1. Missions In Church History

A. The Early Church’s Missionary Movement Through The Middle Ages

Following the Book of Acts, persecution scattered believers throughout the Mediterranean world and God was pleased to see the church quickly take root among Gentile people groups. By the end of the first century the church was in this way established to some extent in parts of Europe, Africa, and Asia. This post–Pentecost generation was used by God, often in response to persecution, to take the Gospel of Jesus Christ beyond the borders of Palestine as far west as Rome and into virtually every major urban center found in the Eastern half of the Roman Empire. As one missionary historian put it, “What began as a Jewish sect in A.D. 30 had grown into a world religion by A.D. 60.”

God caused the Gospel to penetrate the Roman world through five main avenues during the first three centuries of church history. These avenues were: (1) the preaching and teaching of the Gospel by evangelists; (2) the personal witness and testimony of believers; (3) the adorning of the Gospel by acts of kindness and charity; (4) the perseverance of believers persecuted for the sake of the Gospel; and (5) the reasoning and arguments of the early apologists.

From all accounts the believers of the early church were eager to share their faith with others. In writing about this era John Foxe who wrote the classic *Foxe’s Book of Martyrs* stated, “. . . every Christian was a missionary.” He went on to describe what he meant.

The soldier tried to win recruits for the heavenly host; the prisoner sought to bring his jailer to Christ; the slave girl whispered the gospel in the ears of her mistress; the young wife begged her husband to be baptized that their souls might not be parted after death; every one who had experienced the joys of believing tried to bring others to faith.

The early church historian, Eusebius also described the dedication of many within this era who took the Great Commission of Jesus Christ seriously:

---

4 Ibid.
At that time many Christians felt their souls inspired by the holy word. . . . Their first action, in obedience to the instructions of the Saviour, was to sell their goods and to distribute them to the poor. Then, leaving their homes, they set out to fulfill the work of an evangelist, making it their ambition to preach the word of faith to those who as yet had heard nothing of it, and to commit to them the book of the divine Gospels. They were content simply to lay the foundations of the faith among these foreign peoples: they then appointed other pastors, and committed to them the responsibility for building up those whom they had merely brought to the faith. Then they passed on to other countries and nations with the grace and help of God.  

With the ongoing establishment of churches throughout the next two centuries and then the onset of the “institutional state church” of the fourth century widespread evangelism and church planting gave way to a long-neglected and necessary preoccupation with theological issues and doctrinal controversies. The vibrant evangelism of the first two centuries began to wane in the beginning of the fourth during the reign of Emperor Constantine who legalized Christianity and made it a state religion. However, whereas this era of church history is replete with the stories of theologians and church councils meeting to hammer out creeds detailing the fundamental beliefs of the Christian Faith so as to combat heresy as well as stories of this new state church’s attempts to help the government tame barbarians through its own brand of missions it would be unfortunate to miss the fact that there were those whom God raised up to go out for the sake of His Name as well. The fact that this era of church history is not often cited for its missionary enterprises should not be taken to mean there were none for indeed there were those who did go to foreign lands and strange tongues with the Gospel of Jesus Christ for the sake of seeing Christ known, worshipped, and glorified among those who did not know Him.

**Patrick**

Shrouded in legend and misrepresented by Roman Catholicism, the greatest missionary of the 5th century was perhaps the man who brought the Gospel from Britain to Ireland—Patrick. Actually his real name was Maewyn Succat. It is believed that he took the Latin name Patricius (Patrick) when he began his missionary work. Patrick was neither Irish nor a member of the church of Rome. While it is true that he was promoted to sainthood by the Roman Catholic church this was bestowed at the Council of Whitby over two hundred years after Patrick’s death and

---

as incentive to bring the Celtic Church under the church of Rome’s authority.

Patrick was born some time between 385 and 415 A.D. in Britain. His father Calpurnius was a civil magistrate, a tax collector as well as a deacon in their local church. His mother’s name was Conchessa. His grandfather, Potitus, was a presbyter, or a pastor. When Patrick was a teenager a fleet of 50 currachs (longboats) filled with Irish pirates made their way toward the shore where the young man and his family lived. The pirates quickly demolished the village and Patrick along with many others was captured and taken to Ireland as slaves.

In Patrick’s own words,

"I was taken into captivity to Ireland with many thousands of people, and deservedly so, because we turned away from God, and did not keep His commandments, and did not obey our pastors, who used to remind us of our salvation. And the Lord brought over us the wrath of his anger and scattered us among the nations…"  

Once in Ireland, Patrick was sold as a slave to Miliucc, a Druid tribal chieftain and put to work herding pigs and sheep. He lived like an animal himself, with the animals day and night, often in hunger and thirst. He felt helpless and hopeless. He went from an nobleman’s son with all the privileges to a swine herding slave overnight.

It was during these years of captivity that Patrick’s life changed forever. At the age of 16 Patrick was brought to faith in Christ. Again, in his own words:

The Lord opened the understanding of my unbelief, that, as it was, I might remember my faults and turn to the Lord my God with all my heart; and he had regard to my low estate, and pitied my youth and ignorance, and kept guard over me even before I knew Him, and before I attained wisdom to distinguish between good and evil; and He strengthened and comforted me as a father does his son, . . . I am, then, first of all, countrified, an exile, evidently unlearned, one who is not able to see into the future, but I know for certain, that before I was humbled I was like a stone lying in deep mire, and he that is mighty came and in his mercy raised me up and, indeed, lifted me high up and placed me on top of the wall. And from there I ought to shout out in gratitude to the Lord for his great favours in this world and for ever, that the mind of man cannot measure.  

---

7 Ibid., 1:2; 1:12.
From this time forward Patrick gave himself to intense and persistent prayer. During his time of prayer he sensed God had more than slavery for his life’s occupation and one day compelled, as he thought, by the Spirit of God he escaped his servitude only to be just as compelled several years later to return to Ireland only this time as a missionary. After a period of study and spiritual preparation Patrick, now well over the age of forty, returned to Ireland believing that God had called him to return so as to take them the Gospel.

After thirty years of preaching, teaching, and enduring many trials and persecutions 200 churches were planted and over one hundred thousand converts were baptized and given intensive training in the Scriptures. Many of these converts became missionaries themselves taking the light of the Gospel into the darkness of the Middle Ages. Patrick writes in his confession,

I am greatly a debtor to God, who has bestowed his grace so largely upon me, that multitudes were born again to God through me…Hence, the Irish, who had never had the knowledge of God and worshipped only idols and unclean things, have lately become the people of the Lord, and are called the sons of God.  

Patrick’s methodology was not perfect as he struggled in his understanding of how to deal with the Druid magic he encountered throughout his ministry in Ireland. Rather than risk being quickly kicked out of Ireland by the Druid chieftains and priests, Patrick chose to, at least outwardly, accept their social order. Rather than denounce their adherence to animism and spiritism, he ignored it and thus the Druids allowed him to stay and continue on with his preaching. Whereas it would seem that this compromise would put Patrick in a troubling situation once a person was brought to the truth and to saving faith in Christ he simply saw it as another step in a progression of teaching pagans the Gospel.

As to what he taught, much of it is recorded in his confession. In accord with his belief that salvation is the gracious work of God, Patrick rejected any kind of “works righteousness” and taught that men and women are saved from their sins by faith in Jesus Christ alone. In addition, he detailed in his confession his teaching regarding the fundamentals of the Faith.

For there is no other God, nor ever was before, nor shall be hereafter, but God the Father, unbegotten and without beginning, in whom all things began, whose are all things, as we have been taught; and his son Jesus Christ, who manifestly always existed with the Father, before the beginning of time in the spirit with the

---

8 Ibid., 8:41.
Father, indescribably begotten before all things, and all things visible and invisible were made by him. He was made man, conquered death and was received into Heaven, to the Father who gave him all power over every name in Heaven and on Earth and in Hell, so that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord and God, in whom we believe. And we look to his imminent coming again, the judge of the living and the dead, who will render to each according to his deeds. And he poured out his Holy Spirit on us in abundance, the gift and pledge of immortality, which makes the believers and the obedient into sons of God and co-heirs of Christ who is revealed, and we worship one God in the Trinity of holy name.⁹

In regard to missions he taught:

So for that reason one should, in fact, fish well and diligently, just as the Lord foretells and teaches, saying, ‘Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men,’ and, again, through the prophets: “Behold, I am sending forth many fishers and hunters,” says the Lord, ‘et cetera. So it behoved us to spread our nets, that a vast multitude and throng might be caught for God, and so there might be clergy everywhere who baptized and exhorted a needy and desirous people. Just as the Lord says in the Gospel, admonishing and instructing: ‘Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always to the end of time.’ And again he says: ‘Go forth into the world and preach the Gospel to all creation. He who believes and is baptized shall be saved; but he who does not believe shall be condemned.’ And again: ‘This Gospel of the Kingdom shall be preached throughout the whole world as a witness to all nations; and then the end of the world shall come.’ And likewise the Lord foretells through the prophet: ‘And it shall come to pass in the last days (sayeth the Lord) that I will pour out my spirit upon all flesh, and your sons and daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions and your old men shall dream dreams; yea, and on my menservants and my maidservants in those days I will pour out my Spirit and they shall prophesy.’ And in Hosea he says: ‘Those who are not my people I will call my people, and those not beloved I will call my beloved, and in the very place where it was said to them, “You are not my people,” they will be called ‘Sons of the living God.’”¹⁰

---

⁹ Ibid., 1:4.
¹⁰ Ibid., 8:40.
As to Patrick’s motivation in missions, he like the host of God-honoring men and women who went out before him and after him did so for the sake of the Name. Whereas, his efforts were not flawless and his sins admittedly many, his motivation in returning to the land of his former captivity and captors was not to make much of himself or of any man but rather to make much of God.

Thus I give untiring thanks to God who kept me faithful in the day of my temptation, so that today I may confidently offer my soul as a living sacrifice for Christ my Lord . . . so that today among the barbarians I might constantly exalt and magnify your name in whatever place I should be . . . So are we seeing, and so it is fulfilled; behold, we are witnesses because the Gospel has been preached as far as the places beyond which no man lives.

Furthermore, he was confident that God would indeed draw people to Himself through the preaching of the Gospel, thus he pursued this course fully expecting to see God work.

I am greatly God's debtor, because he granted me so much grace, that through me many people would be reborn in God, and soon a after confirmed, and that clergy would be ordained everywhere for them, the masses lately come to belief, whom the Lord drew from the ends of the earth, just as he once promised through his prophets: ‘To you shall the nations come from the ends of the earth, and shall say, Our fathers have inherited naught hut lies, worthless things in which there is no profit.’ And again: ‘I have set you to be a light for the Gentiles that you may bring salvation to the uttermost ends of’ the earth.'

Patrick died and stepped into the presence of the Lord he loved and served on March 17th sometime between 465 and 493 A.D.

The Celtic Missionaries

The Celtic Church established in Ireland through the missionary efforts of Patrick resulted in a great missionary movement coming forth out of Ireland following the fifth century as a consequence of these 200 churches sending out missionaries to Britain, central Europe, and even Iceland. As one historian writes:

---

11 Ibid., 7:34.
12 Ibid., 7:38.
There was a passion for foreign missions in the impetuous
eagerness of the Irish believers, a zeal not common in their day.
Burning with love for Christ, fearing no peril, shunning no hardship,
they went everywhere with the Gospel.\textsuperscript{13}

Their methods are considered even by missiologists today as greatly
advanced and beyond what most scholars imagine an early Middle Age
culture could have conceived. First of all, these churches organized
themselves for the purpose of sending out missionaries and then trained
those they sent out. Once the missionaries were sent out and settled in
an area they began learning the language and customs of the people who
lived there. Upon gaining sufficient knowledge of culture and language
they would publicly preach and teach the Gospel as well as translate
portions of Scripture and hymns into their “target people’s” language.
Finally, once the Gospel began to take hold and converts were identified
they were grounded in the Scriptures as well as taught and encouraged to
become missionaries themselves. As E. H. Broadbent, a missionary
historian writes:

When some converts were made the missionaries chose from
among them small groups of young men who had ability, trained
them specially in some handicraft and in languages, and taught
them the Bible and how to explain it to others, so that they might be
able to work among their own people. They delayed baptism until
those professing faith had received a certain amount of instruction
and had given some proof of steadfastness. They avoided
attacking the religions of the people, counting it more profitable to
preach the truth to them than to expose their errors. They accepted
the Holy Scriptures as the source of faith and life and preached
justification by faith.\textsuperscript{14}

B. The Modern Missionary Movement

Most missiologists do not see the the Modern Missionary Movement as
beginning until William Carey and his family left for India as missionaries
in 1793. Carey became known as the Father of Modern Missions for
many reasons including his emphasis on forming church partnerships to
send and support missionaries, the necessity of Bible translation work
among unreached people groups as well as his commitment to being a
“tentmaker missionary” who combined his meager missionary support
from churches with business enterprises so as to financially support his
missionary work. Perhaps more so than these however, he was seen as
the father of modern missions simply because he did so much through

\textsuperscript{13} V. Raymond Edman, \textit{The Light In Dark Ages} (Wheaton: Van Kampen, 1949), 145.
\textsuperscript{14} E. H. Broadbent, \textit{The Pilgrim Church} (London: Pickering & Inglis, 1974), 34-35.
his preaching, writings, and work to bring the occupation of missions to the forefront of the church’s mind and heart. His *Enquiry Into the Obligations of Christians to Use Means For the Conversion of the Heathens* written in 1792 marked the cause of missions for the next two hundred years and is still used in missionary training classrooms today.

Whereas God certainly used Carey to remind the church and especially the Particular Baptist Churches of England of their responsibility to be involved in the Great Commission it would be a mistake to think that between the end of the Middle Ages and the work of William Carey God had put His missionary program on hold. If there ever was an age when “modern missions” began in which the church realized that the world in which and to which the Great Commission was to be fulfilled extended to China, Japan, and the far Pacific islands in the East to the New World in the West it was in the days of the early Reformers whose vision for evangelism and missions was fueled by their new vision of the majesty and supremacy of God. However, this being the case—it is not what is perceived as the case.

It does not take much effort in perusing literature on the history of missions to run across comments such as “the protestant theology [of the Reformation] was another factor that limited the vision of missionary enterprises [during the Reformation].” More to her point, Tucker also writes: “Calvinists generally used the same line of reasoning, adding the doctrine of election that made missions appear extraneous if God had already chosen those he would save.” She finally concludes that during the sixteenth century Reformation “the urgency to reach out to others was not seen as a top priority . . . and the Great Commission was all but forgotten.” Gustav Warneck wrote early in the twentieth century, “We miss in the Reformers not only missionary action, but even the idea of missions... [in part] because fundamental theological views hindered them from giving their activity, and even their thoughts, a missionary direction.” Warneck, who was a Lutheran missions educator also wrote that John Calvin claimed the church had no duty to send out missionaries.

This false perception has continued even into the present day. For instance, Dr. Ralph D. Winter, the long-time director of the U.S. Center For World Missions and considered a foremost authority on missionary endeavors to unreached peoples, writes that the Reformers “did not

---

16 Ibid.
17 Ibid., 24.
19 Ibid, 19.
He also claims that the Protestant missionary movement can be divided into three eras: the first beginning in 1792 with William Carey, the second beginning 1865 with Hudson Taylor, and the third beginning in 1934 with Cameron Townsend and Donald McGavran describing missionary efforts prior to 1792 as a Protestant tradition that “plugged along for over 250 years minding its own business and its own blessing (like Israel of old).” Even more contemporary and academic treatments of the issues pertaining to world missions such as *The Changing Face of World Missions*, team written by three highly respected scholars in the field of missions has fallen prey to this type of stereotypical and prejudicial theological thinking in stating: “Although early Reformers held to Scripture as their sole guide for life, they believed the Great Commission, ‘to make disciples of all Nations,’ had been fulfilled by the apostles. There was thus no need for missions.”

**John Calvin**

While these charges may be brought against many churches in the Protestant tradition, and even against some Calvinistic churches, it is simply untrue that the Reformers and in particular John Calvin took no interest in missions. Whereas, Calvin never wrote a systematic treatment of his theology of missions his *Institutes*, commentaries, and letters contain many references to his theology of missions and his missionary spirit. An accurate description of his theology of missions can be reconstructed from these statements made by Calvin in his writings.

Simply put, Calvin held that in the Gospel, the barrier between Jews and Gentiles had been abolished and thus Christ’s Kingdom, open through faith in Christ, was to be populated by the elect (made up of both Jews and Gentiles) whom because they were elect needed rather than did not need to hear the Gospel preached so as to be truly converted. Calvin frequently made use of Ephesians 2:14 to insist that the partition-wall between Jew and Gentile has been broken down and the Gospel has been promulgated, so that “we [both Jew and Gentile] have been gathered together into the body of the Church, and Christ’s power is put forth to uphold and defend us.” Thus, Calvin concluded that since Christ’s rule extends over not only Jews, but over the whole world,

---

23 John Calvin, Commentary on Ps. 110:2, vol. 6, Psalms 93-150, 301; see also his commentaries on Isaiah 45:22, Matthew 24:19, and Acts 8:1.
Gentiles are called along with Jews into His Kingdom. Therefore, it is the inclusion of Gentiles into the commonwealth of Israel that allows and in fact demands the gospel of the Jewish Messiah to be proclaimed to Gentiles throughout the world.24

According to Calvin, the means by which Christ's kingdom is spread on earth is through the preaching of the gospel to the nations. “There is no other way of raising up the church of God than by the light of the word, in which God himself, by his own voice, points out the way of salvation. Until the truth shines, men cannot be united together, so as to form a true church.”25 Calvin believed and taught that Christians bear the responsibility to spread the gospel. He writes, “for it is our duty to proclaim the goodness of God to every nation... the work is such as ought not to be concealed in a corner, but to be everywhere proclaimed.”26

Calvin insisted that God uses the preaching of the gospel by men to bring people to faith. Calvin writes,

> Although he is able to accomplish the secret work of his holy Spirit without any means or assistance, he has nevertheless ordained outward preaching, to use it as it were as a means. But to make such a means effective and fruitful he inscribes in our hearts with his own finger those very words which he speaks in our ears by the mouth of a human being.27

Not only did Calvin insist that God had ordained the preaching of the gospel as a means of salvation, he argued it is the only means of salvation. Calvin writes, “God cannot be called upon by any except those who have learned of his mercy from the gospel.”28

Furthermore, since Calvin insisted that the number of the elect is unknown he believed the gospel ought to be freely proclaimed to everyone. Quoting Augustine, Calvin writes, “For as we know not who belongs to the number of the predestined or who does not belong, we ought to be so minded as to wish that all men be saved.”29 With this in mind, Calvin concluded that the Scriptures and the doctrine of predestination do not hinder the preaching of the gospel to the nations

---

but rather demand and encourage it. In further explaining his thoughts, Calvin is best understood to be saying that since the will of man is captive to Satan's will it is impossible for anyone to will his own salvation. However, since the preacher knows that there are elect who will be saved at the preaching of the gospel through the inward work of the Holy Spirit—the preacher can proclaim the gospel with confidence that those elected to eternal life will indeed heed the call.\textsuperscript{30}

Calvin's theology of missions was God-centered and Christ-centered, focusing on the glory of God in Christ as well as the duty of the true follower of Christ. For Calvin, the motivating factor for world missions was the glory of God. When the gospel is proclaimed and accepted among the nations, God is worshipped and glorified. This is the chief end of man. As Charles Chaney states, "The fact that the glory of God was the prime motive in early Protestant missions and that it has played such a vital part in later missionary thought and activity can be traced directly to Calvin's theology."\textsuperscript{31}

Calvin's theology was a lived and practiced theology especially in the area of evangelism and missions as he sent hundreds of missionaries to France, the rest of Europe, and even to the New World. Calvin had an intense passion for the conversion of France to the Reformed faith. In 1553, Calvin began sending missionaries to France. Most of these missionaries had come to Geneva as refugees from France while fleeing persecution. Yet after being trained by Calvin in theology, moral character, and preaching, he sent them back to plant churches in France. These efforts by Calvin had tremendous success. In 1555, there were five Reformed churches in France. In 1559, there were almost 100. In 1562, the number had reached 2,150.\textsuperscript{32} The total membership of these newly planted churches in France in 1562 is estimated at three million (out of a total population in France of about 20 million).\textsuperscript{33}

Calvin also did his best to fulfill requests for new ministers when these requests were received in Geneva from France, The Register of the Company of Pastors mentions 88 men who were sent from Geneva between 1555 and 1562.\textsuperscript{34} Most scholars do not believe this list to be complete however due to an attempt to protect some of these pastors whose lives would be endangered if their whereabouts were known. Some sources claim that the number of pastors sent out by Calvin was

\begin{flushright}
\textsuperscript{30} Calvin, \textit{The Bondage and Liberation of the Will}, 163-65.
\textsuperscript{31} Chaney, "The Missionary Dynamic in the Theology of John Calvin," 36-37.
\textsuperscript{34} Ibid., Preface.
\end{flushright}
much higher citing records claiming that no less than 142 missionaries were sent from Geneva in 1561 alone.\textsuperscript{35} The picture that remains is that an astounding number of missionaries were sent out from Geneva under Calvin’s influence. Fred Klooster even writes, “the mission activity that emanated from Geneva under Calvin’s inspiration was itself of monumental proportions. It was perhaps the greatest home missions project that history has yet seen since the time of the apostles.”\textsuperscript{36} Charles Edwards makes the point that “The Reformation was a missionary movement on a grand, international scale.”\textsuperscript{37}

So successful was this church planting effort that it drew the attention of the king of France. In 1561 Charles IX, the new king of France, sent a letter to the Council of Geneva. The letter claimed that preachers sent from Geneva were disturbing his reign. The king then asked that the pastors be recalled from France in order to maintain peace in the land.\textsuperscript{38}

Calvin, however, was not merely content to impact France with the Gospel. He took advantage of his circumstances in Geneva so as to strategically position missionaries throughout much of Europe. From 1542, Geneva became a refugee center for persecuted believers from all over Europe, including the Netherlands, England, Scotland, and Italy. Calvin was pleased to take in these refugees, though at times it was extremely difficult to accommodate them. In a letter to Farel dated 1551 he writes:

\begin{quote}
I am, meanwhile, much preoccupied with the foreigners who daily pass through this place in great numbers, or who have come here to live… Should you pay us a visit next autumn, you will find our city considerably increased—a pleasing spectacle to me, if they do not overwhelm me with their visits.\textsuperscript{39}
\end{quote}

Not short-sighted by any means, Calvin saw Geneva not only as a refugee center, but a missionary training center for the propagating of the gospel and the establishment of Reformed churches throughout Europe. His vision was that of receiving the people who came from all over Europe to his center only to send them back as trained, bold, and passionate missionaries and ministers of the gospel to many European countries including the Netherlands, England, Scotland, Poland, and Hungary.

\textsuperscript{37} Charles E. Edwards, “Calvin and Missions,” \textit{The Evangelical Quarterly} 8 (1936): 47.
\textsuperscript{38} Kingdon, \textit{Geneva and the Coming of the Wars of Religion in France}, 34.
Calvin’s missionary interests and endeavors were not merely limited to Europe. In 1556 at the request of French colonizers in Brazil, Calvin dispatched a missionary team of two pastors and eleven laymen to sail to Rio de Janeiro to begin work among the Tupinamba Indians. The men arrived in March 1557 and immediately began work among the Indians. Due to conflicts with the political leaders of the colony the missionaries were unable to finish their work. Some returned home to France while five others were eventually killed by the leader of the colony. Finally in 1560 the colony was captured by the Portuguese and all Protestant missionary efforts were ended.\(^40\)

To anyone’s knowledge there never was a single Indian convert made nor church started due to the work of the missionaries Calvin sent to Brazil. However, though the mission seemingly failed, the endeavor demonstrates Calvin’s desire to see Christ’s kingdom extended to what in his time was the “uttermost parts of the earth”. More than demonstrating his desire these missionary endeavors to France, Europe, and Brazil also demonstrate Calvin’s motivation in his desire. Much more than seeing mission posts established, churches raised up, and sinners saved—Calvin desired to see God glorified and Christ magnified. This was his motivational passion in his missionary enterprises. As he put it in a sermon preached on Deuteronomy 33:18-19, “When we know God to be our Father, should we not desire that he be known as such by all? And if we do not have this passion, that all creatures do him homage, is it not a sign that his glory means little to us?”\(^41\)

Calvin never had another opportunity to send out more missionaries. It would be the New England Puritans of the seventeenth century who would carry on the work begun by Calvin of sending and going for the sake of the Name.

**The New England Missionaries**

Between 1620 and 1640, fifteen thousand people made the voyage from Great Britain to North America. Whereas, the first to come were known as Pilgrims the vast majority of the immigrants were Puritans. The Pilgrims were separatists who left the Church of England due to its doctrinal impurities. The Pilgrims arrived at New Plymouth in November of 1620 having traveled across the ocean on the ship known as the Mayflower. Before landing on shore the leaders of the group drew up an agreement as to how they would live and work in the New World. This document is known as the Mayflower Compact. All 41 of the adult male members on the Mayflower signed the Compact, which also included the

---


\(^{41}\) John Calvin, Sermon 196 on Deut. 33:18-19
reasons for which they came to what they believed was Northern Virginia but in reality was Massachusetts:

\[\ldots\] Having undertaken for the Glory of God, and Advancement of the Christian Faith, and the Honour of our King and Country, a voyage to plant the first colony in the northern parts of Virginia; do by these presents, solemnly and mutually in the Presence of God and one of another, covenant and combine ourselves together into a civil Body Politick, for our better Ordering and Preservation, and Furtherance of the Ends aforesaid \ldots.\]  

Their understanding of the primary reason for which they traveled to the New World was for “the Glory of God and Advancement of the Christian Faith”. Therefore, among their other reasons for coming to America the one for which they wanted to be known and the one which they felt would best bind them together was God’s glory in advancing His Kingdom.

Whereas the Pilgrims rejected and left the Church of England because of theological error, the Puritans wanted to work to see the Church of England purified from its theological error. In essence, they desired to see the Church of England become consistent with the teaching of the Reformation. Puritans were known for their high view of God and belief in His sovereign authority and control over all things. Their sanctification rather than their safety moved them to pursue biblical preaching and teaching whenever it was prohibited. They were driven as it were by a passion for the glory of God in which they desired to see the coming of God’s Kingdom rule over all the nations through Christ. They saw everything in life as working toward this goal of God’s glory filling the earth. Thus, when they began their immigration to the New World it was not surprising that they saw this too as simply another means by which God would fill the earth with His glory as they faithfully proclaimed the Gospel to its native inhabitants.

This understanding of God’s purpose in their lives is seen in that the Massachusetts Bay Colony seal designed by the Puritans portrayed a Native American Indian holding an arrow down in a gesture of peace and voicing the words of Acts 16:9, “Come over and help us” emphasizing the missionary intentions of the original colonists. This seal was used until 1686.\(^{43}\)

Thus, the very first missionary endeavors in the English-speaking New World were begun and carried out by Pilgrims and Puritans who went

\(^{42}\) All About History (http://www.allabouthistory.org/mayflower-compact.htm)  
\(^{43}\) The History of the Arms and Great Seal of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts (http://www.sec.state.ma.us/pre/presea/sealhis.htm)
out for the sake of the Name so as to see God's Kingdom extended among the nations. They were those people who while disagreeing on how best to react to the errors of the Church of England agreed with the tenets of the Reformation. They were the spiritual descendents of the Reformers and thus took the Great Commission seriously. They saw it not as a command to be compartmentalized into one’s life but as a way of life.

One of these Puritans who came to the New World in 1631 was John Eliot. One year after his arrival in Massachusetts this twenty-seven year old man became the pastor of a new church in Roxbury, Massachusetts. Surrounded by several tribes of Indians Eliot saw the opportunity before him and could not avoid the practical implications of his theological roots.

If the infallible Scriptures promise that all nations will one day bow down to Christ, and if Christ is sovereign and able by His Spirit through prayer to subdue all opposition to His promised reign, then there is good hope that a person who goes as an ambassador of Christ to one of these nations will be the chosen instrument of God to open the eyes of the blind and to set up an outpost of the kingdom of Christ.⁴⁴

With this as his conviction he began the study of Algonquin at the age of forty. Over the next forty years he translated the entire Bible as well as many books into Algonquin. By the time he was eighty-four years old Eliot had been used by God to plant many churches as well as train many Indians men as their pastors. Known as the Apostle to the Indians, Eliot believed God’s Word and thus went out to establish an outpost for the Kingdom of God among the American Indians. His confidence in this venture is perhaps best summed up in his own words, “Prayers and pains through faith in Christ Jesus will do anything!”⁴⁵ Eliot, like his predecessors, knew and stood upon the great reality that God is unwaveringly and eternally committed to filling the earth with His glory for the sake of His Name.

Another New England missionary to the Indians was the sickly, physically weak yet spiritually powerful David Brainerd who went to the Indians in New Jersey in 1740 and remained there until he died in 1747 at the young age of twenty-nine. His story, as J. M. Sherwood says, "has done more to develop and mold the spirit of modern missions, and to fire the heart of the Christian Church, than that of any man since the apostolic age."⁴⁶ Another writes, “But in truth David Brainerd’s life

---

⁴⁴ John Piper, Let The Nations Be Glad (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2003), 53.
sacrifice reached out and touched the whole world, challenging more people into Christian service than perhaps any other man that ever lived." According to DuBose Brainerd’s journal almost immediately after it was published “. . . captured the hearts of the Protestant world. For over a century it was one of the most popular documents in evangelical circles. Its influence has been enormous." Piper follows in this line making the point that Edward’s book on Brainerd is “a biography that has inspired more missionary service, perhaps, than any other book outside of the Bible.” Even John Wesley, who although he deplored Brainerd’s “Calvinism” commended Brainerd’s journal to every preacher as a means of revival and perseverance in ministry.

One of those who heeded Wesley’s counsel and read Brainerd’s journal was William Carey. God used Brainerd’s life story to open Carey’s eyes to the need of all races everywhere and to fire his heart with a passion to speed the gospel to “the uttermost part.” It was also, chiefly, the reading of the story of Brainerd’s heroic missionary labors that thrust Henry Martyn out as a bundle of fire into the darkness of India and Persia, and caused Robert McCheyne to become the Apostle to the Jews. Other great missionaries who found Brainerd’s life and diary to be inspirational as well as motivational in their own going out for the sake of God’s great Name are Robert Morrison—missionary to China in 1807, David Livingstone—to Africa in 1840, Andrew Murray—to South Africa, and Jim Elliot—martyred missionary to the Auca Indians of Ecuador in 1955.

Undoubtedly, his friendship with Brainerd, his acquaintance with Brainerd’s missionary endeavors, hardships, and perseverance, as well as his pouring over Brainerd’s diary in order to publish his biography had a profound impact and influence in Jonathan Edwards life and future missionary service as well. Who influenced whom the most is unlikely in this life to ever know but it is safe to say that David Brainerd holds the honor of having influenced Jonathan Edwards in a way no other extrabiblical man ever did.

David Brainerd was born at Haddam, Connecticut, April 20, 1718. He became an orphan at fourteen years of age. He was born again and converted at the age of twenty-one on July 12, 1739. Two months later he enrolled at Yale to begin preparing for Christian ministry. His first year at Yale was not a pleasant one as he endured freshman hazing, difficult studies, a college environment not given to spiritual things,

---

50 Harrison, Heros of Faith on Pioneer Trails
measles, and the onset of the disease which eventually took his life—tuberculosis. Having to go home for several weeks to recover he returned to Yale in November 1740 and found the spiritual climate to have been dramatically changed by the ministry of George Whitefield who had visited and preached there while he was gone.

Whitefield’s preaching along with the preaching of more local evangelists was used by the Spirit of God to fuel a revival of sorts among the students. The faculty at Yale found this new revival movement disconcerting and invited Jonathan Edwards to preach in 1741 with the hopes he would discourage it and bring the students back under wraps. Edwards preaching was not what the faculty expected and instead of discouraging the revival on campus, Edward’s sermon entitled *The Distinguishing Marks of a Work of the Spirit of God* encouraged the student revival.

Realizing that they were being thought of as unspiritual and in some cases even unconverted men the trustees and faculty of Yale made a resolution that forbid any student from making such a claim. The punishment for a first offense would be public censorship after a public confession was made and for a second offense the student would be expelled. Brainerd became a victim of this very resolution as he was over heard to have said in regard to one of his tutors when confronted about his own involvement in the student revival, "he has no more grace than this chair." Drawing even more ire his direction, Brainerd also wondered out loud why the rector “did not drop down dead” for penalizing students for their evangelical zeal. In the end, Brainerd was expelled from Yale and refused readmission despite his efforts to make things right and reconcile with the college administration.

Brainerd was quite disturbed by his expulsion in that it meant he could not be ordained to pastoral ministry as a law in Connecticut prohibited the ordination of ministers who had not graduated from Yale, Harvard, or a European university. Whereas all seemed lost to Brainerd God simply had another direction in mind for his life—that of taking the Gospel to the Indians. A group of pastors sympathetic to Brainerd’s plight licensed him to preach and shortly thereafter he was asked to consider missionary service to the Indians. He accepted this proposition and was appointed a missionary November 25, 1742. He then began his work with the Stockbridge Indians not far from the village of Stockbridge, Massachusetts on April 1, 1743. Here he labored for a year and then later among the Delaware Indians. Finally, in June, 1745, he began to work among Indians at Crossweeksung, New Jersey where

---

52 Ibid., 52.
God used his ministry in amazing ways. Within a year of arriving God blessed Brainerd with a flock of 130 newly converted souls.

After laboring for two years in New Jersey Brainerd’s health broke and he moved to the home of Jonathan Edwards to whose daughter, Jerusha, he was engaged. He died nineteen weeks later on October 9, 1747 of Tuberculosis at the age of twenty-nine.

Brainerd’s work as a missionary among the Indians of North America was relatively short yet—only four years yet in this short time his work reaped great fruit as well as great admiration among his peers. Therefore, the obvious question is: why have the records of his short ministry had such a profound and lasting impact? To answer this, several characteristics of Brainerd’s ministry must be considered.

First, David Brainerd gave up his life in complete devotion to the Lord and His work. We can see a picture of this in some of his final words:

> It is impossible for any rational creature to be happy without acting all for God. God Himself could not make him happy any other way... There is nothing in the world worth living for but doing good and finishing God's work, doing the work that Christ did. I see nothing else in the world that can yield any satisfaction besides living to God, pleasing Him, and doing his whole will.  

In accord with his devotion to the Lord, Brainerd had a passion to enjoy God and experience greater personal holiness. He referred to this two-fold passion as a “pleasing pain”.

> When I really enjoy God, I feel my desires of him the more insatiable, and my thirstings after holiness the more unquenchable. ... Oh, for holiness! Oh, for more of God in my soul! Oh, this pleasing pain! It makes my soul press after God. ...Oh, that I might never loiter on my heavenly journey!  

Second, it is worthy to note that Brainerd pursued his work with long term goals in mind. Part of his mission strategy was to build schools and bring the Indians together into a close, permanent community that could be easily taught and cared for. He helped the Indians to restructure their entire lives around a Christian worldview. Integral to this vision of discipleship was the time that he spent discoursing with individuals and catechizing with small groups. He was able then to have direct, personal influence in the Indians’ lives. Brainerd worked to establish the Kingdom

---

53 Ibid., 366.
of God among the Indians in a way that would long outlive his ministry to them.

Third, he faced immense physical suffering. His sickness hounded him throughout his life. Whether he was taking breaks from school or was detained during his travels, reoccurring symptoms of tuberculosis often kept him from working at the tasks at hand. Eventually, of course, it took him completely out of his ministry and soon took his life as well.

Fourth, he often struggled with depression and loneliness. His diary is full of entries about his discouragement. Sometimes he was disappointed about the way his ministry was going, and other times he was distraught over the blackness of his soul. At least twenty-two times he longed for death as a way of escape from his depression, and, though he had made good friends among the Indians, he longed for a soul mate, something he never found, though he might have found it in Jerusha Edwards had they survived longer.

In editing Brainerd’s diary for publication Edwards purposely left out some entries due to their dire sense of spiritual desperation in which he lost all sense of acceptance and acceptability before God in Christ Jesus. Worse than that to him was his inability at times to feel during these times any kind of fear or desire to change these despairing thoughts of lostness. One such example of one of these entries written in his own hand reveals this sense of spiritual desperation.

I felt something like a criminal at the bar waiting for his sentence, excepting this, I felt but little concern which way my case went, for the fear of hell was almost, if not entirely, taken away from me. I had the greatest certainty that my state was forever unalterable by anything that I could do, and wondered and was almost astonished that I had never been sensible of it before. . . . And in this case I felt neither love to God, or desire of heaven as I used to think I did. Neither fear of hell, or love to the present world. . . . I thought my convictions were all gone and that seemed dreadful. But I thought I could go to hell, and that I had no sense of, nor could make it appear dreadful as formerly.

As to his sense of unhappiness, he writes:

Indeed I seemed to feel wholly destitute of any happiness or hopes and expectations of happiness either in the present or coming world, and yet felt no considerable degree of misery sensibly though I felt indeed something so far bordering on despair of any satisfying good that it appeared almost as comfortable to think of

being annihilated as anything that I then knew of, though I can truly say I was not willing for that neither. My whole soul was unspeakably bewildered and lost in myself and I knew nothing that seemed likely to make me happy, in case I could with the greatest ease have obtained the best good that I had any conception of.  

Finally, in this same journal entry he concluded that even as a believer who had walked with the Lord for many years that in his great hour of darkness and despair in which God was not real to him—he was real to God and as such real to Christ and in fact the perfect object of Christ’s compassion.

And being that lost I became a suitable object for the compassion of Jesus Christ to be set upon, since he came “to seek and to save that which is lost.” (Luke 19:10)

Amazingly, Brainerd pressed on through these feelings of spiritual despair and continued with his work keeping in view Christ’s compassion and God’s glory even when he could not feel neither. This pressing on in the face of great discouragement and even greater depression has no doubt encouraged countless other Christians and especially missionaries serving in hard places with hard people who know firsthand the kinds of spiritual pain he experienced.

Firth, Brainerd held firmly to his Calvinistic theology and applied it to his philosophy and practice of missions. As one biographer writes:

Brainerd believed fully in divine sovereignty . . . . As he went forth into the wilderness to preach to the Indians, he did so fully believing that those would certainly be saved whom God had chosen unto salvation. For that reason he ever judged that success in his work depended solely on the good pleasure and power of God. Closely associated with his Calvinistic convictions was his belief that God had called him not to be successful but faithful. Brainerd’s Calvinism was not contradictory to, but in fact included in its very essence, the necessity and importance of the earnest and faithful use of means . . . it was through diligent prayer and faithful witness borne to men that God accomplished His purposes in the salvation of sinners. A belief that his diligence was the ordained means of gathering in the elect of God caused Brainerd to toil and spend himself with a zeal and dedication that is almost unbelievable. Also, his confidence that God’s purposes would most assuredly be accomplished, and that Christ did not die in vain, accounts for the

---

56 Ibid., 136.
57 Ibid.
patience and perseverance he showed amid habitually
discouraging circumstances.\textsuperscript{58}

Finally, Brainerd was passionately fascinated by the glory of God and
thus in spite of his physical pains, discouragement, and even depression
would not quit. Seven days before he died, he spoke of his fervent
desire and longing to see God glorified throughout the world. This was
his last journal entry written in his own hand:

Friday, October 2. My soul was this day, at turns, sweetly set on
God: I longed to be with him that I might behold his glory. . . . Oh,
that his kingdom might come in the world: that they might all love
and glorify him for what he is in himself; and that the blessed
Redeemer might see of the travail of his soul, and be satisfied. Oh,
come Lord Jesus, come quickly! Amen.\textsuperscript{59}

Brainerd was driven by a great and glorious ambition that being the full
lordship of Christ coming to bear in his own life as well as in the lives of
the unconverted Indians all for the glory of God. He was willing and in
fact did give all to see this ambition come to fruition and in doing so found
it to be sweet. In his own words, “Oh how sweet it is to be spent and
worn out for God!”\textsuperscript{60}

Another of his biographers, Clyde Kilby, sums up why Brainerd has had
so much influence for the cause of Christ in seeing believers since his
day giving their lives to go out for the sake of the Name.

It is not Brainerd’s accomplishments as a missionary, significant as
they were, that have perpetuated his influence. It certainly is not
his perturbations of spirit or his sense of vileness or his flagellation
“complex” or his morbidity. I venture to say that it is not even his
diary so much as the idea back of all which eventuated in molding
the man. In our timidity and our shoddy opportunism we are always
stirred when a man appears on the horizon willing to stake his all
on a conviction.\textsuperscript{61}

As John Piper writes, “Brainerd's life is a vivid, powerful testimony to the
truth that God can and does use sick, discouraged, beat-down, lonely,
struggling saints, who cry to him day and night, to accomplish amazing

\textsuperscript{59} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{60} Edwards, \textit{The Life of David Brainerd}, 366.
things for his glory.” 62 Ultimately, the testimony of Brainerd’s life and ministry is that he, in a long line of God-prizing, Christ-loving, and Holy Spirit empowered people went out for the sake of the Name. His life ambition and goal for others as well is summed up in Jonathan Edwards’ editorial comment at the end of Brainerd’s journal.

"May the Lord of the harvest send forth other laborers into this part of His harvest, that those who sit in darkness may see great light, and that the whole earth may be filled with the knowledge of Himself! Amen.” 63

Another and perhaps surprising name to some that needs to be discussed when it comes to New England Missionaries and in particular those missionaries who went out for the sake of the Name is none other than the great American theologian Jonathan Edwards. Many who are familiar with his name and even his theology are not quite so familiar with his missionary career. Even before his abrupt dismissal from his church in Northampton, Massachusetts, Edwards was interested in the propagation of the Gospel to the Indians surrounding him. Upon his firing from Northampton, Edwards, with his large family, was now unemployed and could soon be homeless, but offers of aid quickly came to him. A church in Scotland desired his services as well a church in Virginia. He declined both, to become, in 1750, pastor of a small church in Stockbridge, Massachusetts and a missionary to the Housatonic Indians.

During his time in Stockbridge in the heart of the Berkshire Mountains of Massachusetts, Edwards served as a missionary to some 250 Mohican and 60 Mohawk Indians. 64 According to George Marsden Edwards’ pre-eminent goal during his time at Stockbridge was to reach these Indians with the life-giving Gospel. 65 He did not go there as has been suggested by some to have more time for study and writing. Rather he went to Stockbridge because he had a “passion for God, a passion for souls, and a passion for the inauguration of the glorious kingdom of Christ. It was a full orbed missionary focus that spurred him to relocate to the frontier of western Massachusetts to devote his most mature years to the work of missions.” 66

Like John Calvin, it has been argued that Jonathan Edwards’ deep commitment to a Calvinist worldview effectively hindered the formulation of a rich missionary vision. In an article published in the late 1970s, for instance, James Manor states that “Edwards himself was too close to traditional Calvinism and too concerned with the defense of the sovereignty of God against the Arminians to be termed a mission activist.”

Manor goes on to acknowledge however that Edwards’ sermons and writings were a catalyst for the thinking of missionaries like William Carey who were motivated to pursue missions for the glory of God convinced that it was God’s cause and thus further convinced that thus, it could not fail.

A correct understanding of Edwards’ is to see that his theological vision was a global one. As Davies writes, Edwards’ theological vision was a global one, in which, as he looked to the future, he saw ever-increasing victories in the missionary advance of the kingdom of Christ. In fact in a letter written February 12, 1740 to George Whitefield inviting him to come and preach in Northampton, Edwards reveals this global vision as he prayerfully implores God to:

send forth more laborers into his harvest of a like spirit [to Whitefield], until the kingdom of Satan shall shake, and his proud empire fall throughout the earth and the kingdom of Christ, that glorious kingdom of light, holiness, peace and love, shall be established from one end of the earth unto the other!

Then Edwards, not content to be left on the sidelines, in a second letter to Whitefield that same year asked him to pray for him that he would be,

filled with his [i.e. God’s] Spirit, and may become fervent, as a flame of fire of fire in my work, and may be abundantly succeeded, and that it would please God, however unworthy I am, to improve me as an instrument of his glory, and advancing the kingdom of Christ.

In this request it is clear that Edwards saw being an instrument for advancing the kingdom of Christ through the preaching of the Gospel as tantamount to being an instrument of God’s glory. In other words, Edwards saw the propagation of the Gospel as being primarily a work that

68 Ibid., 39-43.
71 Ibid., 87.
was to be accomplished for the sake of God’s glory. Furthermore, like Calvin, he saw the fulfilling of the Great Commission as being accomplished primarily through the means of preaching and other ordinary means of grace.

Yet not all will be accomplished at once, as by some great miracle, as the resurrection of the dead at the end of the world will be all at once. But this is a work which will be accomplished by means, by the preaching of the gospel, and the use of ordinary means of grace, and so shall be gradually brought to pass. Some shall be converted and be the means of other’s conversion; God’s Spirit shall be poured out first to raise up instruments, and then those instruments shall be improved and succeeded.\(^{72}\)

Edwards like most of the Puritans was a postmillennial. His study of the Bible resulted in his seeing the spread of the Gospel in new and substantial ways. From his viewpoint he could see it spreading throughout North America and then from there across the globe. Ultimately, he believed the propagation of the Gospel throughout the earth would result in a golden age of righteousness upon the earth to which Christ would then return. The process by which this would take place would be through the normal means of grace already present in the church namely the proclamation of the Gospel by those who themselves had heard, been converted, and been called forth to proclaim the same good news. This belief that this propagation of the Gospel with its resulting effect of god being glorified in all the earth inspired Edwards to pursue missions. Of course, the argument here is not that one need be a postmillennialist to have a proper motivation for missions. As Piper writes:

\[\text{Whether one is a postmillennialist, as were most of the Puritans (though not all, e.g., William Twisse, Thomas Goodwin, William Bridge, Jeremiah Borroughs, who were all premillennial Westminster divines in the seventeenth century), or whether one is a pre- or amillennialist, my point remains the same. Hope for the unstoppable success of Christ’s mission (whether you see it as a golden age of gospel sway on earth or as an ingathering of the elect from every people group on earth) is a crucial element in motivation and power for missions.}^{73}\]

Edwards laid out several principles that he saw as relating to missions in his work entitled, History of The Work of Redemption. First, God is working to bring glory to His Name and the means by which He has chosen to do so is the establishing and expanding of the church until it


\[^{73}\text{Piper, Let The Nations Be Glad, 54.}\]
should fill the globe. Furthermore, missions is at the heart of God’s grand design to fill the earth with His glory as it is God’s primary means to expand the church to the nations. Missions must not lose sight of its place in God’s plan or it can degenerate to social, moral, or political ends rather than its God-ordained end.\textsuperscript{74}

Second, the grand unfolding work of redemption redounds to the glory of God. Since God is utterly God-centered, the Father glorifying in the Son and the Son glorifying the Father, the \textit{God-centeredness} of God is discovered in the all encompassing work of the Triune God. The great work of redemption, as Edwards saw it, is ultimately the finished work of Christ, purposed by the Father before time began and unfurled in history as the Holy Spirit applies that grand work to individuals in redemption. Missions must be as \textit{God-centered} as the Trinity.\textsuperscript{75}

Third, God has chosen the means by which His great end should be accomplished. These means are the normal means of grace to be found in the pursuit of God’s worship and the church’s practice. The preaching of the Gospel attended by the outpouring of the Holy Spirit through the church at home and abroad is the God-ordained means by which the grand end is realized. The work of missions is primarily a task of dependent proclamation.\textsuperscript{76}

Fourth, the theological bent of those pursuing missions is critical. In the spread of the gospel in the period leading up to the fall of Antichrist and the dawn of the millennium, it is not just the winning of the heathen to Christ that is in view. The glorious work would be evangelical, proclamational and doctrinal. The work of missions is to propagate the Gospel and seek the purity of the church. From this perspective, it is clear that a well-educated and theologically-equipped ministry is requisite to missions. Reductionism as to the task of missions would not further its grand end. In addition, the theological perspective of the missionaries needs to be that of evangelical Calvinism. Mission work theologically unsound will leave much to be re-done in its wake. The Christian religion may prosper outwardly, but a lack of vital, vibrant spiritual life will ultimately stagnate the work. Missions then, is not merely seeking converts, but the winning of genuine Christians, and Evangelical Calvinism is vital to that end.\textsuperscript{77}

Fifth, eschatological systems are no substantial inhibition to the missionary endeavor. No future eschatological event needed to occur before this grand task can be pursued.\textsuperscript{60} Any eschatological scheme that

\textsuperscript{74} Baines, “\textit{Thy Kingdom Come: The Missionary Theology and Practice of Jonathan Edwards}”, 21.
\textsuperscript{75} Ibid. 21-22.
\textsuperscript{76} Ibid. 22.
\textsuperscript{77} Ibid. 23.
discouraged missions is, therefore, incorrect in its assessment. Missions must not be shackled by illegitimate inferences or tenuous conclusions drawn from eschatology. What is commanded as the means of the great end must not be negated by other subservient theological threads; the part must fit the whole. Missions is a theologically integrated task, and the work of redemption, as more broadly defined by Edwards, is its organizing principle.78

The History of the Work of Redemption not only encouraged missions but saw missionary endeavors as absolutely necessary to the global expansion of Christianity. Edwards’s heart for missions evidences itself deeply in this treatise, bolstering the premise that the work of missions was a significant factor in his overall theological framework. Edwards’ Religious Affections also had missiological implications for those desiring to go out for the sake of the Name.

The first and most obvious missiological implication of Religious Affections is the necessity of the missionary’s own regeneration. Only converted men will do. It would be a grave mistake to propagate this danger in the pursuit of missions. Missionaries must be redeemed; they must have the indwelling Holy Spirit in regeneration and the fruit of that indwelt Sovereign in sanctification. In essence, they must be visible saints in the ways dictated by Scripture.79

The second use of Edwards’s Religious Affections is as an aide in judging new converts. The tendency to look only at surface issues could make the missionary work appear to be progressing when it was not. The capacity to discern genuine saving faith was important to the missionary endeavor.

Third, the missionary must keep in mind that if true conversion is to be sought then those means that tend toward religious affections must be used. In other words, the advance against Antichrist and the toppling of his reign would only come through revival as true and gracious affections take root in the hearts of individuals, anything short of this would only sound the retreat. True revival is evidenced in religious affections and advanced by the means of grace given to the missionary. Edwards emphasized this when he indicated the critical need to distinguishing between false and true affections. “But yet I am humbly but fully persuaded, we shall never be in the way of truth, a way acceptable to God, and tending to the advancement of Christ’s kingdom, till we do so.”80

As has been said in more contemporary language—what men are saved with they are saved to.

78 Ibid. 23.
79 Ibid. 36.
80 Ibid. 36-37.
All in all, there is much work to be yet to be done on Edwards as a missionary. The appreciation of Edwards as a missionary is just beginning to come to hold a place alongside his other accomplishments. However, enough is known and appreciated that some have come to understand that if William Carey is the Father of Modern Missions, Jonathan Edwards is the “Grandfather of Modern Missions”. In fact, it could be said, theologically, that if Jonathan Edwards be the Grandfather of Modern Missions then John Calvin would be the Great Grandfather of Modern Missions.

When Edwards published David Brainerd’s journal little did he realize the effect it would have upon a Particular Baptist pastor named William Carey and a number of other influential pastors and churches. In essence, Edwards’ efforts in publishing Brainerd’s journal as well as his book on prayer entitled The Humble Attempt inspired Carey and his colleagues to seriously consider the fact that if God has indeed commanded men everywhere to repent and believe in His Son and if God has chosen people from every nation for redemption and if these chosen can only be converted through the proclamation of the Gospel then those who are redeemed must be the means of that Gospel proclamation and therefore must go to the nations with the Gospel of Jesus Christ. When Edwards’ ideas reached Britain, they sparked off a new awareness of our responsibility both to pray for and preach to the unconverted. In 1784, a Scottish Presbyterian minister, John Erskine, sent John Ryland a copy of Edwards’ 1748 call for concerted prayer for revival and worldwide evangelism (The Humble Attempt to Promote Explicit Agreement and Visible Union Among God’s People in Extraordinary Prayer for the Revival of Religion and the Advancement of Christ’s Kingdom on Earth) which he passed on to Carey and other Particular Baptist pastors who associated with Carey. As a result, by 1789 many prayer meetings were in existence in various places and different denominations.

Carey was also influenced by a group known as the Moravians, who were sending Christian missionaries, primarily laymen rather than clergy, to many parts of the world, including the Caribbean, North and South America, the Arctic, Africa, and the Far East. He read from their reports that they had sent out 135 missionaries and He is reported to have said, “See what the Moravians are daring… Can not we Baptists at least attempt something in fealty to the same Lord?” And attempting something great for God in regard to missions was exactly what Carey had in mind. However, Carey also wanted to ensure that whatever he attempted for God be not only biblical but be driven by a biblical

---

“Carey was convinced that God could only be reliably known by the understanding and obedient appropriation of the Truth.”

Carey, who was born at Paulerspury, Northamptonshire, England, August 17, 1761, converted at the age of seventeen, and the bi-vocational pastor of Harvey Lane Baptist Church in Leicester, England published a pamphlet entitled *An Enquiry Into the Obligations of the Christians to Use Means for the Conversion of the Heathen*. In this masterpiece on missions Carey answered arguments, surveyed the history of missions from apostolic times, surveyed demographics of the entire known world as to countries, size, population and religions, and dealt with the practical application of how to propagate the Gospel throughout the world. In his work Carey cited Jonathan Edwards as well as John Eliot and David Brainerd, thus establishing a sort of chain between these men and the influence they had in regard to missions.

The impetus to Carey's publishing of the *Enquiry* was a 1791 meeting of the association of Northamptonshire Particular Baptist Churches in Clipston. John Sutcliff of Olney was one of the preachers and he preached a message on being jealous for God in the sense of being passionate to see God glorified in all the earth. He pleaded with his hearers, many of them pastors, to “embrace a globe and every inhabitable shore” for the sake of the Gospel. Then Andrew Fuller, preached a powerful message from Haggai 1:2 on *The Disaster of Delay* in which he likened the failure to be involved in the propagation of the Gospel so as to further build and expand God’s Kingdom to the sin of God’s people in Haggai who has failed to rebuild the temple in Jerusalem. As Carey wrote, “This clarion call to world mission could scarcely have been clearer.” Another of the pastors attending the meeting, John Ryland commented that “An unusual degree of attention was excited. I know not under which I felt the most. The mind of everyone was possessed by a solemn conviction of our need of more zeal, and of the sin of negligence.”

Carey, recognizing that the Spirit was at work convicting the hearts of these pastors about their part in missions decided to strike as it were while the iron was hot. As one biographer writes, “He called for impression to be turned to expression, sentiment to service.” But this was not to be the case this day as Carey’s great-grandson describes:

---

83 Ibid., 63.
84 Ibid.
85 Ibid.
86 Ibid., 64.
He pleaded with them on Christ’s behalf to become His ambassadors to the world, and to venture forward to begin an overseas mission. To his warm mind it seemed that the child for which Christ had long travailed was coming to the birth, and that this Association Day gathering was to be his manger. Had Clipston obeyed, it would have set its church upon a hill never to be hid. To its everlasting loss, the ‘wise and prudent’ prevailed, who counseled the people to be non-committal and who would not take any initiative. Not even the two preachers of the day stood with Carey! They had not anticipated such a hasty response and drew back from Carey’s literal application of their urgings. ‘Feeling the difficulty’, says Fuller, ‘of setting out on such an unbeaten path, their minds [including his own] revolted at the idea of attempting it. It seemed too much like grasping at an object utterly beyond their reach.’

If there was any consolation for Carey it was that these reluctant pastors did agree that he should publish his pamphlet (The Enquiry) which, he should then present to all the churches at the next Association meeting. To his credit, Carey did not leave the meeting angry nor did he resign membership in the Association. Rather, he remained at the meeting as well as in the Association and he published his pamphlet of eighty-seven pages.

It is worth noting that Carey let the fruit of the Spirit rule this day especially since he very easily could have taken Fuller’s and Sutcliff’s failure to stand with him in his desire to take their sermons at face value as a betrayal of sorts. Here they try to draw their hearers out on a limb to which only Carey climbs and then as soon as he calls for action and application, they cut off the limb and leave him hanging alone. But Carey was not about winning battles; rather he was all about seeing God glorified even if it took longer than he had expected. Thus that night after the meeting Carey remained behind with some of these men—John Ryland, John Sutcliff, Andrew Fuller, and Samuel Pearce—until well after midnight filling their minds and hearts with his vision for overseas missions. This night in which Carey exhibited humility and grace was used by God to prepare the ground of these men’s hearts for another day in which all would rise to the challenge and put forth a plan to send someone from their midst to the heathen with the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

The Enquiry was the result of eight years of praying, thinking, and studying the Scriptures as well as the world and its people. Besides an introduction the Enquiry consists of an Argument for the pursuit of world missions, a Review of the history of missions beginning with the apostles. In this section Carey highlighted those early missionaries who conquered

---

87 Ibid.
for Christ in the waning days of the Roman Empire mentioning the likes of Patrick and some of the Celtic Church missionaries. He also described the missionaries of the Reformation followed by his heroes John Eliot and David Brainerd. Finally, he also gave mention to Moravian and Methodist missionaries. All in all, this was the probably the very first attempt to put together a list of world missionaries. Interestingly enough, Carey’s list is the basis for every other list since at least up until his own departure for India.

The Survey section provided his demographic studies and statistics on the various unreached people groups identified. In essence his survey of the world included an atlas, world census, and world directory of the various known peoples living on the earth. His statistical findings he found tragic.

Of the world’s seven hundred and thirty-one millions, more than a fifth were Mohammedans [Muslim], and more than half pagans—seven-ninths in all being either Mohammedan or pagan. Half of Asia, most of Africa, most of America, and all but the coast of South America were as wanting in civilization as in true religion, with peoples sometimes cannibal.  

In the Challenge Carey confronted the obstacles to reaching this known and unknown world with the Gospel of Jesus Christ. He gave time to the barriers of distance, language, physical needs, barbarism, culture, suffering, and even death. He encouraged churches and associations of churches to take up the plow and without looking back choose men of the highest caliber to send out for the sake of the Name.

Choose men of piety, prudence, courage, and forebearance; men of sound knowledge of the Word of God and the Gospel; men prepared to forgo comforts and endure hardships. Let them mingle with the people, always presenting the kindly nature of their errand, resenting no injury, assuming no airs, and grudging no service. Let them above all be instant in prayer, and they will not fail, especially if they be quick to discern and develop the faculties of their converts, who, with their inborn understanding of the people, must always be a country’s chief evangelists, endorsing and adorning their message with their changed lives.

Finally, Carey closed his Enquiry with the Programme in which he set out his plan to propagate the Gospel among the heathen so as to reach them for the glory of God. The main element of his plan was prayer. Carey writes, “We must pray, for without the Spirit all is vain.” Following prayer

---

88 Ibid., 68.
89 Ibid., 69-70.
90 Ibid., 70.
Carey alliterated his remaining points encouraging the churches and future missionaries to plan, plod, and finally pay if the heathen were to be reached. His plan called for every denomination to form its own mission societies with the intent of helping each other whenever possible. He called for Christians to give generously to missions and for churches to invest heavily in reaching the heathen for the sake of Christ. As he writes, “Surely it is worthwhile to lay ourselves out with all our might in promoting Christ’s kingdom.”

Undoubtedly, Carey’s work while influenced heavily by David Brainerd was also influenced by Jonathan Edwards and his view of a universal kingdom of God in which God’s glory will fill the entire earth as His elect are brought to salvation from throughout all the nations. This view formed the foundational underpinnings of a worldwide missionary movement in Carey’s mind. It also was foundational to his motivation for missions and for being involved in missionary endeavors even if the involvement required great sacrifice. Carey expressed this expectant hope when he wrote:

> When I left England, my hope of India’s conversion was very strong; but amongst so many obstacles, it would die, unless upheld by God. Well, I have God, and His Word is true. 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 the sure Word, would rise above all obstructions and overcome every trial. God’s cause will triumph.

Carey revealed in his Enquiry as well as his preaching and missionary methods his Calvinistic convictions, which he claimed to be “essential to missions and to the missionary, for missionaries must, among other things, be "of undoubted orthodoxy in their sentiments." This puts Carey, the Father of Modern Missions at great odds with those whose views run contrary to his when they claim Calvinism a hinderance to missions. They would be shocked to know that Carey not only disagreed with them but even considered their anti-calvinistic views to be outside the realm of Christian orthodoxy.

Carey was by conviction a Particular Baptist, that is a Baptist who held to the belief that Christ’s atonement was not general in the sense that Christ died for the entire world of elect and non-elect alike but rather was particular in that He died for the elect alone so as to actually pay for their

---

91 Ibid., 71.
92 Piper, Let The Nations Be Glad, 20.
sins and procure their salvation. Carey, however was not partial to the view held by many in the Particular Baptist camp which is referred to as *Hyper-Calvinism*, the belief that God saves the elect through His sovereign will with no regard for the use of the methods of bringing about salvation such as evangelism, preaching, and prayer for the lost. Many of Carey’s fellow pastors in his association held to this view and thus were convinced that the doctrine of predestination refuted missions.  

What kept Carey from allowing this view to rule his own theological perspectives was the theology of John Calvin and Jonathan Edwards being mediated through the writings of a few faithful friends. One of these friends, Andrew Fuller, who had been a Hyper-Calvinist, but had reconsidered his position and, in his printed sermon, ”The Nature of Importance of Walking by Faith” of 1784 and in his book, *The Gospel Worthy of All Acceptation*, derived the responsibility for missions from the doctrine of predestination itself. Another friend, Robert Hall published a pamphlet entitled ”Help to Zion’s Travellers” in 1781, which deeply influenced Carey, and marked his transition from Hyper-Calvinism to missionary Calvinism. In short, Anglican and Baptist pastors such as Thomas Scott, Andrew Fuller, Robert Hall,Sr. and John Sutcliffe aided Carey in overcoming Hyper-Calvinism without surrendering his Calvinist understanding of salvation.

While many in Carey’s day were being carried away with the Methodist movement Carey was not influenced by it as one might expect. Whereas, “he could not harmonize the views of the hyper-Calvinists with the duty of calling men to Christ, on the other hand the opposite doctrine of Arminianism held by the Methodists seemed to him to strike at the roots of belief in the grace of God.” Carey continued in his Calvinistic soteriology throughout his missionary career. So important was this doctrine to him and his co-workers that they required others coming to join them to also hold to this theology so as to have a common basis and foundation for ministry. This agreement was set forth in their ‘Form of Agreement’ of 1805 in which they stated, ”We are sure that only those who are ordained to eternal life will believe, and that God alone can add to the church such as shall be saved.”

While rejecting Methodist soteriology Carey agreed with some of their methodology especially when it came to boldly evangelizing and taking

97 A. Christopher Smith, ”The Edinburgh Connection: Between the Serampore Mission and Western Missiology”, *Missiology: An International Review* 18 (1990), 247.
advantage of every situation for the sake of sharing the Gospel. In his *Enquiry* he writes:

> It has been said that we ought not to force our way, but to wait for the openings, and leadings of Providence; but it might with equal propriety be answered in this case, neither ought we to neglect embracing those openings in providence which daily present themselves to us. What openings of providence do we wait for? ... Where a command exists nothing can be necessary to render it binding but a removal of those obstacles which render obedience impossible, and these are removed already. Natural impossibly can never be pleaded so long as facts exist to prove the contrary.\(^{100}\)

Carey’s short pamphlet really is an incredible work in that it set forth in the most concise of terms a theology and philosophy of missions as well as a plan incorporating the two that his fellow pastors were able to not only agree with but eventually put their hands to.

On May 30, 1792 a little over one year from the meeting in which Carey was commissioned to publish his *Enquiry*, the Association met again in Nottingham, England. It was the farthest north the Northampton Association of Particular Baptists had ever met requiring some of the messengers to ride on horseback from sixty to seventy miles to get there. Out of the twenty-four churches in the association seventeen sent their pastors. After a report from the pastors regarding the spiritual health of their respective churches on Tuesday evening the ministers went to bed and awoke at 6 am for prayer and then gathered for the first sermon at 10 am. Carey was the preacher and his text was *Isaiah 54*. After giving the background of the text Carey focused his thought primarily on verses two, three, and the first part of verse four which read:

> Enlarge the place of your tent; stretch out the curtains of your dwelling, spare not; lengthen your cords and strengthen your pegs. For you will spread abroad to the left and your descendants will possess nations and will resettle the desolate cities. Fear not. (NASV)

As Carey explained the historical context of Judea’s destruction and Jerusalem’s humiliation and then God’s encouraging words that as bad as things seemed not all was a loss. God would restore her back to her land and her destiny one day after her captivity was fulfilled and on that day she would need to make some changes. Carey took God’s words to find a larger canvas, stouter and taller poles, and stronger tent pegs to mean that God’s people needed to “...catch a wider vision. Venture on

\(^{100}\) Carey, *Enquiry*, 10-11.
bolder programmes. Dwell in a larger world. Thy maker is thy Husband. He is Lord of all the earth.”¹⁰¹ Then in his conclusion he exhorted his fellow pastors to do two things: “Expect great things from God. Attempt great things for God.”¹⁰² Having thus made his case he sat down.

More preaching and meetings followed until the next morning the pastors met to care for Association business as well as decide what if anything to do about the messages they had heard. Once Carey’s sermon was brought to the table it was noted that he had, as asked a year ago, published his Enquiry and that it was on sale. Yet, when it came to taking some kind of action on his call for action in regard to establishing a mission society with the intent of sending out one of their own for the sake of the Name, the assembly of preachers balked. They simply did not believe that they had the ability to put into practice what Carey was suggesting. As for Carey he could not believe that his fellow ministers would once again have no faith to do anything and like the spies sent out by Moses would only see the giants and the impossibilities.

But this time he could not just sit there and hold his peace. His patience was worn and in desperation he grabbed Fuller’s arm and not letting go, cried, “Is there nothing again going to be done, sir?”¹⁰³ According to Carey’s great-grandson:

Fuller trembled an instant under that desperate heart-broken gesture, and then his own soul was stabbed awake, and the Holy Ghost flooded his spirit. He also heard God’s sigh at the need of the lost. Often had he sympathized with Carey’s propaganda, though too timorous for committal. Now in a moment, he became convert and colleague, the first of Carey’s captives, the first of Christ’s expectant attempters. He crossed his Rubicon. He put both hands to the plough, and then never once looked back. He stood from that instant as Caleb with Joshua. They became two men with one soul and found in the words of Ibsen, that—No precipice is too steep for two.¹⁰⁴

Fuller immediately went to work and with his influence over the other pastors which had been cultivated for years, a resolution was drawn up and passed by the Association’s pastors. It read:

¹⁰¹ Carey, William Carey, 75.
¹⁰² Ibid., 77.
¹⁰³ Ibid., 78.
¹⁰⁴ Ibid.
Resolved, that a plan be prepared against the next minister's meeting at Kettering, for forming a Baptist society for propagating the Gospel among the Heathens.\textsuperscript{105}

Five months later, the Association met again with twelve pastors, one deacon, and a young student from Bristol in attendance. They met in the town of Kettering probably unaware that fifty-one years before to that very month a minister by the name of Philip Doddridge who was deeply burdened for the conversion of the heathen around the world had poured out his burden and his plan to reach them to a group of Anglican pastors. But these ministers were not ready for such bold action and Doddridge's proposal was rejected.

Now fifty-one years later in October of 1792, five of the pastors were ready to move forward in forming what they were to call The Baptist Missionary Society. However, they needed the backing of the other seven pastors and their churches to pursue such action. The faith of the five was evident as Carey, Fuller, Pearce, Ryland, and Sutcliff were ready to proceed with defining a purpose statement as well as a plan to proceed. The other seven pastors however were not so eager. As S. Pearce Carey writes:

They felt themselves so helpless. Theirs were such little flock, and their folk were illiterate and poor, and could neither be expected to grasp nor support such a vast undertaking. In any case, they lacked experience or precedent to guide them. Overall they seemed—to themselves—to be too inland and isolated to direct an overseas effort. The greater centres and churches, they said, must surely take the initiative and shoulder the burden. . . . In human terms they really were nobodies from nowhere, with no influence beyond their village bounds. Indeed, their villages were so obscure that a mid-Englander would have never heard of them!\textsuperscript{106}

Beyond their lack of influence these seven pastors were realistic when it came to the consideration of their ability to finance such a worldwide endeavor. All seven churches were very small. Three numbered less than twenty-five members. As the meeting continued throughout the day it appeared doubtful that a plan was going to get off the floor as the seven pastors were simply to apprehensive. Then Carey began to rehearse for them how the Moravians who with their doctrinal deficiencies and man-centered soteriology and who were as poor as they were able to send out 135 of their own to places in the world where the Gospel had never gone before. It was at this point that he is reported to have said: “See what the Moravians are daring… Can not

\textsuperscript{105} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{106} Ibid., 82-83.
we Baptists at least attempt something in fealty to the same Lord?"\textsuperscript{107}

This was apparently the challenge they needed to hear for after this the seven pastors eventually overcame their apprehension and acquiesced and the following resolution was passed:

\begin{quote}
Humbly desirous of making an effort for the propagation of the Gospel amongst the Heathen, according to the recommendations of Carey’s \textit{Enquiry}, we unanimously resolve to act in Society together for this purpose; and, as in the divided state of Christendom each denomination by exerting itself separately, seems likeliest to accomplish the great end, we name this the Particular Baptist Society for the propagation of the Gospel among the Heathen.\textsuperscript{108}
\end{quote}

It should not go unnoticed that this, the very first mission society made up of and backed by a plurality of likeminded churches for the worldwide propagation of the Gospel among the unreached peoples of the world was organized by churches holding to a doctrine of soteriology that was God-centered rather than man-centered and which recognized God’s complete sovereignty over all things including the salvation of all men. In other words, these churches Calvinism did not hinder their mission vision but rather in the end strengthened it and in fact propelled them forward in spite of their fears.

Andrew Fuller, the most influential of the pastors became the first home secretary and the first missionary appointee was John Thomas, a doctor who was already serving in India as a sort of freelance Baptist layman missionary. Realizing his need of a more theologically astute and accomplished companion, Thomas was overjoyed when Carey at the age of 32, married and with three children and one on the way offered himself as that companion. This decision was much to the consternation of his wife, father, and even his own church of which he had been the pastor for several years. His wife, Dorothy refused to go with him, his father considered him “mad”, and his church resisted and rebelled against his decision. Yet, Carey felt he could only persist in his calling as to draw back now would be disobedience. So, he sought the help of Fuller to act as his advocate and to mediate for him before his wife. Fuller was unable to change Dorothy’s mind and thus Carey resolved to go on to India without her taking along their eight-year-old son Felix with him.

Whereas, Carey’s church, Harvey Lane Baptist Church had been fully behind a missionary endeavor to the unconverted it was another matter to lose their pastor to the unconverted. They experienced great turmoil

\begin{flushright}
\textsuperscript{108} S. Pearce Carey, \textit{William Carey}, 84.
\end{flushright}
once Carey informed them of his plans to leave and simply were not of a mind to give him up. Then in one of their church business meetings as they were bemoaning Carey’s plans, a church member arose and sounded a courageous note saying: “God is bidding us make the sacrifice which shall prove our prayers sincereness. Let us rise to His call, and show ourselves worthy. Instead of hindering our pastor, let us not even be content to let him go; let us send him.”

The church tearfully gave way to this voice and set itself on track to fully support their pastor and his transition to missionary service. The pain and joy they experienced in this decision is reflected in this letter from Harvey Lane Baptist Church to the Association at their next gathering:

Dear Brethren,

Last year we observed that the Lord smiled upon us, and Healed our Divisions, and Blessed us. Then we had some Increase. But this year He has showed himself to Be a God who answers Prayers (Perhaps more than at Former times) to us. We have this year Received 19 members by Baptism and we have Reason to hope that moore are under Concern of soul, our Present Number of Members is 80ty. But in the midst of our expectations, and our growing Union, we Where Visited with a Blow which we Feel the weight, perhaps moore that You can suppose. Our Dear and Beloved pastor was Called from us, to go and Preach the Gospel to Heathens. The Shock was great—great indeed to think of Parting with a minister we so dearly Loved—with faithfulness and with ejection which he was posest of, Indeared Him to us moore and more. But what can we do? His Heart had been Long set upon it, we had Been Long Praying For the Gospel to Be Sent, and Now Providence opened a way, and we were called to make this Painefull Sacrifice, in answer to Prayers. We know that the Head of the Church can Supply our Wants, and hope we shall be remembered for good By our Sister Churches.

Finally, Carey, his son Felix, and the Thomas family boarded a boat bound for India in April of 1793. But the trip ended abruptly at Portsmouth, England due to money problems with Thomas and the lack of proper documentation to go to India. Carey was forced to go home but as God would have it, this delay provided Carey the time he needed to properly persuade his wife to join him. Having delivered their fourth child just three weeks earlier Dorothy was more sympathetic to her husband’s desires and agreed to go to India as long as her sister Kitty would be able to accompany her. Once funds were raised for the family

109 Ibid., 101.
110 Ibid., 102.
and the necessary paperwork was finished, Carey and his family boarded a ship for India on June 13, 1793.

Arriving safely in India five months later in November, the Carey’s moved from the coast to the interior of the country. They were surrounded by swamps, malaria carrying mosquitoes, wild animals, and unbelievers. In these dire living conditions, Dorothy and the two oldest boys became deathly ill and Carey was consumed with caring for his family. His idealistic dreams of missionary service were rapidly fading and it didn’t help that his wife and her sister were continually complaining and blaming him for their circumstances.111

After a few months the Careys moved three hundred miles north to Malda where Carey was able to obtain a position in an indigo factory. The factory provided a steady income which was necessary due to the limited support he was receiving and the troublesome time he experienced in receiving it all the way from England. It also provided Carey with an opportunity to learn the language and build relationships. Dorothy was still unhappy in India and this turned into despair when their five-year-old son Peter died in 1794. She never did recover from Peter’s death and eventually she went insane. As Vishal and Ruth Mangalwadi write:

> For Dorothy, grief at losing her child tipped her over the edge of sanity. She began to have delusions of Carey’s infidelity and would follow him around to catch him red-handed. She would follow him to the factory and publicly accuse him in foul language, shouting obscenities and sought to get rid of him, even taking a kitchen knife to him. She had to be confined to her room for her own safety and his for twelve years, until her death in 1807.112

Despite his circumstances, Carey spent hours each day in Bible translation work. He also gave time to pastoring a small Baptist church consisting of only four members but which was attended by many Indians. In 1800 Carey moved from Malda to Serampore where he spent the remaining thirty-four years of his life. In Serampore Carey experienced great success seeing the mission grow. Schools were established and a large printing operation was begun. At Serampore Carey finished three translations of the whole Bible into Bengali, Marathi, and Sanskrit. He also was able to translate the New Testament into many more languages and dialects.

---

111 Drewery, William Carey, 70.
It was also at Serampore that Carey was able to rejoice over his first convert. The following year their were more converts until by 1818, after twenty-five years in India, Carey could number six hundred baptized converts and a few thousand more who simply attended classes and services at the mission.

In 1819 Carey founded Serampore College for the training of indigenous church planters and evangelists. This endeavor was accomplished in addition to also fulfilling the responsibilities of the Professor of Oriental Languages at Fort William College in Calcutta.

Dorothy, his first wife had died in 1807 and six months later Carey married Charolette Rumohr one of Carey’s European converts whom he had baptized in 1803. They were married in 1808 and enjoyed thirteen very pleasant years together before Charolette died in 1821. Two years later Carey, at the age of sixty-two, married Grace Hughes, a widow seventeen years younger than he.

One of the most devastating setbacks experience by Carey while in India was loss of his translation manuscripts in a warehouse fire in 1812. Besides losing his translation work, he also lost a massive polyglot dictionary, two grammars, and many whole versions of the entire Bible, all works he had worked several years to complete. His response to the fire has been preserved in a few lines of letter to his nephew the day after the fire:

Our printing office was totally destroyed by fire, and all its property. . . . Nothing was saved but the presses. This is a heavy blow, as it will stop our printing the Scripturess for a long time. Twelve months’ hard labour will not reinstate us; not to mention the loss of property, MSS., etc, which we shall scarcely ever surmount. I wish to be still, and know that the Lord is God, and to bow to His will in everything. He will no doubt bring good out of this evil, and make it promote His interests; but at present, the providence is exceeding dark. No lives were lost. We cannot tell what was the cause of the fire.  

The fire was just the beginning of Carey’s later trials which were to mark his last few years in Serampore. New missionaries arrived who were far more demanding than they were giving. They demanded special housing, stables for their horses, and servants to care for their needs. In addition, they were unwilling to work cooperatively with Carey and the older more experienced missionaries choosing instead to work

113 S. Pearce Carey, William Carey, 288.
independent of them. Finally unable to bear these differences and attitudes any longer things were brought to a head and a parting of the ways took place resulting in the new missionaries starting their own mission called the Calcutta Missionary Union. The home office of the Baptist Missionary Society sided with the new missionaries feeling that Carey and his experienced team may have been “stuck in their ways” and not open to new ideas. This then resulted in Carey and his team separating from the Baptist Missionary Society in 1826 and forming their own society known as the Serampore Mission. However, once the split took place the Serampore Mission was unable to support themselves and under Carey’s direction swallowed its pride and sought to be placed underneath the Baptist Missionary Society’s direction again. Soon after finances and kind letters arrived from the home office signifying all was forgiven and thus healing between the missionaries began.

William Carey died in 1834 having translated the whole Bible into six languages (Bengali, Oriya, Hindi, Marathi, Sanskrit, and Assamese). He also translated the New Testament into twenty-four languages. All-in-all, Carey had the joy of rendering the whole Word of God as well as portions of it into thirty-five languages. As impossible as it seems, each of these languages was learned by Carey and each translation project was the result of his own work. As he stated in 1813,

“If I could learn languages faster, the work of translation would be more rapid. But some of the languages are very difficult, and differ so widely from others as to occasion me much hard labour. Every translation goes through my hands, except the Burmeses and the Chinese.”

As to his motivation for working so hard to see so many languages receive the Word of God, one of his biographers writes, “Carey knew that, though the living messenger was important to preach the Word, the Book itself, in the mother tongue of the people, was a permanent missionary . . .”

Besides the legacy Carey left as a translator of the Scriptures, his influence upon missions for centuries to follow was great. He was a pioneer church planter who began indigenous churches which were pastored by native pastors using Scriptures translated into their mother tongue. Unlike some who went before him and many who followed Carey did not insist upon those he ministered to becoming Englishmen or Americans. He did not create churches in his image but rather applied the timeless and transcendent Scriptures to cultures expecting

---

114 Ibid., 394.
115 Ibid., 396.
the Spirit of God to bring about true spiritual transformation of people and churches into a biblical image.

Obviously, Carey was not perfect. In many ways he was a better missionary than he was a husband, at least to his first wife Dorothy. Furthermore, he was a weak father probably due the busyness of his ministry pursuits. This was clear to his missionary associates who were very concerned with his lack of involvement, direction, and discipline in his boy’s lives. In speaking of this situation, Hannah Marshman, one of the Serampore’s mission team members, wrote, “The good man saw and lamented the evil but was too mild to apply an effective remedy.” Fortunately, Mrs. Marshman did step in along with another teammate, William Ward without whose “fatherly concern the Carey boys would have gone entirely their own way.” Despite his failures as a husband and as a father, God’s grace prevailed and God not only preserved Carey’s sons unto Himself but also used two as great missionaries themselves.

In a letter to his oldest son Felix on his ordination Carey provided a glimpse into those things he considered to be of great importance in pursuing ministry as a missionary. He wrote this letter as a supplement to remarks he made at the ordination service. These injunctions were given as a father’s final instructions to a son setting off on a missionary career to Burma.

Let the Burmese language occupy your most precious time, and your most anxious solitude. Do not be content with its superficial acquiring. Make it yours, root and branch. Listen with prying curiosity to the forms of speech, the construction and accent of the people. All your imitative powers will be wanted, and unless you frequently use what you acquire, it will profit you little. As soon as you feel your feet, compose a grammar, and some simple Christian instruction. Begin your translations with the Gospel of Mark. Be very careful that your construction and idiom are Burman, not English.

Observe a rigid economy. Missionary funds are the most sacred on earth. Cultivate brotherly love. Think of our friends Creighton and Grant, who lived for near twenty years in Goamalti without one painful difference. You cannot be so much as shy with each other without hurt to the Mission. Union, like every other blessing, must be prized and sought.

---

116 Drewery, William Carey, 115.
117 Tucker, From Jerusalem to Irian Jaya, 119.
Preach the never-failing Word of the Cross. Be instant in season and out. Do not despise the patient instruction of one Burman. Let us hear from you regularly. Make memoranda of all you see. Be meek and gentle amongst the people. Cultivate the utmost cordiality with them as your equals. Never let European pride and superiority appear at the Mission House, Rangoon. The day when our Saviour says to you and to us ‘Well done!’ will make amends for all we feel at parting.\(^{118}\)

In later letters to his second son William who also followed in his father’s footsteps as a missionary to India, Carey provides more insight into what he saw as essential for the missionary as well as essential to the motivation for going as a missionary.

You are in a post, my son, very dear to my remembrance, because my first Indian years were spent in its neighborhood. I, therefore, greatly rejoice in your exertions. The conversion of one soul is worth the labour of a life. ‘Unto us is this favour given that we should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ.’ Hold on, therefore; be steady in your work, and leave the result with God. I have been contemplating a mission to the Afghans of Kabul.\(^{119}\)

In a second letter to William upon hearing that he was experiencing great success in his preaching to the Indians at Mudnabati Carey writes this paragraph revealing what he saw as the motivational power behind going out for the sake of God’s great Name.

Be encouraged, my dear son. Devote yourself wholly to your work. For this is the cause God has had in His mind from eternity, and for which Christ shed His blood, and for which the Spirit and the Word were given. So triumph is certain.\(^{120}\)

He continues this letter with this exhortation:

Be steadfast, my dear son. Walk worthy of your high calling. Be a pattern to others, who may engage in similar undertakings. Much depends on us who go first to Christ’s work in this country.\(^{121}\)

And then when William was contemplating leaving a place that was dangerous to relocate somewhere else safer his father responded with this stern reply:

---


\(^{119}\) Ibid., 274.

\(^{120}\) Ibid.

\(^{121}\) Ibid.
There is much guilt in your fears, dear William. Mary and you will be a thousand times safer committing yourselves to God in the path of duty than neglecting duty to take care of yourselves.\textsuperscript{122}

He expressed similar sentiments when he emphatically told his sister who was concerned about Carey’s son Felix’s safety at his mission station that, “I would rather hear of Felix losing his life in the cause of the Gospel than see him quit his station.”\textsuperscript{123} Oh, how different are most parent’s aspirations for their children.

Another of Carey’s responses to William after he had seriously offended a senior missionary is worth noting for it reveals the inner heart and humble character of this great pioneer missionary who would rather see his son greatly used of God than have his pride justified in the sight of men.

I would rather see you stoop as low as you can to effect a reconciliation than to avoid it through pride. You will never regret having humbled yourself to the dust that peace may be restored.\textsuperscript{124}

Finally in a letter to his old friend John Ryland, Carey sounds the clarion call churches in his day and certainly in the present day need to hear and hear loud and clear:

Hindustan needs ten thousand ministers of the Gospel; and China as many. England has done much, but not a hundredth part of what she is bound to do. Ought not every church to turn its chief attention to the raising up of such missionaries and the nurture of their spiritual gifts, with the express design of sending them abroad? Difficulties would soon disappear, if the trial were once made.\textsuperscript{125}

Many missionaries followed in the footsteps of William Carey. Some are very familiar names such as Adoniram Judson and his wife who went to Burma, George and Sarah Boardman who also served in Burma, Henry Martyn who started in India and died in modern day Iran, Robert and Mary Moffat who took the Gospel to South Africa, David Livingstone who served throughout Africa, Mary Slessor who spent her life in Calabar just southwest of Cameroon, J. Hudson Taylor who spent his life in China, Jonathan Goforth who opened up fields in China, Manchuria, and Korea, John Patton who poured out his life for the people on the New Hebrides Islands of the South Pacific, Amy Carmichael who rescued orphans in India, C.T. Studd who served in China, India, and Africa, and Jim Elliot

\textsuperscript{122} Ibid., 274.
\textsuperscript{123} Ibid., 278.
\textsuperscript{124} Ibid., 275
\textsuperscript{125} Ibid., 278.
who died as a missionary martyr in an Ecuadorian river. Thousands more went out for the sake of the Name but remain unfamiliar except to their own families, churches, and peoples they shared the Gospel with.

Most of these known and unknown missionaries found great inspiration for their own missionary endeavors in the life and ministry of William Carey. His Enquiry, which laid out a methodology for missions including the qualifications for missionaries, the prioritization of missions, and demographics to be considered. This methodology was well thought out and then tested in his own ministry in India. As one student of missions writes, “His thoroughly Bible-centered approach, coupled with the application of science, good management, and careful strategy, marked missions for the next two hundred years.”\(^\text{126}\)

But while Carey’s methods were sound and his vision clearly set forth, it was his motivation for going to India as a missionary that captured the hearts and minds of the vast majority of those who followed him. His confidence in God and his confidence that God’s cause would triumph were what propelled him to leave all that was comfortable and known to venture out into the unknown for the sake of God’s great Name. Certainly, he was concerned for the lost and greatly burdened by their spiritual darkness but first and foremost he was burdened for the glory of God. His most powerful motivational passion however, like that of David Brainerd and Jonathan Edwards and their Puritan forefathers before them and the reformers before them and the early Medieval missionaries before them, and the first and second century church before them and the apostolic church before them and ultimately Christ before them, was that God’s great Name would be made known, then worshipped, and glorified by people in all the earth. This is the passion that gripped Carey’s mind and gave birth to the modern missionary movement in 1793. As Piper writes:

> The modern missionary movement did not arise in a theological vacuum. It grew out of a great reformation tradition that put the sovereignty of God square in the center of human life. In the warfare of world missions, God bares his arm and triumphs for his own glory.\(^\text{127}\)

Ian Murray makes the same point in his book, The Puritan Hope, saying,

> We believe it can be conclusively shown that the inspiration which gave rise to the first missionary societies of the modern era was


nothing other than the doctrine and outlook which, revitalized by the eighteenth-century revival, had come down from the Puritans.\(^{128}\)

This essential doctrine can be summed up in the supremacy of God in all things. As John Stott put forth so clearly in his commentary on Romans 1:5:

> The highest of missionary motives is neither obedience to the Great Commission (important as that is), nor love for sinners who are alienated and perishing (strong as that incentive is, especially when we contemplate the wrath of God . . .), but rather zeal—burning and passionate zeal—for the glory of Jesus Christ. . . . Only one imperialism is Christian . . . and that is concern for His Imperial Majesty Jesus Christ, and for the glory of his empire.\(^{129}\)

William Carey and thousands of other missionaries before him and after him have gone out and will continue to go out for this one great passion—the sake of His Name. It is not that they go out to make His Name great but rather because it is already great and all-worthy of knowing and worshipping. This is the legacy of missions that Carey left—a legacy not unique nor original with him but one which he passed down from those God-glorifying, God-prizing, and God-inflamed men who went out before him. As Piper points out,

> All of history is moving toward one great goal, the white-hot worship of God and his Son among all the peoples of the earth. Missions is not that goal. It is the means. And for that reason it is the second greatest human activity in the world.\(^{130}\)

As mentioned, **John G. Paton** was one of those missionaries who followed in William Carey’s footsteps. Paton was born in Scotland in 1824. He with his pregnant wife Mary left Scotland for the New Hebrides Islands in 1858. Mary and their baby, a boy, died within four months of arriving on the island of Tanna. Paton stayed and served alone for the next four years until he was driven off the island by cannibals in 1862.

For the next four years, Paton worked mobilizing missionaries for the Presbyterian Mission Society. Then in 1864 he remarried and took his new wife Margaret back to the New Hebrides Island of Aniwa where they served together for forty-one years until Margaret died. Paton died two years later in Australia on January 28, 1907. Today the New Hebrides Islands now known as the nation of Vanuatu claims to be a Christian

---

nation with over ninety-two percent of its population considering itself so and about fourteen percent claiming to be evangelical Christians.\textsuperscript{131} This is stunning considering that when Paton first arrived there in 1858 the New Hebrides were populated by cannibals who were known for already having killed and eaten the first missionaries to venture upon their shores.

Before Paton became a missionary to the New Hebrides he was an inner-city missionary in Glasgow. His efforts were blessed by God and his ministry touched hundreds of unchurched people every week. This success in ministering the Word of God for ten years in Glasgow caused some to doubt whether his decision to leave to be a missionary on a South Pacific island among cannibals was a wise one. In fact, there were some such as one of his professors from seminary who argued:

Green Street Church was doubtless the sphere for which God had given me peculiar qualifications, and in which He had so largely blessed my labors; that if I left those now attending my Classes and Meetings, they might be scattered, and many of them would probably fall away; that I was leaving certainty for uncertainty—work in which God had made me greatly useful, for work in which I might fail to be useful, and only throw away my life amongst Cannibals.\textsuperscript{132}

These doubts about his decision greatly troubled Paton especially since it seemed as though more of his dear Christian friends were opposed to his plans. While caused to somewhat doubt whether he was pursuing God’s will he did not give in to the negative voices around him but instead found his confidence in God. In his own words:

The opposition was so strong from nearly all, and many of them warm Christian friends, that I was sorely tempted to question whether I was carrying out the Divine will, or only some headstrong wish of my own. This also caused me much anxiety, and drove me close to God in prayer.\textsuperscript{133}

Another man who sought to deter Paton was in Paton’s estimation a dear old Christian gentleman. His concern was that Patton would suffer the same fate of missionaries before him and be killed and eaten by cannibals. Patton’s humorous yet pointed response was:

Mr. Dickson, you are advanced in years now, and your own prospect is soon to be laid in the grave, there to be eaten by

\textsuperscript{131} Joshua Project, \url{http://www.joshuaproject.net/people.php?pop3=110511&rog3=NH};
\textsuperscript{133} Ibid., 56.
worms; I confess to you, that if I can but live and die serving and honouring the Lord Jesus, it will make no difference to me whether I am eaten by cannibals or worms; and in the Great Day my resurrection body will arise as fair as yours in the likeness of our risen Redeemer.\textsuperscript{134}

In spite of the arguments, Paton’s resolve grew stronger until he finally decided to give a deaf ear to all the arguments against his leaving Scotland for the New Hebrides and simply listen to Jesus who said, “Go ye into all the world, preach the Gospel to every creature, and lo! I am with you always.”\textsuperscript{135}

In his journal, Paton’s described his resolve and confidence that he was pursuing God’s will as well as his conviction that God would not allow his present flock to suffer by his departure:

. . . I felt a growing assurance that this was the call of God to His servant, and that He who was willing to employ me in the work abroad, was both able and willing to provide for the on-carrying of my work at home. My medical studies, as well as my literary and divinity training, had specially qualified me in some ways for the foreign field, and from every aspect at which I could look the whole facts in the face, the voice within me sounded like a voice from God.\textsuperscript{136}

Not only was Paton confident that God had called him and prepared him to serve as a missionary overseas, he was also assured in his heart that God would undertake for the flock he was leaving by providing them a better pastor than he. He writes, “. . . I felt that I could leave them to the care of Jesus, who would soon provide them with a better pastor than I”\textsuperscript{137}

It is worth noting that the people who encouraged Paton the most had the most to lose in his leaving. On one particularly discouraging day of trying to defend his reasons for wanting to serve God as a foreign missionary, Paton went home to his parents and laid the whole matter before them. This was their reply:

Heretofore we feared to bias you, but now we must tell you why we praise God for the decision to which you have been led. Your father’s heart was set upon being a Minister, but other claims forced him to give it up. When you were given to them, your father and mother laid you upon the altar, their firstborn, to be

\textsuperscript{135} Ibid.  
\textsuperscript{136} Ibid., 42.  
\textsuperscript{137} Ibid., 43.
consecrated, if God saw fit, as a Missionary of the Cross; and it has been their constant prayer that you might be prepared, qualified, and led to this very decision; and we pray with all our heart that the Lord may accept your offering, long spare you, and give you many souls from the Heathen world for your hire.\textsuperscript{138}

Patton continues in his journal, “From that moment, every doubt as to my path of duty vanished. I saw the hand of God very visibly, not only preparing me for, but now leading me to, the foreign mission field.”\textsuperscript{139}

Oh, to have such parents who not only consecrate their children to the Lord when they are but babes but also willingly give them up and in fact send them out to for the sake of the Name. Paton’s parents and he were separated for five years after he left the first time for the New Hebrides. After a brief time visiting them in his boyhood home it was once again time to leave them again. Only this time would be the last time he ever saw them on earth again. His description of the scene picturesquely captures the cost of missions not only on those who go but those who send.

My last scene in Scotland was kneeling at the family altar in the old Sanctuary Cottage at Torthorwald, while my venerable father, with his high-priestly locks of snow-white hair streaming over his shoulders, commended us once again ‘to the care and keeping of the Lord God of the families of Israel.’ It was the last time that ever on this Earth those accents of intercession, loaded with a pathos of deathless love, would fall upon my ears. I knew to a certainty that when we rose from our knees and said farewell, our eyes would never meet again till they were flooded with the lights of the Resurrection Day. But he and my darling mother gave us away once again with a free heart, not unpierced with the sword of human anguish, to the service of our common Lord and to the salvation of the Heathen. . . .Our beloved mother, always more self-restrained, and less demonstrative in the presence of others, held back her heart till we were fairly gone from the door; and then, as my dear brother afterward informed me, she fell back into his arms with a great cry, as if all the heart-strings had broken, and lay for long in a death-like swoon.\textsuperscript{140}

Then with a warning of sorts for all those who reading his autobiography might be willing to follow in his steps Paton writes:

Oh, all ye that read this page, think most tenderly of the cries of nature, even where grace and faith are in perfect triumph. Read

\textsuperscript{138} Ibid., 45.
\textsuperscript{139} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{140} Ibid., 215-216.
through scenes like these, a fuller meaning into the words addressed to that blessed Mother, whose Son was given for us all, ‘Yea, a sword shall pierce through thine own soul also.’”

Paton’s service in the New Hebrides was anything but uneventful. His autobiography is filled with stories in which his life was in danger countless times. Whether it was because of lack of supplies, sickness, storms, or the fickleness of his cannibal neighbors who while thankful for his presence one day were making plans to kill and eat him the next, Paton’s life was in constant danger. Yet, despite his often perilous circumstances Paton’s attitude was a positive one. In writing about one such incident when he was surrounded by armed natives ready to kill him Paton states:

I . . . assured them that I was not afraid to die, for at death my Savior would take me to be with Himself in Heaven, and to be far happier than I had ever been on Earth. I then lifted up my hands and eyes to the Heavens, and prayed aloud for Jesus . . . either to protect me or to take me home to Glory as He saw to be for the best.

Paton knew that the dangers he faced because He went out for the sake of the Name of Christ would not be wasted but would result in God being glorified and people being brought to salvation. As he wrote after another harrowing experience, “Had it not been for the assurance that . . . in every path of duty He would carry me through or dispose of me therein for His glory, I could never have undertaken either journey.”

Paton’s conviction that all that occurred to him whether good or bad was for God’s glory is also evident in his understanding of prayer.

Did ever mother run more quickly to protect her crying child in dangers’s hour, than the Lord Jesus hastens to answer believing prayer and send help to His servants in His own good time and way, so far as it shall be for His glory and their good.

In addition to knowing all that occurred in his life was from the hand of God and would result in God’s glory Paton also had great confidence in the promises of God to fill the earth with His glory in the redemption of people from all nations. This confidence kept him on the field more than once. One dark night after arriving at a village only to find out it had been attacked earlier and its inhabitants cruelly murdered, Paton sighed, “Oh,
what it will be when all men in all nations love and serve the glorious Redeemer.\textsuperscript{145}

Paton credited his strong confidence in the sovereignty of God to always bring about that which would bring Him the most glory and His followers the most good to his upbringing in his church the Reformed Presbyterian Church of Scotland. Its heritage ran back to Scottish Covenanters whose stand for the truths of the Reformation were rehearsed to him often by his parents and pastors. Paton is not known for his boasting except in this case when he writes in his autobiography, “I am more proud that the bloodd of the Martyrs is in my veins, and their truths in my heart, than other men can be of noble pedigree or royal names.”\textsuperscript{146} Of course, the truths Paton was speaking about were none other than heart-strengthening and life-transforming doctrines of grace, which he had no problem referring to as Cavinism. In fact, he emphatically states in his autobiography that he by conviction is “a strong Calvinist.”\textsuperscript{147}

Paton’s theology caused him to see and understand that apart from the work of the Holy Spirit in regeneration that his efforts in reaching the natives with the Gospel would be in vain. Thus he writes:

\textit{Regeneration is the sole work of the Holy Spirit in the human heart and soul, and is in every case one and the same. Conversion, on the other hand, bringing into play the action also of the human will, is never absolutely the same perhaps in even two souls. . . . Oh, Jesus! To Thee alone be all the glory. Thou hast the key to unlock every heart that Thou hast created.}\textsuperscript{148}

Thus, once again, the doctrines of grace, contrary to the misrepresentations of so many did not prove to be a hindrance or a killer of missions but rather fueled the missionary spirit of John Paton as it had for so many before and after him. He, like his missionary forefathers, went out for the sake of the Name knowing that only in the power of the Name could he be successful or safe.

Before he died, Paton, much like his own parents, hoped that his own children would follow him in missions so as to find the same joy he had experienced in learning to trust Him Who is unseen. His sentiments reveal that looking back upon his life and his decision to leave home and family and all he held dear and to go out for the sake of the Name—he had no regrets. He wrote:

\begin{footnotes}
\item[147] Ibid., 195.
\item[148] Ibid., 372-373.
\end{footnotes}
Let me record my immovable conviction that this is the noblest service in which any human being can spend or be spent; and that, if God gave me back my life to be lived over again, I would without one quiver of hesitation lay it on the altar to Christ, that he might use it as before in similar ministries of love, especially amongst those who have never yet heard the Name of Jesus. Nothing that has been endured, and nothing that can now befall me, makes me tremble—on the contrary, I deeply rejoice—when I breathe the prayer that it may please the blessed Lord to turn the hearts of all my children to the Mission Field and that He may open up their way and make it their pride and joy to live and die in carrying Jesus and His Gospel into the heart of the Heathen World.\textsuperscript{149}

The legacy left by the modern missionary movement and its predecessors from the Reformation back through the New Testament is well worth taking note of. Summed up, those who went out for the sake of the NAME had one great and overriding passion: that God's Name be Great among the Nations (Malachi 1:11) and that the Lamb receive the full reward for His suffering (Revelation 7:9-10). They found their greatest purpose and constant motivation for missions in God, His commitment to His own glory, and their God-given desire to see His Christ worshiped in every nation, tribe, people, and language (Psalms 2:6-12).

In their ministries certain essentials also can be observed that are timeless when it comes to missions and which are in great need of being remembered today.

**Missions must be motivated by a passion for the glory of God.** He desire to see God glorified and Jesus Christ receive the rewards of His sufferings is what motivated biblical missions. Missionaries must go out for the sake of the Name. As Piper writes:

> A missionary is someone who goes out for the sake of the name, accepting nothing from the Gentiles. Private material gain must not be the motive. Even genuine humanitarian concern, though crucial, must not be the driving motive. Rather, a missionary is propelled by a deep love for the name and glory of God. Like the apostle Paul, a missionary’s aim is to ‘bring about the obedience of faith among all the Gentiles, for His name’s sake”\textsuperscript{150}

**Missions is an impossibility apart from the power of God.** All men of every culture are born radically depraved, at enmity with God, and are truth suppressors. The conversion of a man and the advancement of missions are an absolute impossibility apart from the supernatural power

\textsuperscript{149} Ibid., 444.
\textsuperscript{150} John Piper, *Let The Nations Be Glad*, 237.
of the Holy Spirit in regeneration. Modern church growth strategies and many new mission methodologies often overlook this essential truth.

**A true Gospel must be proclaimed.** The Gospel is the power of God for salvation (Romans 1:16) and the preaching of the Gospel is the great “means” and “methodology” of missions. The Gospel is, first and foremost, God in Christ reconciling the world to Himself (II Corinthians 5:19). It answers the eternal question of how a just God can rightly justify wicked men (Romans 3:26). It points to Christ alone, who bore the sins of His people upon the cross, was forsaken of God, and crushed under the full force of His just wrath against sin. The Good News of the Gospel is that through Christ’s death, the justice of God was satisfied, and salvation was won for a great multitude of people. This is evidenced by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead - “He who was delivered over because of our transgressions, and was raised because of our justification” (Romans 4:25).

**The Gospel transcends culture.** The greatest need of all men of every culture is the clear proclamation of the Gospel. Men are saved through the Gospel and continue in sanctification through continued growth in the full counsel of God’s Word. Although differences in culture are to be considered, it is more important for the missionary to be biblically sensitive than culturally sensitive. A missionary was once asked how he preached the Gospel to a certain remote tribe. He declared, “I do not preach the Gospel to a remote tribe. I preach the Gospel to radically depraved men who cannot and will not respond positively unless and until God gives them a heart to do so!” The major challenge in missions as in all evangelism is not cultural or language differences—it is the depravity of man.

**Incarnational missions is essential.** Although there may be some effective non-personal means of communicating the Gospel, there is no substitute for one man living among a people, teaching the Gospel to them, and living out his faith before them. God sent his own Son, and He became flesh and dwelt among us (John 1:1,14; 3:16).

**Superficial evangelism (easy believism) is one of the great obstacles to missions.** Non-theological preaching, entertaining skits, and Gospel films are no substitute for the biblical exposition of the Gospel. Inviting men to raise their hands and pray a prayer is no substitute for the biblical call to repentance, faith, and personal discipleship. Biblical assurance of salvation does not flow from a past decision or a prayer, but from the examination of one’s enduring lifestyle in the light of Scripture.

**The doctrines of grace are not a hindrance to missions.** Contrary to the opinion of many, the doctrines of grace, rightly understood and applied
have never hindered missions or evangelism. In fact, it is these very doctrines which fueled the modern missionary movement.

**Church Planting is the primary work of missions.** There are many gifts and callings in the body of Christ, but all of them are to work together on the mission field with the primary goal of planting a biblical church. It is one thing to do mass evangelism and to boast of the numbers of decisions; it is quite another to establish a biblical church.

**True missions is costly.** Amy Carmichael explained that missions is no more and no less than an opportunity to die. We live in a fallen world that is at enmity with God and opposes His truth; therefore, missions and suffering go hand in hand. Any advancement of the kingdom of Christ into the dominion of the devil will be met with warfare. Physical suffering caused by disease, hardships, etc. cannot be always be avoided. In addition, there are many countries and people groups where martyrdom is a distinct possibility.

### 2. The Supremacy of God In Missions (Theology of Missions)

If missions is as Piper says, “the second greatest human activity in the world” what is the greatest human activity in the world? Or to ask it another way, what is the ultimate and primary goal of missions? Quoting John Stott again:

> The highest of missionary motives is neither obedience to the Great Commission (important as that is), nor love for sinners who are alienated and perishing (strong as that incentive is, especially when we contemplate the wrath of God . . .), but rather zeal—burning and passionate zeal—for the glory of Jesus Christ. . . . Only one imperialism is Christian . . . and that is concern for His Imperial Majesty Jesus Christ, and for the glory of His empire.\(^{151}\)

Piper, in answering his own question states:

> Missions is not the ultimate goal of the church. Worship is. Missions exists because worship doesn’t. Worship is ultimate, not missions, because God is ultimate, not man. When this age is over, and the countless millions of the redeemed fall on their faces before the throne of God, missions will be no more. It is a temporary necessity. But worship abides forever.\(^{152}\)

---

\(^{151}\) John Stott, *Romans*, 53.

On the other hand, missions cannot exist apart from worship. As Piper says so well, “Worship, therefore, is the fuel and goal of missions. . . . Where passion for God is weak, zeal for missions will be weak.” As Andrew Murray wrote concerning the apparent lack of enthusiasm in many churches:

As we seek to find out why, with such millions of Christians, the real army of God that is fighting the hosts of darkness is so small, the only answer is—lack of heart. The enthusiasm of the kingdom is missing. And that is because there is so little enthusiasm for the King.¹⁵⁴

Worship is the believer’s heart response to God driven by his passion for God and specifically his passion to see God glorified. This desire to see God glorified is the core of all Christian motivation. It is also the greatest evidence of a life being transformed into the very character of Christ Himself. Christ’s primary motivation for everything He said and did throughout His earthly ministry was to glorify His Father in heaven.

John 17:4

John 14:13

John 13:31

John 12:27-28

And as followers of Christ this is to be our primary motivation in life as well.

1 Peter 4:11

1 Corinthians 10:31

Colossians 3:17

¹⁵³ Ibid., 17-18.
¹⁵⁴ Andrew Murray, Key to the Missionary Problem (Fort Washington, PA.: Christian Literature Crusade, 1979), 133.
If concern for the glory of God is not our primary motivation in life and in all that pertains to life, it hardly seems possible that our character is being conformed to the image of Christ’s. Whose primary motivation was and is that His Father be glorified.

Romans 8:28-29

Furthermore, since the Scriptures are replete with references teaching that God is passionate about His own glory and in being glorified above all things, it would seem that the foundation for the believer’s passion to see God glorified is God’s own passion to be glorified. As Piper explains:

The ultimate foundation for our passion to see God glorified is his own passion to be glorified. God is central and supreme in his own affections. There are no rivals for the supremacy of God’s glory in his own heart. God is not an idolater. He does not disobey the first and greatest commandment. With all his heart and soul and strength and mind he delights in the glory of his manifold perfections. The most passionate heart for God in all the universe is God’s heart. 155

Thus, the great primary reason for missions is not man and man’s need of salvation but rather God and His desire to glorify Himself.

Isaiah 48:9-11

Isaiah 43:25

Psalm 25:11

Psalm 79:9

---

Psalm 106: 6-8

Ezekiel 20:8-9, 14, 22

Ezekiel 36: 22-27

Daniel 9:17-19

One cannot read, study, and contemplate upon the whole of Scripture and not come to the conclusion that God’s greatest passion is not man and man’s salvation but Himself and His own glory. For many, this statement will seem to make God out to be conceited and filled with Himself. In response to that, how can God, who is the sum total of infinite power, might, intelligence, immensity, holiness, truth, wisdom, goodness, and love, not be passionate about that which is the greatest passion--Himself? For man, who is not and never will be equal to God, to glorify himself is sin and in fact utterly disgusting and abhorable to God for the simple reason that he is not God and does not possess God’s glorious perfection. Jonathan Edwards, the great theologian and evangelist of the 18th century wrote:

“The great end of God’s works, which is so variously expressed in Scripture, is indeed but One; and this one end is most properly and comprehensively called, THE GLORY OF GOD.”

Or to put it another and more direct way, the chief end of God is to glorify Himself and to enjoy Himself forever.

Thankfully, God’s passion to glorify Himself takes into account our greatest good, which is none other than to know and enter into His glory. As was stated so eloquently many years ago in the Westminster

157 Ibid., p. 246
Confession, “The chief end of man is to glorify God and enjoy Him forever.” If indeed, God’s greatest and most excellent passion is Himself and His glory then that must be man’s as well. This would conversely mean that man’s greatest failure is to not glorify God. And this is exactly what Paul alludes to in Romans 3:23, “All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.” And the wages of sin, which is the opposite of glorifying God, is death (Rom. 6:23). Consider Piper’s remarks regarding this.

“The infinite horrors of hell are intended by God to be a vivid demonstration of the infinite value of the glory of God. The biblical assumption of the justice of hell is a clear testimony to the infiniteness of the sin of failing to glorify God. All of us have failed. All the nations have failed. Therefore, the weight of infinite guilt rests on every human head because of our failure to cherish the glory of God. The biblical vision of God, then, is that he is supremely committed, with infinite passion, to uphold and display the glory of His name. And the biblical vision of man without grace is that he suppresses this truth and by nature finds more joy in his own glory than he does in God’s. God exists to be worshipped, and man worships the work of his own hands.”

This then means that the salvation of man is primarily for God’s glory. Thus, again, God’s plan of salvation which, includes the means of salvation in terms of missions finds its source, its focus, and its end not in and for man but in and for God and the sake of His Name.

The Bible, seen as a whole and considering all of its parts, is God’s sequential presentation of His work of reclaiming the significance, power, and glory of His Name in the lives of men as He works in history for the redemption of His elect people. His Name was originally and perfectly made know to Adam in the Garden of Eden but then through Adam’s sin was dishonored. This dishonoring of God’s Name equates with the dishonoring of His character and reputation.

Sinful man continued to dishonor the Name, character, and reputation of God until God’s glory had been exchanged for and replaced by created beings and things. This perversion of God’s Name, thus God’s glory is reversed through the redemption of God’s elect and the eternal punishment of the non-elect. God’s plan of redeeming His elect coincides with His plan to punish eternally those who by their own conscious choice have decided to suppress and further pervert the glory of His great Name. The culmination of His plan is expressed in the fact that at the end of human history on earth every knee shall bow and every tongue confess the glory of His Name as it has been revealed in history by His Son, Jesus the Christ.

158 Piper, Let The Nations Be Glad, p. 28.
Thus, history is the story of God restoring the value, honor, and glory of His Name before all Creation by bringing people from every people group to Himself as those who delight in Him as worshippers who find His glory to be their greatest occupation.

The Creation Mandate & The Great Commission

The Creation Mandate was originally given to Adam and Eve in Genesis 1:28. The main components of this Creation Mandate are that man was to reproduce, multiply, and fill the earth with people who would serve God as His regents by taking dominion over the earth. And of course, this mandate, given before the Fall had as its primary goal the filling of the whole earth with people who would know, love, worship, and thus, glorify God with the ultimate result being that God’s Name and glory would be known throughout the Earth.

But because of the Fall, whereas Adam and his descendents multiplied and filled the earth—they did not filled it with worshippers of God but rather haters of God. However, God’s plan to fill the earth with worshippers that know Him, love Him, serve Him and ultimately glorify Him was still in effect as is seen in the mandate God gave Noah and his sons following the flood as seen in Genesis 9:1.

This mandate was altered by God to some degree in that no longer was man commanded to “rule over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the sky and over every living thing that moves on the earth”. Rather, he is now told to eat the flesh of “every moving thing that is alive” (9:3). This second mandate, however, retained the commands to: “Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth”. In addition it added the provision for capital punishment in the case of murder (9:6). Finally, it reiterated the primary commands by stating in verse 7, “As for you, be fruitful and multiply; Populate the earth abundantly and multiply in it.” (NASV)

Therefore, following the flood God’s intent is to see the earth populated with people and in particular with people who realize they are created in the image of God (9:6), thus the addition of the capital punishment clause. In addition, the text makes it clear that there is a definite distinction between man and the rest of the created order and that man had the exclusive privilege and responsibility of living so as to reflect the image of God in him—marred as it was due to the Fall. Thus it would seem that God’s intent to fill the earth with those who were in a relationship with Him is still in effect following the flood.
Then in Genesis 11 it becomes clear that Noah’s descendents failed to obey the divine mandate given to Noah and his sons in Genesis 9, choosing rather to stay together as a unified group living in one place rather than separating and filling the earth as God had commanded. According to Genesis 11:1-2, this new post-diluvian race “used the same language and the same words” and “found a plain in the land of Shinar and settled there”. Their motivation for such disobedience to God’s command is see in Genesis 11:4 which states:

They said, ‘Come, let us build for ourselves a city, and a tower whose top will reach into heaven, and let us make for ourselves a name, otherwise we will be scattered abroad over the face of the whole earth. (NASV)

Note that the primary motivation seemed to be making a name for themselves. In other words, rather than obeying God and scattering throughout the earth so as to fill the earth for the sake of God’s name they chose to remain in one place so as to attempt to make a name for themselves. Thus, the Tower of Babel incident was really a battle over whose name was to be established as great, glorious, powerful, and ultimately worshipped in all the earth—man’s or God’s. God’s response to man’s attempt to settle in the land of Shinar and make a reputation for himself that was greater than God’s was to confuse their language and scatter mankind “abroad over the face of the earth.”

Then in Genesis 12:1-3 God makes a covenant with Abraham who is first introduced at the end of Genesis 11. In this covenant, God commands Abraham to leave his homeland, Ur of the Chaldeans, and to travel to “the land” which God would show him. God promised Abraham that He would make him “a great nation” and that he would make his name great. The reason for making his name great seems to be so that Abraham can be a blessing (12:2). God then concludes with the promise that in Abraham “all the nations of the earth will be blessed”. This same promise that in Abraham all the nations of the earth would be blessed was reiterated to Abraham in Genesis 18:18 and Genesis 22:18.

God reiterated this same promise to Isaac, Abraham’s son in Genesis 26:4 as well as to Jacob, his grandson, in Genesis 28:14. Significant in the life of Jacob is the fact that in Genesis 35, he is commanded by God to move to Bethel and live there. Jacob obeyed God and moved his entire family including all who were with him to Bethel, which was in the land of Canaan. Once there, Jacob built an altar to the LORD and God appeared to Jacob and blessed him. The blessing is found in Genesis 35:10-12.

In blessing Jacob, God first of all changes his name and gives him the name Israel (35:10). God then reintroduces Himself to Israel saying, “I am God Almighty” or El Shaddai. And then God repeats for the first time
since Genesis 9:7 the command to “Be fruitful and multiply”. This is an interesting command to give a man who at this point in time already has twelve sons unless the command is also looking toward the future and to a much greater and larger group of people who would come forth from Jacob. This is exactly what seems to be in God’s mind as immediately after commanding Jacob to “be fruitful and multiply”, He tells Jacob that a “nation and a company of nations shall come from you, and kings shall come forth from you” (35:11).

The command given to Jacob after he was renamed Israel appears to be another reiteration of the Creation Mandate given back in Genesis 1:28 and 9:1, 7.

Genesis 1:28
“God blessed them; and God said to them, ‘Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth, and subdue it, and rule . . .’”

Genesis 9:1 “And God blessed Noah and his sons and said to them, ‘Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth . . . As for you, be fruitful and multiply; populate the earth abundantly and multiply in it.’”

Genesis 35:9-11 “Then God appeared to Jacob again . . . and He blessed him. God said to him, ‘your name is Jacob; You shall no longer be called Jacob, But Israel shall be your name.’ . . . God also said to him, ‘I am God Almighty; Be fruitful and multiply.’”

Then just before his death, as he is about to bless Joseph’s sons, Jacob rehearses God’s promise to him at Bethel but restates it to say, as recorded in Genesis 48:4, “Behold I will make you fruitful and numerous, and I will make you a company of peoples, and will give this land to your descendants after you for an everlasting possession.” Thus, before the family of Abraham immigrates to Egypt only to become permanent residents for 430 years, God’s commitment to fill the earth with differing and distinguishable peoples159 who while different from each other still form one great company is significant. It is also very important to note that whereas the Creation Mandate was a command given to Adam and then

---

159 The idea behind the Hebrew word translated “peoples” is that of identifiable groups of people such as nations or even people groups. The fact that God states all these identifiable peoples (people groupings) will become one company is significant when compared with such passages as Revelation 5:9 and 7:9.
passed to Noah, then Abraham, then Isaac, and then to Jacob (Israel), the fulfiller of that command will be none other than God Himself as he works through and in the lives of His covenant people. It is also significant to observe the fact that God’s commitment is to establish one company of many peoples.

The next incident in biblical history which gives rise to God’s intent to see the earth filled with His people is found in Numbers 14:21. The context is set in Numbers 13 following the Exodus after God commanded Moses to send out twelve spies into the land of Canaan to bring back a report to the Israelites concerning the details of that land. Upon their return from Canaan, ten of the spies brought back a negative report. Having heard the bad news put forth by these ten spies, the people chose to disobey God refusing to enter the land (Num. 14:1-4). Despite the pleas and arguments of Moses, Aaron, Joshua, and Caleb, the people would not repent and obey God but rather started picking up stones to stone them (14:10). At this point God announced to Moses His willingness to destroy the nation and make a new nation of Moses’ descendants (Num. 14:11-12). Moses interceded on the Israelites’ behalf and God spared the nation but refused to bring the present generation of adults, those people twenty years old and older into the land sentencing them to wander in the wilderness for forty years (Num. 14:26-29). But so as to ensure that the people understood that God was still serious about His intent to inhabit Canaan with His people He states in Numbers 14:21, “But indeed, as I live, all the earth will be filled with the glory of the LORD.”

This promise, understood correctly and within the context it is given, is God’s promise to fulfill the Creation Mandate, reiterated and passed along from Adam all the way to Israel, Himself and in doing so to fill the earth with His glory by filling it with His people. The fact that the Israelites refused to enter the land of Canaan meant that the land would not be filled with God’s glory for the simple fact it was not filled with God’s people. So, God’s promise is that despite Israel’s disobedience God would not be thwarted and that indeed the day would come when not only Canaan but the whole earth would be filled with God’s glory because the whole earth will be filled with God’s people—those people who know, love, honor, worship, represent, and thus glorify God.

This promise to fill the earth with people who will delight to worship God so as to glorify Him in all the earth is found throughout the Scriptures in such passages as:

Psalm 22:27  “And all the families of the nations will worship before You.”
Psalm 66:4  “All the earth will worship You; And will sing praises to You; They will sing praises to Your Name.”

Psalm 67:7  “God blesses us, That all the ends of the earth may fear Him.”

Psalm 86:9  “All nations whom You have made shall come and worship before You, O LORD, And they shall glorify Your Name.”

Isaiah 49:6  “He says, ‘It is too small a thing that You should be My Servant to raise up the tribes of Jacob and to restore the preserved ones of Israel; I will also make You a light of the nations so that my salvation may reach to the end of the earth.”

Revelation 5:9  “Worthy are You to take the book and to break its seals for You were slain and purchased for God with Your blood men from every tribe and tongue and people and nation.”

Revelation 7:9  “After these things I looked and behold a great multitude which no one could count from every nation and all tribes and peoples and tongues standing before the throne and before the Lamb clothed in white robes and palm branches were in their hands.”

God’s plan from the very beginning of creation was to fill the earth with people who know Him and love Him and worship Him and enjoy Him. This was the ultimate intent of the Creation Mandate which, finds as the primary means to its final fulfillment—The Great Commission.

Consider those passages where the Great Commission is communicated in the New Testament. Note their similarity with the Creation Mandate and its Old Testament reiterations in terms of it pertaining to all the earth and all the nations and/or peoples of the earth.

Matthew 28:19  “Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations . . .”

preach the gospel to all creation.”

Luke 24:47  “And that repentance for forgiveness of sins would be proclaimed in

Mark 15:15  “Go into all the world and

His name to all the nations.”
Whereas, the Creation Mandate could not be completely and perfectly fulfilled due to the Fall of man—in the Great Commission it is fulfilled—in the sense that as believers make disciples of all the nations [read: people groups], baptizing them and teaching them to obey all of Christ’s commands—they are in effect reproducing, multiplying, and filling the earth with people who know God, love God, worship God, and glorify God so that His Name and His glory does indeed fill the earth. The whole plan of God in Creation and in Salvation is to fill the earth with His Glory and thus all that God has done in history and will do in history has a missional or missions focus. In the Old Testament, this missional focus was centripetal in that the nations were to come to God’s people Israel to hear about God and learn how to worship Him. But in the New Testament, God reverses the missional focus and makes it centrifugal in that God’s people the church are to go to the nations with the Gospel so that they can hear about God and His Gospel and become His worshippers. So—the Great Commission is God’s strategy to fulfill His Creation Mandate by filling the earth with people from every people group who find Him to be their greatest joy.

This is what Paul has in mind in Romans 15:8-12 when he makes the point that in Christ, God confirmed or brought to pass the promises given to the fathers concerning the salvation of the Gentiles. Thus, the original command given to man in the form of the Creation Mandate could not be fulfilled by man. Only God is able to fulfill it thus, wording in Genesis 48:4 in which God pronounces that He will be the One Who makes Israel fruitful and numerous so as to become one company of many peoples. It is akin to Christ’s pronouncement found in Matthew 16:18 where he states, “I will build my church . . .” Finally, it is also seen in such statements as found in Acts 2:41, 47; 5:14 in which it is made clear that the Lord is the One Who adds to His Church so as to make it fruitful among all the peoples of the earth so as to fill the earth with worshippers of God for His glory.

Going For The Sake of The Name

Since the glory of God is in all respects the very essence of the Kingdom of God it is the primary stimuli when it comes to motivating Christians to do anything in the Name of the Lord including being involved in missions. As Piper writes, “Missions flows from the fullness of God’s passion for God, and it aims at the participation of the nations in the very passion that he has for himself.”\(^{160}\) Therefore, missions is first and primarily an endeavor that must be entered into for one reason above all others that reason being to see God’s great Name known, loved, worshipped, and

\(^{160}\) Piper, Let The Nations Be Glad, 36.
thus glorified in all the earth. Thus, those who go out as missionaries, if they are biblical in their going must go out for the sake of the Name for the purpose of seeing people who do not know His Name come to not only know it but ultimately “esteem His Name” (Malachi 3:16-17).

In commenting on those believers in the Bible and church history who went out as missionaries for the sake of Christ’s Name, John Stott writes:

“They knew that God had superexalted Jesus, enthroning him at his right hand and bestowing upon him the highest rank, in order that every tongue should confess his lordship. They longed that Jesus should receive the honor due his name.”161

Here are some passages of Scripture that provide some of the details on what it means to go out for the sake of the Name:


Acts 9:15-16  Missionary hardships and sufferings are for the sake of the Name of Jesus.

Acts 15:14-18 with v. 7  Missions is a primary means of God in calling out people from among the Gentiles for His Name. God’s plan to call Gentiles from among the nations was from the days of old (Old Testament). Thus there is a continuity in missions between the Old and New Testaments.

Acts 15:26  It is right and commendable to risk one’s life for the sake of the Name of Jesus.

Romans 1:5  The salvation of the Gentiles is for the sake of the Name of Jesus.

3 John 5-8  Missionaries who go out for the sake of the Name of Jesus are to be supported in a manner worthy of God.

The Gospel, Missions, & Exodus 34

According to God’s promise in Numbers 14:21, His glory will indeed fill all the earth. The question then arises “What is the glory of the LORD?” What is it that God actually promised would fill the entire earth?

In Exodus 33:18, Moses makes a very daring request of God. He asks God, “I pray You, show me Your glory!” This really was a very amazing request, especially considering what God has already shown Moses. Moses had seen the burning bush that was not consumed and spoke with God who spoke to him from the midst of that bush (Ex. 3). He witnessed every single plague God brought upon Egypt (Ex. 7-12). He saw the Lord part the Red Sea for the Israelites to walk through as on dry ground, and this same parted sea crash down upon the Egyptian soldiers (Ex. 14). He saw God provide Manna, meat, and then water from a rock (Ex. 16-17). He was there when God came down on Mount Sinai in thunder, lightning, thick darkness, a cloud of fire and smoke, and the sound of a great

---

trumpet (Ex. 19). He spoke with God in this fiery cloud and received the covenant written by God’s Own hand (Ex. 20-31). Moses along with seventy-three others were even given the privilege and somehow enabled to see God standing on a sapphire pavement, without being consumed and destroyed (Ex. 24:10). If there was someone who saw the glory of God, it was Moses!

But having seen all this, Moses still believes there is more of God’s glory to be seen so he asks God, “Show me Your glory.” And interestingly enough God did not respond by telling Moses that he had already seen His glory. Indeed, there was more to God’s glory than Moses had seen and experienced, yet there was so much more that Moses wasn’t capable of seeing it. Paraphrased, God told Moses in Exodus 33:20, “You can’t see My total glory because if you did you would be destroyed. But I will show you as much of My glory as I can without destroying you.” Exodus 34:5-7 describes what God showed Moses.

“The LORD, the LORD God…” The very first aspect of the Glory of God is His Own Name, and in the Hebrew culture, a name was more than just a name. A person’s name signified who that person was in terms of his character, reputation, and standing. Thus, when God says His Name, He is saying that His glory is found and seen in His Own very Person--Who He is. Thus first and foremost, God’s glory is Who He Is. It is His identity if you will. As God’s identity, God’s glory and God are inseparable.

“Compassionate and gracious, slow to anger, and abounding in lovingkindness and truth…” The next aspect of God’s glory is seen in what He is like--His Character. Unlike all the false gods who were cruel and harsh, He is a God who delights in love and compassion. He is patient and ready to forgive. God’s glory is His character. It is what He Is Like.

“Who keeps lovingkindness for thousands, Who forgives iniquity, transgression and sin; yet He will by no means leave the guilty unpunished, visiting the iniquity of fathers on the children and on the grandchildren to the third and fourth generations.” The third aspect of God’s glory is His actions—what He does. Everything that God does is always glorious and because this is so God’s actions and God’s work glorifies Himself. Thus God is passionate about displaying His work including the vastness of His work of mercy and grace on behalf of sinners. He wants the glory of the mystery that He forgives sinners to be displayed to the entire world.

However, He also wants the world to see that He is a wrathful God Who will not ignore sin, but who will judge those who do not come to terms of peace with Him. He will “be gracious to whom He will be gracious, and He
will show compassion to whom He will show compassion.” He forgives, but He also punishes. Righteousness and Mercy, Judgment and Grace! God’s Glory is seen in what He does!

Therefore when He made His promise long ago to Moses that the whole world would be filled with His glory He meant that, as surely as He lived, the whole world would be filled with the knowledge of Who God is, What God is like, and What God does. Furthermore, the whole earth would experience, be in awe of, adore, love, worship, and glorify God for Who He is, What He is like, and What He does.

All these aspects of God’s glory found in Exodus are all encompassed and fulfilled in Jesus Christ, the very radiance of God’s glory and the exact representation of God’s nature (Heb. 1:3). Jesus Christ is the One Who makes God and God’s glory known. God’s glory is seen in Who He Is, but, “No one has ever seen God”. Therefore, “the only God (Jesus) Who is at the Father’s side, He has made Him known.” (John 1:18). The glory of God—Who He is, What He is like, and What He does—Jesus has made known. If a person wants to see who God is, he must look at Jesus.

In Exodus 33-34 God provided Moses with a glimpse of His glory which, was later seen fully in Christ’s life and especially in His work of atonement on the cross. Jesus said an amazing thing on the eve of His crucifixion. As Judas got up and left the upper room after eating the Passover meal with Jesus and the rest of the disciples so as to betray the Son of God, Jesus and thus start the domino effect of everything that would happen to Jesus said, “Now is the Son of Man glorified, and God is glorified in Him…” (John 13:31). Thus, It would be at the cross that God’s glory in His Son Christ Jesus would be most greatly displayed!

On the cross, the glory of God was put on full display in Who Jesus was, What Jesus was like, and What Jesus did. On the cross, Jesus demonstrated in His Person and by His actions the very glory of God revealed to Moses in Exodus 34. At the cross, because of Who Jesus was, What He was like, and What He did—Almighty God fulfilled the vision of His glory given to Moses in punishing His son on behalf of His people so as to be able to forgive their iniquities, transgressions, and sins. Thus God was glorified in the punishment of Jesus and in the pardoning of sinners because in Christ God could now, without compromising His justice and holiness, forgive sinners deserving of His wrath. Thus, it seems very probable that what Moses saw in Exodus 34 was a foretaste of the Gospel?

God’s Promise that the whole earth would be filled with His glory finds its fulfillment in the Gospel since His glory is most clearly and powerfully displayed in the Gospel. Therefore, it would seem that when God’s glory
fills the earth it must be understood to a large degree to have in mind God’s Gospel filling the earth so as to see sinners redeemed and transformed into those who love, adore, worship and thus glorify God.

Thus, the act of taking the Gospel to all the nations and thus, into the uttermost parts of the earth is to a large degree the means to fulfilling God’s promise in Numbers 14:21 to fill all the earth with His glory.


The Task of the Great Commission

Although it appears that there are many commands in this passage known as the Great Commission, the fact is, there is only one command and a number of participles that act to fill in additional information regarding the carrying out of the one command. The single command or imperative in this Great Commission passage is found in the words, “make disciples of all the nations”. Thus the command and primary activity Jesus is giving His disciples to do is that of making disciples just as He did.

As stated the Great Commission also contains participles—three of them. The first one is the word, “Go”. The second, is the word, “baptizing”. The third is the word, “teaching”. Again, these participles act as helping words in the sense that they help to explain how the main action or imperative is to be fulfilled.
The first participle of verse 19, translated “Go” modifies the command to make disciples by detailing the circumstances in which the church is to make disciples. The idea of the Greek grammar is that the disciple making process will take place as the church is “going”. It is not strictly a command for the church to go, but it speaks of the church making disciples as part of its normal routine. Some have tried to argue from this grammatical fact that there is no basis here for going anywhere, only that the church wherever it happens to be or whatever it happens to be doing should be making disciples. This, however, mishandles the text.

Grammatically speaking, whenever a participle functions as a circumstantial participle dependent upon an imperative—as is the case in verse 19—the participle normally gains some imperatival force. A circumstantial participle also may be used to communicate an action that is necessary to the completion of the imperative. In other words, “going” was not an incidental matter in Jesus’ mind. It is a necessary and intentional action that needs to take place prior to the act of making disciples. It is not as if Jesus was saying, “whenever you happen to be on a trip or in the neighborhood or at work or whatever, try and make a few disciples along the way”. To the contrary, if the Lord is commanding His disciples to make disciples of all the nations, then they must first go to these nations. Thus, Jesus is directing His disciples to go in the sense of an intentional purposeful and active going so as to be able to make disciples and thus, fulfill His command.
The other two participles, “baptizing” and “teaching” have to do with the marks or characteristics of disciple making. The first characteristic of disciple making is that disciples are baptized. Baptism assumes salvation. In baptism the new convert identifies with the Lord as well as with His Church as well as professes his desire to yield to Christ’s authority over his life. The second characteristic is that the disciple is taught and instructed in all of the Lord’s teachings. The New Testament does not teach an evangelism that does not involve the convert in the process of instruction in the truths and teachings of the Bible. Contemporary evangelistic methods that drive for a decision for Christ but fail to instruct the disciples are not obeying the Great Commission.

The mere preaching of the Gospel to all the nations does not fulfill the Great Commission. It is a necessary start to seeing it fulfilled but more is required than simply proclaiming the Gospel to sinners. Sinners must be converted, an act of God, and then baptized and taught so as to become like their teacher who ultimately is Christ.

The word translated as “make disciples” means to bring people into the relation of a pupil to a teacher or an apprentice to the journeyman in which the learner submits to the authority and instruction of the teacher or master. In simplified terms, a disciple is a learner or follower of Jesus Christ. Thus,
the Great Commission involves transformation. In essence, rebels and haters of God are transformed into followers and lovers of God. This, while necessitating evangelism also requires more than just evangelism.

The Great Commission produces disciples not decisions. While it is most certainly true that becoming a disciple of Christ occurs at a decisive moment in time and through a personal decision to surrender one’s life to Christ, the fruit of the conversion will be seen in more than the decision. It will be seen in the transformation of the life. Too many evangelistic appeals reduce conversion to a simple transaction—similar to signing up for life insurance—rather than presenting the Gospel as the power of God to transform a person’s life. This watered-down view of salvation has had disastrous effects upon evangelism and missions.