

World Missions in the 80's

by Oswald J. Smith

The Church's job is to evangelize the world, giving every nation an opportunity to be saved, and until the world is evangelized, the work will not be done.

Duration: 43:08

Scripture: Matthew 9:35, Matthew 9:38, Mark 16:15, Acts 1:8, Romans 10:14, 1 Timothy 2:4, Revelation 14:6

Topics: "World Missions"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker emphasizes the importance of sending laborers into the harvest fields of the world to spread the gospel. He shares a personal story about the impact of missionary work on his own life and poses the question of why anyone should hear the gospel twice before everyone has heard it once. The speaker urges the audience to take action by either going themselves or supporting missionaries financially. He concludes by stating that it is the responsibility of the Church to evangelize the world and fulfill the commands of Jesus Christ.

Transcript

Those of us that were here last night, it was a historic occasion to hear Dr. Oswald J. Smith bear his heart once again on world missions. Tonight, we hear him again. And it is a real honor to be able to present to you the founder of the People's Church, Dr. Oswald J. Smith.

This man who introduced me tonight is a man who comes from the People's Church originally. I met him for the first time when he was in his teens. I remember him very well in those days.

And then when he grew up, we sent him down to the United States with about a dozen others to study for the ministry. And he came through wonderfully, and here he is back on the platform of the People's Church, a minister of the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ. His father is one of our elders.

His mother is also with us. And we thank God for Don Botsford and the wonderful way God has blessed him as the years have passed by. It's a great joy to be here tonight, and I trust that I may be able to say something that will be a blessing to everyone present.

First of all, I want to read from God's word. I'm turning to Matthew's gospel, and if you have your Bibles with you, I'd be glad to have you turn with me to this passage. Matthew's gospel, the 9th chapter.

Beginnings read of the 35th verse. The 9th chapter of Matthew's gospel, chapter verse 35. And Jesus went about all the cities and villages teaching in their synagogues.

Note, if you will, that he went about all the cities and villages. He didn't neglect any of them. He knew that every one had to be evangelized.

And Jesus went about all the cities and villages teaching in their synagogues and preaching the gospel of the kingdom and healing every sickness and every disease among the people. But when he saw the multitudes, he was moved with compassion. Have you, during these days, have you seen the multitudes? As you've listened to these men from across the sea, have you seen a picture of the multitudes, where they're living and where they're working? What happened when Jesus saw the multitudes? He was moved with compassion on them, because they fainted.

Now, what is compassion? Compassion is love in action. Love in action. If there isn't any action, there isn't any compassion.

Compassion is not a strange sort of a feeling that one has. But compassion drives men to do something. It's love in action.

But when he saw the multitudes, he was moved with compassion, because they fainted and were scattered abroad as sheep having no shepherd. Then saith he unto his disciples, The harvest truly is plenteous, but the laborers are few. And the problem of his day is the problem of our day.

A plenteous harvest, but few laborers. What is the solution? Here you have it in the last verse. Pray ye, therefore.

Pray ye, therefore, the Lord of the harvest, that he will send laborers into his harvest. And that's what we're trying to do here in the people's church. We're trying to send laborers into the harvest fields of the world and get as many missionaries as we can out to the regions beyond.

My life has been greatly moved by missionary models, and I want to give you one of my models that has perhaps meant most to me in my ministry. I put it in the form of a question. Why? Why should anyone hear the gospel twice before everyone has heard it once? I'm not saying that no one should hear the gospel twice until everyone has heard it once.

I don't care how many times people have heard the gospel. But I put it in the form of a question, and I ask the question, why? Why should anyone hear the gospel twice before everyone has heard it once? Now, the Bible makes it clear and plain, very clear and very plain, that the church of Jesus Christ must go to all nations, that every nation on the face of the earth must hear the gospel. The church must go to all the world.

And if you and I miss one part of the world, if we miss one nation on the face of the earth, we have not carried out his orders. God is interested not in just one nation. God is interested in the entire world, and he wants the world evangelized.

He says every kindred. That includes everybody. He says tongues, people, and nations, the uttermost part of the earth, the uttermost part of the earth.

Now, when I saw that, I asked myself the question, do all nations live in Canada? Is there any nation living beyond the boundaries of the country in which I live, beyond the boundaries of Canada? If all nations in the world live in Canada, then I can stay in my own country, or I can do my work in my own country and ignore the rest of the world. But if one nation lives beyond the boundaries of Canada, I am in duty bound to leave my country and go with the gospel of Jesus Christ to that nation. And if I cannot, if I do not feel led to do that, there is only one other thing that I can do.

I must send substitutes. And if I do neither, if I do not go myself and if I do not send substitutes, I'll be a missing Christian in the day of reward. When I saw that, I realized that I had to do something.

I was only 18 years of age. I'd just turned 18. But God spoke to my heart, and I realized that I have to do something He did his message to other people.

I left the city of Toronto, and I traveled 3,500 miles to British Columbia. And I settled down in a place called Harkley Bay. And when I got off the steamer at Harkley Bay, I found that the snow was deep, very deep, on every side of me.

In fact, it was five feet deep at Harkley Bay. And in order to get into the house where I was supposed to live, I had to get a shovel, first of all, and shovel the snow and make a path to the door of my house. Otherwise, I could not possibly enter.

And I remember as I lived there, I had to find my own firewood. I taught school during the daytime. I preached four times each week to the Indians.

There wasn't a single white man on the reserve. I lived alone among the Indians. And I'll never forget the first night how nervous I was as I went to bed.

I drew my bed up close to the fire so that I could replenish it from time to time when it got cold through the night. I'll never forget that first night at Harkley Bay when I realized that I was now on a mission field, though I was only 18 years of age, ministering for the Lord Jesus Christ. I stayed for about a year, and then realizing that I needed more education, more training, I left my Indian mission field and I returned to civilization.

I came back to the East. First of all, I spent a year in Winnipeg, Manitoba, in college. And then I came on to Toronto, and I spent two years in the Toronto Bible College, now the Ontario Bible College.

And after graduating from the Ontario Bible College, I left and went to Chicago, and I attended McCormick Theological Seminary, and for three years I went to that seminary in order to train to become a minister of the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ. And after graduating, having taken those five years in theology, then I took another year of post-graduation work in order to fit myself for the ministry of the Lord Jesus Christ. Then I applied to the board of the Presbyterian Church of Canada, and I asked to be sent to India as a missionary.

My application was very carefully considered. I was asked to appear before the board on different occasions to answer their questions. I did so because I was now 25 years of age, and I felt the time had come for me to go.

The board considered my application very carefully, very prayerfully, but they decided that I was not fit for missionary work, that I would be absolutely useless on the foreign field, and therefore they wrote me a

letter and frankly and definitely turned me down. I realized then that there was only one thing for me to do. If I was not fit to go to the foreign field, if I could not labor for the Lord Jesus Christ in India, then I would have to spend a lifetime sending out substitutes.

I'll never forget the day I placed the first five substitutes on the platform of the People's Church over 50 years ago. I went to see Reverend Mr. Cook, who was head of the Evangelical Union of South America. He was sick, but I talked to him and I asked him some questions.

I said, Mr. Cook, tell me, have you any missionaries to send out to the field? Have you any ready to go to South America? He said, yes, I have five who are ready to go. I said, why don't you send them? He said, we haven't the money. We cannot take care of their transportation, and we haven't the money to support them on the field.

I looked at him, and this happened well over 50 years ago, and I said to him, tell me, if I can raise the money to pay their transportation to the field, will you allow me to support them through the People's Church as missionaries of the People's Church on your behalf? I'll never forget the way his face lit up, why he said, of course, if you can possibly raise the money to get into the field, your church can take on their entire support. So I placed the five of them on the platform of the People's Church. I challenged the congregation to give the money in order to pay their passageway to South America, and then to continue to give the money to support them on the foreign field.

They did it. They gave sufficient to pay the passage of every one of them. They gave sufficient to support them on the foreign field.

The five in due time became 10. Then the 10 became 20. The 20 became 40.

The 40 became 80. The 80 became 100. And I lived to see the day when the People's Church had 100 missionaries on the foreign fields of the world.

But I wasn't satisfied. In a little while, the 100 became 150. And then the 150 became 200.

And again I walked the floor and praised God for 200 missionaries in the regions beyond, backed financially by the People's Church. I realized that God had called me not just to be pastor of the People's Church, but to use the People's Church in order to evangelize the world, or at least to do its share in evangelizing the world. So I continued.

The 200 became 250. Then the 250 became 300. And I'll never forget the day I was able to praise God for 300 missionaries in the regions beyond.

But I still wasn't satisfied. The 300 became 350. And now we have 350 workers laboring for the Lord Jesus Christ on the different mission fields of the world, and we stood back of them financially.

But the work went on. The day came when I handed the work over to my youngest son, Dr. Paul. And he continued with the vision with which I had started.

The 350 became 400. And then 450. And then 500.

And now we have 550 laborers for the Lord Jesus Christ on the foreign field. And every year we see to it that we spend more money in the support of our missionaries than we ever used for ourselves here at home. And that's why God has blessed the people's church.

That's why the crowds have come for over 50 years. That's why souls have been saved. We have put first things first.

We have sought the evangelization of the world, for God wants to see the entire world evangelized. And so we sent out substitutes, and they did the work. But you know, there came a time when I thought that the board might have made a mistake and that I might be of some value on the foreign field.

And I went over to the United States, and I started talking about my vision for missions. And finally I raised sufficient money by the grace of God in order to go to the mission fields of Europe. Three different times I went to the Russian mission fields of Europe proclaiming the message of God's salvation.

At last I became ill, and I was so ill that I had to give up my work over there and come back to my church here in Toronto. And that's what I did. Two or three years went by.

Then the urge came upon me again. This time I thought of Africa, and I raised sufficient money by the grace of God to enable me to go to Africa. Three different times I went to Africa on three different occasions, and there proclaimed the message of God's salvation.

Then I came back home and continued my work here in Toronto. Then there came upon me an urge to go to the Solomon Islands. I had heard a great deal about the Solomon Islands, and my heart within me was anxious to see what I had heard.

And so again, God enabled me to raise the money, and I went to the Solomon Islands to preach the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ. It took me one month on a fast steamer to get to the Solomon Islands, and it took me one month to get back home again after I was through with my ministry on a steamer because there were no planes in those days. This was years ago, and I had to go by boat.

But I became ill in the Solomon Islands, so ill that I scarcely had strength enough to make my way to the place where I was to speak at night. And I used to sit down on a chair in the Solomon Islands and preach seated on a chair because I wasn't able to stand. I became so weak.

At last, I boarded a steamer, came back to Australia and New Zealand, and finally, after six and a half months, back home again to my wife and to my family. I realized that I couldn't go to the foreign field and stay for any length of time without getting sick for I was unusually delicate in those days. I wasn't big and strong like I am today.

I was unusually delicate and unusually sickly, and I had to face sickness every time I went. But then I learned a lesson. I discovered that if I would go for only two or three or four weeks, that I could get by without getting sick, and that's what I did.

And as a result, I went to 70 different fields preaching the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ in those different countries. And then coming back home and carrying on my work in the People's Church. And that's the way the Church was led in the missionary work, and that was the way we got started in supporting missionaries on the foreign field.

Now I want to ask this question, if I may. Why should we go before all have been reached here? Because I hear that question again and again. People who have no vision of missions, no vision of world evangelization, they ask me that question.

They say, Dr. Smith, we haven't evangelized Canada yet. There are still thousands of heathen people in Canada. We haven't completed the work here at home yet.

Why should we go to the foreign fields of the world before we have completed our work in our own country, before we have evangelized Canada? And I used to answer that by asking three questions. First, why did David Livingstone leave Scotland while there were still thousands of people in Scotland who had never been saved? Why did he leave Scotland and go to Africa with the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ? For that's exactly what David Livingstone did and became the world's most famous missionary. And then my second question, why did William Carey leave England? Why did he go to India with the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ? Why did he do it? Were there not people in England who were still unsaved? Thousands of them.

Many, many had never yet accepted the Lord Jesus Christ as their personal Savior, and yet William Carey left them, turned his back on them, his own people in England, and he went to India, and there he proclaimed the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ. Why did he do it? And why did Judson leave the United States of America when there were so many in the States who had not yet decided for the Savior? Why did he leave? Why didn't he stay at home in the United States and finish the work of evangelism there before ever going to the foreign field? Why did Judson do that? And last of all, why did the Apostle Paul turn his back on Palestine long before everyone in Palestine had heard the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ? Why did he turn his back upon his own country and go with the gospel of the Lord Jesus to Europe, to your forefathers and my forefathers, with the gospel of Jesus Christ? Why didn't he stay in Palestine until everyone in Palestine had heard the gospel and knew at least how to be saved, until everyone had heard something about the Lord Jesus Christ? But he left Palestine and he went to Europe and he preached the gospel of Jesus to your forefathers and my forefathers in Europe. I say, why did the Apostle Paul do it? And I answer just with one statement.

Because the field is the world. Canada is not the world. The United States is not the world.

England is not the world. No country in Europe is the world. The world is made up of all countries and all nations everywhere.

North, south, east and west. And therefore, until the world has been evangelized, the work will not be done. For the remaining portion of this message, please turn this tape over to side two.

God is interested in a world, not just in Canada, not just in America, not just in England, but in the world. For God wants to see the entire world evangelized. Everyone must hear the gospel before he'll be satisfied and before this age can end.

I didn't say everyone must become a Christian. The Church will never, never Christianize the world. It is not the business of the Church to Christianize the world.

There is no country anywhere in the world where everyone will become a Christian as a result of the work of the Church. But the Church can evangelize the world. The Church can give every country in the world an opportunity of accepting God's salvation.

And if the world only knew the way of salvation, then the peoples of the world could be saved. And that's the work of the Church of Jesus Christ. We're not going to save everyone in Toronto, not by any means.

There never will come a time when everyone in Toronto will be saved, not in this dispensation. We're not going to save everyone in Chicago, not in our dispensation. We'll save a few.

We'll save some. But you know as well as I do that there are far more people outside the Church on the Lord's Day than there are inside the Church. In every country in the world, I say there are more people outside the Church than there are inside the Church.

And even those who are inside the Church are not all saved. There are always those who need God's salvation. The job of the Church is to evangelize the world, to give to the entire nation, to the entire peoples of the world, an opportunity of being saved, to present the gospel to them, to go to them with God's message of salvation, to go to every country and every nation on the face of the earth.

And God will never be satisfied until we have reached the entire world with the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ. Did you ever hear of a farmer working in one little corner of his field and working that corner over and over and over again and neglecting the rest of the farm? I never did. What does a farmer do? He works the entire field, the entire farm.

He doesn't spend his time in one little corner of the farm. He gets over the fence. He gets to the other parts of the farm and he works every part of the farm at the same time, year after year.

He's not satisfied to work a corner of the farm. He knows that the entire farm must be worked if he's to do the kind of a job he ought to do. Is God going to be satisfied if you and I settle down in one little corner of the world and work that little corner year out and year in? I don't think so.

God wants to see the world evangelized. And he tells us to leave our little corner, either go ourselves or give our money and send others and evangelize the entire world with the gospel of Jesus Christ. Dr. Alexander Duff, that famous missionary from India, came home to Scotland to die.

And as he stood before the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church of Scotland, he made his appeal. While he was making his appeal, he became weak and he fainted on the platform. They carried him to an adjoining room.

A physician bent over him and listened to his heart. After a while he opened his eyes. Where am I, he said.

Where am I? Lie still, said the physician. You had a heart attack. Lie still.

What cried Dr. Duff? I haven't finished my appeal. Take me back, take me back. I must finish my appeal.

Lie still, said the physician. You go back at the peril of your life. But in spite of the protest of the physician, the old white-haired warrior struggled to his feet.

With the physician on one side and the moderator of the General Assembly on the other side, he again mounted the steps of the pulpit platform. And as he did so, the entire assembly stood to do him honor. Then when they were seated, he continued his appeal.

And this is what he said as he hung on to the pulpit. He said, When God, when Queen Victoria, when Queen Victoria calls for volunteers for India, hundreds of young men spring to the colors. But when Jesus Christ calls, no one responds.

He paused. There was silence. And then he spoke again.

Is it true, he said, that the fathers and the mothers of Scotland have no more sons to give for India? And then he paused again and waited. But there was no response. Very well, he concluded.

Then age it though I am, I'll go back to India. I can lie down on the banks of the Ganges, and I can die. Thereby can let the peoples of India know that there's one man from Scotland who loves them enough to give his life for them.

In a moment, young men all over the assembly sprang to their feet, crying out, I'll go, I'll go, I'll go. And after the old warrior had been laid to rest, those young men, having graduated, having been ordained to the ministry, left their homeland, made their way to India, and they there became the substitutes of Dr. Alexander Duff as they gave their lives for the evangelization of India. My friends, you and I are facing a tremendous challenge at this conference.

God wants the world evangelized. God wants Jesus Christ known far and wide. God has no other way, except through you and through me, of evangelizing the world.

If the world is to be evangelized, the Church of Jesus Christ must do it, unless you and I respond to the appeal and do something about it, either by going ourselves or else by giving our money and sending someone else in our place. We will not have fulfilled the commands of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. What are we going to do about it? How are we going to answer? Will we fit into God's plan, into God's program? Will we do something to get this gospel to those who have never heard? Or are we going to close our ears to the call and our eyes to the need and refuse to do anything to evangelize the world? You and I have to decide what we're going to do, and not until we decide will God be satisfied.

Sir Winston Churchill put it this way as he appealed to the United States of America to do something to help win the war. He said this, Give us the tools, and we will finish the job. That's what he said to America.

Give us the tools, and we will finish the job. And they gave the tools, and they gave the money, and they gave the equipment, and more than that, they gave themselves. And the job was finished, and the war was won because they were willing to do what they could in order to win the war.

My friends, I believe God is saying to you and to me here tonight and in this convention, God is saying to us, to each and every one of us, if you cannot go yourself, then give the tools that the world may be evangelized and evangelized before it is forever too late. Shall we bow together in prayer? Father, we thank you now for that which we have heard, and Lord Jesus, it is our prayer that this message from thy servant based upon thy holy word and over 50 years' experience will pierce our hearts and send us out to do the job that you have already called us to do. We pray in Jesus' name.

Amen.

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