

Reformation and Revival

by Peter Hammond

The sermon emphasizes the importance of the Biblical Gospel and the need for Christians to be involved in missions, evangelism, and leadership training to fulfill the Great Commission and bring about Reformation and Revival.

Scripture: Psalm 22:27, Psalm 72:9, Isaiah 54:2, Daniel 2:34, Matthew 28:19

Topics: "Great Commission", "Revival Ministry"

Description

Peter Hammond preaches on the transformative power of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, emphasizing the need for it to change lives and nations. He highlights the commitment of Frontline Fellowship to fulfilling the Great Commission by making disciples of all nations and applying the Lordship of Christ in every aspect of life. The sermon delves into the challenges faced by missionaries like William Carey and the sacrifices made by prominent missionaries of the 19th century, showcasing their perseverance and dedication to spreading the Gospel amidst trials and hardships.

Transcript

The Gospel of Jesus Christ is life changing, history making and nation transforming! If it doesn't change your life and the lives of those around you then it's not the Biblical Gospel.

Frontline Fellowship is fully committed to studying and proclaiming "the whole counsel of God." The Great Commission is our supreme ambition: to make disciples of nations - all nations; and to teach obedience to all things that the Lord has commanded. We need to apply the Lordship of Christ in all areas of life.

Making Disciples of Nations

We are convinced that God has called us to pioneer missions into neglected areas, to assist persecuted Christians, to work for Biblical Reformation and to pray for revival in Africa. Many people see Frontline Fellowship only as a Bible smuggling ministry. For the last 17 years it has been one of our greatest priorities to deliver and distribute hundreds of thousands of Bibles and Christian books in Marxist and Muslim countries. The Bible is the Word of God. The greatest book ever written. The foundation for Reformation and revival. But I would not describe Bible distribution as our main purpose.

Our purpose is to glorify God by seeking to fulfill His Great Commission. One of our aims is to see the persecution of Christians in Sudan brought to an end. And we are working for the complete transformation

of Sudan from its present Islamic military dictatorship to a free Christian Republic firmly established upon the liberating Word of God. And this is our serious and steadfast prayer for every nation in Africa.

"Those who dwell in the wilderness will bow before Him and His enemies will lick the dust. Yes, all kings shall fall down before Him; all nations shall serve Him." Psalm 72:9, 11

Do you think that this is too ambitious! Are we aiming too high? Does it seem too unrealistic?

Carey's Challenge

On 31 May 1792 in Northampton, England, William Carey preached one of the most influential sermons in history. Along with his 87 page book, "An Inquiry into the Obligation of Christians to use Means for the Conversion of the Heathens," Carey's sermon literally launched the modern missionary movement.

The text was Isaiah 54:2-3 and his challenge: "Expect great things from God, attempt great things for God" inspired 12 Reformed Baptists to form the "Particular (Calvinist) Baptist Society for Propagating the Gospel among the Heathens."

Despite being uneducated, underfunded and underestimated William Carey's bold project to plant the Gospel among the Hindus in India inspired the greatest century of missionary advance in history. Yet that would not have been initially apparent. Carey's mission provoked controversy, dissention and criticism. By an act of the British Parliament it was "illegal" for any missionary to work in India without a licence from the British East Indies Company. And the East Indies Company had made it clear that they would not issue any such licences - because they believed that any such missionary work would jeopardise their business activities amongst the Hindus. So the first mission of the modern era of missions was illegal.

Once Carey's family and team had evaded and overcome the obstacles before them they endured some crushing trials. Carey's young son, Peter, died of dysentery, his wife went insane, his co-worker squandered all their money and bankrupted the mission. Sickness afflicted them all. Furthermore, after 7 years of tireless toil in India Carey still did not have a single convert!

However, Carey provides us with an inspiring testimony of steadfast perseverance. Utterly convinced of the sovereignty of God and standing on the promises and prophecies of Scripture, Carey kept on working. The Bengali New Testament was first published in 1801 - within a year of their first convert being baptised. By 1818 there were 600 baptised and disciplined church members. And despite a devastating fire in 1812 which destroyed their print house, paper stock and manuscripts, Carey and his team started all over again and succeeded in translating the whole Bible into 6 languages, New Testaments into 24 and Gospels into 34 languages! Carey also successfully campaigned for legal reforms, outlawing infanticide, child prostitution and sati (widow burning). Serampore College which Carey established has had a profound influence for nearly two centuries.

Sacrifice and Service

Studying the strategies and sacrifices of William Carey and the other prominent missionaries of the 19th century makes it clear why the 1800's were the greatest century of missions. First of all the missionaries of the last century were incredibly tough. They routinely made sacrifices and endured hardships that we can hardly imagine.

The first American missionaries to go overseas Adoniram and Ann Judson endured debilitating tropical diseases and vicious opposition and imprisonment under the cruel king of Burma. They also lost children to disease and laboured for 7 years before seeing their first convert from Buddhism. Ann Judson died in the field - only 36 years old. Yet by the time Adoniram Judson had died there were over 100 000 baptised church members amongst the Karen tribe! To this day the mostly Christian Karen people remain steadfast in Burma - an island of Christianity in a sea of Buddhism - fighting one of the longest wars of this century. A war of survival against the despotic Buddhist dictatorship that is seeking to annihilate the Christian Karen people.

Most of the missionaries in the last century, particularly the wives, died young. Hudson Taylor's wife, Maria died in childbirth. The average life expectancy of a missionary to Africa was 8 years. Johan Krapf, missionary to East Africa, lost his wife and both children to disease within months of arriving in Africa. I have seen graveyards of missionaries outside the churches that they established. The Church in Africa has literally been built upon the bones of countless missionaries and martyrs.

By God's grace, medical advances have now immeasurably lengthened the lifespans of missionaries to tropical countries. Diseases that used to kill can now be defeated by quinine, antibiotics and a cupboard full of other life saving medicines. But the incredible fact of 19th century history is that even when it meant going to almost certain early death there was no shortage of missionary volunteers.

As the famous English cricketer turned pioneer missionary, C.T. Studd, declared: "If Jesus Christ be God and died for me, then no sacrifice can be too great for me to make for Him."

Body, Mind and Spirit

The second most striking aspect of 19th century missions is how comprehensively they sought to fulfil the Great Commission by ministering to body, mind and spirit. Their aim was nothing less than the total transformation of all areas of life in obedience to the Lordship of Christ.

Whereas today many missionaries might be satisfied with an evangelistic crusade or the establishment of a self supporting, self governing and self propagating congregation with their own church building, missionaries of the last century typically aimed for far greater depth of penetration. William Carey left India with a permanent legacy of Scriptures translated, schools and colleges established, laws protecting widows and orphans entrenched and congregations thoroughly disciplined in Biblical doctrine.

Dr. Kenneth Fraser, the Scottish missionary to Moroland also laid firm foundations for the Church in South Sudan by establishing the first hospital, school and church in the area. Most of the Moru people were won to Christ and remain steadfast Christians even under vicious persecution by the Muslim government of Sudan.

This strategy of ministering to body, mind and soul was enormously successful. Dr. David Livingstone combined his medical training with his theological education and a vision for establishing lay leadership Bible training centres throughout Africa to minister to body, mind and soul. His painstakingly detailed and accurate geographic research and map making on his pioneer explorations and his published research were foundational in opening up Africa to Christianity and destroying the Islamic slave trade.

Livingstone had the grace to see that his mission was part of a divine plan to set many souls free from slavery, both physical and spiritual. Despite the crushing losses of his fourth child, Elizabeth, and his wife,

Mary, to diseases in the field and many debilitating illnesses, attacks by wild animals and Muslim slave raiders, criticism from home, and the physical strain of hacking his way through dense tropical jungles and walking from coast to coast across Africa, yet Livingstone persevered: "These privation, I beg you to observe, are not sacrifices. I think that word ought never to be mentioned in reference to anything we can do for Him who though He was rich, yet for our sakes become poor."

A Vision of Victory

The tribulations so willingly endured by so many missionary pioneers should provoke us to ask: what could have inspired them to have continued on in the face of such overwhelming obstacles and hardships?

battling rains, chronic discomfort, rust, mildew and rot, totally drenched and fatigued, laid low by fever, Livingstone continued to persevere across the continent. Hostile tribes demanded exorbitant payment for crossing their territory. Some tense moments were stared down by Livingstone, gun in hand. Trials tested the tenacity of the travel wearied team. "Can the love of Christ not carry the missionary where the slave trade carries the trader?"

"I shall open up a path in to the interior or perish," Livingstone declared with single minded determination. "May He bless us and make us blessings even unto death." "Shame upon us missionaries if we are to be outdone by slave traders!" "If Christian missionaries and Christian merchants could remain throughout the year in the interior of the continent, in 10 years, slave dealers will be driven out of the market."

David Livingstone was inspired by an optimistic eschatology. Like most of the missionaries of the 19th Century, Livingstone was a post-millennialist who held to the eschatology of victory:

"Discoveries and inventions are culminative ... filling the earth with the glory of the Lord, all nations will sing His glory and bow before Him ... our work and its fruit are culminative. We work towards a new state of things. Future missionaries will be rewarded by conversions for every sermon. We are their pioneers and helpers ... Let them not forget the watchmen of the night, who worked when all was gloom and no evidence of success in the way of conversions cheers our path. They will doubtless have more light than we, but we serve our Master earnestly and proclaim the same Gospel as they will do."

"A quiet audience today. The seed is being sown, the least of all seeds now, but it will grow into a mighty tree. It is as if it were a small stone cut out of a mountain, but it will fill the whole earth (Daniel 2:34-45)."

"We work for a glorious future which we are not destined to see, the golden age which has not yet been, but will yet be. We are only morning stars shining in the dark, but the glorious morn will break - the good time coming yet."

"The dominion has been given by the power of commerce and population unto the people of the saints of the Most High. This is an everlasting kingdom, a little stone cut out of the mountain without hands which will cover the whole earth, for this time we work."

The challenge of Livingstone rings out to us today: "Can that be called a sacrifice which is simply paid back as a small part of a great debt owing to our God, which we can never repay ... it is emphatically no sacrifice. Say rather, it is a privilege!"

"I beg to direct your attention to Africa: I know that in a few years I shall be cut off from that country, which is now open; do not let it be shut again! I go back to Africa to try to make an open path for commerce and

Christianity: will you carry out the work which I have begun? I leave it with you!"

The same Biblical vision of victory inspired William Carey: "Though the superstitions of the heathen were a thousand times stronger than they are, and the example of the Europeans a thousand times worse; though I were deserted by all and persecuted by all, yet my faith, fixed on that sure Word, would rise above all obstructions and overcome every trial. God's cause will triumph!"

Time and again, in the face of crushing defeats, disappointments, diseases and disasters, Carey reiterated his unwavering eschatology of victory:

"The work, to which God has set His hands, will infallibly prosper ... We only want men and money to fill this country with the knowledge of Christ. We are neither working at uncertainty nor afraid for the result ... He must reign until Satan has not an inch of territory!"

When at last Krishna Pal (their first convert) was baptised, Carey declared: "The Divine grace which changed one Indian's heart, could obviously change a hundred thousand!"

While Carey was quick to trust God for great things, he was remarkably slow to accept a profession of faith from any new convert, even when there was substantial sacrifice involved: "Let nothing short of a radical change of heart in your converts satisfy you" was one of his sayings.

Which brings us back to the first paragraph of this article: If it doesn't change your life and those around you - then it's not the Biblical Gospel.

Training World Changers

For this reason Frontline Fellowship invests heavily in leadership training. All of our missionary volunteers and staff are required to go through an ongoing training programme which includes our Great Commission Course, Discipleship Training Course, Biblical Worldview Course; in addition to on-the-job training as apprentices to experienced missionaries in street evangelism, door-to-door, child evangelism, literature evangelism, personal evangelism, Muslim evangelism and many other courses and ongoing outreaches. We also have a large and growing library of old Christian classics, biographies and doctrinal books of the great missionaries and reformers of the past. No matter how long any of us have served in the mission our training never ends. We are constantly seeking to delve deeper into the Bible and Church history to make ourselves more effective servants and soldiers of Christ.

To train courageous and competent missionaries who will be disciplined, flexible and motivated to take initiative (and where necessary risks) in conflict areas we throw our workers into confrontational situations such as outside bars, night clubs, abortion clinics and mosques and show them, by example, how to evangelise even in unpromising situations.

We have been handing out our Titanic Tragedy leaflets (which gave the true untold stories of Christian heroism on board that sinking ship) outside cinemas and anti-pornography tracts outside porn shops. We often conduct literature evangelism at railway stations, bus and taxi-ranks, in shopping centres or at the harbour. We participate in Life Chains, the marches to Parliament against abortion and the closing down of Christian community radio stations and other moral, pro-life actions.

We also conduct regular outreaches and Love in Action projects in townships and amongst the unemployed. Prayer is a scheduled part of every day. Sometimes we hold intensive days or nights of

prayer.

Praying for Revival

In the Lord's Prayer we say: "Thy Kingdom come, Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven..." On this the great reformer John Calvin wrote: "As the Kingdom of God is continually growing and advancing to the end of the world, we must pray every day that it may come: for to whatever extent iniquity abounds in the world, to such an extent the Kingdom of God, which brings along with it perfect righteousness, is not yet come."

Martin Luther pointed out that when one prays: "Hallowed be Thy Name, Thy Kingdom come, Thy will be done," then "He must put all the opposition to this in one pile and say: 'Curses, maledictions and disgrace upon every other name and every other kingdom. May they be ruined and torn apart and may all their schemes and wisdom and plans run aground!'"

To pray for the extension of God's kingdom is to solicit the destruction of all other kingdoms. "The God of Heaven will set up a kingdom that will never be destroyed ... It will crush all those kingdoms and bring them to an end, but it will itself endure forever" Daniel 2:44.

Advance and victory for the Church means defeat and retreat for the kingdom of darkness.

There is a life and death struggle between two kingdoms! The Church cannot exclude hatred for Satan's kingdom from its love for God's kingdom. God's kingdom cannot come without Satan's kingdom being destroyed. God's will cannot be done on earth without the destruction of evil. The glory of God demands the destruction of evil. Instead of being influenced by a sickly sentimentalism which insists upon the assumed, but really non-existent "rights of man" - we should focus instead upon the rights of God and the responsibilities of man. We need to rediscover the power of praying the Psalms.

Working for Reformation

The Reformers who won for us the religious freedoms we take for granted, did so at the risk of their lives. John Hus of Prague was burned at the stake, as were Patrick Hamilton and George Wishart of Scotland and William Tyndale (whose crime was translating the Bible into English!) Foxes Book of Martyrs records thousands of such Reformers who gave their lives for the Faith.

Yet the Reformers succeeded in winning over whole nations. How did they do it?

They were totally dedicated. As John Knox prayed: "Give me Scotland or I die!"

The Reformers also used wise strategy: Leadership Training, Literature (especially Scripture) Translation and Distribution and Itinerant Evangelism. John Wycliffe, John Hus and Martin Luther were all university professors and invested heavily in training leaders. John Calvin taught the whole city of Geneva. The Waldensians, Wycliffe, Luther and Tyndale gave high priority to Scripture translation and distribution. Wycliffe trained and mobilised itinerant evangelists, the "Lollards," to read, preach, sing and distribute the Scriptures in the market places. The Waldensians were also vigorously active in literature distribution and itinerant evangelism. John Calvin's written works have still not been surpassed for their systematic and thorough Biblical exposition.

William Farel went into the market places, cathedrals and city halls to debate and declare the Word of God. Farel won over whole cities to the Biblical Faith.

Ideas Have Consequences

It is said in Military Intelligence that: only 5% of the people think; 15% think they think and 80% of the people never think! The 5% who think need books, seminars and documentation. The 15% who think they think need leaflets, newspaper articles and video documentaries. The 80% who never think only respond to TV soundbites, slogans on T-shirts, bumper stickers and posters.

The five culture conveying institutions that need to be influenced are identified as: 1) educational institutions; 2) the entertainment industry; 3) the news media; 4) religious institutions; and 5) political institutions.

It is noteworthy that great revolutions such as the terrible bloodbath that was the French Revolution of 1789 began with intellectual books by Voltaire and Rousseau. Their revolutionary humanistic ideas were then spread throughout Paris by teachers, newspapers and leaflets. Finally Robespierre and the other revolutionaries whipped up the masses with parrot cries of "Liberty, Equality and Fraternity!" In the name of those noble sounding sentiments 40 000 heads were cut off by the guillotine and Europe was plunged into war.

Similarly, the American War of Independence was heavily influenced by books such as *Lex Rex* by Samuel Rutherford and *Vindicae Contra Tyrannos* (A Defence of Liberty Against Tyrants). Again, newspapers and leaflets and speakers carried it forward until the slogans: "No taxation without representation!" "Give me liberty or give me death!" and "Resistance to tyrants is obedience to God!" mobilised the masses to successfully win independence for the USA.

In the Reformation, Luther wrote books, but he also wrote many leaflets and he composed songs and slogans. Revolutionaries might try to use these methods for evil, attacking morals and destroying freedom. We need to use literature, leadership training and itinerant speakers for good, ministering to body, mind and spirit, to lay foundations for true freedom, making disciples of nations.

It is also said that only 5% of people make things happen, 15% watch things happen and 80% don't know what happened! The 5% who read books are most often the same 5% who make things happen. This can be as true in missions as in any other area of life. Readers make leaders. "If you want to lead," said Napoleon, "you must read." For this reason Frontline Fellowship gives high priority to producing, importing and distributing vast quantities of Bible based books.

Sometimes I have heard it said "The missionaries taught us how to read but it was the communists who gave us something to read." Well Frontline Fellowship has taken up that challenge. Every year we distribute millions of tracts, newsletters and books.

A Continent In Conflict

There are 16 wars raging in Africa. Two of the wars have embroiled another 10 neighbouring countries. With Angolan, Namibian, Zimbabwean, Central African Republican and Sudanese troops all in the Democratic Republic of Congo seeking to bolster the marxist regime of Laurent Kabila (who only seized power in 1997); and with Ugandan and Rwandan forces assisting the rebels, the Congo conflict has the potential for a continent wide war. Overlapping this conflict is the war in Sudan. The longest war of this

century is spilling over the borders of the largest country in Africa. The National Islamic Front government of Sudan has supported terrorists groups fighting against neighbouring Eritrea, Ethiopia, Uganda and Egypt. By way of response, Eritrea, Ethiopia and Uganda have provided some assistance to the SPLA resistance fighters of Southern Sudan.

So now we have 12 nations involved in two overlapping wars stretching from the Red Sea to the South Atlantic. When one also considers the terrorist bombings of the US embassies in Nairobi and Dar es Salaam and of Planet Hollywood in Cape Town, the danger of escalation is considerable.

Radical Islamicists in North Africa want to make Arabic the official language and Islam the only religion for the whole continent of Africa. The Christians in Sudan are on the very frontline of this Islamic offensive.

Gas Masks for Missionaries

Our mission teams in Sudan report that there has been a massive increase in aerial bombings and artillery bombardments in Western Equatoria. Several sources in the Blue Nile, Equatoria and the Nuba report the use of mustard gas by Government of Sudan (GOS) forces. The SPLA also report capturing increasing number of GOS soldiers equipped with gas masks. As the rainy season has come to an end there has been a sharp build up of GOS forces in the South. An offensive is considered imminent. Accordingly, all Frontline missionaries have received instructions in how to survive chemical warfare attacks and have been equipped with gas masks.

Serving the Suffering

In Sudan, Frontline Fellowship is seeking to maintain a balanced ministry to body, mind and spirit. Derek is delivering and distributing tonnes of medical supplies and agricultural relief aid to those areas worst affected by the bombings. Steve and Tim are involved in Bible distribution, film and audio evangelism and chaplaincy services throughout the most desperately needy and neglected areas.

Robert and I will be conducting further leadership training courses, Biblical Worldview Courses for teachers, Reformation and Revival Seminars for pastors and God and Government Seminars for civil leaders.

In addition to the tens of thousands of Bibles and thousands of hymn books, we have also pre-positioned tonnes of medical and relief supplies and thousands of library and school books for distribution throughout Sudan. By God's grace we are also planning to equip a new medical clinic near the battlefield.

Zambian Mission Centre

One of our long term projects to lay foundations for Reformation is about to be launched. Land has been acquired and permission has already been received from the Zambian government for the establishment of a Frontline Fellowship mission station in Zambia. This station will include a Bible Training College, a literature depot and a base for evangelistic and discipleship outreaches throughout the country. It will also offer practical self- help programmes for the poor and needy, including agricultural training.

The mission base is strategically situated close enough to the capital city for our missionaries to be able to assist Zambia United Christian Action and the Reformation Society to disciple some of the leaders of the nation, but it is remote enough to be considered rural.

A Daunting Dilemma

One of the most desperate priorities in Africa is leadership training. However, the tragic fact is that most Theological and Bible College students from third world countries who come to a first world country for training stay in that country and fail to return to their home areas. Some authorities have reported that there are more trained Mexican pastors in the USA than in Mexico! There are also more trained Mozambique and Zambian pastors in South Africa than in their home countries. This is a disaster. It is haemorrhaging the third world churches of some of their most promising potential leaders.

It is also a frustrating fact that most Theological College graduates from rural areas stay in the city where they have been trained. For these reasons we are determined that our Bible Training College will be rural and firmly situated inside the country we are serving.

Robert's latest mission conducting Biblical Worldview Seminars in 16 different towns throughout Zambia helped lay further foundations for the mission station. In 2 months Robert and Matthew drove 13 000 km and presented 195 lectures or sermons.

Whitefield Theological

We praise the Lord that Frontline Fellowship has now entered into a partnership with Whitefield Theological Seminary (WTS) and Whitefield College (WC) based in Florida. Whitefield has authorised Frontline to offer extension programmes in Africa. Their college courses will now be available by correspondence (using audio tapes, books, lecture notes and assignments) and college credits will be granted to those who successfully complete (with the exams and assignments) Frontline Fellowship training courses, such as the Biblical Worldview Course, the Great Commission Course, and the Discipleship Training Course.

By God's grace, I have completed a Doctorate of Missiology degree with Whitefield Theological Seminary and I have been asked to head up their Master of Divinity and Doctorate of Missiology programmes in Missions. Students will be afforded the opportunity of a balanced programme of study and practical work in the field with Whitefield and Frontline Fellowship.

Change Your World

The Gospel of Christ is life changing, history making and nation transforming. Do you want your life and the lives of those around you to be transformed by the Word of God?

Then order our new Change Your World set - The Great Commission Manual and Putting Feet to Your Faith. Into these two books I have packed some of the most important life changing messages that the Lord has entrusted to me.

Don't settle for anything less than God's best. Give up your small ambitions - and follow Jesus.

"All the ends of the world shall remember and turn to the Lord, and all the families of the nations shall worship before You. For the Kingdom is the Lord's and He rules over the nations." Psalm 22:27-28

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