

# Worldwide Missionary Convention

by K.P. Yohannan

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*K.P. Yohannan's sermon calls for a deep commitment to missions through love, prayer, and personal sacrifice for the sake of the Gospel.*

**Duration:** 29:42

**Scripture:** Psalm 73:25, Matthew 6:33

**Topics:** "Mission Movement"

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## Description

In this sermon, the speaker shares a powerful story of a young man who was sent by Jesus to a dangerous place called Bundi. Despite facing threats and opposition, the young man boldly declared that he came to die for the sake of spreading the gospel. Three years later, the speaker receives a call inviting him to Bundi to inaugurate a newly constructed church. When he arrives, he witnesses the incredible love and devotion of the first generation of believers in Bundi. The speaker also shares a personal story about his mother's sacrificial giving and her desire to use her possessions to preach the gospel to those who have never heard of Jesus.

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## Transcript

Good evening. Thank you. I am told if I go over time, from behind me, they will pull me, my jacket, and push me down.

So, then they told me, you better look straight, there's a clock. And if you go over time, it will explode. Now, I got it.

Thank you for inviting me to be here with you. And after me, you will have a brilliant speaker, Michael Johnson. And this is a very special gathering.

I learned so much about it by people just telling me. Oh, by the way, I just came to Northern Ireland just about three, four days ago, first time. And I'm quite happy to be here.

And I was telling people, the only thing I can think about Ireland, long, long, long time ago, when I heard the Irish rovers. Oh, them silly unicorns. You forgot all about it, I know.

I gave my life to the Lord at the age of eight. My mother led me to Christ. I'm obviously, you know, by my look and my accent, I am not Irish.

I am from the southern part of India, born and raised there. And Thomas, Christ's disciple, came to preach the gospel in AD 52 and planted seven churches. And one of those churches happened to be just three kilometers from where I was born and raised.

That makes me a better Christian, I think. And I had this amazing privilege to be born in a Christian home. And my mother prayed for many years that one of her six boys would go and serve Christ.

And I'm the youngest in my family. And one by one, they all went to business and farming. And when I was growing up, she kind of lost her hope because I was kind of timid and shy and withdrawn, which you don't believe.

But it's true. So she decided to fast and pray, which she did for three and a half years, every Friday fasting, one prayer. Lord, call one of my sons to serve you, which she never told any of the boys.

And when I finished my studies, when I came and told my parents that day, if you allow me, I'd like to go to North India and serve Christ. Before I could finish my sentence, my mother, who was sitting on the bench, jumped up and said, Go! And I said, Dear Lord, I was an accident. She hates me.

So after two years of my life in North India with Operation Mobilization, I went home 2,000 miles down the south to visit my parents. That's when she told me the story. And she is the reason for the Lord's call in my life, I believe.

After eight years of my life with OIM, I went to the United States to do my seminary studies and to be pastoring a church for four and a half years. And it was during that time the Lord convicted me deeply, which was 30 years ago, to give all for the sake of people in India and the subcontinent, where they did not allow any more Americans and Europeans to come and be missionaries to preach and plant churches. But the lives of William Carey, Hudson Taylor, Judson, Amy Carmichael, and thousands like these wonderful missionaries, they gave their lives, and today what we have is the fruit of their labor.

And God continues to work there. So I serve the Lord with a mission called Gospel for Asia. Our focus is to recruit and train natives, nationals.

Now we are 13 nations, some 15,000 or so workers, about 14,000 plus workers in 13 nations serving Christ. They go through three and a half years of intense training before we send them out to the mission field where there is no gospel yet preached. And by the grace of God, we see no less than 17 churches planted every single day on the mission field.

When I say churches, it means no less than 20 adults baptized, which means you may have 50, 60 people total in the worship, and the work continues to grow. And I left India just a few days ago and landed in London for a few days of meetings both there and here. And tonight, right after the meeting, I'm going to run away to the airport and catch a flight to the States and be there for a week then again.

Somebody asked me where I live. I said, in the suitcase. That's a good place to be.

I have a wife and two kids, and my children were both born in the States. And we prayed from the day they were born, Jesus called them to know you, then called them to serve you. So when they finished their studies there, they both ran off to India to serve Christ.

And they're a little older, and they both are married. And my son Danny, his wife was in Nepal serving Christ, and they have a little daughter. And then my daughter Sarah, also serving God in India, married to a young man who is a medical doctor.

They have a little boy. They both are serving Christ. And incidentally, we don't arrange marriages for our children, but we assist them.

So I remember when this young man wanted to marry my daughter, I asked him, Danny, can you tell me about your life a little bit? You are a medical doctor. I think you will run off to America, and do you want to be there? And my daughter never wanted to leave India. She wanted to serve Christ here.

He said, oh yeah, when I was young, the Lord saved me. And when I finished my college, the Lord told me to go to medical college and get my degree. But you know, my call is to serve Christ and reach the lost.

My vocation is being a medical doctor. I said, you got it. You can marry my daughter.

And I'm quite happy. Now, you understand my English? Thank God. I speak English, you speak Irish.

My assignment tonight is to talk about loving God, loving others. When the going is tough, looking at you, you people look like you're starving to death. What an impossible situation you are in.

And so this message is quite applicable, I think. One of the places I went to serve God... Oh, by the way, if you need a Bible reference, since this is a mission conference, read Matthew's Gospel, chapters 9 and 10, tonight when you go home. That's my text.

So one of the places the Lord allowed me to go with a group of young people to serve Christ was in Rajasthan, in northwestern India. I was just about 18 at that time. Boondi is a place where people said, you don't want to go there because mean, bad people live there.

They usually beat up Christians and Christian workers. And we happened to be the seventh team to go there. True to their reputation, we were seven of us on the team, they beat us up real bad.

I was laying on the ground, this man was kicking me without any mercy. Another brother, blood was oozing down from the side of his head from the beating. And they said, dogs, leave this place in five minutes or we'll have to kill you.

We left the place. Some years would go by. The young man who finished his Bible school, we have 62 Bible colleges in 13 nations and when they finish their studies, we usually send them out saying that it's a one-way ticket.

This young man felt the Lord was calling him to go to Boondi. He was 19 years of age or barely 20. And the elder said, Boondi? You are tiny, skinny, it's not the place for you to go.

But he said, I've been praying for a year and I feel I must go there. He said, okay, they prayed and sent him. He got there, rented a place for a few dollars and every day he would go and talk to people.

And one night, as he was sleeping, early morning, six men came and busted the door open. And the tall Rajput with the turban on, he said, pull this young brother up by his legs and said, we can tear you apart like we do with a chicken. You don't want to stay here.

We've got our gods and goddesses. Leave this place. He was scared.

I would too. Next morning, he ran back to the mission station from where he was sent and reported. They came last night.

They said they will kill me. And he was really scared. And they said, well, we told you this is going to happen.

And the senior brother said, son, I just want to ask you a question. Did Jesus ask you to go to Boondi? He said, I know he did. But I'm scared.

And he said, son, go back to Boondi. Yeah, they will come and give you some trouble. Maybe beat you up and give you some problems.

And there's a small possibility they may kill you. But son, if that happens, heaven is a much better place. And you wait there for us.

And we'll come and see you later. He knelt down. They laid hand on him.

And he tells me, he got in the bus, saying goodbye with tears, saying that he may never see them again. He got back to Boondi. Within a few days' time, the same men came back and said, we told you never to come here again.

You are now going to make us murderers. After hearing their threats and mighty speech, this young man simply said to the gang leader, you know what? The sooner you do your job, it is better for me. I came here to die.

There's no way I'm going to leave this place. Jesus sent me here. What do you do with a guy who wants to die like that? Another three years would go by.

I get a telephone call in the United States. I said, hello. He said, is that a KFP? I said, yeah, it's me.

Oh, I'm calling to ask you, we want you to come to Boondi. I said, what? I want to put the phone down. He said, no, no, no, no, no.

We want you to come and inaugurate the church we just finished constructing. Ah, the story changes. The following month, I flew to Delhi and took a train and went on to Kota, on to Boondi.

You want to see people's face almost grow with Christ's love? So intense, you can touch it. First generation, some 120 adults and kids just worshipping the Lord. And I taught the Bible, weeping through the whole service.

When it was over, this young man said, you know what? This is the guy who said, he'll tear me like a chicken. And that is his friend, his wife. And I said, I can't believe it.

Now, another story. One of the ministries that we don't talk about is the work among the Muslims. We have 180 plus full-time workers working among the Muslim communities in India, in Pakistan, in Bangladesh.

But we don't talk about it. Salsa and Hussain, two young brothers, having done their special studies, they were assigned to work among a group of Muslim communities in northeast India. A couple of dozen

people showed interest in Christ and few came to know the Lord.

Praying for the sick and God healing them and seeing some miracles. Evenings they would spend their time teaching the new converts and daytime they both would go do evangelism. One day as they were going about their work, a group of men met them and said, how, you are Hussain, you are Salsa, you came to tell us about Jesus.

And our brothers thought they were friends. But no more words exchanged, the leader of the gang pulled out a dragger, a long knife, and stabbed into the heart of brother Hussain. He fell in a pool of blood.

They stabbed Salsa six times, believing that both are dead. These men fled. It took many months for Salsa to recover.

Hussain died. Hearing about this incident, Hussain's father-in-law, his wife's father, who is a committed Muslim from a distant village, traveled to meet his daughter and the two little children, his grandchildren. And this is what he said, my daughter, thank God the devil is dead.

Talking about his son-in-law. Now you come home with me and we raise the children. Now, a lot of you sisters sitting here and wives and mothers and grandmothers, I imagine.

How would you respond to that kind of request? This young sister replied, said, father, I just want you to know. I love the Jesus my husband loved and gave his life for. And I love the people that he loved.

And I cannot come home. I must stay here and raise my children to serve Christ. It took a couple of weeks before this man to understand the reality of Christ and his love.

And he gave his life to Christ. Finishing his seminary, a young man named Juby, traveled over 1,500 miles to a group of people called missing people between Arunachal Pradesh and Assam Delta area. Some 2 million people live there.

Even today, when some people come to them as honored special guests, the way they honor them, they give them a special drink. Not whiskey and beer. They grow these humongous worms in rotten meat.

And they take these worms and get juice out of it and give it to you. What? Look at your face. You're right.

That's the reason I'm not going there much. And Juby found himself in very difficult circumstances. Strange language, strange food.

And no one could understand Jesus or the gospel. With great enthusiasm, he went there. But all of a sudden, the honeymoon was over.

Life becomes very painful. And he told me, he began to pray this prayer. Lord, I'd like to go somewhere else.

And maybe someday later I can come back here. No answer. He kept praying the same prayer.

And he said, after a few weeks, all of a sudden he felt the Lord answering him back. Yeah, you can go. Wherever you want to go, you can leave.

But I must stay back. These are my people. I love them.

Juby tells the story with tears. He said it broke his heart. He began to weep.

And simply said, Lord, I don't want to leave you. I will stay. Whatever it takes.

Another 10 years will go by. He will have 92 churches planted. A Bible school to train new converts to go and preach the gospel.

A radio broadcast in the missing language. I think the saddest days of my life, it was when my mother died. My father passed away in 1974.

The memory of my mother, as growing up in this tiny village in the southern part of India, I mean, she was hardly five feet tall. A small frame. But oh, how she loved Jesus.

Early morning, she would be up about four or earlier and spend a couple of hours praying. And reading her Bible. I never saw her reading any other books, except her Bible.

And then he'd wake up the whole family for what we call the family prayer time in the morning. And as a young boy, I heard my mother repeat this verse a million times. Well, thousands of times.

Psalms 73, verse 25. Whom have I in heaven but you. And on earth I deserve no one and nothing beside you.

And I used to think, what on earth is she saying? Because I didn't understand that Bible verse. But oh, how she loved him. After our father passed away, in our culture, our mother becomes the head of the family.

And her son is fairly well-to-do people, including me, in terms of not that I'm rich and rich, but we would take care of our mother. And they all gave her whatever money she wanted, and we always did everything to take care of her. And one time, I was in India, and I traveled to visit my mother, and I saw her wearing this, what we call the blouse, torn from here to here, and stitched by hand.

In America, they call it a Mickey Mouse job. I was angry. And I said, Mother, what madness got into your head? Don't you care? The whole world will think we don't take care of you, Mother, but we give you all you want.

You can get a new dress whenever you want, but you are doing this. You are putting cow dung on our head and shame on our face. You know, preachers can get mad.

After all my anger and frustration, my mother, as always, incredible, gentle smile, she said, My little boy, you don't understand nothing. Someday you'll understand. That's all.

And I was on the way to Seoul, Korea, in 1990, when I heard my mother was taken ill with a heart problem at the age of 84. And I canceled my trip and went down to see my mother that weekend. She passed away.

I didn't know there was so much pain and emotions that I had experienced. But when the funeral was over, my brothers and I, we met to talk about our mother. Right during the conversation, one of my brothers said, Anybody know how much money our mother left in the bank? The guy who asked is a kind of greedy individual.

Don't tell him that. But somehow we all knew she didn't spend any money, but she was given quite a lot. So what do you do when you don't spend it? You keep it somewhere.

Answering the question, my older brother pulled out a notebook and held it up and said, I found it under the pillow of our mother's bed. We were terribly curious. And he opened it up.

He said, well, pages after pages, scribbling of our mother. Names of young people studying in Bible schools, missionaries scattered throughout many states of India. And the money she was sending marked against their names.

And then he said, as far as I know, there's nothing in the bank. And I broke down, began to weep. It was as though my mother walked back to the room, put her arms around me saying, My little son, now you understand what mother lived for.

Sure, I could have purchased a new dress if I wanted every month. But my son, I saw something that maybe others didn't see. Accepting the inconveniences and less inconveniences, a choice she made.

Oh, that's from the end of the story. The last thing she left with us. When I'm dead and gone, the only thing I will leave behind my earrings, my wedding ring, and the gold chain my husband gave me at the age of 19 when he married me.

I wanted to sell these items and give the money to preach the gospel among people that never heard my Jesus name. I want to meet them also in heaven. Before my time runs out, just a few more minutes.

I can tell you all night stories. And now my dear brother Michael is coming. He can tell you a lot more stories from the mission world because for 40 years I've been living with them.

But please listen to me. Missions and involvement is not you give a few more dollars or pounds or go somewhere for a few months or a few years. Jesus died on the cross to save sinners.

And you and I are called to continue the journey as Paul did. And this will not come by without suffering on the cross. In 1974, I went to the United States within a few years because of the resources given to us, my in-laws.

I was living for a luxury life. Seventy expensive neckties, all silk imported from Europe. Suits.

So many I couldn't figure out what I'm going to do. It took me half an hour to figure out what color and what clothes I must wear because I read a book called Color Me Beautiful. And not any fountain pen was good enough.

No, I had to have a fountain pen that was worth \$600, Mont Blanc. Nothing wrong with nice things in life. Please don't misunderstand me.

But living like that for nearly three years in the midst of seminary and being a pastor. One day Jesus said, son, half of the world goes to bed with an empty stomach and naked bodies. And you have an expensive leather-bound Bible sitting on your shelf and half of the world has never seen one page of the Bible.

It was not guilt and condemnation. It was love and grace. And I looked at my life and said, Lord, whatever happened to me? My heart was cold.

I couldn't cry anymore. And that's when I said, Lord, borrowing somebody else's prayer, take eternity and stamp on my eyes. That was 13 years ago.

And we exchanged all and everything possible for the sake of the lost world. No regrets. I'm the happiest human being traveling over 300,000 air miles average a year like this.

But this is what I want to tell you. You are not going to go to Burundi or Bangladesh or Orissa or Afghanistan. Most of you will never make it there.

But this is the time you need to embrace the cross by taking maybe a day or the week for fasting and prayer. Get Operation World Book. Get a world map put in your house.

Become a world Christian, as somebody said, not a worldly Christian. And if you fast one day of the week and if you die, you please let me know. It will not happen.

Develop a more deeper commitment for prayer. Secondly, let the Lord give you grace to evaluate your life and what you do, where you go and your time and all those resources. And maybe you'll find it's a beautiful thing to serve him.

Maybe you are called to go somewhere. But let your life become a living sacrifice. Get a one-way ticket.

And then also, like our mission with thousands of brothers and sisters scattered throughout many of these nations, you can become a prayer partner and a sender for many of them to continue the journey, reach the most unreached. Throughout all the stories I told you, they're all literally true. There's one common denominator.

Whom have I in heaven but you, nothing beside you. Love me, Christ said, more than all and life itself. When things get tough or difficult, emotionally draining, whatever, you will make it.

It's worth it. Oh, I end by saying, tonight, when you go home, look at your passport, your driver's license, your ID, and look at your date of birth. Add 100 years to that and ask the question, what happened to all the stuff I lived with and for? It's worth living for him.

And may the Lord speak to us.

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