

WHY YOU SHOULD GO TO THE MISSION FIELD

by Keith Green

I recently returned from visiting some overseas missionary bases, and I must say that since returning, my life has not been quite the same. The vision and goals of our ministry have suddenly changed. The Lord definitely did something to my heart on that trip. Besides showing me how small my vision had been, He began to give me a great burden to see the ranks of His army in the field swell! One of the greatest things God opened my eyes to was how tremendously evangelized my own country was, while the rest of the world was barely being reached. As I traveled from country to country, I thought of the millions of people I was passing through who needed to have the Gospel of Jesus shown to them in a real way - and yet there was hardly anyone there to reach them.

As I visited each mission base, I spoke with different missionaries, and picked up various pieces of literature that told the story of what was being done in different parts of the world to expand the Kingdom of God. As I read the statistics, I was shocked - I really had never known how little the need was being met!

When I returned home, I got hold of some of the leaders of different missionary organizations and set up some meetings to find out more about what was being done to fill the need. After these meetings, I decided to do a study of God's Word (to see what He had to say about reaching the lost in other countries), and I also read through some more of the missions literature I had been given. This article is the result of that study, and also a burning desire in my heart to see 100,000 young people released to the mission field over the next five years!

So...why should you go to the mission field?

1) *Because Jesus has told you to go.*

"Go into all the world and preach the Gospel to all creation." (Mark 16:15) With these words, Jesus made it clear exactly what His disciples were to do - they were to spread His teachings in His name, preaching salvation unto the ends of the earth. (Rom. 10:18) If you consider yourself a "believer", then you must consider yourself a "disciple" of Jesus - no less called and chosen than the very first 12 apostles. There are no such things as "1st class" Christians and "2nd class" Christians - every believer is called to spread the Good News about Jesus to those who have not yet heard. Jesus' command is definite and clear - it is His

great mandate, His "Great Commission" to the soldiers in His holy army. We must go, because our great General has commanded us to go.

2) You should go because the need is so great.

"The harvest is plentiful, but the workers are few. Therefore, beseech the Lord of the harvest to send out workers into His harvest." (Matt. 9:37-38)
Ever since Jesus first spoke these compassionate words, the supply of workers in the fields of soul-harvest has always been horribly low. But today the need is the greatest it has ever been in the history of mankind. Remember, Hell is not just for the weekend! More people are alive today, and more souls are at stake, than the total number of people who have ever lived on the face of the earth in all of human history! This simply means that we can populate either Heaven or Hell by our obedience or our laziness. There are over 2,700,000,000 people who have never heard the Gospel at all, and there are only 5,000 to 7,000 missionaries worldwide, working directly with these totally unreached groups of people. That means there is approximately one missionary for every 450,000 of these people! There are over 16,000 different and distinct cultures and people-groups - even whole countries, where not one single church is in existence. There are 7,010 distinct living languages, and 5,199 of them still have no Bible or Scripture translations available in their own language! Do these figures move you at all? Does it matter to you that an estimated 80,000 unsaved people die every day (approximately 3,333 every hour...55 people every single minute!) to face the judgment seat of Christ?

3) You should go because so few Christians are obeying the call, making the need even greater!

"Faith comes from hearing, and hearing by the Word of Christ...how shall they hear without a preacher?" (Rom. 10:17,14) Right now worldwide there are only 85,000 workers on the mission field - working mainly among those who have heard the gospel before. This figure includes missionaries from all over the world of every nationality. When you compare this number with the amount of Americans selling Avon or Amway products, it is staggering. Just in America alone there are 435,000 Avon sales-people (with 1,280,000 worldwide), and over 750,000 Amway products distributors, (with over a million worldwide)! Do you realize that these two companies combined have 14 times more representatives in the United States alone than the Church of Jesus Christ has in the whole world outside of America?

And what about the Christian representatives we do have in the world? Only 9% of the world's population speaks English, and yet 94% of all ordained preachers in the whole world minister to the 9% who speak English. And 96% of all Christian finances are spent in the United States on 6% of the world's population.

Only 4% of all Christian money is spent on missionary efforts to reach the other 94% of the world's population! There are over 1,000,000 full-time Christian workers in the United States; while one half of the world's population (3 major groups - Muslim, Hindu, and Chinese), 2,200,000,000 people, have only 2,417 full-time Christian workers. As you can see by these figures, something is definitely wrong. While we in America have approximately one worker for every 230 people - those who have never heard the Gospel even once have one worker for every 450,000 souls! Please forgive us, Jesus, for being too timid to obey You and reach out into all the world like You have commanded us to!

4) You should go because God gives special anointing and grace to those who leave their own land, people, and culture to do God's will and spread the Gospel.

"And the Lord said to Abram, 'Go forth from your country and from your relatives, and from your father's house...and I will bless you and make your name great; and so you shall also be a blessing; and I will bless those that bless you, and the one who curses you I will curse. And in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed.'" (Genesis 12:1-3)

Abram (later to be renamed Abraham by God) is only one of the many people in the Bible who God used mightily only after he left his own people, his own land, and his own culture. Look at the travels and ministries of people like Jacob and Moses - both of whom had to go into other lands to learn from God and be used by Him.

No matter where you look in the Bible, God always gave a great anointing and blessing to those who served Him in a foreign land. Look at Joseph and Daniel. They were the only two men in the Bible who God raised up as successful, secular officials in foreign and heathen cultures - and they remained faithful witnesses and servants of God to the very end, and often at the risk of their very lives! What about Jonah? He was a good example of someone who didn't want to go to the mission field and preach to heathens! Stubborn, rebellious, and selfish - and yet God "made him an offer he couldn't refuse." (I pray that God would freely move like that in all our lives, "helping" us to make the right decisions about going.)

And then there's the apostle Paul - who had such a burden for his own people and country, Israel. Oh, how he would have loved a ministry among the Jews! But what did God say? "Go! For I will send you far away to the Gentiles." (Acts 22:21) That's what God commanded, and "go" he did. Never was there a missionary like Paul. Take a look at II Corinthians 11 if you'd like to see a list of his qualifications: beatings, imprisonments, stonings, mobs, shipwrecks, the list goes on and on - and so did Paul, obeying his Master who bought him.

From Noah to Abraham, from Moses to Jonah, from Daniel to Paul, God has always given special blessing to those who, leaving the comforts of home and relatives, cross the boundaries of their little worlds to bring God's message and blessing to the nations. Remember Jesus' words about this subject, "A prophet is not without honor except in his home town," (Matt. 13:57)

5) You should go because America (and some other western nations) is literally drenched with the Gospel, while most other countries and cultures of the world do not have any continual, relevant witness at all.

"And thus I aspired to preach the Gospel, not where Christ was already named, that I might not build upon another man's foundation; but as it is written, 'They that had no news of Him shall see, and they who have not heard shall understand.'" (Rom. 15:20-21)

It is so true that we here in America are continually bombarded with Christian witness and ministry. Almost at every turn there's a billboard or a bumper sticker proclaiming something about Jesus. Turn the dial on your radio at any time of the day or night, and you've got non-stop preaching. There are several Christian satellite and cable networks. And there are over 250 different Christian magazines and publications. In most cities there's a church on almost every corner. I am not trying to say that this is all bad - a lot of it is good, winning many souls to Jesus - but as I've traveled overseas, it is hard for me to believe that it is God's will for there to be so much Gospel preaching and literature available here, while there is comparatively little or even none in many places outside of this country.

The world is going to Hell on every continent! Is it God's fault that so few are hearing the gospel - or is it the Church's? Aren't we who love Jesus accountable to reach our generation with the gospel? A friend of mine has written, "this generation of Christians is responsible for this generation of sinners." If this is true, then each of us must take a good, long look at our lives and priorities - finding out where God would have us begin to get ready to go!

6) You should go because, as Oswald J. Smith said, "No one has the right to hear the Gospel twice, while there remains someone who has not heard it once."

"But if our Gospel be hidden, it is hidden to them that are lost: in whom the god of this world has blinded the minds of them which believe not, that they might not see the light of the Gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God." (II Cor. 4:3-4)

Has it occurred to you that Jesus wants every creature to hear the Gospel? If you had 20 children to feed and plenty of food to feed them all with, do you think it would be right to give 3 of the children 10 meals, 7 children only 1 meal, and the remaining nothing - causing them to die of starvation? That's exactly what we're doing with the Gospel in the world today!

Because we believers are so deaf to God's call to go into all nations, we keep most of God's resources to ourselves! We keep feeding and reaching the same people over and over again. I am not saying there should be no Gospel preached in America, I am saying that there needs to be a spreading out of the soldiers of God, to fight the enemy where his greatest strongholds are - "where Christ is not already named"!

7) You should go because the time is short. More and more countries are closing their doors to missionaries and the Gospel, and we must go now.

"We must work the works of Him who sent me, as long as it is day; night is coming, when no man can work." (John 9:4)

I constantly hear of country after country where missionaries used to be welcome, but now the doors are closed to them entering. Though it is true that many Christians can still go to be subtle witnesses as doctors, teachers, engineers, etc., the Gospel can no longer be openly preached in many lands.

Although there are still vast areas of the world wide open for foreign evangelism, such as western Europe, parts of Asia, and most of the Pacific (Japan, South Korea, Singapore, etc.) there are many other countries where it is illegal to hold a street meeting or pass out Gospel literature. We need to sense the urgency of this hour, and obey God by reaching out to those lost in the darkness "while it is still day."

8) You should go because the Holy Spirit is speaking to Christian leadership all over the world that it is God's desire for there to be a great final missionary thrust with the Gospel before the end of the age.

It is His desire that every people should have the Gospel preached to them, and that the Gospel should be published in every nation and in every language. And unless YOU get involved personally, there is no hope of that ever happening in our generation!

"...And you shall be my witnesses both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and even to the remotest part of the earth." (Acts 1:8) "And this gospel of the Kingdom shall be preached in the whole world for a witness to all the nations, and then the end shall come." (Matt. 24:14) "The Lord is...patient

toward you, not wishing for you to perish but for all to come to repentance." (II Peter 3:9)

Is there any doubt in your mind that God wants everyone to be saved? If you believe this, and you really love Jesus, then WHY are you so timid about getting involved in this great thrust to bring the Gospel to all the nations? Do you think that while you're reading this, God isn't grieved that His Church is being so lazy and disobedient about fulfilling his commission? He knows that you agree with the Scriptures, and He's listening to every excuse you're turning over in your mind like, "Yes, I know that more people need to go...but He just couldn't mean ME! I'm...just not the 'missionary-type'..."