge of poverty. As country people moved to the cities they settled in slum conditions. Traditional social structures broke down, there was widespread poverty and family life disintegrated. Children as young as five entered the unofficial workforce. No longer could missionaries build mission stations and congregate people on a Sunday morning. New strategies needed to be adopted.

Diversity

Secondly, cities became meeting points of diverse cultures and traditions. Ethnic differences still are obvious in many of the world's largest cities. Again missionaries needed to adapt to this lack of homogeneity.

The Challenge of Adapting

Christian missionaries have generally adapted well but there remain many challenges. Hospitals and schools have been built. Other initiatives such as language instruction, drug rehabilitation centers and urban ministries have all had relative success. For the emerging missionary, the mission field is no longer overseas but right in our own cities. Creative vision and strategy must continue to be implemented in order to reach our cities for Christ.

The Rise of Post-Modernism.

Notes

This generation is a “hinge” generation. We exist between modernity, with its stress on reason, modernism, science and technology and post-modernity with its stress on holistic approaches, subjectivity and non-rational approaches to life.

Post Modern Thought

In order to help understand post-modern thought M.P. Gallagher in a book called “Clashing Symbols” published by DLT in London (1997) lists the ten commandments of Postmodernism. They are:

- 1. Thou shalt not worship reason. (All reality is open to many conflicting interpretations)**
- 2. Thou shalt not believe in history. (Everything happens by chance)**
- 3. Thou shalt not place hope in progress.**
- 4. Thou shalt not believe in “big stories”. (Christianity is invalid because it attempts to encompass all aspects of life)**
- 5. Thou shalt focus on self. (Hedonism)**
- 6. Thou shalt not agonize about values.**
- 7. Thou shalt not trust institutions.**
- 8. Thou shalt not bother with God.**
- 9. Thou shalt not live for productivity alone. (Leisure is more important)**
- 10. Thou shalt not seek uniformity.**

We can immediately see the challenges facing Christians as they proclaim the absolute truth about the only true God in a postmodern world. It is a final frontier that we must and are crossing.

The Globalization of Islam

Notes

Islam is an aggressively missionary faith. Financed by wealthy oil rich nations Islamic propagation centers are being built throughout the world. In Europe, immigration has brought large numbers on Islamic people into nations that only fifty years ago had virtually no Muslims at all.

Although we are all aware of the forces of fundamentalist Islamic groups who are best known for terror tactics, the majority of Muslims do not necessarily agree with their viewpoint. However, they are sincere in their faith and are very aggressive. Islam is growing rapidly in countries that are nominally Christian. Christian missionaries need an awareness of this fact and specialist Muslim outreaches are proving successful.

Unreached People Groups

Starting in the 1970's missionary strategists such as Donald McGavran and then Ralph Winter began to focus our attention on groups of people who were not being reached in any way by the Gospel. Generally an unreached people group was defined as a language or cultural group that had no known church meeting. In other words, the only way to reach them was to cross both language and cultural barriers. Initially about 12,000 of these groups were identified. Some estimates tell us that about half of these have some form of Gospel witness amongst them now.

The Challenge of Church Planting

Another great challenge is how will we push into and see marginally Christian nations be truly reached and brought to Christ? The only answer is - CHURCH PLANTING. There is a great challenge to all of us in many nations to see hundreds and thousands of indigenous churches planted which have a truly multiplying power within them. In Europe alone, most nations are only about 1% born again believers, and it is estimated that to reach the 750 million people, 500 000 new churches must be planted.

Who is going to tackle this mighty task around the world? If we don't, then who will?

The 10/40 Window

Notes

In the late 1980's various task forces endeavored to become more strategic both in meaningful prayer strategies and outreach. Through these the concept of the 10/40 window was developed. This represented the geographical area of the world where it was estimated that the majority of the world's unreached people lived. Great breakthrough in prayer and strategic mission is opening up this area of the world.

This was further developed to include the 40/70 Window, which includes most of Europe and the former USSR. There are many groups that have no viable church or Christian witness and they must be reached by a new generation of missionaries and strategists.

Opportunities of the Global Village.

In closing this session we can summarize all of the factors already mentioned as "The Global Village". We no longer live in culturally or linguistically distinct communities. Although this does present challenges to us as missionaries it also represents unique opportunities. We now have a mission field of many diverse people groups right in our own nations, towns and cities. We also have technology and communications such as no other generation has ever known. Travel is more affordable than ever. All of these combined give us unprecedented opportunities to reach more people with the Gospel than ever. We must ask ourselves, are we willing to take these opportunities and use them well?

We have more resource and gifts to use than any in the history of the world. Could it be that just as the church was born in the fullness of time, we are also living in that fullness.

- *Travel*
- *Communication*
- *Finances*
- *Technology*

*Are at an all time high. There is only one thing the Lord lacks
– PEOPLE!*

C. T. Studd said, If Jesus be God and died for me, then there is no thing I cannot do for Him.

Application



SESSION 7

Notes

Your Commitment To God's World

Understanding Culture

OBJECTIVES OF SESSION 7:

- 1. To understand the various ways that cultures can communicate.**
- 2. To identify various means we can use to enable us to reach other cultural groups.**
- 3. To observe how Jesus and Paul crossed barriers to reach people in need.**

IMPORTANT SCRIPTURES:

Acts 17:22-29

Ephesians 6:11

John 4

Introduction

To effectively communicate the Gospel across cultures means that believers must have an understanding of the world and study it, so that they can be effective in presenting the Gospel to different language groups and cultures.

Missionaries need to work at communicating in culturally appropriate ways in order to impact others' worldview.

The Use of Culturally Appropriate Symbols

Missionaries have to learn to master the use of symbols, stories, humor, philosophy, poetry and even imagery.

Cross-Cultural Dynamics

It's a huge misconception for missionaries to think they only need words. Many cultures do not have written systems. Some cultures respond to pictures. To be effective, we need to note the following cross-cultural dynamics:

- ***Kinesics* refers to gestures, body language and facial expression, which vary in each culture.**
- ***Audio* sounds, such as music, laughing, whistling, moaning, etc. are all ways in which we communicate. In some countries, to whistle at a person is positive. In Latin America, it means they are jeering.**
- ***Silence* is important in many cultures. To sit silently in the Cameroon for say fifteen minutes signals that the person sitting in silence has something very serious to say. Remember, Job's sorrow when Job's friends sat silently for seven days (Job 2:13).**
- ***Artifactual* communication is sending messages through the arranging of objects. We communicate different ideas by how we arrange furniture in our family room or our bedroom etc.**
- ***Touch* may be a hug, a kiss, holding hands or even casually slapping a person on the back. Paul said to give one another a holy kiss (Romans 16:16; 1 Corinthians 16:20; 2 Corinthians 13:12; 1 Thessalonians 5:26), however, in some cultures; it is inappropriate for**

Notes

men to kiss other men. We have to be very careful of touch and how it is perceived in other cultures. In Cameroon, it is extremely offensive to pat a little boy on the head. In other cultures, it is extremely rude to cross your legs and show the bottom of your feet.

- ***Optical communication includes the use of lights and the color of lights. We stop at red lights in traffic, but in a red-light district, it is inappropriate to stop.***
- ***Spatial communication is the amount of space allowed between us. In some Asian cultures, you stand very close to the person when you communicate. That would be very intimidating to many Western cultures. Some cultures perceive space between two people as being aloof.***
- ***Time is viewed differently in some cultures. Being late in many cultures is rude, whereas in Africa being late is no problem.***
- ***Olfactory communication is popular as can be seen by how television advertisers spend millions of dollars on perfumes, which regularly communicate romance. In many cultures, there are male and female smells.***
- ***Oculesics communication is use of eye contact. In the Western world, we use direct eye contact to communicate sincerity and intensity. In other cultures, that is very offensive. To stare into someone's eyes would imply you are trying to overpower them, show superiority, or give them an evil eye of intent.***

How We Can Impact Other Cultures More Effectively

When any missionary goes to another culture, they clearly stand out and often the people they minister the Gospel to perceive it has a foreign Gospel. The New Testament way to communicate the Gospel seems to be through what Don Richardson terms “concept fulfillment”.

Concept Fulfillment

Consider - Jewish people practice lamb sacrifice. John the Baptist preached to the people and proclaimed boldly, “Behold the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world.” This is “concept fulfillment”

Consider – the Jewish multitude remind Jesus of Moses miraculously providing manna for the people of Israel six days a week. They suggest Jesus should repeat His miracle of the loaves and fishes.

Jesus replied, “Moses gave you not the true bread from heaven. The true bread from heaven is He who comes down from heaven and gives life to the world...I am that bread of life!” This is “concept fulfillment”.

So how does “concept fulfillment” apply today? Missionaries need to discern the redemptive analogies in each culture. Let’s look at some examples in other cultures:

The Damal and “Hai”

Less than a generation ago, the Damal of Irian Jaya were living in the Stone Age. A subservient tribe, they lived under the shadow of a politically more powerful group called the Dani.

How could one find a redemptive analogy amongst Stone Age people?

The Dani talked of a concept called “hai”. This was a term for a long anticipated golden age, a Utopia in which wars would cease, sickness would be rare and men would not oppress each other. A Damal leader called Mugumenday had yearned to see hai. Before he died, he told his son Dem to wait for hai.

Eventually missionaries went to the Damal valley and studied the language in which they eventually preached and taught. One day Dem got to his feet and told his people that hai had come to them through these foreigners. He urged his people to believe their words as they had waited so long for the fulfillment of this ancient expectation.

Virtually the entire population welcomed the Gospel. Within a few years there were churches in nearly every Damal village.

This is concept fulfillment.

The Dani and "Nabelan-Kabelan"

The Dani were now intrigued by all the excitement amongst the Damal. They sent representatives to inquire as to what it was all about. When the Dani learnt that hai had come to the Damal, they were amazed. They had been waiting for the fulfillment of Nabelan-Kabelan – the belief that one day immortality would return to mankind.

By then missionaries were working among the Dani. They spoke of "words of life", and a man named Jesus who not only rose from the dead, but also could raise people from the dead.

Suddenly the Dani understood. The word spread quickly. A church was born.

This is concept fulfillment.

The Karen and a Black Book

The Karen in Burma had a legend that a teacher of truth would come carrying a black object under his arm. The first missionary to the Karen always had a black Bible under his arm. This caused them to listen attentively as he preached from the black book.

God moved by His Spirit and soon thousands of Karen came to know Christ.

This is concept fulfillment.

The Yali and "Osuwa"

In 1966, missionaries went to this cannibal tribe. These cannibals killed many of them.

The Indonesian government stepped in to stop further uprisings. The Yali decided they preferred missionaries to soldiers, but the missionaries could not find an analogy in Yali culture to make the Gospel clear. In the 1990's, some missionaries went to the Yali's and probed around to learn more about their customs and beliefs. One day a young man shared a story with the missionaries that utterly amazed them.

"Long ago my brother Sunahan and his friend, Kahalek, were ambushed by enemies across the river. Kahalek was killed, but Sunahan fled to a circular stone wall

nearby. Leaping inside it, he turned, bared his chest at his enemies and laughed at them. The enemies immediately lowered their weapons and hurried away. If they had shed one drop of my brother's blood while he stood within that sacred stone wall – we call it an Osuwa – their own people would have killed them.”

Now the Christian workers had a new evangelistic tool. Christ is the spiritual Osuwa, the perfect place of refuge. For Yali culture instinctively echoes the Christian teaching that man needs a place of refuge. Missionaries had noticed the stone walls, but had never understood their full significance.

CONCEPT FULFILLMENT!

The Gospel Respects Cultures

Concepts like hai, nabelan-kabelan and osuwa form the basis of these people's culture. Missionaries cannot ignore distinctives like these, because if they do, these people will not be reached. The Gospel respects cultures and preserves these concepts. In many areas where results are slow or non-existent, sensitive cultural probes may open up unbelievable possibilities for spiritual penetration through concept fulfillment.

The Example of Paul

Missionaries must preach in a way that goes beyond the superficialities of a particular culture. In the novel, “The Poisonwood Bible”, Barbara Kingsolver tells of a Baptist missionary who arrives in Africa and his first sermon addresses and rebukes the bare breasted women. The missionary got caught up in all the superficialities of the culture and never got to the hearts of the African men and women.

The Apostle Paul was a master at looking at the heart and not superficial behaviors. In his sermon to the philosophers at the Aeropagus on Mars Hill, he said, “Men of Athens! I see in every way you are very religious. For as I walked around and looked carefully at your objects of worship, I even found an altar with this inscription; To an unknown God. Now what you worship as something unknown, I am going to proclaim to you.” (Acts 17:22 – 23) Paul did not condemn the

Greeks for idolatry, he didn't look at the superficialities of the culture, he got straight to the heart.

Notes

The Example of Jesus

Jesus was never superficial like the Pharisees. They kept all the rules of the Sabbath; Jesus went out of his way to violate their rules. Their worldview was shaken when Jesus said that the Sabbath was made for man, not man for the Sabbath (Mark 2:27 - 28). People were offended when someone told Jesus that His mother and brothers were waiting for Him. He replied, "Whoever does the will of my Father in Heaven is my brother and sister and mother" (Matthew 12:46 - 50). Jesus was expressing that family in the Lord was closer than blood relationships.

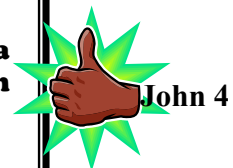
Jesus Always Looked To The Heart

Jesus also taught that people do wrong not by forgetting to wash their hands ceremonially, but by the rubbish that comes out of their hearts (Matthew 15: 2; 23:25 - 26). The Pharisees said that murder resulted in judgment, but Jesus said those who are angry will be judged (Matthew 5:21 - 22). When the rich put a lot of money in the offering, Jesus pointed people's attention to the poor woman who put in a mite, yet gave her all (Mark 12:41 - 44). Jesus always avoided superficialities. He always dealt with the heart of men and women. Let's look at John 4 to see how Jesus handled a "cross-cultural encounter".

The Woman At The Well

In John's gospel chapter 4 is Jesus' encounter with a Samaritan woman. It was at Sychar, the Samaritan town where Jacob's well was.

Jesus' disciples were in town when the woman came to draw water. Jesus said to her, "Will you give me a drink?" She replies, "You are a Jew and I am a Samaritan." There was the cultural gap. She asked Jesus how He could ask her for a drink when Jews did not associate with Samaritans. To which Jesus replied, "If you knew the gift of God and who it is who asked you for a drink, you would have asked Him and He would have given you living water."



Notes

Listen to her civic pride coming through when she says, “Are you greater than our father Jacob who gave us this well and drank from it himself, as did also his sons, flocks and herds.” Notice how Jesus made her pride in the well become His ally.

Jesus answers, “Everyone who drinks this water will be thirsty again But, whoever drinks the water I give him will never thirst ...”

There are now two wells being spoken of in this story: the historical, physical well and the eternal, spiritual well. Jesus used this object of her civic pride as an analogy to tell her of the well that can be inside a person. That is what missiologists call an “eye-opener”. And, it worked!

The woman tells Jesus she wants this water. He tells her to go and call her husband. She says she doesn’t have a husband. Jesus told her that was true, because she had had five husbands, but the man she now had was not her husband.

Jesus had used an eye-opener to get to first base, but now He was focusing on the real issue of sin in her life.

Notice how Jesus never condemned the woman. He never called her an adulterous or a liar. He dealt with her in a positive and gentle way.

Application



I think these are the kinds of missionaries Jesus is looking for. The Kingdom of God has no room for those who get caught up in the superficialities of culture, leading them to condemn and pressure people.

Jesus is looking for missionaries with loving, caring hearts that can honestly, openly and lovingly confront issues of the heart.

Loving the sinner, yet hating the sin. This is the calling of every missionary who would truly impact other cultures.

SESSION 8

Notes

Your Commitment To God's World

Finishing The Task

OBJECTIVES OF SESSION 8:

- 1. To understand the difference between communicating the Gospel to peoples and communicating the Gospel to countries or individuals.**
- 2. To appreciate all the resources at our disposal to complete the task of world evangelization.**
- 3. To examine our personal commitment to the Great Commission and motivate a much greater commitment to God's world.**

IMPORTANT SCRIPTURES:

Matthew 24:14

Matthew 28:19-20

Matthew 13:22-23

John 4:34

Introduction

How do we complete this enormous task of evangelizing our world?

One of the most significant verses in the Bible is found in Matthew 24:14, ***“This Gospel of the kingdom must be preached in all the world and then the end will come.”*** Only when the Gospel is preached to every tribe and people group, will the end come.

The need for more missionaries has never been greater than at this time in our history. The mammoth task of evangelizing our world will only be completed when people become obedient to Jesus’ final command by making it their top priority.

What Must Occur Before Christ Returns

We know that the Bible speaks of famines, wars, rumors of wars and earthquakes. However, more importantly than all these verses that speak of the “beginning of the end”, is the little verse we read in Matthew 24:14, “This Gospel of the kingdom must be preached in all the world and then the end will come.” Notice it does not say, the end might come, but that it will come. This is a highly significant verse, because Christ’s return will be hindered until His Gospel has gone forward into every nation of the world.

How do we get involved?

Well, we need to take the words of Jesus very seriously. Jesus was not just speaking lightly or flippantly; He was speaking with great authority and purpose.

There is only one mention in the Bible of Satan getting angry. In Revelations 12:12, it says that the Devil gets angry when he knows his time is short. 2 Peter 3:12 talks about judgment coming on the earth when the entire earth will burn up.

But, it also says, ***“You ought to live holy and godly lives as you look forward to the day of God and speed its coming.”*** So we can actually hasten the Lord’s return by proclaiming His kingdom to the world’s *ethne*.

Notes



Matt. 24:14

What Jesus never said

In Matthew 28:18 - 20, Jesus repeats the word *ethne* when giving the Great Commission. Jesus never said, "Go into the world and make disciples of all the people, or all the men, or countries." The word *ethne* that Jesus used in this passage refers specifically to ethnic groups or people groups. Not every single man and woman is going to respond to the Gospel. Jesus sends us to the *ethne* of the world.

Notes



Matt. 28:18-20

Understanding More Fully What We Can Do to Fulfill the Great Commission

We can see to it that in every nation, tribe and language group, there are churches full of disciples or churches in the process of making disciples.

There Are Still Many Unreached Groups

To understand a little bit more about *ethne* let's look at the country of Indonesia. It is a very large country with millions of believers, in mainly three groups; the Javanese, the Batak and the Dayak. Believers can also be found in many of the small groups throughout the Indonesian province of Irian Jaya; however, there are still approximately one thousand groups in Indonesia with no believers as yet.

Each of these groups has a different language and culture, and they all need to be reached in their language and culture. All together, in the country of Indonesia there are over a thousand groups that need to be reached.

India itself is a basilea (a country) with two thousand unreached *ethne*. Next to India is the basilea of Pakistan with two hundred unreached *ethne*.

Making Progress, Yet Great Opportunities Remain

The Gospel is making great progress thus far. The more than one hundred and fifty thousand missionaries worldwide are doing an extraordinary job. Yet, we still need to reach approximately 10,000 *ethne* with the Gospel. Where the church has already been planted, it is doing well, and in some places even 'exploding'. But, where it hasn't been planted, there is nothing but darkness and hopelessness.

The church has more resources now than ever before. We have more finance at our disposal, more educated people, more books, videos, etc. than ever before. The church must wake up to its responsibility. Every single day, 50,000 people among unreached people groups die without the Lord. The Bible tells us clearly that these people have gone to hell.

Understanding That Satan's Goal Is To Hinder The Great Commission

Satan certainly does not want us to shorten his time of wreaking havoc on earth. He has a job to do and he wants as much time as possible to cause the maximum damage to mankind.

In the Western world, we are so caught up with ourselves, our health, materialism, etc. The Great Commission is very low on our priority list. In America, believers have an after tax income of over \$800 billion. They give about \$2 billion or a quarter of one percent to missions. Amazingly, evangelical believers spend 8 billion dollars a year on weight loss programs. And no one knows how much money it took to get them that fat.

Our priorities as Christians are more than a little mixed up. No doubt the Devil is incredibly happy with the state of the Christian church in the west and peoples mixed sense of priority.

We can hasten the Lord's return and make the Devil really mad as we become committed to the Great Commission and evangelize our world.

Still 10,000 people groups have never heard the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

Application



There is only one question to ask,

“What are we going to do about it?”