

Why Missions (12.6.1986)

by Peter Maiden

The sermon emphasizes the importance of missions and the need for pioneer missionaries to reach the 47% of the world's population that is outside of the reach of the existing Christian church.

Duration: 51:44

Scripture: Genesis 12:1-3, Matthew 6:33, Matthew 25:31-46, Revelation 20:15

Topics: "Missions"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker paints a vivid picture of millions of people walking blindly towards destruction. He emphasizes the urgency of world mission and the need for believers to take action. The speaker highlights the uniqueness of Jesus Christ as the only way to salvation and emphasizes the commandment to go and spread the gospel. He then challenges the audience to make a five-fold commitment: to pray daily for world evangelization, to give sacrificially, to consistently share their faith, to influence others to become global Christians, and to be willing to go anywhere and do anything for God's purposes. The speaker encourages the audience to make a public pledge and provides resources for further study on missions.

Transcript

Father, we do thank you for these tremendous hymns that we can sing together. We thank you for the deep, deep love of Jesus Christ. And we thank you there's no problem in our lives too deep and too ingrained for that love to reach and touch.

And Lord, when we think of Calvary and the height and the depth and the length and the breadth of your love displayed there, our response would be, take our life. You've given your life, we don't want to give anything less than our lives in return. So Lord, make these more than words we sing.

Make them the reality of our hearts and our lives, we pray. In Jesus name. Amen.

Well, we're encouraged to see more people at the book table last night and today. But there are still a few books left. Tonight I'm going to give what I trust will be a very clear challenge to get involved in world missions.

And I just want to mention four books which you might like to buy after this meeting. If you haven't got this book, then I really do urge you to purchase it. It's in many languages, it's in French, I think it's in German.

Operation World. I wouldn't say you can't be a Christian without owning one of these books. But I would say it's vital for every Christian who wants to get involved in world missions.

It presents almost every nation on earth. It gives you facts and figures about each nation. And then it gives you specific prayer requests for the lands.

I just opened a book there and it fell open, it's Iraq. I wonder how much you know about Iraq. I wonder how you could begin to pray intelligently for Iraq.

Point three, the tragic Kurdish people. How much do you know about the tragedy of the Kurdish people in Iraq? If you want to stop playing games about world missions and get serious, this book is important. This is a book I personally only came across about a month ago.

It's called The Great Omission. And it's by one of the best writers and speakers on missions in the world today, in my opinion. A man called Robertson McCroken.

And you will find that a tremendously powerful, impassioned cry to get involved in world missions. I finished it last night actually. The first chapter is called Three Loves.

Questions are motivation for getting involved in mission. And shows that there can be many valid motivations. The highest and the most lasting motivation is love for God the Father.

Another motivation is love for the lost. But a higher and a longer lasting motivation is love for God himself. That's a fantastic chapter, Three Loves.

If you want something brief and stimulating and fast-moving, A Hitchhiker's Guide to Mission. It's an excellent introduction to the subject. If God has spoken to you about missions this week, and you're sitting there longing that your friends back home could get a vision.

A very useful book to buy. Read it yourself and then pass it on to a friend that you're concerned for. And then finally, We Believe in Mission.

Some modern missionary thinkers and writers write on subjects relevant for everyone who wants to get involved in Christian work full-time. Very quick, simple book to read and very, very challenging indeed. So have a last look at the book table before you leave, before you go to bed tonight.

Two thousand years ago now, the Lord Jesus gave his final commission to his disciples. He said, wait. Wait in Jerusalem until you receive the Holy Spirit.

Once you've received the authority, the power of the Holy Spirit, I want you to go. Don't just sit around and enjoy yourself with this authority and with this power. That's not the purpose.

Upon receipt of the Holy Spirit, go. Begin at Jerusalem, but don't stop there. Judea, Samaria, the outermost part.

And they really got going. Very soon, their enemies in Jerusalem were saying, there are believers, Christians, all over Jerusalem. But that city wall appeared to be something of a barrier.

You can get almost halfway through the Acts of the Apostles and the vast majority of Christians are still in the city, within the city wall. But God is very concerned that the message concerning his son should never

be limited to just one group of people. So he allows persecution to come upon his church.

And the Christian church bursts through the walls of Jerusalem. It spreads into Judea and Samaria. And by the 18th chapter of the Acts of the Apostles, they're complaining that the Christians have turned the world upside down.

Well, many different things followed that initial surge. We haven't got time for the history of missions tonight. But by the time you get to the year 1780, it's a very tragic picture indeed.

200 years ago, 1700 years after Jesus had said go, the church is limited geographically to the following areas. Parts of Western Europe, the eastern seaboard of North America, and the southern tip of Africa. Christianity is in no sense an international faith.

And then God spoke to a very ordinary young man. He was a geography teacher. And the story goes that very often his fellow students would find him weeping over a globe or over a map.

And they would say, sir, Mr. Carey, why are you crying? And he would explain about the lost millions, particularly in the land of India, which God had very specially laid upon his heart. The concern grew so much that eventually Carey went to the Baptist ministers in his area. He expressed his concern for India and his desire to go there as the first Baptist missionary.

And I don't think the church has ever forgot the reply he received. Sit down, Mr. Carey. When God chooses to convert the heathen, he'll do it without your help or mine.

Calvinism gone mad. Calvinism gone much further than John Calvin ever took it. But Carey wouldn't lie down.

And he kept going back to those ministers. And I think he got on their nerves. And eventually he said, Mr. Carey, you may go as the first Baptist missionary to India.

Went home with great joy in his heart. Explained it to his wife. She said, there's a problem.

William, God may have called you, but he hasn't called me. So they made a very strange arrangement to our ears today. The decision was that Carey would go, I think it was with the eldest son to India, and Mrs. Carey would remain in England with the youngest son.

So he began to make plans to go. It was illegal to go to India as a missionary in Carey's day. So the next thing he had to do was find a willing sea captain who would take him.

Took him quite a long time, but eventually he found one. Just before he set sail, he received news that his wife was expecting their third child. The great day came and they set sail.

It was a tremendous voyage. They got to the Isle of Wight. That's just a few hundred meters south of the coast of England.

There they stopped. They had to wait for other ships to come and join them so they could sail in convoy across the world. And the ships never came.

Carey waited for over nine months for this convoy. During which time the ship captain got cold feet and changed his mind and told Carey he would no longer take him. So Carey, suffering from a devastating

depression, returned to England.

He was prone to depression all his life. Like many men whom God abused mightily, he battled almost daily with severe depression. Well, the third baby had been born, so he dashed home to have a look.

And he made one final appeal to Mrs. Carey. And of course, in the providence of God, she changed her mind. And now they were able to go as a united family to the land of India.

Found another captain, eventually made it there. Seven others joined him. Within a few years, five of them were dead.

They actually had quite a long lifespan in comparison with the early missionaries to Africa. Two years were considered a very long term of missionary service when missionaries first went to Africa. I'm in the process of writing a book and the title is, All Missionaries Were Short Term Once.

That's because most of them died within the first few years. But Carey pressed on. And of course, the world map changed, humanly speaking, because of the actions of this man.

The last 200 years have been 200 years of fantastic triumph for the Christian Church. Today, Christianity is the only truly worldwide faith. 200 years ago, 99% of all the Christians were in the Western world.

80 years ago, 91% were still within the Western world. Today, there are more Christians outside of the Western world than inside. 53% of the world's Christians live outside of Europe and North America.

Just try and imagine South Korea. 40,000 evangelicals at the turn of the century. 16 years ago, there was just 6 million.

Today, there's probably 13 to 15 million Christians in that one country. Take China, the turn of the century. 1.6 million Christians.

And the missionaries have to leave. 1970, just 16 years ago, there hadn't been much church growth. There were probably about 2 million Christians.

Today, estimates vary, but the most conservative would start at 40 million. It would go up to 50, 60, even 65 million possibly in China today. Very soon, China will have more Christians than any other nation on Earth.

Communists read China. So why do we need Operation Mobilization? Why do we need any missionary society? The job's done, surely. The church is expanding, it's exploding all over the world.

Bring them all back to poor Europe. Well, let me give you the balance. We haven't heard the word balance much in this conference, have we? 32% of the world's people claim to be Christian.

That's everything. All the Roman Catholic Church, all the liberal Protestants' church, Greek Orthodox, Russian Orthodox, everything, 32%. 21% we call evangelized non-Christians.

In other words, they live close to churches, and if the church is witnessing, they'll be reached. But 47%, almost half the world, are outside of the reach of the existing Christian church in 1986. And the only way they'll ever be reached is as a whole new army of pioneer missionaries get up and get moving for God.

And the population explosion is so great that more people will be born in the last quarter of this century than were born in the whole history of the world up to 1973. If you want a big job, get involved in world missions. If you want a challenge greater than any other challenge on earth, give up petty, selfish ambitions and let's get moving for God.

Now let's think of seven reasons we should do that. I want you to turn to Genesis chapter 12, and we'll commence reading at verse 1. We're just going to read the first three verses of the chapter. The Lord had said to Abraham, leave your country, your people, and your father's household, and go to the land I will show you.

I'll make you into a great nation and I'll bless you. I'll make your name great and you will be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you, and whoever curses you, I will curse.

And all peoples on earth will be blessed through you. I want to ask you. Why are we attempting this summer to reach the nations of Europe with the gospel? Why are you doing that? Why is OM involved in a similar way in year-long programs in over 30 different nations? Why do those of us who lead this work believe that every one of you should seriously consider giving your life to cross-cultural missionary work? Why do we believe that? We have to face it that many people in the church today don't share our conviction.

Many people in the church today are strongly opposed to mission. The Archbishop of Canterbury, on a recent visit to India, made it quite clear that we no longer need missionaries in India. They have their religion, they have Hinduism and Islam, and they're perfectly happy, and we must learn from them and they must learn from us.

Many people in the church say mission is politically disruptive, it's religiously narrow-minded, and those of us involved in it are suffering from arrogant imperialism. We're assured by these people that Christ now speaks through other religions. Our responsibility is not mission, it's dialogue.

You have to listen to the adherents of other faiths. You have to hear what God is saying to them and through them to us. They all have something to contribute to the wisdom of the world.

Mission is dialogue among equals. So why are you getting involved in going into France to talk to Roman Catholics and liberal Protestants and Muslims about Jesus Christ? Let me tell you seven reasons why I do. Number one, the Christian claim that there is only one God.

There's the central foundation stone of mission, there is only one God. There's only one mediator, says Paul, between God and man, and he is Christ Jesus. There's a popular British TV comedian, he's a very funny man, but he always ends his programs with these words, Good night, and may your gods go with you.

You notice how today people speak of the Christian's God, as though he's just one amongst many gods, you see. Christianity in many religious textbooks is relegated to one chapter. The idea is quite popular today that the God of the Bible is just one amongst many.

It doesn't really matter which one you believe in, which one you serve, as long as you have your God and you're worshipping sincerely, all will be well. Like picking up a bottle of liquid, and you're not sure whether it's Coca-Cola or arsenic, poison, but you drink it with sincerity in your heart, and it doesn't really matter, does it? The Bible says there is only one God. I am the Lord and beside me there is no one else.

The second great foundation stone is the nature, the character of this God. What is this one God like? He's not a God of wood or a God of stone. He's not a God who can only be worshipped on one particular mountain, as that poor woman in John chapter 4 thought was the case.

He is a living God, he's a personal God, he's a God who can be known. It's an amazing fact about the Christian's God. He can be personally known.

I often think about those disciples when Jesus taught them to pray. He said, when you pray, say, our Father. I imagine those disciples going off somewhere quiet, and for the first time in their lives looking to heaven, and very nervously repeating that, Father.

Up until that point they would have spoken about the God of the world, the God of their nation, but to think of him as my God was revolutionary for them. We alone have this incredible message. Our God can be known and longs to be known by human beings.

The third great foundation stone. Our God has a missionary heart. I believe the heart of God is bleeding tonight over a lost world.

I believe my concern for world evangelism is nothing compared to his concern. And this concern has beat in the heart of God ever since man sinned, and it will continue to do so until the whole church is gathered to Jesus Christ. Don't ever think that the first command to mission is in Matthew 28.

You've totally misunderstood your Bible if you've come to the conference believing that. The first command to mission or the first concern about mission is in Genesis chapter 3 and verse 15. Soon as man sins, the missionary heart of God provides the answer.

And here in Genesis chapter 12 we see the missionary heart of God in the Old Testament. The first 11 chapters of Genesis, all of God's dealings have been international. He's been dealing with all the families of the earth.

But in verse 6 of Genesis 11 we're told that God saw no work of evil which would be impossible to the families of the earth. So God scattered the families of the earth, chapter 11. And then in chapter 12 he chooses, as we saw, one man and one family.

Why? Is God just concerned in the Old Testament for one family, one nation? Is it only Israel that's on God's heart until you get to the day of Pentecost? You can see in verse 3 of Genesis chapter 12 that nothing could be further from the truth than that. God chose Abraham, he chose the nation in order that all the peoples on the earth would be blessed through that choice. Whenever the children of Israel stopped witnessing, stopped testifying to the nations around them, God sent his judgment or he sent his prophet.

Brothers and sisters, if you share the heart of God tonight, your heart will be concerned for a lost world. And the fourth great foundation stone is the Christian view of man. We believe in the fall of man.

We believe in the total depravity of man. We believe his position is desperate. And in Ephesians chapter 2 Paul describes just how desperate it is.

He says man is dead. Utterly helpless. And he's under the wrath of a holy God.

Now these are unpopular ideas in the 20th century. The idea of a God of wrath, an eternal hell, a lost world is unpopular even in certain sections of the so-called evangelical church today. A far more popular

idea are various forms of universalism.

All men and all women will eventually somehow, by some method, end up in heaven. Some people say human beings aren't half so bad as you evangelicals make out. Eventually they'll make it to heaven.

Others say that even if a person doesn't accept Christ in this life, he's going to be given a second opportunity. Others say if you believe that God will permit people to remain in hell, you can't also believe he's a God of love. And universalism is very attractive.

I would say that if this is a normal group of people, of course you're exceptional, but if this was a normal group of people, some of you will fall to the temptation of universalism in the next few years. It appears to be very kind, doesn't it? It shows God in a good light. He's loving, he's compassionate.

The simple and complete downfall of all forms of universalism. The downfall is that it's just not contained in this book. The downfall is, what was the purpose of the death of Christ if man could be saved by any other method? But some people treat this book rather like people treat a buffet meal.

You breeze up to the table, you take some things, you leave other things. And some people open their Bibles and they read about the love of God, and the grace of God, and the goodness of God, and Psalm 23, and they say, yeah, that's right, we believe that. And they read about the separation of the sheep from the goats, and hell, and a lake of fire, and they say, no, not in the 20th century, we're not going to believe that.

If you don't hold on to the authority and inerrancy of scripture, you will fall to the temptation of universalism. But what's the real situation? Amy Carmichael presented it magnificently. She said there's this great plain, this great field.

At the edge of the field there's a gulf, there's a chasm. And she's sitting in the field making daisy chains with her fellow Christians. And across the field millions of people are walking.

And initially she feels that tourists coming to look at the gulf. Then she sees one fall to destruction, followed by a second and a third, and they're going over by the hundred. And she looks more closely and she sees that everyone is blind.

And she looks more closely and she sees a few people running up and down the edge, saying, that's the way to safety. But those who run look tired and exhausted, and there are great gaps between them. And thousands in their blindness fall.

That's what the Bible says. If you believe it, you're going to get serious about world missions. Now let me give you a fifth great foundation stone.

And that's the uniqueness of Jesus Christ. Jesus himself said, I am the way, no man to the Father but by me. Peter says, salvation is found in no one else, no other name under heaven, given amongst men, whereby we must be saved.

We don't like that, do we? That's too simple. In this age of sophistication, we don't like anything so simple as that. And it seems a wee bit arrogant, doesn't it? What we're saying is, there's only one way and we are on it.

But that's exactly what the Bible says. There's no more challenging verse to missions than John 14 verse 6. No man comes to the Father but by me. There is no salvation in Hinduism.

No salvation in Islam. It doesn't matter how sincere, it doesn't matter how many times they pray, it doesn't matter in my opinion where they've never heard the gospel of Jesus Christ. There's no salvation in anyone but Jesus.

Now let me give you the sixth great foundation. That's the authority of scripture. Without the Bible, there would be no world evangelization.

The Bible that lays upon us this responsibility. It's the Bible that gives us a gospel to proclaim. It's the Bible that tells us how to do it.

And it's the Bible that promises God's help as we do it. And John Stott argues in a paper, that it's a clearly observable fact in the history of the church. When the church has believed in the inerrancy of the Bible, her concern for missions has grown.

But when her confidence in scripture wavers, her missionary enterprise immediately lessens. If you're going to be obedient to this book, you've got to get involved in missions. Otherwise you might just as well put it to one side.

Because this book is a missionary book. From Genesis chapter 3 to Revelation chapter 22, it's a missionary textbook. Now let me give you the final foundation stone.

And that's the second coming of Jesus Christ. The Bible repeatedly tells us of the last day. The day of judgment.

The end of the world. The beginning of God's perfect rule. But equally the Bible says that before that day comes, the whole church must be gathered in.

This gospel says Jesus will be preached in the whole world. A testimony to all nations. And then the end will come.

Do you long to see the glory of Jesus Christ displayed? Do you long for Him to look at the travail of His soul and be satisfied? Do you really believe in the second coming of Jesus Christ? If you do, you're going to get involved in world missions. The final victory awaits the completion of our task. Our task is done and I believe it can be done in our generation.

The trumpet will sound, the dead in Christ will rise and Jesus Christ will return. You and I can be involved in bringing that day to pass. The final prayer of the Bible is even so come Lord Jesus.

Now we've had a good week together. I trust you've enjoyed it as much as I've enjoyed it. You know I've been coming to these conferences for I think 10 or 11 years now.

And I'm told that over 44,000 young people have passed through these conferences. They've had nights of prayer. They've gone out on teams.

They've read Operation World. Yet how many of them are involved on the frontiers for Jesus Christ today? It really depends how you look at it. If you look at it some ways, you can be very encouraged.

But I think if you look at it honestly, there's some discouragement. Thousands have heard. But only scores or maybe hundreds are on the frontiers today for Jesus.

I wonder if this group is going to be different. And I wonder if it's just going to be more than songs and nice tunes and good words for you. I wonder if you are going to stand out and be willing to get personally involved for the rest of your life in Michigan.

I believe sometimes it helps to make a public pledge that you are going to do that. Something you can specifically look back on. I want to be very, very, very specific tonight.

I want you to make a pledge before God in this tent at the end of this conference. And I want you to make a five-fold commitment. I'm going to read it slowly so that you know what you're thinking about.

I want you to pledge tonight that you will, number one, pray each day for the work of world evangelization. Pray for the world. Number two, I want you to pledge that you, as God enables you, will give sacrificially for this cause.

In other words, you won't get involved in the materialistic age in which we are living. And take my silver and my gold will be more than the words of the hymn that you've sung, but it will be the attitude of your life. Number three, I want you to pledge to consistently share your faith with non-Christians.

Because missions is only secondly geography. Missions is sharing Jesus where you are to begin with. Number four, I want you to commit yourself to seek to influence other people to become global Christians.

I would say that 90% of the British church knows very, very little about the things you've been considering this week. And I want you to pledge to influence those who don't understand. And then finally, I want you to pledge that you are willing to go anywhere and do anything that God asks you to do.

There's only one God. He can be known. His heart is burning for missions.

Man is lost. Jesus Christ is the only mediator. This Bible commands us to go.

As we go, we hasten the day of the triumph of Jesus Christ. Will you pledge yourself in those five ways at the end of this conference? To pray each day. To give sacrificially.

To consistently share your faith with a non-Christian. To seek to influence others to become global Christians. And to go anywhere and do anything that God desires of you.

Now I'd like you just to think about that with your head bowed for 60 seconds, because it's not something you'd want to respond to in the emotion of the moment. Let's think about that in the presence of God. Now if after thinking about that seriously and quietly, you're willing to make that pledge, I'd like you to stand to your feet right now as a public statement.

If you're not sure, don't stand. If you want to make this commitment, now is a public opportunity for you to do so. Father, we thank you for the fact that there is no God beside you.

Thank you that you've given us a big, big job to do. Lord, some of us have to confess, and I'd have to make the confession myself, Lord, that we've spent a lot of time involved in very small, incidental things in our lives. Lord, even today we'd have to confess that we've been meddling around in the shallows.

Now Lord, we want to just give the rest of our lives to that which is upon your heart. Father, we ask that you'll help us to remember this pledge we are now making. And some of us, Lord, are going to find ourselves possibly far away from you in some years ahead.

We pray, Lord, that you'll remind us of this commitment. Bring us back to yourself and back to this great cause, we pray. And Lord, we want to say that we believe the earth shall be filled with the glory of God as the waters cover the sea.

We're longing, Lord, for that day when the trumpet will sound. And you will come and all your bride will be there awaiting you. Lord, help us to be involved in bringing that to pass.

In Jesus' name we pray. Amen. Well, let's all stand and let's sing a hymn together.

I wonder if we've got the music still, have we? I want us to sing A Mighty Fortress is Our God. It's my favourite hymn, probably tells you something about me. And it's number four in your hymn book.

Audio: <https://sermonindex1.b-cdn.net/29/SID29284.mp3>

Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/peter-maiden/why-missions-1261986/>

Grow in Your Walk with Christ

Listen and read messages that will stir your heart for Christ and point you to deeper repentance and devotion.

- 50,000+ Sermons from speakers past and present
- 3,900+ Classic Christian Books freely readable online
- 1,200+ Bible Translations and Commentaries
- Over 450k forum posts — Join our vibrant online Christian forum

www.sermonindex.net