

*A Journal of Holiness Theology for Asia-Pacific Contexts*



**ASIA-PACIFIC NAZARENE  
THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY**

*Bridging Cultures for Christ*  
*1 Timothy 2:5*

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## Table of Contents

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Preface	v
Missiological Education as Missionary Theology <i>Dr. Donald Dean Owens</i>	1
Some Reflections on Building Bridges <i>Dr. Donald Dean Owens</i>	11
Theological Foundations of Missions <i>Dr. Donald Dean Owens</i>	15
Theology of Missions 1 <i>Dr. Robert E. Coleman</i>	29
Theology of Missions 2 <i>Dr. Robert E. Coleman</i>	47
Theology of Missions 3 <i>Dr. Robert E. Coleman</i>	58
Some New Directions in Missions <i>Dr. Robert Donabue</i>	73



Nielson Center for Education and Evangelism; Wooten Chapel (background)

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## Preface

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Missions is at the heart of Asia-Pacific Nazarene Theological Seminary. Our graduates have gone throughout the world ministering in the name of Jesus Christ. For more than 20 years now God-called men and women have gone forth to the nations of the world to proclaim the gospel. Many serve in their own national settings or minister in diaspora mission. A significant number reach across cultural, ethnic and linguistic boundaries in cross-cultural ministry. An increasing number are engaging in ministry which is multicultural and often urban.

Our students and graduates are “bridging cultures for Christ” everywhere. The message of the Cross of Christ is the bridge that unites us in His body. This primary commitment to bring the gospel message to the nations is at the heart of our commitment at APNTS.

The vision for a school of world mission was born in March 2004 when APNTS celebrated their 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary. The deep commitment to missions prompted the APNTS Board of Trustees at their meeting to appoint an operational committee to establish a school of world mission on the campus of APNTS. Multicultural Manila makes the most natural mooring for a school of world mission. Current offerings in missions include: the Master of Divinity degree, the Master of Arts in Christian Communication with a concentration in cross-cultural communication, the Master of Science in Theology with a concentration in missions, and a Graduate Diploma in missions. The Donald Owens School of World Mission was officially launched in September of this year with the first lecture series on missions given by APNTS founder, Dr. Donald Owens.

“Members of the planning session envisioned that the Donald Owens School of World Mission would provide a venue for the training of regional missionaries,” commented Dr. Floyd Cunningham, regional education coordinator. “Planning session participants also expressed their hope that the Donald Owens School of World Mission would help the Church of the Nazarene develop new approaches to missionary work and to the processes of discovering, developing, and deploying missionaries for the

twenty-first century.” Future plans for the Donald Owens School of World Mission include sponsoring of lectureships and visiting professors, as well as offering summer mission institutes. It will also help to coordinate distance and extension education mission programs. Most importantly, the School of World Mission is intended to inspire passion for the mission of God.

This edition of *The Mediator* presents the initial lectures given by Dr. Owens. It was a unique blessing for the founder of APNTS, Dr. Donald D. Owens, General Superintendent Emeritus, to be present on September 21-23 to deliver the first four missiological lectures for the School of World Mission. “APNTS is located in the heart of urban Manila with a very diverse student body,” stated Owens. “It is an ideal place to teach missions.”

We trust these lectures will be informative and inspiring for all who read them. Audio tapes of most these lectures will be made available in the near future. The second annual lecture series is also included. This series was delivered in January 2005 by Dr. Robert E. Coleman. It was a great privilege for the Donald Owens School of World Mission to have Dr. Coleman as our second lecturer. A video edition of Dr. Coleman’s teachings based on his best-selling *The Master Plan of Evangelism* was taped on the APNTS campus and will soon be available. We at APNTS, the Donald Owens School of World Mission, and the World Mission Communications are happy to be a part of this new venture to help train people in discipleship, evangelism and missions.

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# Missiological Education as Missionary Theology

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*Dr. Donald Dean Owens*

In April 2004 it was my joy to be invited to share in celebrating the 20th anniversary of Asia-Pacific Nazarene Theological Seminary and give the Commencement address. I was very impressed by the development of APNTS in all of the major categories that make up a successful educational institution; that is: a growing student body, exemplary faculty, strong library offerings, and pleasant facilities. Perhaps I should not have been surprised when Rev. Steve Walsh, Chairperson of the Board of Trustees, announced that the administration and faculty would initiate planning for the creation of a School of World Mission at APNTS. I am honored that my name is being associated with it. People continue to think more of me than I deserve. I am deeply grateful for the pilgrimage that Mrs. Owens and I have shared together.

I applaud Asia-Pacific Nazarene Theological Seminary in positioning the institution at the very heart of what a Sovereign Lord is doing in the world. The urgent task of bringing the gospel to the lost of earth must be undergirded by the careful academic study of why He is doing it, where He is doing it, and how He is doing it. While God moves in mysterious ways to fulfill His love for mankind by mission, it is still incumbent upon the church to understand all we can. This requires reflection.

The geographical location of the seminary at the crossroads of east, west, north, and south provides the cross-cultural setting for a global view of theological education. APNTS is already staffed with a faculty that has had missiological training or members embedded in deep cross-cultural understandings. The seminary has a budding library of collections for mission studies. Metro Manila offers an ideal setting for challenging urban evangelism. At the same time, just a few kilometers from the heart of the city are rural areas that offer opportunities for profound cross-cultural experiences. The diverse composition of the student body makes possible immediate resources for dialogue and cultural insights.

The stage is set for some significant work here as missiology is recognized as an essential part of the curriculum. It must be admitted that this is a road less traveled. Missiology, the Science of Missions, for most theological schools is “the new kid on the block” with no secure place within the theological curriculum. Even now, when one uses the word “Missiology,” eyebrows are raised and a “Huh?” is extracted. Missiological education seems to have a relatively long history in Europe, especially among the Roman Catholic Orders. However, before 1950, missiology in the United States had not developed an academic character with regard to definition, methodology, and objectives.

In 1966 when Bethany Nazarene College (now Southern Nazarene University) asked me to teach missions courses as part of the theological curriculum, one of my colleagues indicated that “missions were history, or it was nothing.” Another informed me that it was “another form in the practice of ministry.” Following my installation address as professor of missions at Nazarene Theological Seminary in 1974, because I had sought to show how missiology was informed by all branches of theological and societal interests, one of my colleagues told me, “I think you have claimed too much for your discipline.” Actually, all that I wanted to show, in the words of a youngster who wrote a term paper entitled, “The World and All That Is In It,” was missiology is . . . the world and everything in it!

The Christian faith is intrinsically missionary. It sees all peoples, *ta ethne* as objects of God’s salvific will and plan of reconciling the world unto Himself in and through Jesus Christ. He, who was sent, now sends in his ministry of reconciliation. This dimension of the Christian faith is not an optional extra: Christianity is missionary by its very nature or it denies its very reason for existence. It is generally acknowledged that the supreme task of the Church is to make Jesus Christ known to all men. Yet, it is interesting that the Church has often shown little interest in providing any adequate courses that would prepare men and women for the task. In typical fashion, as most missionaries fifty years ago, I went out as missionary



without having a single course, other than a required language course, where missions were a professor's primary concern. Classical theological education or medicines were the two main roads to the mission fields, for men and women. The phrase was not in vogue then, but it was assumed that the missionary appointee would enter the wide world of mission and **"Just Do It!"**

It is not my intention to lessen the importance of the biblical and theological core of the theological education curriculum because these disciplines are front and center, especially if they lead to praxis in ministry. However, given the setting of APNTS, there is an important point that I must raise.

Each semester that I have taught missiology I have habitually begun with a section that I call "Biblical Foundations of Missions". The text I have used is a fine book by Gailyn Van Rheezen entitled "Biblical Foundations & Contemporary Strategies: Missions." I know that decades ago, theology was referred to as "the queen of the sciences." As many of our colleagues here have done, I studied the biblical data and theological reflections as "documents of an inner-Christian doctrinal struggle" and early Christian history as "confessional" history, as a struggle between different Christian parties and theologians. I submit to you that the missionary character of the New Testament has not always been appreciated. If the Holy Scriptures spawned theology as "queen" then I support David Bosch's assertion that missiology is the "mother of theology." The New Testament is a missionary document. Bosch writes: "The New Testament writers were not scholars who had the leisure to research the evidence before they put pen to paper." Rather, they wrote in the context of an "emergency situation" of a church which, because of its missionary encounter with the world, was forced to theologize. The gospels, in particular, are to be viewed not as writings produced by an historical impulse but as expressions of an ardent faith, written with the purpose of commending Jesus Christ to the Mediterranean world. New Testament authors were less interested in definitions of mission than in the missionary existence of their readers.

## Definitions of Missiology

When one seeks to define something, that person attempts to build a fence around a mental construct, not allowing extraneous nuances to slip in to change or impact the essential nature of the subject at hand. Missiology is surrounded by a fence, but the fence apparently has large cracks in it as evidenced by the variety of names for the science of missions. The selection of a name for the discipline is very important. However, since the term is being more widely accepted, there is a need to describe and delineate the field of study.

Justice Anderson points out that the term “missiology” has had some criticism on purely linguistic grounds. Some theologians express a positive dislike of this term. These critics maintain the word—a compound of Latin and Greek—is a horrid, hybrid word, a linguistic monstrosity! However, one notes that such “monsters” appear frequently. For example, sociology, and other *ologies*.

**Missiology** came into the English language from a French word that had its beginning from a Latin derivation of a Greek verb *missio*, the act of sending. **Logia** is a Greek derivative from the sense of reason, inference, or study. Perhaps a tentative definition of the field of missiology should be advanced. As one would expect, the two definitions seem more descriptive rather than definitive, but they are helpful nonetheless.

Alan R. Tippett (1911-88) emerged from twenty years of missionary service with the Australian Methodist Mission in Fiji to become a significant missiologist with strong anthropological insights. He collaborated in several publications within the so-called “Church Growth” movement out of Eugene, Oregon and Fuller Theological Seminary. His writings were not only theoretical in many instances, but steeped in the practice of missions.

Following his conversion, Tippett knew that a vocation in missions was to be his calling. In obedience to the advice of his father, he pursued the full ministerial training course. His training, however, had no cross-cultural dimension. This included Missions, neither its theology,

theory or history. In later years as an active missionary, he lamented over this gap in appropriate training for the missionary calling. In time he earned an M.A. with emphasis on social anthropology.

Perhaps it could be pointed out that in the United Kingdom, anthropology is called “social anthropology,” while in the United States, it is called “cultural anthropology.” This distinction is based upon historical contingencies when Great Britain was a colonial power with interest in control within social structures.

Tippett considered anthropology as an important tool for missionaries. Most successful missionaries became applied anthropologists as they struggled to understand and communicate the culture nuances of the peoples among whom they served. Given his intense concern for church growth in several dimensions, we can understand Tippett’s points of interest in his definition or description of missiology. He writes,

The academic discipline or science which researches, records and applies data relating to the biblical origin, the history (including the use of documentary materials), the anthropological principles and techniques and the theological base of the Christian mission. The theory, methodology and data bank are particularly directed towards: the processes by which the Christian message is communicated; the encounters brought about by its proclamation to non-Christians; the planting of the Church and organization of congregations, the incorporation of converts into those congregations, and the growth and relevance of their structures and fellowship, internally to maturity, externally in outreach, as the Body of Christ in local situations and beyond, in a variety of culture patterns.

A succinct, and more “user friendly” definition, is provided by Justice Anderson who says, “Missiology is the science of missions. It includes the formal study of the theology of mission, the history of missions, the

concomitant philosophies of mission and their strategic implementation in given cultural settings.”

Most evangelical seminaries having departments of missions embrace the fourfold pattern of missiological training as articulated by Anderson’s definition, and subscribe to the practical approach of Alan Tippett. There is little substitute for hands-on missionary experience in the classroom where missiology is taught by those who have engaged in field work. The passion of the instructor is a powerful voice; and it is true, some things are caught rather than taught. Having said that however, every seminary offering such a discipline should also require solid academic credentials in the various fields of theological reflection.

Johannes Verkuyl, a Dutch missiologist, writes that the term “missiology” is of rather old vintage. Quite naturally, since the beginning of church history many derivations appeared from the Latin translation of the Greek verb *apostle: mittere, missio, missiones, etc.* The derivation *missio* only surfaces in the sixteenth century when both the Jesuit and Carmelite order of monks sent out hundreds of missionaries. Of course, this leads to the question of whose mission is it?

Out of the world missionary conference held in Willingen, West Germany in 1952, a term which stemmed from the time of the Trinitarian discussions emerged: *missio Dei*. The council concluded that “the missionary movement of which we are a part has its source in the *triune God Himself*.” This concept provided one of the earliest books I read on missiology, George Vicedom’s famous book *Missio Dei (The Mission of God)*. Another emphasis of the of the Willingen Conference, and repeated often was the relationship between *missio Dei* and *missio ecclesiae*. The conclusion was, “There is no participation in Christ without participation in his mission.” This is what Emil Brunner meant when he said later, “The Church exists by mission, just as fire exists by burning. Where there is no mission, there is no Church; and where there is neither Church nor mission, there is no faith: (i.e. no theology).”

Men like John Taylor and Johannes Aagaard point out that to be faithful to the Scriptures, one should not refer to the *missio Dei* but to *missiones Dei* which underscores the historical data in the Bible that God involved Himself in the various activities of believers who were called upon to perform in his name the innumerable ministries of compassion and reconciliation. If theology is the study of God and divine things, then one would think that the theological enterprise would concern itself with the acts of God in His contemporary salvation orientation. A perusal of most classical and contemporary theologies reveals that this is not the case.

As a case in point, in his small book, *Karl Barth's Theology of Mission*, Waldron Scott writes, "It is somewhat disconcerting to the missions-minded reader to discover that within the more than eight thousand pages of his systematic theology, Karl Barth devotes a mere four and one-half pages to the specific topic of foreign missions." One must not conclude that Barth had no missionary theology. In fact, the theme of *missio Dei* permeates his magnum opus. However, although his personal and frequent visits to the prisons and his attacks on injustice are well known, when considered in the framework of his total theology, he has relatively few words to say about the specifics of foreign missions.

Following David Bosch and others, theological education needs both a missiological dimension, *missio Dei*, and a missiological intention, both the study of God's mission and the furthering of the study of the church's mission. He writes:

The solution lies neither in regarding missiology as a subdivision of one of the classical theological disciplines nor in its self-assertion as an autonomous subject. We need a third option.... When [missiology's] right to exist was grudgingly conceded [in theological education] . . . a solution was attempted in either assigning to missiology a completely separate sphere, making it a component of one of the 'classical' disciplines, or hoping the other

disciplines would embroider their own courses slightly by including some threads of mission. None of these attempts proved satisfactory....It seems to me that we need a combination of these three solutions.... Mission is the action of God in which the church shares and which belongs to the essential nature and character of the church....Missions are particular forms of this essential participation [by the church] in God's mission, related to specific times, places or needs. They are identifiable activities of the church—activities which flow from its missionary nature.

It is unfortunate that mission studies have not been able to break into a conjoined relationship with theology in the theological curriculum although they are, after all, mutually interdependent. The history of theology indicates that theologians long taught the holistic concept of theology, that is, they conceived the study as one, undivided discipline. Through time, however, a separation took place which produced theology as theory and practice. From this concept, theology gradually evolved into a fourfold pattern: the disciplines of Bible (text), church history (history), systematic theology (truth), and practical theology (application). This pattern became firmly established and continues to this day. Practical theology became principally "ecclesiology" and assigned missions to the practical area which existed to serve the institutional church. Bosch believes that this pattern came about due to the influence of Schleiermacher.

Schleiermacher made some changes in his system when Moravian missions and the work of William Carey pioneered the modern missionary movement. Schleiermacher's solution was to append missiology to practical theology as a peripheral field for study. This, of course, kept the fourfold division sacrosanct. While in total agreement that mission studies should end in practice, in none of the courses that I took in the fields of practice and Christian education was there anything that pointed toward cross-cultural application. Potential missionaries, of course, stud-

ied the materials; possibly it was assumed the missionary would be able to make the necessary cross-cultural application.

As a side note, on one occasion the Dean of Nazarene Theological Seminary made an interesting observation regarding his faculty. Although most of us had an earned doctorate, none of us had a single hour's credit in methods of teaching. It was assumed that we would be able to teach effectively due to our years of preparation.

In the evolution of missiology as a discipline, in the mid-nineteenth century, missiology tried another method to validate its standing within theology by declaring autonomy. That is, missiologists demanded the right to a discipline apart. This was not greeted with wide approval in theological circles, but due to such figures as Alexander Duff at Edinburgh in 1867 and Gustav Warneck at Halle in 1897, chairs of mission were established in their respective institutions. Other institutions followed. This declaration of independence on the part of missiology did not immediately gain respectability, especially since most of the chairs of mission were occupied by retired missionaries who told a lot of stories.

Reflecting on the development of missiology as a legitimate academic pursuit, David J. Bosch makes the observation that as an independent discipline in theology, missiology further distanced itself from the theoretical disciplines by falling into its own fourfold pattern. "Missionary foundations" paralleled the biblical subjects, "mission's theory" paralleled systematic theology, "missions history" found its counterpart in church history, and "missionary practice" reflected practical theology. As a result, this arrangement isolated missiology even more and made it a science of the missionary and for the missionary rather than informing academia of its global responsibility.

In seeking to place missiology solidly in academia, three models have been tried during the evolution of the discipline: incorporation, independence, or integration, none of which satisfied the theological academy. Integration is theoretically and theologically the soundest, but today the independent model prevails in most theological institutions. However,

since the 1960s, the church has gradually come to the position that mission can no longer be peripheral to its life and being. Mission has become no longer merely an *activity* of the church, but an expression of the very *being* of the church. Bosch says this calls for a movement “from a theology of mission to missionary theology.”

In the last fifty years the church has recovered its sense of mission in many quarters. This has impacted missiology and raised many issues of great importance. An amalgam of the fourfold theology with the fourfold missiology is in formation. The structure in some educational institution, keeping in step with the church’s global expansion and the maturity of the national churches, has allowed a missiological dimension to permeate all theological disciplines, while others have dedicated distinct sections of faculties to address global concerns such as world religions, indigeniety, contextualization, and others. Thus there is a twofold thrust in the study of missiology. However missiology is formed, in active reflection on the church’s activities, it must relate to theology and praxis at the same time. Missiology should not become the domain of the ivy tower, but engage theology to join hands with the Great Commission work even as missiology exercises theology in context.

Today, missiology, while maintaining its departmental identity, is seeking help from, and offering help to, the classical theological disciplines. As Scherer so beautifully states, “missiology must be the handmaiden of theology and also the handmaiden of God’s word.”



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# Some Reflections on Building Bridges

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*Dr. Donald Owens*

Building bridges is not always easy, but to get “from here to there” it must be done. It was our joy to be among the first to lay the first spandrels that was to become the Asia-Pacific Nazarene Theological Seminary. What follows are simply some musings of only one of those chosen to be a part of the mediating ministry of the institution.

It is a given that the world has become a global community where peoples of every differing cultures are forced to live together, share the same natural and human resources, and solve the same basic human problems. In the process of becoming community, bridges must be created between culturally pluralistic communities where tensions are often quite pronounced.

By design the Church of the Nazarene has set a course to be a global community of faith. In that process, contextualized theological and praxis pursuits are considered servants of the church in the critical task of the education and formation of persons for the church’s ministry. Contextualized theology is not construed to be an epistemological break of continuity with our theological and ecclesial ancestry. The dangers of allowing context to determine the nature and content of theology are always present in the ministry of cross-cultural communication. It was our understanding that there should be a large place in the curriculum for addressing issues of cultural diversity in the field of Pastoral Theology.

As a side note, it was felt by denominational leaders that a theological school in the region would lessen the loss of bright young men and women from the region, students who elected to remain in the United States following graduation.

The Philippines was chosen to be the site of the Asia-Pacific Theological Seminary for some very practical reasons. Since the institution was to serve two distinct regions, the location seemed quite fitting. Transportation into the country was excellent and student visas were readily attainable. English was generally spoken throughout the country, making

it easier for foreign students to move about the country. Technology and excellent communications were readily available. In addition, the real cost of living was less in the Philippines than any other country in the Asia. However, another very important contributor was the fact that the country seemed ripe for rapid church growth; there were several organized districts and church planting opportunities everywhere. Students and faculty could find ministry and “hands on” experience in a responsive environment.

The seminary was to be the church at work in the task of theological education. It was for that reason that Metro Manila was chosen to be the site for APNTS. Manila is a “hinge” city. It bypasses traditional national boundaries and has become an international power center with millions of people who seem to be responsive to evangelicals. There were few Nazarene congregations in Manila. The rural areas seem to have been more inviting for a Nazarene presence.

The General Superintendents voted for a merger of the Luzon Nazarene Bible College and the budding APNTS if deemed feasible. The Board of Trustees of that college in Baguio City voted to sell and move its ministry into a joint ministry with the seminary if it was thought best. On the other hand, the Children’s Garden property that had been purchased in 1979 could move to Baguio City. In the end, the call of a burgeoning metropolis like Manila was too strong to move five hours higher into the mountains. The merger never took place. The seminary became an active partner with the Metro-Manila District in planting several churches.

In 1979 the Children’s Gardens property, formerly a Methodist Church sponsored orphanage, was purchased in Taytay, Rizal for the seminary. The General Board of the Church of the Nazarene had approved the plan for a graduate seminary as early as 1977 and I was elected to head up the project. In 1980 the first extension seminar was conducted on the Taytay property by Dr. Willard Taylor and me. Those two seminars, and several that followed, were extensions of classes approved and accredited by Nazarene Theological Seminary in Kansas City. During this period of

time, the seminary was experimenting with recruitment of faculty, student enrollment issues, visa concerns, relationship with accrediting associations, and considering its affiliation with Nazarene Theological Seminary in Kansas City. It was not until 1983 the seminary was formally named Asia-Pacific Nazarene Theological Seminary as an autonomous graduate school of theology. The relationship of the two seminaries was fraternal rather than administrative. APNTS was to be sponsored by the World Mission Division of the Church of the Nazarene with a Board of Directors selected mainly from the Asia-Pacific Region. I believe the records indicate that I was appointed/elected Director or President on three different occasions during that period of time.

Building bridges can be fulfilling if not strenuous work. Developing a faculty, curriculum, and facilities can be a test of commitment and patience. During the period of uncertainty to which administrative entity the seminary was to be accountable, several fine administrators and faculty members were lost to the mission of the seminary. We also learned a great deal about God's ability to multiply the bread and the fish. Sometimes gold lies nearer to surface than one might think, for God gave APNTS the gift of Dr. Ronald W. Beech. A veteran missionary already in the Philippines, culturally sensitive, and gifted educator, Dr. Beech became the first Academic Dean. Since I had been appointed Director of the Asia-Pacific Region, as well as head of the budding seminary, much of the time I was traveling over the Region while Dr. Beech was designing a curriculum and catalogue for 1983-85.

While I have had the joy of planting seed, my successors have done a superb job of putting the seminary "on the world map." I am delighted that APNTS has maintained the logo that we designed at the beginning. The symbolism reflects the mission of the seminary. "Bridging Cultures for Christ" speaks to the essential mission of APNTS while I Tim 2:5 teaches us that Christ, and Christ alone, is adequate to mediate between the ancient cultures and the historical antagonisms that exist in the Asia-Pacific Region. The logo suggests the round circle represents God's

presence and prevenience overshadowing that vast area of the earth's planet. The open book is the Bible and the bridge by which the peoples may cross from darkness to light. The window represents the Church through which "Christ likeness" is to shine. The cross represents the Christ whose death and resurrection provides the only way to be reconciled to God and to each other. The dove represents the Holy Spirit who empowers his people and creates responsiveness among the nations.

On one occasion, Mrs. Neva Beech exclaimed, "I have a 'school song' for us!" It is a good song:

In Christ there is no East or West, In Him no South or North;  
But one great fellowship of love thro'-out the whole wide earth.

In Him shall true hearts every-where their high communion find;  
His service is the golden cord Close binding all mankind.

Join hands the, brothers of the faith, What-e'er your race may be;  
Who serves my Father as a son I surely kin to me.

In Christ now meet both East and West; In Him meet South and North.  
All Christly souls are one in Him thro'-out the whole wide earth.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>*Sing to the Lord*, 678.

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# Theological Foundations of Missions

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Dr. Donald Dean Owens

The late David J. Bosch has pointed out that most introductions to missiology tend to begin with something like “Biblical Foundations for Mission.” Once these foundations have been established, so the argument goes, the author can proceed by developing his or her exegetical findings into a theology of mission.<sup>1</sup> So, in order that I appear not to be too innovative, I have entitled this study “Theological Foundations of Missions,” and using the outline and some material from a text that I have used for teaching a course on the practice of missions: *Biblical Foundations & Contemporary Strategies: Missions*, by Gailyn Van Rheezen.

For centuries missionary advocates have argued that the missionary enterprise has its roots in Scripture. And indeed, much trouble was taken to find biblical authorization for the missionary enterprise. This was done by gleaning so-called “missionary texts” from the Bible to undergird the contemporary missionary enterprise. In doing this, as far as the Old Testament was concerned, it was often implied that it was “particularistic” and therefore hardly usable to support missions. There is no doubt that the New Testament witnesses to a fundamental shift when compared to the Old Testament. Clearly this paradigm change took place with the advent of Jesus of Nazareth and what followed after that.<sup>2</sup>

At first sight the Old Testament appears to offer little basis for the idea of missions. However, that record contains stories that show some “universalistic” expressions such as Ruth and Naaman who accepted the faith of Israel. Jonah is often referred to as an unwilling missionary to Nineveh. To put it mildly, Jonah was not a missionary in the normal sense of the word. The prophet is sent to Nineveh, not to proclaim salvation to “non-believers,” but to announce doom. Neither is he himself interested in

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<sup>1</sup>David J. Bosch, *Transforming Mission* (Mary Knoll, N.Y.: Orbis Books, 1995), 15.

<sup>2</sup>Bosch, *Transforming Mission*, 15.

mission, he is only interested in destruction. Fortunately, the Sovereign God was interested in the peoples of that great city and opened their hearts for repentance and mercy. One may locate such expressions scattered throughout the Psalms, and earlier scholars believed the second chapter of Isaiah discusses the future of all nations in graphic terms.<sup>3</sup>

It is striking how often the Old Testament discusses the future of nations and interests itself in the salvation that will one day be their lot. This indeed cannot be otherwise, for from the first page to the last the Bible has the whole world in view, and its divine plan of salvation is unfolded as pertaining to the whole world.<sup>4</sup> It is salvation history with a universal motif.

Just as theology is the study of God and divine things, this excursion into a theology of mission should begin with the God who identifies himself as the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. The one who discloses to Moses his personal name, *Yahweh*; the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. Mission does not originate with human sources, for ultimately it is not a human enterprise. Mission is rooted in the nature of God who sends and saves.<sup>5</sup> Let us consider:

## I. GOD: THE SOURCE OF MISSION

The God of the Bible is a God who acts, and in doing so reveals His love, His power, and His plans. When Adam and Eve acquiesced to Satan's temptations in the Garden of Eden, God came searching for them, calling, "Where are you?" This question testifies to the nature of God throughout all generations. He continually seeks to initiate reconciliation between Himself and His fallen creation. Genesis 10, a passage listing the table of

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<sup>3</sup>J.H. Bavinck, *Introduction to the Science of Missions* (Philadelphia: The Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Co., 1964), 11.

<sup>4</sup>David J. Bosch, "Reflections on Biblical Models of Mission," in *Toward the 21st Century in Christian Mission*, eds. James M Phillips and Robert T. Coote. (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Wm B Eerdmans's Pub. Co., 1995), 175-176.

<sup>5</sup>Gailyn Van Rheen, *Biblical Foundations & Contemporary Strategies: Missions* (Grand Rapids, Mich. Zondervan Pub. House, 1996), 14.

nations, is important for understanding the universal motif of the creative hand of God who ultimately embedded himself with man in his Son, Jesus Christ.

This is one of the fundamental truths of Genesis 1-11, the record of history's beginning; it is also found in the moving account of history's end, the book of John's Revelation. The very God who revealed himself to Israel and dwelt among us in Jesus Christ identifies himself as the Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending. He does not lay down his work until "every tongue and nation" and "a multitude without number" have been gathered round his throne (Rev. 5:9-10 and 7:9-17).<sup>6</sup>

After the Bible finishes its account of God's judgment of the nations, so graphically described in the Genesis passage about the Tower of Babel, in chapter 12 it shifts to God's call to Abraham to leave Ur of the Chaldees. The "God of the whole earth" seems at first glance to narrow his interests to the private history of one family and tribe only. This is not the entire picture, Johannes Verkuyl asserts. He says, "Israel is the opening word in God's proclaiming salvation, not the Amen."<sup>7</sup>

For a time Israel, the "people of Abraham," is separated from the other nations (Ex. 19:3ff; Deut. 7:14ff), but only so that through Israel God can pave the way toward achieving His world embracing goals. In choosing Israel as a segment of all humanity, God never took His eye off the other nations.

As one committed to an understanding of the precious Wesleyan-Holiness doctrine of "prevenient grace," across the years, I have often wondered, when Abraham was moving out of Ur of the Chaldees, twenty-one centuries before Christ, what was God doing in China during the Hsia Dynasty (2205-1766 B.C.)?

Whenever Israel forgot that God chose her with a view to speaking to the other nations and turned away from them in introverted pride,

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<sup>6</sup>Johannes Verkuyl, *Contemporary Missiology* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans' Pub. Co., 1978), 91.

<sup>7</sup>Verkuyl, *Contemporary Missiology*, 91.

prophets like Amos, Jeremiah, and Isaiah lashed out at the people's ethnocentric pretension and charged them with subverting God's actual intentions (see especially Amos 7:9-10). This ethnocentrism dies hard. It still persisted, and graphically disclosed, when Peter visited Cornelius, a Gentle centurion living in Caesarea (Acts 10-11). Fortunately, that episode produced a note of liberation for Gentile Christians as Peter defended the work of the Apostle Paul and his colleagues in their ministry to the non-Jewish world (Acts 15).

The soteriological theme of the Bible, that is God's work of rescuing and saving both Israel and other nations, is tied closely to the Exodus; in fact the Israelites define God's mission to save by His actions in delivering them from Egyptian captivity. God's mission of deliverance was based on His eternal attribute of love (Ex. 34:6-7). The deliverance account reveals that the Israelites' cry of desperation was "heard" by God, who "remembered His covenant with Abraham" and "looked on" the Israelites and "was concerned" about them (Ex. 2:23-25). The mission was not instigated by the Israelites' cries, but by the ever present God who responded to their groaning.

At this time, I must insert a practical application for potential missionaries. The story of the exodus is illuminating. When God, the originator of the mission of deliverance, decided to act, He sought for a person to carry out His mission. At the burning bush Moses was given the commission to be God's missionary of deliverance (Ex. 3:10). God took the initiative. And He found an appropriate vessel, the man Moses.

Forty years previous to God's call, Moses was being prepared for his role in salvation history. He was well trained in the culture and organizational skills of the Egyptians—training that he would be able to use later. I personally do not know of many aspects of knowledge that, in one way or another, will not be useful to the missionary. Moses identified the Israelites as "his own people"; and felt for them; not through pity, but empathy.

Following his aborted attempt to take the salvation of Israel in his own hands, Moses had forty years of field experience in Midian—experience



that would prove essential in his role as an agent of deliverance. There is no substitute for actual experience, especially in roles where human relationships test the metal of potential Christian workers. There seems to be some advantages sending out missionaries who are older with experiences outside of the classroom. God revealed Himself and the appointment of Moses through a burning bush while Moses was taking care of his father-in-law's flocks. It is almost axiomatic that God chooses busy, occupied people for His work.

Moses feared God's call, perhaps because he failed to realize that the mission was not his, but God's. Moses initially objected to God's mission in four ways. There may not be any burning bush, but many of us have struggled with counterparts in our call to God's mission. Let us consider these four ways: *first*, Moses asked, "Who am I that I should go . . .?" (Ex. 3:11). The Bible does say that Moses "was more humble than anyone else on the face of the earth" (Num. 12:3). This is as it should be. However, God answered this first objection by saying, "I will be with you" (v.12). In essence, God was telling Moses that the mission was greater than the missionary.

Moses' second objection had to do with the Israelites' understanding of Yahweh. Moses asked, "Suppose I go to the Israelites and say to them, 'The God of your fathers has sent me to you,' and they ask me 'What is his name?' Then what shall I tell them?" (v. 13). This is the same type of questions that the Jews asked Jesus (Matt. 21:23) and later his disciples (Acts. 4: 7). The answer to both instances referred back to God the Father as the authority for mission. The missionary task must always be recognized by what it is: it is the mission of God. The missionary is an agent, and important one, but an agent in the redemption process.

Moses' third objection was "What if [the Israelites] do not believe me or listen to me and say, 'The Lord did not appear to you?'" (Ex. 4:1) Moses' objection was once again on him. God responded by indicating that "the missionary credentials" would be provided to help the missionary fulfill the mission. May I say that before the missionary arrives on the field, God in prevenient grace is already there? The Holy Spirit creates response in

grace and goodness. God would not leave His messenger without the means to create belief in the hearts of those to whom he would minister.

Moses' fourth objection was that he had "never been eloquent" but was "slow of speech and tongue" (4:10-11). I will be suggesting some qualifications of those whom God uses in His mission in a future paper. Let me say that humility is a marvelous virtue; it gives God something to work with, however we may feel about ourselves and our perceived gifts, or lack of them. The real issue with Moses, as it often is with us, whether we stand available to God's call to service or not? May I suggest that the outcomes of our calling are in God's providence; our responsibility is to live a life of obedience and faithfulness. When Moses continued to object, God became angry. Moses' objections demonstrate the human tendency to make God's mission a mission of self.

The mission of God originated in the mind of God; The mission flowed from Him to Christ, who proclaimed God's kingdom message and in His death enacted God's kingdom plan. He prayed that the Father would send the Spirit. This Spirit empowered the church for mission to the world.

I have previously referred to Georg Vicedom's significant book, *Missio Dei, the Mission of God*. From this concept at least five applications may be made:

*First*, if mission flows from the character and nature of God, it cannot be neglected by the church, Mission, because it is of God, cannot be aborted!

*Second*, since the mission is of God, God will equip people for the task. "Not our ability, but our availability." Professor Ada Lum has said, "A missionary is a prepared disciple whom God sends into the world with his resources to make disciples for the kingdom."<sup>8</sup>

*Third*, the "mission of God" enables Christian missionaries to understand themselves under God's sovereignty. Christians should not undertake God's mission for self-glorification or the aggrandizement of a denomination or religious order, but to glorify God. The unifying theme

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<sup>8</sup>Ada Lunn, *Missions in the Modern World*, eds. A Scott Moreau, Gary R. Corwin, and Gary B. McGee (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2004), 18.

of the mission is the Kingdom of God. “The good news of the kingdom” is to be preached throughout the whole world, as a testimony to all nations, and then “the end will come” (Matt.24:14). A correct understanding of mission focuses on the kingdom of God.<sup>9</sup>

*Fourth*, the “mission of God” implies sacrifice. This fact is supremely evident in the giving of his son as a sacrifice for the sins of mankind. Helen Virginia Blakeslee encapsulates this thought by saying,

I go to Africa not for fame or prominence, but because I am attached to Jesus Christ in love that knows no sacrifice too great to be made, that men and women everywhere throughout Africa may know of and come to possess the wonderful inheritance He has won for them on the cross of Calvary. I go to Africa because I believe the Africans to be worthy of the most heroic effort that can be put forth to save them. I believe this because Jesus Christ believed and proved to the world that it was true.<sup>10</sup>

*Finally*, this perspective enables the Christian communicator to recognize that because the mission is God’s, it will succeed. In an eloquent paragraph, missiologist Arthur Glasser writes, “...God Himself, the Ruler of world history, will finally triumph. The satanic empire will be overcome and the kingdom of God will be fully manifested in power and glory. On this the New Testament is most clear” (I Cor. 15:24).<sup>11</sup>

## II. CHRIST: THE MESSAGE OF MISSION

The coming of Jesus Christ formed the watershed of the ages, a turning point in history, and a time for the breaking in of the mighty reign of

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<sup>9</sup>Arthur F. Glasser, “The Whole Bible Basis of Mission,” in *Contemporary Theologies of Mission*, eds. Arthur F. Glasser and Donald A. McGavran. (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1983), 31.

<sup>10</sup>Glasser, “The Whole Bible Basis of Mission,” 137.

<sup>11</sup>Glasser, 45.

God in his Messiah. Christ's ministry reflected two interrelated purposes. *First*, Christ *proclaimed the message of the kingdom of God*. John prepared the way for Jesus Christ's appearance and message by admonishing people to, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is near" (Matt. 3:2). Christ's message paralleled that of John (Matt. 3:11). His message is given in Mark's Gospel: "The time has come . . . The kingdom of God is near. Repent and believe the good news" (1:15). The term "near" has both present and future connotations. It means "drawing near," "breaking in," or "in the process of becoming."

The biblical concept of kingdom predates the coming of Christ. The word means the "rule, reign, or sovereignty of God." The nature of the kingdom of God is beautifully sung in Psalm 145:11-13. God's kingdom is one of glory and splendor. Synonymous parallelisms equate the kingdom with power, mighty acts, and dominion. God does not merely sit on a throne, but he reigns by performing mighty deeds . . . expressed in acts of power."<sup>12</sup>

But Christ did more than merely proclaim the message of the kingdom. Because of who He is—the Son of God—and His willingness to die for sinners, He became the very *message of mission*. The message taught by the early church was that Jesus was "the Christ," the Anointed One of God (Acts 5:42). In the book of Acts Christian proclamation was described as "preaching Christ." The message of Christ was not distinct from the message of the kingdom but parallel to it. Philip, for instance, "preached the good news of the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ" in Samaria (Acts 8:12).

In I Corinthians 15:1-4 Paul defined the gospel he *preached*, the *message* the Corinthians had *received*, on which they had *taken their stand* and by which they were *saved*. This message is described to be of *first importance*:

Now, brothers, I want to remind you of the gospel  
I preached to you, which you received and on which

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<sup>12</sup>Everett Ferguson, *The Everlasting Kingdom* (A.C.U. Press, 1989), 7; quoted in Van Rheen, *Biblical Foundations & Contemporary Strategies: Missions*, 21.

you have taken your stand. By this gospel you are saved, if you hold firmly to the word I preached to you. Otherwise, you have believed in vain. For what I received I passed on to you as of first importance: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, that he was buried, and he was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures.

Thus the fundamental message of Christian proclamation is Jesus Christ. Paul wrote, “No one can lay any foundation other than the one already laid, which is Jesus Christ (I Cor. 3:11). And again, “I resolved to know nothing while I was with you except Jesus Christ and Him crucified” (2:2).

Cultural and theological relativism is the perception that there is no absolute truth in the world, and that diversity in religious orientation should be tolerated since all perceptions of truth are valid. There are many voices that object to the seeming exclusivism found in the Christian faith. Some refer to claims of the uniqueness of Christ as “the scandal of Christianity.” But we close this section by a passage from John R. W. Stott. He forcefully says,

Because God has exalted Jesus and given Him the name above every name, the rank above every rank, the dignity above every dignity that every knee should bow to Him and every tongue confess that He is Lord. And every knee and every tongue means every knee and every tongue, and we have not liberty to place any restriction upon that repeated ‘every.’ It means every secular knee, every Marxist knee, every Muslim knee, every Hindu knee, every Jewish knee, every Christian knee [my add], that every knee should bow to Christ . . . that is the will of God.<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>13</sup>John R. W. Stott, “Our Challenge for Today,” in *World Evangelism* (Lausanne Committee for World Evangelism 15, No. 55, November-December, 1988), 34.

Peter surrendered his life because he believed, “Salvation is found in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to men by whom we must be saved” (Acts 4:12). The fundamental Christian teachings of the sovereignty of God and his distinctive work in Jesus Christ are foundational to all other Christian beliefs and must, therefore, be given priority in the presentation of the gospel. We have not proclaimed the gospel until we have identified its essential truth, Jesus Christ.

### III. THE HOLY SPIRIT: THE POWER OF MISSION

Luke, physician and historian, described the work of the Holy Spirit in the mission of God to such an extent that the book of Acts might be called the Acts of the Holy Spirit. The topic of the Holy Spirit is introduced in Christ’s pre-ascension discussion with His apostles (Acts 1:5-8). Instead of the political power formerly sought by those of a first-century Jewish heritage, Christ promised them a far greater and nobler power. Jesus said, “You will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witness in Jerusalem, and all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth” (Acts 1:8).

God’s Spirit is behind His mission! Through the Spirit, the missionary enjoys the *presence of the Lord* as Jesus promised in the words of the Great Commission in Matthew 28:20, “I am with you always, to the very end of the age.” In the Book of Acts the Spirit of God guided evangelists to those seeking the way of God. The “Spirit told Philip” to flag down the chariot in which a searching Ethiopian was reading a prophecy about the suffering servant (8:29). The Spirit is active in *prevenient grace* as the Spirit directed Peter to go with the three servants sent by Cornelius (10:19-20).

Lesslie Newbigin, in commenting on Cornelius’ conversion, says:

It is certainly true that this story shows how God’s mission is not simply an enterprise of the Church. It is a work of the Spirit who goes ahead of the Church, touches the Roman soldier and his household, prepares them for the message, and teaches

the Church a new lesson about the scope of God's grace.<sup>14</sup>

The Spirit's prevenient grace and guidance may be seen further by the way He opens and closes doors for the missionary. In Acts 16 the Spirit closed the doors of Asia and Bithynia (vv 6-7) but opened the door to Macedonia (v.7). Although the Apostle Paul had a definite strategy for evangelism and church planting, he was wise in allowing the Holy Spirit to exercise sovereignty over the work of mission.

A final thought in this section is to indicate that the Holy Spirit sets aside and appoints leaders for mission. In Acts 13:1-4, the record shows that after fasting, praying, and laying their hands on Barnabas and Saul in the church in Antioch, we see the hallmark of the missionary appointment. "The Holy Spirit said, 'Set apart for me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them.'" The church's sending (v.4) and the Spirit's speaking (v.3) were not incompatible, but rather are indicative of the way God seems still to be working to a remarkable degree. That is, the church commissioned and sent out (released, if you will) those selected by a praying and fasting fellowship of believers.

These examples from Acts demonstrate that mission is not a human endeavor. God, who is the source of mission, continues to guide His mission through His divine Spirit.<sup>15</sup>

#### **IV. THE CHURCH: THE EMBODIMENT OF GOD'S MISSION**

Few Christians are able to describe vividly in biblical terms what the church is and what it should be. Avery Dulles has identified five major ecclesial types. The church, he suggests, can be viewed as *institution*, as *mystical Body of Christ*, as *sacrament*, as *herald*, or as *servant*. Each of these

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<sup>14</sup>Leslie Newbigin, *The Gospel in a Pluralist Society* (Grand Raids: Eerdman's Press, 1989), 168.

<sup>15</sup>Van Rheenan, 27-28.

implies a different interpretation of the relationship between church and mission.<sup>16</sup> The development of the mode of church government is not the issue: if the church is mission, the embodiment of Christ, we have something to work with. It seems abundantly clear that when we speak of God's people in terms of missionary purpose, we are speaking not of an ephemeral, invisible, universal body, but of real, visible congregations of the redeemed.

Drawing on the use of the New Testament term *ekklēsia*, the process of the development of the concept in the New Testament, and the indications in the New Testament of the mode of church government, we may come to a working definition of a church as suggested by H. E. Dana, a late professor from the Central Seminary in Kansas City. Dana's definition of a church is as follows:

A New Testament church is a body of believers, baptized upon their profession of faith in Jesus Christ, who have joined together voluntarily in the Holy Spirit for the purpose of promoting Christ's redemptive purposes for humanity.<sup>17</sup>

According to this definition, the church is visible, composed of baptized believers, voluntary organization, and in mission. This is not to deny divine origin or living relationship with the Vine through the Holy Spirit. The incarnational aspect of the church is clearly seen as the mission of God, initiated through Jesus Christ and continued through His disciples. Christ prayed about this identification as recorded in John 17:18, "As you sent me into the world, I have also sent them into the world." He reiterated the statement after His resurrection, "As the Father has sent me, I am sending you" (John 20:21). The church, then, should conceive of itself as "the outcome of the activity of God who sends and saves."<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>16</sup>Avery Dulles, *Models of the Church* (Dublin: Gill & Macmillan, 1976); quoted in Bosch, "Reflections on Biblical Models of Mission," 368.

<sup>17</sup>H. E. Dana, *A Manual of Ecclesiology* (Kansas City, Kans.: Central Seminary Press, 1944).

<sup>18</sup>Georg F. Vicedom, *The Mission of God: An Introduction to the Science of Mission* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1965), 80.



Vicedom has written that the greatest problem with Christians today is that “they do not know that they are Christians.” Instead of permeating the world with its eternal message, the church being permeated by the world.<sup>19</sup> The church may lose its identity as God’s distinct people through worldliness. At the same time, it may lose its distinctiveness by neglecting its witnessing. Those redeemed by God’s mission and incorporated as His distinctive people become witnesses to His nature and mighty acts. They have been given “the ministry of reconciliation” standing in God’s place inviting lost humanity into His embrace.

The basis of all mission is sending. Listen again to the Apostle Paul. He says that “everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.” This is the Gospel, the good news! But to be news, it must be heard; to be good news, it needs to be heard in time to be beneficial. Paul’s rhetorical questions show the role of mission in the church:

How, then, can they call on the one they have not believed in? And how can they believe in the one of whom they have not heard? And how can they hear without someone preaching to them? And how can they preach unless they are sent? (Rom. 10:14-15).

The church most frequently establishes its rationale for being—its purpose for existence—while articulating its faith. The church reflects the eternal nature of the kingdom of God. Its continuance is rooted in its being God’s people under his eternal sovereignty. And he is the God who sends.

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<sup>19</sup>Vicedom, *The Mission of God*, 80.

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# Theology of Missions 1

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*Dr. Robert E. Coleman*

*A lecture delivered during the 2<sup>nd</sup> Donald Owens' School of World Missions  
Lecture Series  
January 10, 7:00 p.m.*

This is certainly a happy providence to join your school here for a few days for these lectures. I am honored for the invitation. Already many of you have gone out of your way to facilitate my ministry this week. I believe that this was ordained of the Lord even though I did not know exactly the plans a couple of days ago. It is a joy to be here on this beautiful campus and I am delighted that my wife and a couple of grandsons can be here as well.

I am going to be thinking with you about missions. Today I want to begin by looking at the very faith that makes us missionaries. Tomorrow we will think about what we do. And then on Wednesday, we will focus on the empowering of His Spirit.

Perhaps I can best introduce the theology of missions tonight in the form of a picture. I will use eight aspects of the picture to unfold this theology. Try to picture with me the painting of a scene at sea. A storm has rolled in and the skies are covered with darkness. In the sky you can see the flash of lightning. There in the distance a small boat has been crushed against some breakers, and is disintegrating under the pounding of the ocean. And you can see painted into the picture some seamen struggling for survival. Their anguish is seen on their faces as they cry for help. In the foreground, there is one large protruding rock. And one of those seaman has managed to make his way to this place of refuge—this rock of salvation. He is pictured there holding on with both hands for his life. But as you look at this picture, this picture of destruction, you look at that one person who has made his way to safety, there is something missing. Can you see what it is?

Now I would like all of us to discard that painting and see another which would be very similar; which shows the same black clouds of

darkness, though in the far corner there is some light that is breaking through. The ship that has been crushed against the breakers is disintegrating, and you see the same seamen struggling in the water crying for help. The only hope in the foreground of the painting is this large protruding rock, and there is a seaman who has found this place of refuge. But there is now a change. He is holding on with only one hand. His head is turned somewhat to the side as he looks out to the scene of devastation and some of his friends struggling in the waters. And as he holds on with that one hand, the other is reaching down beneath the waters to lift up a friend who was sinking. And that friend in turn is struggling to reach out to help another.

That is the picture I want you to see as we think about missions. First, note how in that rock we see a secure place of safety—a rock that can illustrate God and His strength and His power. Sometimes in fact, He is referred to in the Bible as “the Rock.” Indeed this is where we begin, just as the Bible, “In the beginning, God...” This supernatural reference point is where we begin in missions. Quite different from the more humanistic approach of theological liberalism, which begins with the ingenuity of man to work out his own salvation, relying on sociology, psychology, or anthropology. Though that is helpful, it does not give you certainty what comes from God Himself. It follows the old dictum “know thyself,” which sounds reasonable until you realize if that is all we have from which to learn, we have begun with the problem and we will end in confusion. But if we begin with God, we begin already with the answer—with all the resources of the universe.

God is the one who is infinite, who is Almighty—Spirit—not to be identified with what he created in matter. This mighty God is omnipresent, everywhere at everyplace all the time, yet not bound by any. He never changes. He is immutable. He is the same yesterday, today, and forever. And even more remarkable to me is his omniscience. He knows everything. He knows even the end from the beginning and because of this infinite foreknowledge, He can work all circumstance to His knowledge and purpose. And since God is Sovereign and Omnipotent, He can do everything that He wants to do. We recognize, too, His moral attributes.

He is just and righteous. He cannot do anything wrong. He is truthful, which means he can never make an error in judgment. He is holy, which means He cannot be defiled. And even more wonderful, He is love—love that cannot be self-contained—a love that insists making itself known. Yet this great God is also a Person. He is self-conscious; He is intelligent; and He is free—a freedom that is always exercised in consistency with his nature of perfection. In this personality, we recognize him moving among us as one who cares. He sees, feels, touches, speaks, and weeps. He is one who actually appears to us finally in the person of His Son.

I think of the boy who was there beside the riverbank. He was waving his hand and crying out, “Here I am! Here I am!” People noticed and began to make fun of him, telling him “Lad, go on home, nobody on that river steamer is going to notice you.” But he just kept raising his hand and crying, “Here I am! Here I am!” Then to the dismay of everyone, as that river boat got directly in front of the little boy, it swerved and came to the river bank. The captain walked over, put his arm around the boy, and then they walked together on board that great river steamer. As the whistle blew and started to go out into the channel, the boy turned around to the startled crowd on the bank, and said, “I knew all along this boat was gonna stop for me, because the captain of this boat is my daddy.”

Oh what a difference it makes, to know that this infinite God of the universe, this Omnipotent Power who can do all that He pleases, this King of glory, is our Father. He is personal.

This is represented in the Holy Trinity where we see God in His person as the Father, and in His person as the Son, and in His person as the Spirit—neither confused in unity nor divided in number. I know this is a mystery, but all of the truth that leads to mission is summed up in the Trinity. While we cannot fully explain it, it overwhelms us with its wonder. We might think of God as the Father in administration or as the Son as the revelation of Himself or the Spirit in operation and power. Sometimes, this Trinity is likened to an illustration of electricity, where you have the dynamo as the Father, and wire as the Son, and the current going through

as the Spirit. But any of these elements fall far short in describing the mystery of the Holy Trinity.

But what is significant to us is that this undivided God as a Person, can have a personal relationship with those persons made in His image. He is always seeking that fellowship. He is a missionary God.

As you look again at that picture, notice that man who is holding onto the rock, so that now the strength of this rock belongs to him. And we see an outreached hand from that person seeking another. God, you see, is always desiring to communicate with that which He has made. Indeed it is this revelation of Himself through zhis Word that becomes now the means by which His purposes can be known. Since God is truthful in whatever He speaks, He can be depended upon. He will always tell us what is right. And because He is love, He always wants the best for His creatures. God has spoken in the prophets as they have written down His revelation, and ultimately and finally, through it all, He speaks to us in the person of His Son. What we have in Scripture is simply the final way in which He is revealing Himself—the Word made flesh.

That great truth of inspiration again brings us into the mystery of how God can work. He does not violate any person when He gives this revelation. All those who receive this are like you and me, but when the Spirit came upon them, He gave them this ability to perceive what God was saying—not only to understand it, but also to communicate it and finally to write it down so that they did not inject into the message their own corruption. That is why we can say that the Word finally written was without any error. It was indeed the Word of God.

That is why we hear someone like Paul saying to Timothy, “preach the Word.” That word “preach” carries a great deal of authority. It can be likened unto a herald who was dispatched by the king to deliver a message. He would ride his horse into a village, dismount, sound the trumpet. As the people gathered, he would unroll the scroll and read the proclamation. Then he would get back onto his horse and ride to the next village. It was not his responsibility to explain everything about the word, but only to

announce it. The authority was not in the messenger, but in the word he proclaimed. And that is our authority.

Paul cautioned Timothy against being enticed by those who try to lead us astray, to those who listen to the opinions of men having itching ears wanting a truth that would appeal to their own self-interest. Indeed this is a danger that we should recognize. There are so many that would like to dilute the authority of the Scripture. We can be certain that when the Bible loses its authority in any way, we lose any real communication in missions. For that is its purpose. As Jesus said, "Search the Scripture, they testify of me." Or as John wrote, "These things were written so that you might believe that Jesus the Christ is the son of God," and have life in His name. The way we come to know the Living Word in Christ is through that which is written in the book. That is why Wesley would say, "I want to know one thing, the way to heaven, and God himself condescended to teach that way. He has written it down in a book. Oh! Give me that book! At any price, give me the book of God. Let me be a man of one book." That is our heritage. Because of this book, we become missionaries. The Bible without that sense of mission loses its purpose, just as the mission without the authority of the Word loses its power.

Look again at that picture. We see that man now identified with the rock, like our Lord reaching out to save. Jesus is God's expression of love to us, sent to seek and to save the lost. We recognize the condition of mankind as we look at that picture. The world is very dark and stormy; yet God made us so that we could as persons love Him. He made us in His image as spiritual creatures. We do not live by bread alone; He breathed into us that immortality which is derived from His own so that the soul will never die. He made us intelligent so that we can think thoughts after Him. In the beginning we were made undefiled, holy and free. He knew of course how this freedom would be misused. He could already foresee the calamity that would fall upon that which He had made. But He was willing to do it because there was no other way we could exercise true love. That's what we were made for. Indeed God Himself, in order to give expression

to His nature, made another person as an object of His own love within Himself. Just as we reflect that image of God, we can not be whole persons unless we return that love to Him. When we took that freedom to devise our own desire, our own pleasure, not to heed God who had made us—we had the beginning of what we call sin. Under the beguilement of Satan who has always tempted and sought to destroy, our forebearers in the garden actually thought that they could do it by themselves. In fact, the devil suggested they could become wise as God, and under that illusion they turned to their own way.

This action was an assertion of independence which really amounted to self-worship. This is the idolatry of self—the complete reversal of the way God made us so that we would truly turn to him as the author and finisher of our faith. And that rebellion against God, which has perpetuated itself in the human race, has brought this great storm—this great destruction upon the world—alienating our affections, darkening our intellect, and perverting our will so that the whole world is depraved. Those who follow in that expression in way then become separate from God, a course which ultimately leads to hell. God who is holy cannot ignore that affront to His nature. And it cannot be reversed unless by some intervention by God himself, we will be restored to his purpose. Those who object on grounds that it diminishes God's nature of love fail to comprehend the undivided nature of His being. Indeed if God's judgment did not fall on that which would destroy His beloved, you would question His own sovereign love and His perfection. You see, it is not because God's love is limited, but because His love is unlimited that hell as well as heaven is made necessary.

An atheist wrote a tract, which fell into the hands of a man named C.T. Studd, an indifferent sportsman in England. As he read it, God brought conviction to his soul, and coming to salvation, he became one of our great missionaries. This is what the atheist said:

If I firmly believed as millions say they do, that the knowledge and practice of religion in this life influences destiny in another, religion would mean



to me everything. I should labor in its cause alone. I would esteem one soul, gained for heaven worth a life of suffering. Earthly consequences should never stay my hand nor seal my lips. Earth, its joys and griefs would not occupy the moments of my thoughts. I would strive to look upon eternity alone and on the immortal souls around me, soon to be everlastingly happy or everlastingly miserable. I would go forth to the world and preach it in season and out of season and my text would be “what shall it profit a man if he gained the whole world yet lose his own soul?”

Yes, there is this great sense of the world's destruction, the lostness of humanity all around us that cannot be ignored.

As you look again at that picture you will understand the reason how the infinite God who made us to know Him and to love Him could rescue the perishing. That hand reach of God, clothed itself in our very humanity and became one with us. God in the incarnation, became both God and man. Here again is a mystery and yet its what we must affirm—Jesus in the flesh clothed that hand with humanity, so that He is indeed a perfect man in every respect as we are, though He never sinned. He was even tempted like we are. We think we know what being tempted is, but we really do not. The only one who understands temptation is the one who was tempted and never sinned. We all give in; only God Himself has been truly tempted. We see in Christ how He overcame for us—it begins in the incarnation, continues through the incarnate life of Jesus, and finally it culminates on the cross—when Christ Himself accepted in His body that judgment of our sin. He suffered for us—the just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God, put to death in the flesh, but then raised by the Holy Spirit. The resurrection of Christ now brings into focus the awesome reality of the cross. For now we must account for why he died, and the only reason given is that He died for our sins and rose from the dead for our justification. He is the only who could do it. Only God and man in the person of the Son could make that atonement.

Today, some say it is really not that important as to who Christ is, whether He is God or just the greatest man who has ever lived. What matters is the goodness of His life. Others would say, “Well it would only be Christ who could save us, but you don’t really have to hear the gospel. As long as you are sincere in doing the best you can, that is enough.” But that was not the way the church has preached this message. They went forth to declare that there was no other name under heaven given among men whereby we must be saved. And indeed when you look at that picture, you realize that the initial hand that reaches out is single. There is none other.

Robert G. Lee is a well-known preacher of the last generation. He liked to tell about his first visit to the holy land. Some of you may have heard him. He would tell how he was with his touring party—and then one day the guide pointed into a distance and said, “Now there’s the hill called Calvary.” The great preacher seeing that for the first time, felt a great emotion beginning to swell upon him. He got excited! He started to walk faster and soon he was running up that hillside. The guide was the first to get to him. He found Dr. Lee standing on the summit, panting for breath. The guide slipped beside him and said, “Sir, have you been here before?” There was a long pause, then with a whispered tone Dr. Lee said, “Yes, I was here nearly two thousand years ago.” We were all there nearly 2000 years ago. When God became man, He was representing us all, when He bore our sins at Calvary and when He rose from the dead; He was one against the world. And when you see Him there, lifted up, you see the love of God. Even while we were sinners, Christ died for us.

I think that is why Wesley’s hymn “And Can It Be?” is my favorite. It fills me with such wonder, and like Wesley I still can’t explain it; but I can bear witness to it. Do you know that old song? Do you sing it here? I want you to join me:

And can it be that I should gain  
An interest in the Savior’s love  
Died He for me who caused His pain

For me who Him to death pursued  
Amazing love! How can it be  
That Thou, my God, shouldst die for me

And as we think again at that picture, and we see that hand in our mind, God clothed in the flesh of Jesus Christ reaching into the darkness, reaching into the lost world—you see now an offer, a gift of salvation. You grasp that hand and receive the grace of God. For indeed as we sang, it is too amazing to grasp fully because it is all unmerited, undeserved. It is all of grace which we received through no merit of our own but simply because the hand is extended. We grasp it by faith, turning from our own self-insufficiency in true repentance, renouncing our past and laying hold upon that which is firm and steady in God. We speak of this as now being justified, so that we stand before God without condemnation. Our sins are forgiven and there is a regeneration of life. The old things are now passed away and all things become new. It's grace—and that grace of course, reaches to all people.

Now again, it is hard for some who have to come out of the more liberal tradition to comprehend fully the significance of this, for they still like to insist that we, by our own effort, by our own goodness, or by our conformity to certain regulations and ordinances, attain God's favor. The late Dr. Charles Berry, one of the well-known preachers of Scotland, tells how this was his position when he entered the early years of ministry. Like many other young men with a liberal theological training, he minimized the atoning nature of Christ's work and looked upon Christianity as essentially being a good person. During his first pastorate in England late one night, while sitting in his study, he heard a knock. When he opened the door there was a Lancashire girl standing.

"Are you a minister?" she asked. And getting an affirmative answer, she replied anxiously, "You must come with me quickly. I want you to get my mother in."

"Imagining it was the case of some drunken woman out on the street," Berry said, "Why don't you go and get a policeman?"

The girl said, “Oh no! My mother is dying, and you must come with me and get her in—to heaven!”

The young minister dressed and followed her in a lonely street on a journey of nearly a mile which led finally into the room of this woman. He knelt down beside her and began to describe the kindness of Jesus explaining that He had come to show us how to live more unselfishly. When suddenly the desperate woman cut him off and cried, “Mister, that’s no use for the likes of me. I’m a sinner. Can’t you tell me of someone who can have mercy on me and save my poor soul?”

“I stood there” said Dr. Berry “in the presence of the dying woman and I had nothing to tell her. In the midst of sin and death, I had no message. But in order to bring something to that dying woman, I went back to my mother’s knee, and I began to tell her about the cross and Christ, who was able to save to the uttermost.”

Tears began running down the cheeks of the eager woman. “Now you’re getting at it,” she saying, “now you helping me.” And the famed preacher concluding his story said, “Well, if you want to know I got her in, and praise be to God, I got in myself!” Oh it is beautiful to see this young preacher and this old woman going into the glory of God together. And that is the way we all come in—it is only by God’s grace.

I know that there are different ways by which we look at those who have this privilege. Those in the Reform tradition may say this kind of saving grace is differentiated from the more common grace, as if given to only those elected especially by God. Arminians, on the other hand, would say everyone has enough grace even to believe so that that is the privilege of all. Of course, even that faith itself is a gift of God, so we can make no boast. It is still not our work. Its all by grace. In either case, you never know who the elect are until you offer the gospel. So wherever you are coming from, we all admit it is by grace. God takes the initiative, and God is reaching out in this unmerited love to the ends of the earth. I can hear those early Methodists singing, “Oh that the world might taste and see the riches of His grace. The arms of love that encompass me would all mankind embrace.”

But look again at that picture, and you will notice that as the second person holds that hand, he has become very much like the one who was represented in the first hand. There is actually here an impartation of the likeness of the Savior—a transformation of character. We call this sanctification, which is essentially being made in the likeness of Him who loved us and gave Himself for us. It is Christlikeness, and indeed it is that kind of love displayed in God which we see in beautiful focus in the life of Jesus that becomes the example of true holiness.

We recognize that there are different ways that this is understood. Some would see holiness as a progressive work of God's spirit, that continues on in this life but is never quite finished until we are glorified in the presence of God. In our Reformed brothers tradition, they understand sin as any deviation from the absolute character of God. You could buy a fifty cent candy bar and commit sin. You say that "I don't think of sin that way," but from their point of view you could use that 50 cents for missions or give it to someone in need. From their point of view, it does not matter whether you understand it or not, the question always is what would Jesus do in the same situation. So in their view of sin, you wouldn't speak of entire sanctification; it will always be progressive, moving on. The Wesleyan tradition would understand sin differently as a deliberate transgression, and allowance would be made for your ignorance. Certainly we struggle with this ignorance all our life, we are going to be making wrong choices, and when we speak of this kind of holiness, it is not that you reach the goal of Christ's perfect character. We are struggling toward that goal, but it always eludes us. The holiness we can know is not in performance but in desire, in love. We still have our human infirmities, physical weaknesses; but in the heart there should always be this desire to please Him who gave Himself for us—a desire that is expressed in obedience to the will of God. Indeed from the very beginning there should be a sense of this cleanness in the sight of God. When one comes to see the deeper dimension of sin and disposition and attitude, we can commit even that to him in that confidence that He is still able save to the uttermost.

So sanctification begins when we grasp that hand, and as we begin to be conformed into his likeness, changed into his image from glory to glory even by the Spirit of the Lord. This is on-going, but all along the way you can be certain that the blood goes deeper than the stain of sin has gone. I like the way my Wesleyan brothers foresee how that blood can cleanse even from the deeper dimensions of carnality. This is not to suggest that as you continue to grow there will not be more correction as you receive more light.

But sanctification is not just an inward transformation. It is also through that indwelling love that there is motivation now to reach out, just as Christ who has become our life reaches out. When Jesus prayed in the high priestly prayer of John, He prayed that as He was sent into the world, so now His disciples were being sent. And He said, “For their sake I sanctify myself that they too may be sanctified through the Word.” It is interesting as you look at this context and you take the root of the word “sanctify,” which is “being set apart,” you realize that in Jesus’ case, it did not involve cleansing for He was already the perfect Son of God. But it was for that mission for which He was sent. The tense indicates that it is a continual action. He has given Himself to fulfill the will of the Father who sent Him. That commitment led Him to the cross. For the disciples, He was praying that they would come to that point of commitment because truly for them there would be a cross, a dying out as they know their life in sin—because they should be a vessel truly sanctified for God to use. This is a dimension of holiness I think we need a lot more attention to. And yet our mission is more than bringing people to Christ, and showing them that hand that reaches others where they can receive salvation. Our mission is also to lead them on—in holiness. As Wesley said, “You have nothing to do but to save souls, to call all men into repentance and to build them up in that holiness, without which no man can see the Lord.”

There is a little island off the coast of Scotland. They call it the Holy Isle, where it is believed that Christianity first came to root. There is little span of water between that and the mainland. There’s a little shack there on the shore which advertises “visit the Holy Isle where the saints have

trod,” and underneath the sign are the words, “we can take you.” The life and business of the church must be to take the people to where the saints have trod. Indeed holiness is to become now the powerful motivation in missions, where the love that God had for the world displayed in Christ and which we now participate in becomes the love that drives us to follow in that same mission.

I still remember the great International Congress of Evangelism in 1966. It was the first one I think for many hundreds of years. We met in Berlin and there were about a thousand representatives from most of the free countries of the world. In the closing service, Billy Graham preached a sermon on the stains on the altar. He concluded that sermon by telling the story of H. C. Morrison, whom many of you recognize as the founder of Asbury Theological Seminary and the great holiness preacher of the south land. Billy Graham told how Morrison one day out in the field had been chopping corn, looked down the road and saw an old Methodist circuit rider coming along. He knew that man from other acquaintances and he knew he was a man of God—a holy man. And as he rode by, Morrison fell under such conviction that he dropped on his knees there between those corn rows, and resolved there he would give his life to Jesus. After Billy Graham told that story, he called us to our knees as he said, “I want to be a holy man... Oh make me a holy man.” I believe that is your desire and indeed wherever we are, if we are going to be of any real use in missions, holiness must be at the heartbeat of our life.

But as you look again at the picture, that hand—now the hand of Christ reaching out to another who in turn reaches to another, you begin to see how through multiplication there is an incorporation into the whole body of our Lord Himself. The church is being formed, called the communion of the saints. You see there are no isolated Christians. Whenever we come to Christ, we are joined to everyone else who has received that hand. And we become agents of the kingdom of God, the means by which the King reigns in the hearts of people on earth just as it is in heaven. This church is not divided. We are all one in Christ. There is no male or female, slave or free, rich or poor—just one body, just as Christ is one. There are

diversities of gifts, but everyone is a minister of that body. I am afraid in the Protestant Reformation, we did not quite get that message through. We succeeded very well in our relationship with God, so that we did not have to go through another intermediary,—a priest on earth, but could go directly to God. But a priest is also a minister to—his fellow man. In that sense I am afraid we do not yet fully understand our priesthood. Yes, we can come to God directly, but we are also to be a ministering priest to others whom God loves and for whom Jesus gave his life. So here you see a church being formed that becomes a ministering body that reaches forth in evangelism, in discipleship, in building up people in this same faith which has been our means of salvation. How easy is it for us to forget it.

I think of that touring party going to Westminster Abby and if you have been there you probably saw two or three touring parties as you walked through this place where the kings of England are buried. Well, this had been going on for a while when an old lady in this touring party interrupted her guide and said, “Young man, would you stop your chatter for a minute and tell me how many people have been saved here lately.” There was an embarrassing silence that came into that touring group. Saved? In Westminster Abby? But why not? Isn’t that the business of the church? Is not that what we are supposed to be doing? Aren’t we simply an extension of the body of Christ, as He came to serve, not to be served but to serve, and give His life as a ransom for many? Is this not our purpose as well? The Church you see that is not involved in that ministry becomes a contradiction, and that is true for each individual in the church. If you are not expressing it in the way God has gifted you, that ministry, that priesthood, something is missing.

You will recall as you will look at that painting, there was something in the background that did not appear up in front where you see that large rock and one seaman who has found that place of refuge from that dark despair of the storm, how he was holding on with one hand and yet reaching out to another, who in turn reaches beyond. Yes, that was the way the kingdom would finally come. But up there, in the sky, beginning to break through the clouds was a ray of light. The sun would soon come through



and a new day would dawn. Oh someday, you see, God's purposes will be fulfilled. There will be a final consummation. The kingdom will finally come to fruition in the triumph of the church. You can be certain that God will accomplish His purpose, and the Bride that He loved will be adorned in beautiful holiness and be presented unto Him in the praise of God. As brought out so beautifully in the 19<sup>th</sup> chapter of Revelation, where after the shout from heaven, the Lord God Almighty reigns, the heavenly beings exhort themselves and say, "Let us be glad and give honor to the him who sits on the throne for the wedding of the Lamb has come. The Bride has made herself ready and she has been given clean linen, fine linen that is without any blemish. This speaks of the righteous deeds of the saints."

That is the way the Bible ends—in a wedding, just like it began in the garden. But the end is better than the beginning. Now through the centuries, and as the years have unfolded, there is a final wedding to the Bride that He had in mind as He made us, the object outside Himself to which He could express His love. That is why He made a church because the church to Him will always be a display of His perfection—of His glory. Indeed for us as we behold Him there in His glory, we have our highest joy. This is the chief end of man—to glorify God and to enjoy Him forever. This is the final consummation of all that was made—the triumph of his Church.

Recall that throne scene in the seventh chapter of Revelation where John saw the door of heaven opened. There around the throne was a multitude so numerous one cannot even count them. As far as you can see in all directions they are gathered. They are waving palm branches; they are clothed in white, symbolic of their holiness, and he tells us they came from every tribe, from every tongue, from every people, from every nation. The Great Commission is fulfilled!

God will not be defeated in His purpose. Any activity now which does not contribute to that destiny is an exercise in futility, for nothing finally will remain except that which brings glory to Him who sits on the throne. The great commission simply gets us on the wave length of history to which all things are moving. Oh the joy that this brings to the soul, to

know that our labor is never in vain. And whether we see small things or great things, we know that the Son will break through the clouds, and that the day of the Lord is coming. It makes you walk on tiptoes. That is why you can never stop; you can never be discouraged. The best is always yet to be.

The old missionary E. P. Scott spent most of his years working among the Northern tribes in India. One day he was seeking to make contact with a group that he had not yet reached. Suddenly he was surrounded by a band of warriors and they pointed their long spears at his heart. The old missionary thought that the end had come. It happened though that he had his violin with him. He quickly picked up that case, opened it, took up his instrument, put it to his shoulder and he began to play and sing in their own native tongue:

All hail the power of Jesus' name  
Let angels prostrate fall  
bring forth the royal diadem  
and crown him lord of all

As he played and sang he closed his eyes, momentarily expecting death, when nothing happened, even when he finished the third stanza, he opened his eyes and saw that the spears had fallen from the hands of his captors. Tears were streaming down their cheeks, and they begged him to tell them of that Name—the Name above every name, the only Name under heaven given among men whereby we must be saved. So he went home with them and told them the old old story of Jesus. And a church was raised up there that is still giving praise to God.

Now I do not want to suggest that you will be delivered from adversities. I do not want you to think for a moment that you will be spared hardship or even death. For after all, we have already professed that we have taken up the cross. Though it may not find its expression in physical death, in our spirit we already know that we are not our own. We belong to Him who loved us and gave Himself for us. If you enter into the mission of God, you can expect difficulty; you can expect hardship, you can expect

suffering, and indeed—this will be in God’s plan for through these difficulties God is conforming you to know more of Him who gave up everything for you. How would we ever learn to be like Jesus unless God would lead us through some valleys? Yes, it’s going to be a difficult task, but whatever comes, you can know that the kingdom will be realized, and you can rejoice knowing what is yet to be. You can praise God from whom all blessings flow.

A few years ago, coming back from a trip, my wife and I stopped over in London for a day. I did it purposely because I wanted to go out to the house of John Wesley. I had never been there before. It is a two story house just across the street of Bon Hill Cemetery, where John Bunyan is buried, and Susanna Wesley and Isaac Watts, and the non-conformists. We got there about noontime. We were met at the door by the custodian. We explained we would like, if it was possible, to go to the room on the second floor where John Wesley died. He graciously obliged. We walked up the steps to that room just to the right. In the small room was a small bed. John Wesley was just about five feet and two and half inches tall. The only other furnishing in the room was a chair and then a kneeling rail, where he would pray every morning. I had read not long before an account of Wesley’s death, and as I looked at the bed, I could visualize that scene that was described by one who was present. His friends were gathered about. Lying there he saw this small group of sad people gathered around. Suddenly he burst into singing, “I’ll praise my Maker while I breathe and when my soul is lost in death, praise shall employ my nobler powers.” That must have startled the people there to watch him die. To give them some comfort, he turned and said, “Best of all is, God is with us.” Then he exhorted his friends to kneel down, and pray and praise.

So Marietta and I knelt down at the bed, at the very place where those friends knelt that day. I looked at the head board and visualized Wesley there as he died. With his last words and strength lifting his right hand and whispering, “I’ll praise... I’ll praise... I’ll praise... I’ll praise...” He whispered farewell and his spirit was taken by an angel into the presence of his Lord.

What a beautiful way to die, but even more meaningful, that is the way we should live,—with the praise of God on our lips and His praise and adoration reflected in our lives. That is the reason we are made—to give glory to God and our greatest joy is in beholding Him who made us, who wants us to be like Him, to love Him with all our mind and soul and strength and love those He loves—our neighbors as we love ourselves. This is holiness. This is the reason for existence. This is the reason for a mission—to go forth to a world that is lost and struggling in the sea of destruction, crying out for help. This is the reason to reach out in love with that same hand that reached us and embraced them, and bring them close to Him that we have come to know. This is the heartbeat of missions. This is the fabric of theology that gives us our faith. It is because we believe that we become missionaries.

Every Christian who believes in Jesus Christ is a missionary. Whether they understand it or not, that is what has made them what they are, and in that same faith and love, we need to go forth in this great stream of the church until the church militant becomes at last the church triumphant. Then we will join our brothers and sisters from every tongue and every tribe and every people and every nation around the throne of glory and praise God forever. What a way to live in the true faith of missions!

Thank you, Father, for this privilege to come for a moment into this holy place, and to think again on that faith which we embrace—that faith which indeed has worked a miracle of grace in our lives, and makes us, too, to join that great triumphant procession leading someday to that eternal destiny in your presence. Oh hasten the time when this Gospel of the kingdom will at last be heard to the ends of the earth, and your purpose will be fulfilled. Yes, that is our desire, for that is what we are. We pray in Jesus name, Amen.

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# Theology of Missions 2

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*Dr. Robert E. Coleman*

*A lecture delivered during the 2<sup>nd</sup> Donald Owens' School of World Missions Lecture Series  
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We were addressing the theology of the Great Commission last night, and I was pointing out this is not an appendage to our faith or an added specialty, but it is the heartbeat of all theology. It is the only reason we even have Christian theology, the reason we have a Bible; God wants us to know Him and to love Him. He is a missionary God. He knows the condition of the world and the condition of the people that He made in His image so that we would have the ability to know who He is and experience His love. He made us so that truly we could enter into fellowship with Him and enjoy communion with Him forever.

In the tragedy of sin, that fellowship was broken, and yet God's love never left us. He addressed the need for a reconciliation all through the Bible. That missionary heart of God is seeking those who have turned from Him. It came to its fruition nearly 2000 years ago, when as the prophets said, "the son of God Himself, the Visible Word" – came and clothed Himself with our flesh to bear our sorrows and our griefs and finally to accept our judgment on the cross. On the third day He rose from the dead, confirming His disciples and assuring them He would never leave them as He sent them out to make known to the world His purpose of redemption. Indeed that is what we are doing when we go forth as missionaries. We are simply reflecting the God who made us and who has redeemed us and has now brought together a church that reflects the beauty of His holiness. We minister together in that confidence, that someday there is going to be a reunion with Him when our faith will turn to sight and we will behold him in all His glory.

That indeed is the heartbeat of our faith. We are not a missionary because of some particular special call. We are missionaries because we are Christians. I think of a circuit rider who was asked one day if he was a

missionary and he said, “Well, I am a Methodist. We are all missionaries.” I wish that was true today among all Methodists. As you know not many years ago Nazarenes came and stole our fire and left us nothing but the stove. But we all came out from the same stock and as Wesley said, “The whole world is our parish.” We do not make any distinction between home and foreign missions. It is just one great big world that God loves and for whom He has come in His Son to save. The whole revelation in His Word is to make known to us this great missionary compassion of God . This is the heartbeat of our faith.

But I want us to move on to see what that means. What are we going to do about it since “doing follows being?” It is here where our faith takes practical expression everyday. This is brought out in those final words of Jesus in all the Gospels before He ascended back into heaven. He told His followers, “Now you go and you do what I have been doing: you preach, you witness, you disciple, you teach, because I am sending you into the world just as I was sent. And as you go, you make disciples of all nations.” That commission is given particular prominence in the last chapter of Matthew’s Gospel, where the command is recorded in verses 18 to 20 of chapter 28.

See how the command comes into focus in context. It’s always good to understand the Scripture in the context in which it was written. I think of an old farmer who was contesting the decision of the insurance company when he filed the claim for compensation after an accident. He was denied his compensation on the basis that on the time of the accident, he told the police officer, “There is nothing wrong with me.” So they had to go to court and have a hearing. The judge looked at this farmer and asked, “Is it true that at the time of the accident you told the police officer that ‘there was nothing wrong with me?’”

“Well sir,” the farmer said, “it was like this. I was going down the road in my pick-up and Betsy my cow was in the back.”

“Your honor,” interrupted the lawyer for the insurance company, “the man is not answering your question.”

The judge looked at the farmer and said, “You will have to answer sir.” “Well it was like this,” he answered. I was going down the highway in my pick-up and my cow Betsy was in the back.”

“Your honor,” again interrupted the counsel for the insurance company, “The man is still not answering your question.”

So the judge looked at the farmer and then at the lawyer, and said, “Well, why don’t we let the man tell his story.”

“Well sir it was like this. I was going down the highway in my pick-up, and Betsy my cow was in the back, when this big semi pulled out in front and I crashed on the side of that truck. I went flying this way and Betsy went flying that way. And when I came to, this police officer was standing beside me. And he looked over at Betsy and I heard him say, ‘This old cow is in bad shape.’ And your honor he pulled out his gun, and shot her dead. Then he turned to me and said, ‘Now how do you feel?’”

The context helps us understand. And it is interesting as you look at the setting in which the Great Commission is given. Note verse 16, these disciples had gathered there on the mount where Jesus told them to go. When they saw Jesus, they worshiped him. Now that is easy to understand, because Jesus appeared to these disciples in the glory of His resurrection body. You can understand how the disciples felt when they saw Him, they worshiped him. But then notice what else is said. There were some who doubted. That is intriguing. Why would those disciples doubt in this situation? They certainly could not question the resurrection. Jesus was standing before them in His glorified body and He would soon be ascending back to heaven where He would take His place at the right hand of the Majesty on high. Why would they doubt? Well, I imagine that it must be in their own sense of anxiety and fear regarding the future, for they are going out soon into a hostile world, the world which crucified their Lord. I expect that there was a good deal of apprehension, and they were wondering how they were going to survive. That is the context of this Great Commission. Note vs. 18—“Jesus came to them.” Is not that beautiful? He knows our doubts, He knows our fears, He knows what is

going on through our mind when we look at the future and see all the uncertainties that await us. He knows you. He knows what is going through your mind as you think of the task before you. Is it not beautiful how He comes to us and says, “All power and all authority is given to me in heaven and on earth”?

Dr. Donald McGavran, the father of the modern school of Church Growth, was asked shortly before he died. “What was for you the most neglected aspect of the Great Commission?” You would have thought, knowing Dr. McGavran, that he would mention people groups or homogeneous principles or some of the things that he is famous for. But that was not what was in mind at all. Without hesitation, he said, “It’s the way the Great Commission begins. It’s the affirmation that Jesus makes of His authority, and of His power.” Indeed if we would turn that confession of Christ around that testimony of Jesus, it would become the creed of the Christian church. Are you aware of that? A creed that will be affirmed by any Christian anywhere in the world. If they truly believe Christ, they would affirm Jesus is Lord! As we note that confession in the 10<sup>th</sup> chapter of Romans verse 9, this is the essence—that Jesus is the incarnate God. He is the One who flung out the stars in the heavens, who laid the foundations of the earth, the One who reigns in majesty on the throne, the One who is the sovereign king of the universe; the Lord God Almighty. He is the One who stands before us, and says, “I have all power in heaven and in earth.” Is not that assuring? We can be confident the One who speaks to us will be able to fulfill His word.

That being true, notice what follows—“therefore.” And when you see “therefore” in the Bible, note what it is there for. “Therefore,” He said “go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to obey all that I have commanded you. And lo, I am with you always even to the end of the age.”

I want us to focus especially upon that command of Jesus. Note the four action words in verses 19 and 20: “go,” “make disciples,” “baptizing,” and “teaching.” What is most fascinating is that of these four action words,



only one is a verb in the original Greek. Have you noticed that you Greek scholars? And what is the verb that gives direction to everything else? It is “make disciples.” “Go,” “baptize,” and “teach” are participles. Participles are not intended to stand alone. They get their direction—their force—from the leading verb. Now you may not always observe this basic rule of grammar, and incidentally that is why you have those red marks on those term papers. Look for the verb. The verb controls the participle. And when this is recognized in the Great Commission, it gives direction to what we are to be doing. Yes we are to go, and baptize, and teach, and in the other versions, we witness, preach, and are sent (Mark 16:15; John 17:17; Acts 1:8). And yet what is the objective, the purpose of it all? What are we trying to do? Not make converts. Certainly we need to be converts before we can enter the kingdom of heaven, as Jesus said. That means you repent and by faith you turn to Him and receive the gift of salvation. That is the beginning, but certainly that is not the end. He said “make disciples.” And how does this word translate? You scholars know its meaning. It translates “a student,” or “pupil” or “follower,” as in the sense of an apprentice. This becomes the key to God’s plan for reaching the world. It tells us very clearly what we are to be doing—why we are on this earth. For if you make disciples—persons who will continue to follow Christ and learn of Him, they will grow in His character, in His likeness, in His holiness. And they will also begin to see how He is ministering to the world, and they too will begin to follow in that tradition, in that pattern. They will begin to do what He was doing in making disciples. As they have learned, they will teach others to do the same. So that through the process of multiplication, someday, the whole world will have opportunity to hear the gospel. That is His plan. It is so simple. And it begins in His command to the church—the way every believer can live in fulfillment of the Great Commission—everyday.

We have already learned that we are missionaries. This is the heart of the message that saves us. But now we see how it takes practical expression in our lifestyle as we do what He commands. Being a disciple of Christ, we learn from Him the interpretation of what this commission means. As

we look at Him, we can see some principles which underlie His activity, then translate those principles into our culture and situation where we live. Methods and programs, of course, will change according to different circumstances and time, but principles will be constant in any culture and in any age. That is what we want to think about very briefly.

And we will begin where we first met Him—in the incarnation when He becomes a servant. We do not really get to know Jesus until He takes a physical form, as the Son of God, as the Word of God now made flesh. And in this identity with us, He becomes like us as He lives in this world, bearing our burdens and shows us how we too can become a servant. We are told that Jesus, who had all power, renounced His own rights, He humbled Himself and took the form of a servant. You see, in order to serve the world, you must renounce the value system of this world. The world teaches us to do our own thing, irregardless of how it may affect others. So you push your way ahead. We live in a society where that is the value system. But Jesus shows us that to be relevant, we must recognize our own rights and take up a cross.

This becomes evident from the very beginning of His life, as He was raised in obscurity and probably having to take care of His mother and younger brothers and sisters after His earthly father (Joseph) died. It finds practical expression later in ministry, in feeding the hungry, healing the sick, opening the eyes of the blind, delivering those who are demon-possessed and constantly preaching the gospel of the kingdom and teaching the Word of God.

No wonder people are attracted to Him. Sometimes they would gather by the thousands. Once Jesus looked out to this crowd and characterized the people as sheep that had lost their way. The tragedy was they did not have anyone like a shepherd who could lead them—someone who could love them—who knows the way of God. He told his disciples, seeing the need, to pray for the lord of the harvest to send forth workers into this harvest—workers who have the characteristics of a shepherd, who would lead the sheep in His service.

If you multiply that kind of people, someday you will reach the world. That is something all of us can do, that is where we begin. When you are known as a servant, you will never lack opportunity to have some disciples. Have you discovered that? Don't you like to be with people who demonstrate they care; they minister at the place you hurt—where you have need?

But as Jesus went about doing good, sometimes because He was so effective in demonstrating His compassion, the crowds overwhelmed Him. He could not possibly be with all the people that needed help. So in the midst of this busy ministry, He began to call out some in a special way to be with him—disciples, learners. When the number became overbearing, He chose twelve especially to be with Him. Within this small group three have a closer relationship—Peter, James, and John, only a few. Indeed this small nucleus of people is finally narrowed down into three—Peter, James, and John. It is not that He loves the world any less, but it is for the sake of the world that He concentrates upon a few.

The disciples become the focus of His ministry—people much like Himself. None of them seem to be great intellectuals; they were just simple people—fishermen, businessmen, one was a tax collector. Even more interesting, none of them, like Jesus, was a member of the Levitical priesthood. While they have many limitations, they did have a desire to learn.

That is what you look for, and when you look around, you will see some people like that where you live—in your family, in your neighborhood, people you work beside. This is no accident—they are the answers to your prayers. Do you see them?

Notice then how Jesus spends so much of His time with them. They stayed together. Seldom do you see Jesus do anything by Himself. They are always standing around looking on. They walked the tracks together, they go to the synagogue and the temple together, and they for the most part, have their ministry together. Here is a principle that we dare not overlook. If we want to develop the potential of people, we have to be with them. You cannot be with everybody, but you can with a few, and especially

those that are closest to you. You must be careful that they are men and women who really have the desire to learn.

Notice in His ministry how He opened His life to them, how He let them see the inner working of His mind. They beheld Him as He prayed, and it was not long before they wanted to pray like Jesus. They watched Him use the Scripture and interpret it so that it was fulfilled in the way He lived everyday. They saw His compassion with people. They were learning all the time by being with Him.

What facilitated this ongoing education was the fact that He was teaching them to obey. In fact that is actually included here in the commission. Did you note this in verse 19? This is one of the participles. For, as we are making disciples, those who are learning with us need to recognize that if they are going to move on, they need to practice what they are learning—to obey.

Those first disciples of Jesus were slow learners. There were so many things they did not understand. Even the theology of the atonement was not clear to them until after the resurrection. We have to be patient with the people God brings into our life. Usually they are very slow learners, not to say that we know it all, but we can learn together. That is why I want some of you to be down here so we can talk after this meeting. That is the way we learn. That is the way we grow in grace and knowledge and that is the way faith finds practical expression everyday. Faith is not just an intellectual accent to a creed. It is lifestyle. It is the way you live out the Great Commission.

In this context, you can see how Jesus is constantly giving them more to see, He is giving them more example to follow, teaching them by what they observe. This is the way they, too, can teach others. All the while, those disciples are learning what it means to fulfill the Great Commission. So when at last, before He returns to heaven, and tells them to make disciples, they understand what it means. Do you see why? They have been discipled. They had seen the Great Commission lived out before their eyes. Do the people that are close to you see that lived out in your home? in your church? That is the way we always learn most quickly. Let it be seen in your life.

They watched and learned, and as they moved on, they were constantly seeing how they could have a part. First, it is not much more than just to attend; gradually He finds ways they can help out in hospitality. He is preaching, but the disciples, we read, are doing the baptizing. That is interesting to me they are not even ordained yet. Though they did not have enough faith to feed five thousand, they did have enough faith to take a basket after Jesus broke the fish and the bread and gave them those provisions, and told them to go out and feed the people. Is not that beautiful? There are two miracles there. It is not just the breaking of the bread and multiplying of the loaves; there was a miracle in the hearts of those disciples. They took courage and they went out and did what Jesus asked them.

After about a year and a half, maybe two years, he said one day, “Now we are going to divide up.” They were probably scared, but He said, “When you go out to villages, you won’t be alone. You will be working with another person, and you just do what you have seen me do—you heal the sick, cast out demons, preach the gospel of the kingdom. When you come into a new village, you find the most worthy family, that is someone who has enough interest in your mission, who will open their home and provide hospitality. Make that your headquarters. You can evangelize the whole community during the day but come back to this same house. That will be where you begin to build relationship and trust. When you come back at night and kick off your sandals, just sit around the table, and laugh and sing and reflect upon the experiences of that day.” This could be the beginning of a new church plant. Now if you have covered the whole community and it appears that no one has at least an interest... Remember what Jesus told them to do? This has always intrigued me. “Shake the dust off your feet, go to the next village.” We do not have the luxury of going through programs when no one is seeking to learn.

But once you get involved in the ministry, you will always be encountering difficulties. If you have not been encountering some difficulties, the probability is that you are not doing enough to make the devil want to defeat you. If you are truly working, you can expect some opposition

because the devil knows what is going on. He is always going to attack the captain—the one in front. But you do not have to be overwhelmed. Remember the one who sends you has all power in heaven and earth.

Jesus called His disciples back, and asked how things were going. They told Him and He used their experiences everyday as a beginning point for further teaching—on-the-job training . He was not just speaking theoretically about doctrines. He was talking about faith that had been expressed that day—what they have needed to exercise in terms of their own ministry. That is the way to teach—out of experience. In this constant supervision of the disciples—ever leading them on through it all, He was constantly praying for them.

The 17<sup>th</sup> chapter of John is the greatest insight to the Great Commission in this recorded prayer of Jesus. If you want to know what is uppermost in a person's heart, learn how they pray. You can see in this prayer how He praised God. The worship of the Father is what fills His soul with joy even though He knows it means the cross. But He turns His attention to the gifts of the Father that have been given Him out of the world—the disciples, and particularly the eleven. How He pours out His soul for these who followed Him so closely to the end. He prays that they might have His joy, that they might be delivered from the evil one, that they might be sanctified just as He commits Himself to the mission. Then, with an amazing display of faith and confidence in His disciples, Jesus envisions how through their ministry of multiplication, someday the world will come to believe on Him whom the Father has sent.

The Great Commission focused the strategy by which this objective would be realized by the disciples of Jesus reproducing what they had learned by making disciples. He projected this vision of the coming harvest all through His ministry, stretching their faith, teaching them to think big, not to limit the resources of Almighty God.

One day they were walking along, when Jesus noticed a vine growing out of the bushes and He compared Himself as the true vine. He said, "You are like the branches growing off the vine." Then He added, "From those branches there would be fruit." What a powerful illustration! You

see the branch gets its life from the vine, but those branches, those disciples are going to bring forth the harvest. Just as we see with a shepherd, he is not the one who primarily reproduces. The sheep reproduces; the shepherd is in charge of the sheep to care for them so that they can come into maturity—and they begin to reproduce.

That is how you measure your ministry—the way reproduction is going on in the next generation; how leadership is being raised up for people with your vision to go forth and hopefully do a better job than what you have done. They may not be a better preacher, they may not be a better teacher, but they may indeed be a better discipler. That is the command. It is not by some gift of the Spirit. It is not some specialized training you learn in theological seminary. The Great Commission is a lifestyle. It is the way you live every single day. It is the way a missionary can fulfill the Great Commission wherever God leads them.

And this is what you must teach your people. This is what makes the church dynamic as it reaches out. You are not limited to clergy. You are not limited to those who have the special privilege of education, because now you see that the priesthood includes all believers. You see the body of Christ Himself going forth into the world. He did not have a university degree. He did not have the ordination robes of a priest. He was just a disciple maker who finally took the burden of the world in His heart and bore us all to the cross. That is the example to follow.

Is this your lifestyle? It is the way the Great Commission finds expression in the life of the church of Jesus Christ everyday. Teach this to your people and let this be what they see when they watch you. Do not worry about the adversary and the hostility of the world and all the attacks of Satan, because Jesus will be with you. The Great Commission concludes with this promise: “I will be with you always, even to the end of the age.” Yes, He knows some of you doubt. He knows some of you are fearful. He knows you are facing some hard times. But know that you go forth in the presence of Jesus whom the Spirit now exalts and makes real to us. This is the reality that comes so powerfully into focus in the time of the Pentecost, which we will consider in the closing lecture tomorrow.

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# Theology of Missions 3

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We began with the heartbeat of theology, which comes right out of our faith. We have a missionary God, and we are saved because in His Son He came as a missionary. By grace He offers us salvation, not only from sin, but to a new life—a new creation—making us conform in this sanctification process to what He wanted us to be in the beginning. Inevitably then as a part of this recreation, we become an extension of the body of Christ. Therefore, missions is inevitable as we live in expectancy of the day when finally this Gospel which has saved us, this Gospel of the kingdom, will reach the ends of the earth and God will gather His people from every tongue and tribe and nation to praise Him for ever. Because this is our faith, we are by the very nature of our being—missionaries.

But that raises the question, “what does it mean in terms of our life?” We recognize that we are now to be the outreach of our Lord in this present age but how can we be a part? This necessitates a move from *being* to *doing*. As discussed yesterday, the Great Commission, I believe, is the way Jesus summed up our responsibility—to make disciples, and He Himself gave us in His life an explanation of what that means.

While there are diversities of gifts and callings, everyone in the body of Christ is a part of this missionary work. Some will be called to be pastors or evangelists, some will have a very clear vocational ministry as cross-cultural missionaries. But everyone is called to go about the work of our Lord in reaching the world He loved and gave Himself to save. The Great Commission is not a gift; it is not a special call; it is a lifestyle. With this commitment, missions becomes the focus of all Christians as we live in that expectation of seeing finally this Gospel of the kingdom reaching to the ends of the earth.



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This cannot be done in our own strength or power. Before Jesus left His disciples, He told them to tarry until they were filled with power from on high, and they would receive that power when the Holy Spirit would come upon them; and they would become witnesses, beginning where they were in Jerusalem—but they were to go to Judea and Samaria and to the ends of the earth. This was simply amplifying what he had been teaching them—how the Holy Spirit would take what He had been doing and bring it into their lives so that they could continue His ministry. He would not talk about Himself but about the things of Christ. He would guide them; He would teach them; He would be their Counselor. Just as Jesus in the flesh had been their Counselor, now the Holy Spirit would take that role in their lives and through it all, He would glorify Jesus. That is what the Holy Spirit is doing; and as Jesus is lifted up, people are drawn to the Father. The whole work of the body of Christ today is being expressed in that ministry of the Holy Spirit.

The work of the Holy Spirit becomes powerfully evident in times of great revival throughout the history of the Christian Church. So in the real sense, the study of missions brings us into the dynamic heartbeat of revival.

The word “revival” in the Old Testament simply means “to come alive.” Though it is used about 250 times, it is seldom translated as “revival.” More often it is translated “saved,” or “restored,” or “heal” or “renew.” Sometimes though, you will read the word “revival.” For example, in Psalm 85:6, “Will you not revive us again, O Lord, that your people might rejoice in You.” We see, “coming alive” is when we recognize that God alone is the One who is our life. That is the end of man—to behold His glory; and that is where we find our joy, not in ourselves but in our God who is a missionary God. Revival brings that into focus. We come alive to what God made us to be when He created us in His image, that we might know Him and love Him.

That does not always seem to be the experience of His people, however. And so those who have enjoyed spiritual life can grow distant and cold. In the picture of the valley of dry bones in Ezekiel, you notice that

these bones were once alive but now their flesh is gone. But the Spirit comes upon them, breathes life into them, and they begin to live and move and have their being again in God. That is revival!

In the New Testament you find it on the lips of Jesus when He speaks of the prodigal son, who was once in the family of the father, went away from home, spent his inheritance in pleasurable living, and finally he came to himself; and as he was returning, his father saw him coming down the road, and ran to meet him—the child who was dead is alive again. That is revival. Another word which can be translated revival is used by Paul when he speaks of the budding of a tree. It has been dormant during the winter but as spring time comes the sap rises and that limb that has been dry for many months now begins to take on new life—and you have revival. Or again he uses the word when speaking to Timothy about stirring up the gift that is within you. This is the figure of a fire that has just about gone out; but you put in the poker, and stir up those coals, blow upon them and then slowly those embers begin to catch fire and there is revival—coming alive again. That is what we are speaking of when we say God wants His people to live in the fullness of this joy of being alive. The joy of who He is and what He is doing in this world. And indeed that is what Jesus wants us all to be living in and enjoying in our lives.

You can study this concept all through the Bible. Start with the fourth chapter of Genesis, where you have the first recorded reference to prayer. You recognize the situation. The offspring of Adam had not been faithful and you see the result of that in the sickness and the decay and the death of man. The son of Seth is born, and in recognition of the tragedy, the peril of their condition, he calls his son Enosh. It is very interesting because the word literally means “sickness” or “weakness.” Already you can see dissension in the human race; already one of the sons of Adam has murdered his brother, and unless in some way this propensity for evil can be restrained, the whole human race will be annihilated. And so Seth calls his new son Enosh—“weakness, helplessness.” But then the chapter adds, “men began to call upon the name of the Lord.” Usually that is the way it

begins—out of some distress, out of calamity. It is when the night closes in that we recognize the stars, though they had been there all along. You can trace this theme through the Scripture.

Often though revival does not come. Take the situation in the sixth chapter of Genesis. The world has become so sinful that God decides He will destroy that generation through the flood. But there was one man who was righteous in his day. God is never without a witness. And so he takes Noah and his family and his sons and their wives and starts all over again. Seldom do we learn from history, however, and soon you see the human race returning to their former degradation. You move across the years until the arrogant people started to erect a monument to their strength, to their power, Babel. Well, God moved in to confound them in their pride, and they were scattered – which is a way of explaining the diversity of the many languages across the earth. You see humanity had a bent to evil, and in our natural state unless there is God's intervention and our response, we always take the path of least resistance and begin to worship our own image. Still God is faithful, always seeking, always wanting to bring the nations to know Him whom to know aright is life everlasting.

So our missionary God speaks to a man living in the up in the land of the Caldees. He calls him to come out, and follow Him. You know that beautiful experience of Abraham, moving out as God leads, raising up a new posterity, and given again the promise of the Great Commission: to make of him and his seed a posterity that will be as great as the stars of heaven and as the sand on the seashore. God is not going to be defeated. But as we have seen so often before, we soon turn to our own way.

Moving to the era of the Pharaohs and, the suffering of Israel, God brings a leader who now rallies the people in revival that comes in the form of the first Passover. And as the people paint on their doorposts the blood of their sacrificial lamb, God brings deliverance. But again they turned quickly to their former ways. Something of a new reformation happened when the Law was given at Sinai, but how quickly when Moses was gone did the people turn back, and soon were worshiping idols.

You have that incident at Mt. Hor. When again for a brief moment, it seems revival comes when the people recognized the serpents sting of death was the result of their waywardness and they confess their sin to Moses. Thankfully, God honored that prayer, and told Moses to make a serpent in the likeness of these snakes, “Make it out of brass; put it on a pole; lift it up on high in the camp, and everyone who looks upon it will be saved.” What a demonstration of God’s grace. That is the illustration that Jesus used thousands of years later when he was teaching Nicodemus what it really means to believe on the Lord Jesus Christ—“as Moses lifted up that serpent in the wilderness.”

Can you see a picture in your mind of those afflicted people trying to bring their loved ones within sight of that pole that was lifted up in the camp much like a cross. “Look,” they are told, “You don’t have to come and bring a sacrifice at the altar; you don’t have to go through some ritual of coming forward or lifting a hand or even lifting a finger—you just have to look at what God has done.” That’s faith—absolutely trusting the Word of the Living God. Yes, we have these epochs that recur through the Old Testament.

We come to the period after the Israelites had entered the land and the people have finally conquered all they need. But disregarding the full command, they took just what was needed for their temporary pleasure, and rested. Joshua knew the danger, and at the close of his ministry, confronted the people with a choice. “Serve the gods of Egypt, or the God our Lord.” Then to make clear his own intention, he said, “I want you to know that as for me, I am going to serve the Lord with my family.” He drew a line, and there was a revival through Joshua that continued until the death of the elders. It is one of the longest recorded revivals in the Old Testament.

We do not have time to go through this whole sequence, but you can see the pattern. God raises up a leader who sounds the cry for revival. People repent and promise to obey the law, and in their faith rejoice in God. You’ll see it with David as he takes the ark up to the city of the King and the rejoicing of that procession. There is another high moment when

the temple was dedicated by Solomon, and the Word was given by the Lord; “If my people who are called by my name will humble themselves and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven and will forgive their sins and will heal their land.” But the promise was soon forgotten.

After the kingdom was divided because of the rebellion of the people in that little southern kingdom of Judah, there are revivals recorded: under the King Asa, Jehosaphat, Hezekiah, and Josiah. We can be grateful for these seasons of refreshing from the Presence of the Lord, but they did not last long, and soon the people would return to their former ways. Though God was long-suffering, the day came when His people were carried away into captivity. Yet even when they were in Babylon, God loved them, and was seeking a way to call them back to Himself. And revivals came again under Nehemiah and Ezra—great times of blessing. But the weakness of human nature repeats itself again and again. That is story of the Old Testament—up and down—and down a lot more than up.

Thankfully there is always a faithful remnant who never bow their knees to Baal. Though often without encouragement from the priests, those unheralded moms and dads revered their God and sought to teach their children to keep the law. Remember that the responsibility of discipling ultimately rested with the parents? It was written in the Law of Moses that they should be talking about it when they got up in the morning, through the day, and before they went to bed at night. They were to write it down on the doorposts of their houses. The home was the center of religious instruction. Thank God there were those who were faithful. Out of these faithful ones came great leaders and when they used their influence and their authority, their leadership reached out to others. So usually submerged, there was always an undercurrent of revival in the nation.

As we come to the New Testament, we have the coming of the long awaited Messiah. He would finally fulfill God’s plan to raise up a people and a kingdom from every tongue and tribe and nation—a Son of man who would establish a kingdom that would never perish, encompassing all the peoples of the earth. In the fullness of time, the Promised One comes.

As He begins His active ministry at the age of thirty, He goes over to the other side of Jordan where already a large number of people are gathering, listening to the voice of the greatest prophet yet. John the Baptist is thundering the Word of God, calling people to repent and to prepare the way for the coming of the Lord. That is where Jesus begins his active ministry—in a revival. And by being baptized by John, He puts His personal seal upon this new movement of reformation. It's there that He is identified by the prophet as the Lamb of God who will take away the sins of the world. The Jewish people for many thousands of years have put their faith in the blood of the sacrifice, which was the seal of the covenant that God would bring redemption. Literally they identified with that blood, pouring out themselves as it were unto death. Represented in these offerings was the expectation of a perfect sacrifice which God Himself would make. Can you imagine how the announcement of John would thrill your soul? At last the Lamb of God has come. He is here in your midst. He is going to take away the sins of the world. Everything that is foreshadowed for thousands of years in ceremony, in type, and in prophecy is present in Jesus, the Nazarene.

Everything is ready. Jesus can immediately enlist the followers of the Baptist, who is willing to decrease in order that Jesus can increase. He will turn over what he has started to the Lord. All He has to do is exercise His authority. He could raise the dead, gather a great army, sweep down upon Jerusalem and on to Rome to take the world by storm. That would have been nothing for Jesus—the king of glory. Why does He not do it? This was the kind of Messiah most people were looking for. This is the kind of Messiah the world is still looking for—someone who can deliver us from any adversity, from any suffering, any persecution, who can satisfy all our self-serving desires? But that is not the kind of kingdom that Jesus reigns over. He is making a church that is holy, that is beautiful, in the likeness of His own image.

So what does Jesus do in this introduction to His ministry at the revival—the greatest revival Israel had known for over 400 years, where

people are gathered not just from Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria, and Galilee? He walks away. Incredible! Almost unbelievable. When the stage is set for a great mass movement—a crusade that will certainly succeed in raising up an empire—Jesus walks away.

And what does He do? He starts gathering some disciples. O yes, He preaches sometimes to great crowds, numbering into the thousands. Certainly He ministers to people in their needs, while continually preaching the Gospel. The people recognize that He cares and they are responding.

But you don't make disciples just by handling great crowds or crusades. You make disciples like you raise children—every day. So He begins to address from the beginning of His ministry one of the great failings that you have seen in the revivals of the Old Testament, for they failed to reproduce leaders who have the heart to continue the work of God. In most instances, as soon as the leader died, or in some instances even before, the people soon returned to their former ways, and the last state was worse than the first. Knowing this problem, Jesus addresses the need. If we truly want to reach the world, if we want to see God's Word fulfilled in creation when He gave the command to populate the earth, if you want to really see the seed of Abraham multiply to the ends of the earth, then you've got to address the need of developing men and women who have a vision for the kingdom—disciples who will give their lives to perpetuate that vision, and develop others who will carry on until the whole world hears the Gospel. That's what you do in the Great Commission.

As Jesus is about to leave, He makes clear to His disciples what His strategy has been, so there will be no possible misunderstanding. In effect, He says, "You go now and you do what I have been doing with you." They could understand exactly—they are to go out now and make disciples as Jesus has been discipling them.

Then after giving the command, He concluded with that promise: "Lo, I will be with you always, even to the end of the age." As He had taught them, by the Holy Spirit, they would go forth with the presence of Jesus Himself. Indeed, He would be within them. By His power, they "will do

greater works” than those they had seen Him do. Have you ever thought about that promise in John 14:12? “Everyone who believes in me will do My works, and greater works than these.” He is speaking to the whole church. I don’t see the church producing greater miracles or coming up with greater insights, or preaching greater sermons. But in the sense of bearing fruit, I can see the church gathering the harvest in an infinitely greater way than Jesus Himself ever saw. He offered the sacrifice; He gives us the privilege of bringing in the fruits. And this will happen He said, “because I am going to the Father, and I am going to ask him to give you another Counselor—the Spirit of Truth. The world does not know Him, but you know Him because He has been with you and He shall be in you.” Another—not another theory, not another doctrine, but another Counselor just like Jesus. Everything you have seen in Him— His holiness, His power, His love—is also true of the character of the Spirit. The only difference is between the visible Word in Christ and the invisible presence in the Spirit. But the Holy Spirit is the Spirit of Christ and that is how we can go forth. We will never have to be alone.

Another Comforter has come—the *Paracletos*. And so He tells His disciples, “What you have been hearing me say these many years and what you’ve seen in the life that I have lived, you must have the power from God to do. You cannot do this in your own strength. So go back to Jerusalem and stay there until you are endued with power—power from on high. When the Holy Spirit comes upon you, you will truly be endued with power, and then, go forth as my witnesses.”

Those disciples obeyed Jesus. After His ascension into heaven they went to that upper room—back to the place where they had heard Him earlier give that great discourse in John 14, 15 and 16—that teaching on the Holy Spirit.

It was now the time of Pentecost, which is the feast to recognize the first fruits of the harvest. People were bringing in their gifts to lay them on the altars. But there was to be another harvest—a spiritual harvest that would begin at Pentecost. When they gathered the feast was not yet



completed, so for about ten days they waited in that upper room. I suppose they had the freedom to come and go.

We are not really told very much about what transpired in those days. We do know that they finally came together in one accord – they were all united. What a testimony of the way of love has knit them together into a body in harmony with their Lord. I suspect that while they were there, they all had some things to make right. Helping that spirit, I can imagine Peter with tears streaming down his face confessing how he had denied his Lord – how he panicked, and three times scorned Him. It was humiliating, I know, but he got it all out. I can think of James and John apologizing for the way they wanted to sit at the right and left hand of the throne, and asking forgiveness for their pride. I do not know everything that transpired, but they came together in one mind.

During this time, they remembered that the Scripture said there should be the twelve, so they decided to select one to take the place of the traitor – that event occupies almost half of the first chapter of Acts. Someone may think that was not an important matter. What we are learning from this is that it does not matter whether it is important or not; if there is something that you know that is not in accord with the Word of God, you've got to make it right, however insignificant, however small it may be. If you believe it is written in this book, you've got to line up with the Word

As the feast of Pentecost was coming to its close, while 120 disciples were in this upper room, suddenly there was a sound of a mighty rushing wind which seemed to sweep through the place. Certainly it was an awesome display of power. Then there was a flame of fire that came down from above, and entering the room, it separated until a flame sat upon the head of each believer. What a beautiful symbolism! Jesus had sat down at the throne which means He is the king, He is in authority; and now the Spirit sits down on the head of His believers. He has taken control. Then they were filled with the Holy Spirit and went forth to declare the wonderful works of God.

The power is not in the wind; the power is not in the fire; the power is not in the tongues—the languages with which they speak so that everyone that was present can understand them in their own tongue. The power is in the Holy Spirit—the very presence of Jesus Christ who has come now to fill them with that character they had known earlier as they walked with him along the trails of Galilee. That is what has made the difference. Immediately you begin to see how the fear of people has vanished as they boldly go forth to declare their witness. When people acknowledge that this is strange, Peter seizes the opportunity to explain the reason for it, the preaches the Gospel. When the people ask what they can do to be saved, he tells them how—to be baptized, to be forgiven, and receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. About 3000 were converted—more in one day than Jesus had won in over three years. And everyday after that we are told that others are added into the church as they gave their testimony in the market and in the places where they lived.

The whole church was involved.. By the time you get to the fourth chapter of Acts, persecution has broken out, but the Christians are not afraid. As they met together, they prayed that the Lord would give them boldness to keep them witnessing. When they finished praying, the place was shaken and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit. Soon, there were 5000 believers, and when you get to the 6<sup>th</sup> chapter, even priests were coming out of the woodwork and becoming obedient to the faith.

Growth can create tensions, which became evident between the Arameans and the Greeks. To deal with the problem, they decided to select deacons—men of wisdom, men who were filled with the Holy Spirit. As far as I know that is still the basic requirement for any leadership position in the church. Stephen was one of those selected, and in the next chapter, after his bold sermon, he was stoned to death. We are told that as he died, looked up to heaven, full of the Holy Spirit and saw Jesus standing at the right hand of God. Jesus is generally represented as seated on the throne but now it seems that He rises to His feet and welcomes home the first martyr of the church.

By the time you get to the 9<sup>th</sup> chapter of Acts, the chief persecutor of the Sanhedrin, Paul of Tarsus, is converted on the Damascus road and is led blind into the city. Ananias comes and lays his hand upon him so that he might receive back his sight and be filled with the Holy Spirit. When you get to the 13<sup>th</sup> chapter, you see the Spirit-filled Paul boldly pronouncing judgment upon Elymas who was deceiving the people of God. When he bids farewell to the Christians in Antioch in Pisidia, again all of them are filled with the Spirit. This is the power in the Acts of the Apostles. The Spirit of revival is blowing through that church.

There were some misfits, of course. There is the account of Ananias and Saphira early in the 5<sup>th</sup> chapter—hypocrites. There is always going to be some form of hypocrisy among professing saints because of human nature, and the more who are attracted to the church, the larger will be the circumference. But don't measure the effectiveness of the church by its circumference; measure it by the core of Spirit-filled leaders. Multiply the core and the church will continue to reach out to the world. And revival—being filled with the Holy Spirit—is the norm. As Paul said of the church at Ephesus, “Don't be drunk with wine, but be continually filled with the Holy Spirit.” Revival brings this admonition into focus.

Think about those three years that Jesus ministered. On occasion large crowds attended His meetings, but we don't read of any great mass revival, which is astounding when you consider the great epochs of the Old Testament. In Israel, of course, when a king would get this vision, he would use his authority to command everybody to come and renew their commitment. If they did not line up, that would be the end of them. But Jesus was addressing the deeper problem in spiritual awakening. He is raising up a church that the gates of Hell cannot defeat, preparing men and women who will be equipped to win the world for God. You don't see the revival of Jesus until you read the fifth Gospel, the Book of Acts. There is the norm of the Church. When we live less than in the Spirit-filled reality of Pentecost, we are living less than what God wants us to be. Pentecost is the norm of the New Testament. I am not speaking of gifts or signs. I am talking about the reality of the living presence of Jesus Christ, filling the

heart of those who truly trust Him. Wherever you see the Church through the ages, alive and reaching out, you will see revival.

For the first 300 years, to a remarkable degree, this Spirit flowed through the church as it reached out literally to the ends of the Roman empire and beyond. But by the 4<sup>th</sup> century, the church had accumulated some wealth and finally it was recognized by the Emperor Constantine, becoming one of the official religions of the state. It seems then the vitality of revival began to leak out. Not that God was without a witness. You can see it in various ways through those times of Roman domination: you have the Monastic movement where people came together to seek holiness, and many of them became the means of reaching out to the poor and the neglected; in the 5<sup>th</sup> century you have a movement that for a while gathered around Augustine; in the 6<sup>th</sup> century it was with Justinian and Gregory; in the 8<sup>th</sup> century a leader named John of Damascus, called people back to what God wants them to be. Though not embracing the whole structure of the church, principles of revival sometimes break forth with vitality. Even into the Middle Ages you see movements like this with Bernard of Clairvaux, Francis of Assisi, John Wycliffe, Peter Waldo and the great Savonarola. Then came the Protestant Reformation which certainly recovered the theological convictions of Scripture. Strangely though, what we call the Reformation with Calvin, Zwingli, and Luther did not really produce missionaries. It was the Anabaptists persecuted by many of the Reformers, who were the real evangelizers of Europe in the 16<sup>th</sup> century. Revival groups began to gather and study the Bible and to pray, like the Moravians. What a tremendous missionary thrust they gave to the world. And then you have the Pietists, the Puritans, and later, the Wesleyans. These are basically revival movements, not in the official structure of the church normally, but representing that remnant that is always seeking God. These movements inevitably produced many missionaries. Out of that Puritan-Wesleyan missionaries came to America and many other parts of the earth. In the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century, you have the Student Volunteer Movement coming out of revival with Dwight L. Moody and others, multiplying in fifty years with no less than 20,000 missionaries actually reaching other countries.

Still you see the encroachment of the world upon the saints, crowding in, trying to draw attention on our self. But there are seasons of revivals. One that began in Wales about 1905 had a profound impact upon the Western world. About the same time, revival began at Azusa Street in Los Angeles, which really launched the modern Pentecostal movement around the world. In 1905, 6 and 8, a struggling church experienced a remarkable moving of the Spirit in Korea. Let me read a testimony of a missionary who was present.

The room was full of God's presence—a feeling of God's nearness impossible to describe. The whole audience began to pray—it was not many but one born of the Spirit—lifted to one Father above. God came to us in Pyongyang that night. Man after man would arise, confess his sin, break down, and weep. My last glimpse of the audience is photographed indelibly in my brain. Some threw themselves full length on the floor; hundreds stood with arms stretched toward heaven; every man forgot each other; each was face to face with God.

The overflow of God's spirit did not cease with the blessings of the people gathered there at Pyongyang. The account goes on to say that when the men returned home to their country, they took that Pentecostal fire with them. Everywhere the story was told, the same Spirit flowed and spread, practically every church throughout the Peninsula received its share of blessing. All through the city, men were going from house to house, confessing to individuals they had injured; returning stolen property and money, not only to Christians but to non-Christians as well. The whole city was stirred.

This was the revival that gave birth to the Korean church in power. And for a 100 years, it was the Spirit of revival that sustained that church and made it one of the great missionary churches of all time. I was there in 1999, at the conclusion of the Global Consultation on World Evangelization. At a meeting in the Olympic stadium I witnessed 80,000 young people stand to their feet and declare they wanted to get involved in the Great Commission. I regret to say that the revival today is diminished in the Korean Church. And if you talk to the old saints, they would say they are

earnestly praying that they can recover something of that heritage they had from their forefathers.

Revival is really the power of missions. We can have our courses, our planning sessions, our seminars, our lectures, but it's the Spirit of the Living God in Pentecostal power that makes God's people a mighty missionary people.

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# Some New Directions in Missions

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*Dr. Robert Donahue*

The work of missions is as old as the church. It has always been dynamic. Witness the dynamic of the Holy Spirit working through the believers scattered from Jerusalem in the earliest days of the church. These believers naturally shared the good news of Christ across Judea, in Samaria, and in the great multicultural city of Antioch in Syria where they were first called “Christians”. It was out of this ethnically mixed church that the Holy Spirit directed a new dynamic outward thrust commissioning Barnabas and Saul to preach the gospel in new areas and establish believers in those places.

The missionary spirit of the Moravians and their connection with the Evangelical Revival and John and Charles Wesley resulted in a strong missionary impulse. This impulse was specifically nurtured for followers of the Wesleys by Thomas Coke, the ardent champion of Methodist missions.

John Wesley laid a practical, theological framework that is important for Wesleyans today: the Wesleyan Quadrilateral which emphasizes the primacy of Scripture as the governor and judge of all else, the informative role of the tradition of the church, the importance of spiritual experience (the witness of the Spirit), and the contribution of reason. Within this framework of understanding, the Wesleyan experiments in practical religion have left us emphases which may be more important and relevant in the 21<sup>st</sup> century than in Wesley’s own time.<sup>1</sup>

These emphases include the importance of religious experience.<sup>2</sup> In the postmodern world experience is highly prized. We need to emphasize the “witness of the Spirit,” the “born again” experience, and the work of the Holy Spirit in one’s life.

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<sup>1</sup>Leonard Sweet. Also see Sweet’s book, *11 Genetic Gateways to Spiritual Awakening*, Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1998.

<sup>2</sup>The four emphases given here and below follow the EPIC idea: experience, participation, image driven, and connectedness or community driven. These ideas have been popularized by Leonard Sweet and others and used widely in the USA and Europe.

A second emphasis that John Wesley discovered was participation. He saw the importance of participation in a small group (band or class), in doing good works, and gathering in societies for the spiritual growth of believers. Personal accountability and responsibility for one another's spiritual lives was important. Participation precludes a spectator approach to vital religion. This emphasis is especially important to people today who sense the need for personal contact, experience, and relationship. "Hands on" is perhaps more important today than ever before. Think of the popularity of "work and witness" participation. People today desperately want to be more than spectators.

A third emphasis is image or graphics. Wesley could utilize a certain amount of symbolism: the cross, clerical garb, and so forth. But he had no movies, no video, and television, not even photographs! The 21<sup>st</sup> century is image saturated and driven. This is the MTV age. Movies have captured the attention and influence even the most conservative evangelicals and holiness people. Televisions are ubiquitous. Whole communities and nations are captivated by the images of our time. Graphics can be one of the most powerful instruments for missions in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. The Jesus Film is but one example of the power of image in missions today.

A fourth emphasis is community or connectedness. With the explosion of mega-cities, millions of people often live close to each other, but with little or no real connectedness. Community is often missing in this new urbanized world. There is a void within the lives of millions, a void that can be filled. Wesley's England was in the throws of the beginning of the industrial age and the beginning of urbanization. People flocked to the new urban centers from small villages where community had been taken for granted. Wesley seemed to understand well the need of people to connect with one another and to rebuild meaningful community. This was largely the difference between himself and George Whitefield who failed to gather his followers into meaningful communities. For Wesley, the community was largely the band, the class meeting and the societies. These provided both opportunities for participation, and connectedness



to build a real sense of belonging. It was a functioning community. The need for close community is probably much greater in the 21<sup>st</sup> century than in Wesley's day.

The approaches of missions today that take into serious account these four elements will make a strong impact for the gospel in this present century. Note that most of the fastest growing and largest churches around the world are utilizing most of these principles. The small group, cell approach to evangelism and church growth has been highly successful. Often the modern-day followers of Wesley have left this emphasis to others. The principles will work for Wesleyans today just as well as for others! Why should this good Wesleyan emphasis be left to the Pentecostals and Charismatics?

The World Mission Communication located on the campus of Asia-Pacific Nazarene Theological Seminary represents one of the "cutting edges" to missions. Few theological schools have the modern communication facilities and master's degree level programs that our offered on the APNTS campus. Here is an attempt to utilize the image emphasis, so especially important to this generation. Every pastor and Christian worker should receive education and training in this area to better understand and utilize the power of image communication for the gospel.

The Owens School of World Mission on the campus of APNTS has access to this modern facility specializing in broadcast and video media. This is incorporated into a unique master's degree program known as the Masters in Christian Communication with a concentration in Intercultural Communication. This 48 hour thesis program gives exposure to innovative use of mass communications studies, combined with cultural anthropology, theology of mission, cross-cultural communication and field work, and a significant supervised intercultural internship. Rounding this out is writing a relevant thesis combining communication and missions concerns.

As a denomination we Nazarenes have done a superb job of fielding hundreds of missionaries at any one time for many decades. These have mostly been career missionaries (now known as "global missionaries").

There are other organizations and denominations that may field more missionaries, but proportionately we have done very well.

However, this is a new day. The old paradigm of sending and receiving is changing dramatically. Most of the unreached peoples of the world live in countries that do not issue missionary visas! We have moved into the age of closed nations, and covert missionary activity. Tentmaking missions have become increasingly important. The ability of western nations to continue the expensive support of missionaries in the traditional ways is now in question. The major denominations have long since drastically reduced missionary support for financial and theological reasons. The trend to reduce missionary staffs is already evident in evangelical and holiness circles.

New trends for sending missionaries have been with us for some time. The short-term missionary has contributed much. These are mostly volunteers who may be college students giving a summer to missions, doctors who go for a few months or a year or two, teachers who do the same, and lay people and pastors who give a couple of weeks for work and witness projects. These do not take the place of the long term missionary, but they have been a new avenue for many to become significantly and personally involved in the work of missions.

Newer ways yet of doing missions and fielding large numbers of missionaries are already on the horizon! Many local churches in countries like Korea, Brazil, Nigeria and Peru, to name just a few, have been sponsoring missionaries at various levels—short-term, bi-vocational and full-time. Direct participation by local congregations in commissioning, sending and supporting missionaries is an important development. This reflects the Wesleyan concern for participation, and touches very well the postmodern desire for closer personal involvement. New missionary organizations are being formed in Asia, Latin America, and Africa where none existed even a few years ago. These groups are experimenting with new ways to field missionaries as well. Some of those ways include short-term missions. This can be a weekend, a few days, a few weeks or months or even a few years. Very few missionaries give a life time

exclusively to missionary work let alone to a particular field. The significance of these new groups is that they represent whole new groups of churches from the newer churches of the Third World. These are already fielding large numbers of missionaries all over the world. Many times this is done with less financial support than western mission groups have been used to. Sometimes this is because the new missionaries go to unreached ethnic groups nearby or even within their own countries. Sometimes it is because the emphasis is upon bi-vocational or tentmaking kinds of missionary work.

One of the most interesting and inspiring developments comes from the Philippine Missions Association under the leadership of Robert Lopez. By the year 2010 this organization aims to field 200,000 missionaries in up to 180 countries of the world! The primary method to accomplish this is a plan to utilize the vast Filipino diaspora—about 8,000,000.<sup>3</sup> At least ten percent of these could well be evangelical Christians. The idea is to identify, challenge, commission, and train at least 200,000 of these people who are already working in an overseas country to understand themselves as sent missionaries who can and will function in a missionary capacity first to the their fellow countrymen in these nations, and secondly to persons native to those nations and/or to persons from other nations who are also living and working in the country. An important new book, *Scattered*, published in 2004, details the arguments for this approach. Diaspora missionary approaches are attractively under consideration in Korean, Indian, and Nigerian circles as well as Filipino. Whether this approach succeeds as well as anticipated is not so important as is the attempt to find and utilize new approaches that have good potential to work.

There are other developments as well. There is spiritual renewal and revival in places across the globe from Laos, to Brazil, to Columbia, to the Philippines to China. The phenomenal growth in urban churches, often

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<sup>3</sup>See Luis Pantoja, Jr., Sadiri Joy Tira and Enoch Wan, editors, *Scattered: The Filipino Global Presence*, (Manila: LifeChange Publishing, 2004).

“international” in character in places as different as Kiev, Bogota, Amsterdam, and Manila. Some of these utilize the basic methods of Jesus with his disciples as articulated by Robert E. Coleman in *The Master Plan of Evangelism*. At least two major ministries that are now ministering to thousands each week are based upon this book and have developed an approach known as G-12 or D-12. Some characterize these methods as the Jesus method with a multiple marketing component.

Yet another phenomenon is the church planting movement that has seen almost unbelievable numbers of churches planted in various part of the world in very short time frames, i.e., 20,000 new believers and 500 new churches in a four year period, or in another place a similar four year period growing from 85 believers and three churches to 55,000 believers in 550 churches. This is a movement, which means the structural and administrative controls that most denominations and para-church organizations are used to cannot be applied. There must a a very high degree of freedom and Holy Spirit dynamic for this kind of movement to exist and work. The expectations of certain levels or finance, educated pastors, property ownership, and buildings have to be abandoned.<sup>4</sup>

This is the greatest day to be alive and active in the work of world evangelization! The greatest opportunities for spiritual harvest are now. The mission is the same—“make disciples of all nations.” The approaches and the paradigms may be changing. The methods may be undergoing adjustments. This is a time for bold advancement in the Name of Jesus Christ—to make Him known. It is wonderful to see the formation of the Donald Owens School of World Mission on the Asia-Pacific Nazarene Theological Seminary campus here in Manila, Philippines. The school proposes to be a center for innovative and creative missionary thrust based upon a solid biblical and theological base. It is our prayer that this school will play a pivotal and role in the tremendous challenge of world evangelization in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

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<sup>4</sup>See David Garrison, *Church Planting Movements* (Richmond, Virginia: International Mission Board, 2000).

# OWENS SCHOOL OF WORLD MISSION

The Donald Owens School of World Mission was officially launched in September 2004. It was a unique blessing for the founder of APNTS, Dr. Donald D. Owens, General Superintendent Emeritus, to be present on September 21-23 to deliver the first lecture for the School of World Mission. “APNTS is located in the heart of urban Manila with a very diverse student body,” stated Owens. “It is an ideal place to teach missions.”

The vision for a school of world mission was born in April 2004 when APNTS celebrated its twentieth anniversary. Members of a planning session that included Dr. Owens, Dr. Donahue, Dr. Cobb, Dr. Fukue, Rev. Dave Hane and Dr. Cunningham envisioned that the Donald Owens School of World Mission would provide a venue for educating regional missionaries. Planning session participants also expressed their hope that the Donald Owens School of World Mission would help the Church of the Nazarene develop new approaches to missionary work and to the processes of discovering, developing, and deploying missionaries for the twenty-first century.

Plans for the Donald Owens School of World Mission include sponsoring lectureships and drawing in visiting professors, as well as offering summer mission institutes. It will also help to coordinate distance and extension education mission programs. Most importantly, the School of World Mission is intended to inspire passion for the mission of God.

More specifically, the planning committee envisioned that the School of World Mission would:

1. Educate regional missionaries (non-formally as well as formally);
2. Become a primary missionary training center for other prospective Nazarene missionaries;
3. Remain a place where each course is relevant to missions in the region and directly addresses the regions that APNTS serves;
4. Provide a means of procuring funds and endowments, as well as gaining visibility for the missions programs and funding lectureships and visiting professors;

5. Initiate summer “institutes” consisting of a mission track of three summer courses, possibly attracting non-Nazarene missionaries and utilizing non-Nazarene resources;

6. Foster distance and extension mission program in coordination with regional communications;

7. Enable holistic ministry and evangelism for the seminary community and interaction with districts;

8. Develop multiple internship sites;

9. Develop new missions paradigms for the twenty-first century that design new approaches to missionary work and the processes of discovering, developing, and deploying missionaries;

10. Excite a passion for the mission of God.

A by-product is that a quality mission training program at APNTS will help keep Asia-Pacific leaders serving on the Asia-Pacific Region. Dr. Robert Coleman delivered the second lecture series of the Owens School of World Mission in January.

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## CALL FOR PAPERS

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One of the purposes of *The Mediator* is to provide a forum for dialogue about theological issues related to ministry in Asian and Pacific contexts. In keeping with this purpose, the editorial committee of the journal is seeking quality papers on the following topics. Also welcome are reviews of publications, including books and music.

As a result of discussions at the recent Asia-Pacific Regional Theological Conference (October 6-10, 2003), *The Mediator* will entertain receiving articles from interested scholars, administrators and pastors on the general topic of the "Spirit World". There are many categories which can be addressed: biblical, theological, historical, and pastoral. Many topics are possible.

Some might be: worldview of spirit world, evangelistic issues and the spirit world, pastoral concerns relating to spirit world (e.g. exorcism), Wesleyan views of spirit world understanding, holiness and spirit world, biblical hermeneutic of spirit world, territorial spirits, possession and oppression, post-modernism and spirit world, spirit world manifestations in our modern world, spirit world and urban ministry and so forth. Papers may be submitted as scholarly footnoted articles or as essays. Some good sermons would also be welcome. Papers may be sent (in electronic form) to me at: robertd@amdg.com.ph anytime for consideration for publication, but the deadline is August 31, 2005. We look forward to receiving many stimulating papers and trust these will help bring better understanding and foster further study and discussion of this area of interest among us.

We are looking for articles on issues faced by pastors at the local church.

How can pastors more effectively lead, train, and inspire their congregations for effective ministry in their communities? The topics could be addressed from a number of directions including biblical, theological, sociological, historical, missiological, or psychological perspectives.

In addition, articles on the following topics are always welcome:

Various Approaches to Theological Education

Contextualized Interpretations of Holiness or other Doctrines

Christian Communication or Cross-cultural Communication

Compassionate Ministry or Missions

Readers are also welcome to submit papers on topics not listed above.

### **Guidelines for Submission**

Please submit all proposed articles to the editor in both paper and electronic forms. Articles formatted in most modern word processing programs are acceptable. The proposed article should be in standard international English. Citations should contain complete bibliographic information, or a bibliography should be provided at the end of the article.

Footnotes are preferred over endnotes. Kate Turabian, *A Manual for Writers*, 6th edition, is the preferred standard. Papers may be of any length, although authors may be asked to condense longer papers. A list of non-standard abbreviations should be provided.



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# Bridging Cultures for Christ

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*For there is one God and one mediator between  
God and humanity— the man Christ Jesus (1 Timothy 2:5).*

Asia-Pacific Nazarene Theological Seminary is a graduate level school of the Church of the Nazarene. It is located on the outskirts of Manila, Republic of the Philippines.

This graduate school exists to prepare men and women for ministry in the Asia-Pacific region and throughout the world by developing personal and professional attitudes and skills so as to enable analytical reflection upon Christian faith and life, and competencies in the practice of ministry. Since its first graduating class in 1986, APNTS has trained men and women for a wide range of vocations. Today, over 175 graduates serve as pastors, teachers, Bible college presidents, missionaries, and various other church and para-church workers.

APNTS seeks to live out the holistic approach to the Gospel—a distinctive Wesleyan contribution to Christianity.

## **Degrees and Programs:**

APNTS offers a number of degrees and programs including:

- ***Master of Divinity*** (93 units) with possible concentrations in Biblical Studies, Religious Education, Missions, and Christian Communication..
- ***Master of Arts in Religious Education*** (48 units) with possible concentrations in Curriculum or Church Ministries.
- ***Master of Arts in Christian Communication*** (48 units) with emphasis in radio, video and print media.
- ***Master of Science in Theology*** (48 unites) with concentrations in Biblical Studies, Christian Faith and History, Christian Ministry, and Missions.

English is the language of instruction in the classrooms. Thus, students must pass the Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL) or the APNTS English Proficiency Exam to register. A score of 500 is required for the M.Div., and 550 for the M.A. and M.S.T. degrees.

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The well-qualified teaching staff upholds a high level of education. Adjunct and visiting professors from both within and outside the Asia-Pacific region help expand students' worldviews.

## **Accreditation**

APNTS is accredited by the Philippines Association of Bible & Theological Schools (PABATS), Asia Theological Association (ATA), and the Association for Theological Education in Southeast Asia (ATESEA), and is recognized by the Philippines Commission for Higher Education (CHED).

For further information or for an application, please write to the address below and indicate

Program(s) of interest:

- Master of Divinity
- Master of Arts in Christian Communication
- Master of Arts in Religious Education
- Master of Science in Theology

Materials we can provide you:

- Student Catalogue
- Application Form
- Other (please specify)

Please send all correspondence to  
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Philippines

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Website: [www.apnts.com.ph/mediator](http://www.apnts.com.ph/mediator)