

The Divine Imperative

by Paris Reidhead

Paris Reidhead's sermon emphasizes that every believer is called to actively participate in the mission of spreading the Gospel in their daily lives.

Scripture: Matthew 4:19, Luke 12:48, Luke 16:9, Acts 1:8, Hebrews 11:6

Topics: "Missions", "Stewardship"

Description

Paris Reidhead emphasizes the importance of following the call to a Person, Jesus Christ, rather than a specific place or work. He shares stories of individuals like Sofie and Kwabena Darko who found their mission fields right where they were, impacting lives through their obedience and generosity. Reidhead challenges listeners to be actively involved in missions wherever they are, whether in their neighborhood or across the world, by being faithful stewards of their resources and opportunities.

Transcript

The Divine Imperative By Paris Reidhead* Let's bow our hearts in prayer. Father we're here and thou art here and we are here to meet with Thee, to hear from Thee. Make this a special time that everyone here sense that there's just two people here, You and he or she. Here to hear from Thee, to meet Thee, to find out Thy mind and Thy will and Thy plan and to where our place is in all that Thou art doing. We give these thanks in Jesus name, Amen. Now, we begin with the fact that everyone who names the name of Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord, Lord and Savior is by very definition committed to follow Him.

I hear a lot of missionaries speak about a call; I've used the term many times. Always regretfully when I began to understand what the Scripture teaches us about a call. I've had young people come and say, "I believe God has called me to so and so, to such and such." Usually to a place or to a special kind of work. The only call I find taught in the Bible is the call to a Person. He said, "Come follow me and I will make you fishers of man," but I don't find any other biblical evidence for a call. (Matt. 4:19) They say, "Well, don't you have people called?"

Paul called. Did Paul say he was called to be an apostle?" "Yes, he did." "Didn't he say?" "Yes he did." "Didn't he say it was ...?" "Yes, he did" In the looking back at it, in retrospect, it's correct, but in terms of the future I think it's questionable. Somebody comes to see you and says you know God has called me to so and so; you'd do well if you know the person well enough to be honest and frank. To say you know it might be a little wiser if you were to say, based on what I now sense and feel and know.

It seems that possibly the Lord may be leading me (laughter) to such and such a place and such and such a ministry, but I would like to hold it before others for prayer and for leaders for council. We went to our mission society as applicants and one morning after we arrived the first day of the month we were to spend with them. They had a session for the candidates and one of the chaps got up and he said, I felt unrest in my spirit. I asked the Lord to speak to me. During the night I had a vision of where two rivers came together, I went to the map and looked for those rivers and I found it was where the blue Nile and the white Nile joined the joined the Khartoum.

God has called us to the Anglo-Egyptian Sudan. I didn't know where the Sudan was, I turned to Marjorie and I said if that's what they are looking for we can leave this afternoon because we've not had anything like that. All we had was a burden and a desire that our lives be used where He wanted them. I always thought it was kind of unfair to have ten of the strongest men on the light end of the log and the one weaker man or woman on the heavy end of the log. It didn't seem quite fair to me that that was the way God wanted the log to be.

If the log is getting the gospel out then we've got ten men in the homeland for one woman out in the mission field or one lonely man somewhere. I didn't think that was fair and we put our lives in the Lord's hands and He seemed to be leading us toward Africa. Well, we stayed there for a month. During the course of the time, I learned where the Sudan was because Earl Lewis was there and he had been in the Sudan and he told us what it was. All I found out about it was enough to make me say, well, Lord if you've got a second choice (laughter), I'll take it.

We went before the board and we were accepted and they said, "Would you be willing to go to the Sudan?" I looked at Marjorie and she looked at me and we said, "We'd love to go to the Sudan." Right then we decided that if that's where the Lord wanted us that's where we wanted to be. The other family wasn't accepted, the one that had the call to go where the rivers joined. And when it was over he said, "Well, I gave it a good try. Now I can go back to pastoring and be at peace."

Listen, a little bit of gentle timidity is appropriate. As best as I can see now it does look as though possibly the Lord is leading me to such and such a field, but I want to explore it and pray about it and find His mind and have it confirmed because I don't want to be any place He doesn't want me to be.

You see just because He doesn't lead you to some distant place doesn't mean that He intends for you to be a spectator in this task of missions. There are no spectators except those that are in the church that have never been born of God, the kind that I talk about in the book (Finding the Reality of God). The ones that are there they have everything but life. Now, they're spectators to everything, they're even going to be seated in the bleachers in hell spectators of those that have gone to heaven.

It's a terrible thing isn't it to come up to Matthew 7, "Many will say unto me in that day, didn't we cast out devils in Your name and do miracles in Your name and I will say unto them away with you, I never knew you." I never ask anybody anymore, when did they come to know the Lord. I don't think that's important, the question I ask is, when did you come to know that the Lord knows you as His? You see, a lot of folks know Him, He doesn't seem to know. Now, if you know Him and He knows you then you're involved in missions because He said, "Come follow me."

And then in that verse that we love to misquote. Mark 16 it says, "Go in all world and preach the gospel to every creature." Literally what it says is: "as you are going into all the world, preach the gospel." The imperative is in preach and "as you are going." You see, if He said "go" when He said "follow," it would be

a contradiction. He doesn't contradict Himself. He said, "As you are following Me, preach." So wherever you go, whatever you do is just as much service for the Lord as though you were going to some distant area supported by the local congregation.

Now unless you see that the purpose of the conference has been missed as far as you're concerned. You're involved, there are no spectators. Why do you live in that house where you live? You say well we got a good buy on it. I don't think so; I think you live there because God wanted to put you next to somebody as a sample of His grace. Why do you work where you work ... Well, I got a good offer. I don't think that's the whole reason, I think you work there because God wanted you there as a sample of His grace to someone He'd like to see brought out of death into life.

You ought to pray just as much about where you live and where you work as the missionary prays about where he's going to settle and what he's going to do when he settles there. Because you're just as much involved as he is. An old washer woman, Sofie, in New York at the Gospel Tabernacle, when I got there the fragrance of her memory was still very, very real. It started at missionary conference. Now, Sofie had the right idea, she got involved. First she said, "Lord send me to China."

And He didn't do that, then she said, "Send me to Africa." And He didn't do that. And she went around a few other countries. She said, "Why is this Lord? I keep asking you to send me, why don't you send me?" He said, "Sofie, why should I do that, I'd be wasting money. You have a Chinese family living in the next apartment building to yours; you've never gone to them. And there's an African family living in the floor below you, you've never gone to them. And there's a Philippine family living right next door to you, and you've never talked to them about Me.

Sofie, it would be a waste of money to send you anywhere. I put the whole world right at your door and you're not talking to them. So if you're not going to be a missionary for Me here, it won't do Me any good to send you anywhere else." Sofie saw that she could be a missionary; first she saw that she could give. Now she didn't make a pledge, she didn't believe in pledges. She believed in giving, so she took the \$1,000 that she saved out of the bank and she gave that to the first missionary conference A.

B. Simpson¹ had at the Tabernacle and that was the first missionary conference ever held anywhere in the world. That year she went ahead and took an extra job, she was a char woman, she swept offices and she laundered clothes and she took two or three extra jobs working about 18 hours a day. The first day of the second annual missionary conference when the pledge time was given, Sofie got up from the place where she usually sat in the corner, the end seat in the back row and danced down the aisle.

Brought a bag full of money and put it in Dr. Simpson's hand, a little over a \$1,000. The year 1882. Do you know how much money that would be today? That would be a whole pile, just a big whole pile, somewhere around \$10,000. You could buy a tailor made suit of imported Scotch woolens in New York City for \$7.50. Then a maid worked in a home for \$2.50 a month, board and room of course. Dr. Simpson died in 1919, same day after Dr. Simpson died, Sofie died. The Tabernacle was filled, seated a 1,000 people, the Tabernacle was filled for Dr. Simpson. They had a beautiful display of flowers and preachers came from every place they could ¹ Albert Benjamin Simpson (1843-1919) founder of The Christian and Missionary Alliance

to be there to honor this man that had such a ministry. They left the flowers up because Sofie's funeral was the next day and they didn't want to have the church empty of flowers for the washer woman. They didn't know about what Sofie had done. The front of the church was filled; they put racks along the wall on

both sides. Every seat was taken, the Fire Marshall gave up trying to keep the place because they were crowding in and there were nearly half as many outside as there were inside, waiting, and they couldn't get in.

You see, Sofie had gone up and down the streets of New York witnessing to drunks and to derelicts and to poor. Gone into homes where mother was sick and she scrubbed and washed and cooked and fed the children and won them to the Lord. Some had become politicians, some had become ... Gone back to their practices ... They had been alcoholics and God had delivered them. Limousines brought some to the door of the Tabernacle. She was a missionary in New York City. Now if you're not a missionary in Omaha or wherever you live it would be a waste of God's money and your time to go anywhere else.

If you can't be concerned about the people you know, there isn't a ghost's chance, a snowballs chance, in a hot stove of your amounting to anything for God if He gets you 10,000 miles away. You've just got to realize that. He said, "After that the Holy Ghost has come upon you, you shall be witnesses unto Me both in Jerusalem and in Judaea and in Samaria and under the outer most part of the earth." (Acts 1:8) But every believer can have a worldwide ministry for Christ, not just in their Samaria, but elsewhere.

Hal Street, Harold B. Street was the Deputation Secretary for the Sudan Interior Mission and when I was assigned to do that work they asked me to. I spent a few weeks with him. I heard Harold Street tell several times of an experience he had in a missionary conference in a little Baptist church over here at George, Iowa. He'd gone into the church for missionary conference and that meant Sunday through Sunday. We had Bible teaching during the mornings and missionary ministry at night and people didn't have television and they came out to see pictures missionaries took.

It took a lot of grace, but they came anyway. They asked me, when I got to be this Deputation Secretary, to review the pictures of the missionaries before they went to the churches. They had gotten some motion picture cameras. Now, to them that meant keep the camera moving all the time (laughter). I'd get sea sick looking at these pictures, cars flying up in the air, houses swinging across. Well, Hal had some good pictures. In that congregation, that week, was a family. They grew corn, they fed their corn to hogs and they worked real hard.

Nothing seemed to come just right, if there was sickness it got to their hogs first. If there was drought their ground got the least water. They always were just at the edge. Everybody felt a little bit sorry for them especially because he had a very serious handicap, he stammered so badly it would take him two minutes to say his name. A real handicap speaking. The last Sunday night, Hal was putting away the curios and folding up the screen and getting everything down to leave the next morning.

When he got done he looked and there was still this family sitting in the back of the church. He came back and the man's wife said, "My husband has something that he wants to ask you and he insists that he do it." So Hal just stood there and finally the man got it out. "I want you to stop by my filling station tomorrow." See he wasn't making it with just hogs and corn, he had a chance to get a filling station and he was paying it off from the sales. So Hal filled the car up to the brim and sloshing ...

Just couldn't get another tomato can full of gas in when he left town because he didn't want to take any of this man's gas. He figured that's what he wanted, he was wrong. When he got there the man was there and his wife was there and he said, "God has been speaking to my heart this week. My wife has received an insurance policy from one of her relatives that died for \$1,000. You said we could support a missionary for \$1,000 a year and we got the first \$1,000 and we want to support our missionary."

Hal was desperate, he didn't want to take ... He knew how badly they needed the money and he said Lord give me wisdom under his breath. He said, "I couldn't do that, the Scripture says, 'Without faith it is impossible to please God.' (Heb. 11:6) If you've got a \$1,000 you won't have to trust God for a whole year. I can't do that, why the only way I could do that is if we'd have to take that \$1,000 for outfit and passage and you'd have to start trusting God from the first month."

He said, "I ... (stammering the whole time) I have to think about that, I'll write to you." Hal left and drove back to Minneapolis hoping and praying that Christy would forget all about it, that he cut that off right soon.

Three weeks later, he got a letter saying my wife and I thought and prayed about this and you send the missionary, we'll give the \$1,000 for outfit and passage. The missionary came down, they took her around they introduced her to friends, got prayer people that promised to pray and she went to the field. The end of the first year Hal got a check, here's our \$1,000 for next year, God has blessed us, send us another missionary. So he just didn't have time to go back he just sent another missionary.

End of the second year he got \$2,000. God has blessed us, send us another missionary. He said I better go down there (laughter) to see what he's doing, maybe he's cooking his corn our in the back yard or something (laughter). I got to see what he's ... How he's getting this money. He went down there and God had blessed. They put on a grease rack and he was greasing that brought him more money. They put on a little store and he was selling goods the way they are doing now, bread and milk and so on.

They were one of the first. He says well all right, he got \$2,000 for the two that were on the field and \$1,000 for the missionary that was going. The next year he wrote back, in a little letter he said Brother Street God has blessed us, I've been able to put two bays onto the station and now we're doing repair work. Send me another missionary. Well, Hal wrote back and said yes but there's next year, your first missionary is coming home on furlough. We don't want you to take another missionary we want you to be with her, help her on furlough.

The end of that furlough year the church back in Bay Ridge Brooklyn that had said they couldn't afford to support their missionary had finally got around that they were going to have a farewell service in Brooklyn for her before she went to Africa. Hal was going out for a missionary conference and he invited this family to go. When they got there, he didn't get there from Sunday, they got there about Thursday but it was Sunday afternoon and Hal was getting ready for the last service.

He was just working around and Christy was helping him and Hal sort of matter-of-factly out of the corner of his mouth said by the way Christy tonight I'm going to call on you for a 10 minutes testimony. Christy ... He couldn't ... Says that's all right Christy if you can't talk you just stand up there ... Let them look at you, but you'll talk. He wasn't sure, he didn't really think so, and he didn't really think he could do it. Hal said, the man I'm calling on to bring testimony is supporting four missionaries, Christy.

Christy came, stood there, raised himself to his full height, took two deep breaths, opened his mouth and spoke for 10 minutes and didn't stammer on a syllable. Question, if you were to die tonight and meet the Lord in the morning, you've been singing, "Oh, how I love Jesus,"² and "Take my life and let it be consecrated Lord to thee."³ Would He be able to say to you, you've done what you could? You see, or would you be like Christy as he began stammering, unable to complete a sentence because you've had such great benefits and blessings and privileges and endowment and opportunity and resources.

Would He honestly say of you, you've done what you could? Well, perhaps it gets back to this; we've never really quite understood what Christy put into that. Sure, he put in money, but what is money, money is - now listen very carefully it's very important, - money is fluid life. Money is crystallized intelligence. Money is solidified energy. You have a job, you work, you bring your life, your education, your talent, your time and you put that into whatever you've contracted to do and at the end of a week or two weeks or a month, as the case may be.

They give you what one period of your life is worth. Now don't fall the filthy laker! There is such as filthy laker obtained by filthy means. Their filthy clothes and filthy words, but that doesn't mean clothing in its essence is filthy. Or were speeches filthy. No. Money is life. It represents the time it took you to get it and when someone puts into the hands of a missionary the means for their going, God in His wisdom counts that as a portion of the life of the person who earned it.

Let me read it to you, you look skeptical, you don't believe what I'm saying and I think I can prove it to you. Luke, Chapter 16, verse 9, "And I say unto you, Make to yourselves friend of the mammon of unrighteousness; that, when ye fail, they may 2 "O How I Love Jesus" By Frederick Whitfield, 1855 3 "Take My Life, and Let It Be" By Frances R. Havergal, 1874, Music by H. A. Cesar Malan, 1827

receive you into everlasting habitations." What's he saying, he's saying that by means of that which is known as "the mammon of unrighteousness you can make friends that will receive you into everlasting habitations." Now, let me give you a scenario, I've had missionary friends in New Guinea. I've never been to New Guinea, I've tried to give and support and pray. You've given and supported and prayed for missionaries in whatever field you're particularly burdened about. Now you die and you go to heaven that isn't far and you're going to recognize people and someone is going to come to you and say, "Oh, my brother, my sister I'm here because you cared.

Today the Lord sent word to me that you were coming and that I was to be here to receive you and that he had put me down to your account." "Where were you from I don't think I ever saw you?" "No, you never saw me in the flesh, I was from New Guinea. I was from the interior of Brazil, I was from wherever but you sent a missionary, you prayed for a missionary, you gave to help that missionary be there. Through that one, that messenger, I learned of Christ and He has just told me that He put me down to your account.

I'm one of the friends you made by your life gave." He said, "Well, that's not what that verse means." Well, my dear I'm here and you're there and I'm just going to stand on the fact that I got the floor for the moment (laughter) and that's what it means. If you don't think so you just prove it to somebody else, don't try to prove it to me. Don't bother me with the facts my mind is made up (laughter). "Make to yourself friends with a mammon of unrighteousness that when you fail they will receive you into everlasting habitations."

So that means that you can have part with Him anywhere in the world. He counts it. Well, let's look at it arithmetically. When I went to school I studied arithmetic. When I went to high school they had math but I missed it, it didn't take. Now, my little grandchildren in the third grade is studying math. I tried to help my daughter and she said dad my teacher said if you help me once more I'm going to fail (laughter). I still remember a little bit about arithmetic and you're in for it.

I go back a long ways so bear with me hon, bear with me. Here's somebody that's got a job and he works and he earns \$1 an hour, \$40 a week. Now don't tell me that that's illegal, I know that but just accept my arithmetic. He's got a \$1 ... \$40 a week and he hears you are being sent to the Lord and he comes to you and says I'm going to put in a \$1 a week for your support. Now what is he giving? He's only giving you 100

pennies. What's he giving, he only earns \$40 a week, and what's he giving?

He's giving one hour of that work week but he can only work 40 hours, there's 168 hours in the week so round it off. He's giving four hours of his life on your field as a witness for Christ through you. Now here's another chap, man, he's got a great job. This fellow is making \$10 an hour. Unheard of hourly wage. When I got up to 27 cents an hour in 19 early 40's and never worked for a wage since as such, I thought 27 cents an hour was going to put me on easy street for life.

Any rate, he's got \$10 an hour and he sees the missionary and he says I'm going to give \$1 a week for your support. Now how much time, witness time, does he get through that? Does the dollar help, the dollar does as much for you as the other dollar did but it didn't do anything for him did it very much. Because \$10 a hour means that he's getting 1/10 of an hour which I understand is about 6 minutes times 4 is 24 minutes. Now do you see why this Scripture says, "To whom much is given from them much is required." (Luke 12:48) In order to get the same balance you have to give more.

What if he gave \$10 he'd only get an hour but the missionary would get help, more tracks, more travel, more witness and so on, it would go into the work. Now suppose this person were to come to the place that they made this is unheard of, of course, nobody does that. They made \$400 an hour, you think they don't do it, you just wait until you get your bill from your surgeon and see what he tells you, or from your lawyer. Those boys know how to charge, they had a graduate course in how to charge. (laughter) That's all right I don't mind, if they can get it that's good.

I'm going to come along right behind them and say here's the collection plate here's your opportunity to have a witness in wherever. I don't mind how much they make I'm only concerned about how much they keep, you see. See God, right now if everyone here that earns money were to say now heavenly Father I know how much I need to live and I'm living comfortably now and I'm going to go into partnership with you. I will never take more money for my life than I presently take. I will only increase it by cost of living.

Nobody does that! Oh yes, they do. Kwabena Darko did in Ghana. Why would I love the Lord, he believes the Lord didn't want him to be a Pastor or missionary he wanted him to be a chicken farmer. I met him just after he started on his own, he had \$978. He got 5 acres of land leased to him there was water and light on it. He

went out in the bush and cut posts, went to the dump and got some old wire, built the houses out of mud blocks and started a chicken business. I came to him then and he said, "I need you as a counselor." I said, "I'll do it as long as I find you're doing what I tell you." Well, he said, "What's the first thing." I said, "The first thing for you to do Kwabena, is the first dollar you make you give God 10 cents of it. From that time on every dollar that comes in on your gross not your net, you give God 10 cents of it.

Then you set down and you put 10 cents into another savings account for the government, taxes, legal fees, anything, but you pay 10% to the Lord" and I said, "Kwabena what I want you to do is do that at the beginning of the week, not at the end of the week, what you anticipate God is going to do that. You draw a check for God on Monday morning, the first check you draw you make it for God. It is 10% of what you expect that week. Then you take 10% of what you expect and you put it in the other savings account for your taxes and government expenses.

See that's what Joseph did, that's the law rule of Joseph, he took 20%." When I saw Kwabena I said, "How is it going?" He said, "According to you the appraisal I got, I didn't ask for it, but they brought it, they say

my hatcheries, feed out pens, processing plant, feed mill and my vertically integrated marketing and producing, that is an American price of over \$5 million." I said, "What are you doing about the stewardship?" He said, "I hate to say this, but last year I fully supported 95 national evangelists, in this country and the two neighboring countries.

I have provided all the material for 27 churches and the people did the erecting. I have provided all the material for four youth camps and I'm spending 10% of my time going around preaching." He said, "Thousands of believers have gone into the chicken business and are feeding themselves and their families." I met a man in Washington, I was asked to sit in on a conference he wanted to start a nice business in Kumasi, Ghana. I said I'm not interested in being involved with you unless you get Kwabena Darko on your board.

He lives in the house he's lived in for the last 25 years. He put a porch on it and he put a couple of rooms on it and he drives an old pickup truck. Remember, the bargain he made with God. He wouldn't take any more for himself than he had at that time and he kept the bargain. God's looking for people He can trust and He can honor and He can use, they'll be partners with Him in getting this message of the redeeming love manifest in the death of His Son out to those for whom His Son died.

"Make to yourself friends by the mammon of unrighteousness that when you fail they will receive you into everlasting habitations." You're involved in missions; you're not going to have to give an account to me. Isn't that marvelous? But I don't have to give an account to you and that's marvelous. I must stand before the judgement seat of Christ and give an account to Him of the deeds that were done in the body whether bad or good. You're at a missionary conference you're never going to be the same.

You're either going to go on in a vision God's given you through the ones that have spoken and shared their hearts or something is going to come in and you'll never be saved. You've got to be saved! By the way did you know you can never un-ring a bell, think about it and you can never un-see what you've seen. You may not obey it but you can't un-see it. Heavenly Father, you know the potential of these people as they sit before Thee. You know the possibilities there are in their lives.

You know the Christy Voss, and the Kwebena Darko this year. The buried treasure the one that's saying, "I want my life to count for the very most for the Lord Jesus Christ and so we're asking in a very special, real way the Holy Spirit will speak to the hearts of those that are here." May it be that because Thou art here and they are here that there will be a nucleus in this church who are 100% for Christ and are going to live their lives in total obedience to Him. We give Thee thanks for answered prayer in Jesus name, Amen.
* Reference such as: Delivered at Trinity Interdenominational Church, Omaha, Nebraska; 1989 by Paris W. Reidhead, Pastor. ©1989 PRBTMI

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