

Every Believer Is Called to the Nations



David Wilkerson January 25, 2016

In America I see great churches full of godly, loving people. I rejoice that the Lord has blessed his people here incredibly. In many congregations, the presence of Jesus is awesome—the worship is glorious and the altars are regularly filled with hungry, repentant people. But American Christians have to come to grips with something. If we continue only to drink in blessings and neglect to give them out, we'll face what happened to the church in Jerusalem.

After the blessing of Pentecost, the believers there grew comfortable in their fellowship. Scripture says they went from house to house eating together and sharing their experiences. What happened then? The Lord sent persecution and that glorious, Spirit-filled church was suddenly scattered. The people ended up going to the nations preaching Christ, making disciples and establishing other churches.

God won't allow his blessed children to become mere "sermon tasters." He won't allow us to get fat on his blessings while others around the world starve. He knows we'll die spiritually if we don't receive his missionary vision for a lost world. And he has ways of stirring and shaking us.

I thank God for all of the mission activity that takes place in his church. But the Lord has so much more on his heart regarding this subject. His goal is that every member of his body becomes a missionary—and that includes you. We are all called to go to the nations. Let me explain what I mean.

Jesus said, "Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them" (Matthew 28:19).

Christ's command here is spoken to every one of us with no exceptions. You, I and every other Christian must go to the nations with the gospel. You may ask, "Is that realistic? Am I supposed to quit my job, end my career and uproot my family? Is God actually telling me to pack up my loved ones and move them to another country?"

Not everyone can go physically. I'll explain how many Christians are to "go" without leaving where they are now. But first let me point out that some believers are literally to go to other nations. This includes many men and women who are single, like the apostle Paul, who took with him single men such as Timothy and Titus. God also issues this call on certain married couples. No matter how rooted and established a couple may be, the Lord supernaturally begins an uprooting process in their hearts. He gives them his vision for the lost, and his call on their hearts is so strong that nothing can stop them from eventually going.

Dr. Smith is a friend of mine. Now in his seventies, he has quit his medical practice, sold his home and serves as a medical missionary for our ministry. He and his wife have pledged to give their lives to the sick and needy anywhere we may send them. They've ministered in Mozambique and in orphanages in Romania.

Delores, a wonderful, older Christian woman from our church, went to South Africa. She has dedicated herself to working with AIDS babies there. After a while she informed us she doesn't want to come back. She wants to continue ministering Jesus to suffering children.

An elder in our church named Sam has been ministering in Kosovo. Sam has a gift for reaching young people.

Everywhere he goes they flock around him like he's their father. We all sense that the Lord has put a call on Sam's life. This precious man knows he won't be happy anywhere except where God places him.

Be assured God looks for volunteers. He won't interrupt our lifestyles if we don't want him to. For his call to be heard we have to have an openness of heart that says, "Lord, thank you for all the blessings you've given me. Now let me be a giver of those blessings."

You don't have to be an ordained minister to go to the nations, and you don't have to be a Bible teacher. In fact, doors are closing in some nations to traditional missionaries, evangelists and preachers. But at the same time, doors are wide open all over the world for doctors, teachers, English-language instructors, business people, students—anyone who can simply go. Yet you don't need a professional skill—all you need to do is answer a call. Your apartment in another nation can serve as a makeshift church no matter how simple or small. God could use you to raise up and train a host of indigenous workers, pastors, teachers and evangelists.

And you don't need money. Think of what Peter and John told the beggar who called out to them: "Silver and gold have I none; but such as I have give I thee: In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth rise up and walk" (Acts 3:6). The beggar received the greatest blessing of all—Christ himself—because Peter and John answered the call to minister.

The Lord has made other ways for Christians to be sent out.

In my opinion, this is how the majority of Christians will reach the mission field. One of these ways—perhaps the most effective way—is to adopt a nation as your own. This means giving yourself to pray for a certain country. It requires learning about the people in that land and praying for the Christian remnant there. You can touch an unreached people while on your knees. Indeed, your secret closet may become the headquarters for a movement of God's Spirit over an entire nation.

I think of Abraham's example. He prayed over godless, wicked Sodom. The Lord answered him, "If I find in Sodom fifty righteous within the city, then I will spare all the place for their sakes" (Genesis 18:26). When Abraham heard this, he began to negotiate with the Lord. Finally, God answered Abraham, "I will not destroy it for ten's sake" (18:32). God spared a wicked nation for the sake of a praying remnant. He's willing to save entire societies if he can find a band of righteous people within them.

Why is this matter of prayer so important? Let me tell you: We know of two converted Muslim boys in Macedonia who are planning to open a Bible school there. These young men want more than anything to preach the gospel to their countrymen—and it's all because of prayer. I believe there isn't a missionary anywhere on earth who wasn't prayed into his field by someone interceding elsewhere. That's the job of every believer who can't physically go to the nations. We're to be a supporting body of intercessors. We're to take on the Lord's burden of praying for missionaries and short-term workers as well as for the lost nations of the world.

And we're to assist those who have given themselves to go to the nations. When Paul writes of his journeys, he mentions not only Timothy and Titus as his helpers but also Lydia and other precious women who aided him. These were devoted servants whose assistance helped touch entire nations with the gospel.

As Jesus looked to the end of the age he pointed out a terrible problem.

Christ told his disciples, "The harvest truly is plenteous, but the labourers are few" (Matthew 9:37). As I read these words I wonder: What's the solution? How can more laborers be raised up to go to the nations? Jesus gives us the answer in the next verse: Someone has to pray these laborers into the harvest. "Pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he will send forth labourers into his harvest" (9:38).

It doesn't matter how closed some nations may look to our eyes. If God can tear down the Iron Curtain in Eastern Europe and the Bamboo Curtain in Asia, nothing can stop him from working wherever he will. The Holy Ghost will accomplish anything he wants, anywhere on earth, through anyone he chooses.

In the 1980s, when our ministry was headquartered in Texas, I spent a year praying that God would send someone to New York City to raise up a church in Times Square. I pledged to help whomever God chose—to raise money, to hold meetings, to build up support. Yet while I was praying for God to send a laborer into this specific harvest, the Lord put the burden on me.

Even the apostle Paul was sent forth as a missionary through the power of prayer. It happened in Antioch where certain prophets and teachers were praying over the harvest: “As they ministered to the Lord, and fasted, the Holy Ghost said, Separate me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them. So they, being sent forth by the Holy Ghost, departed unto Seleucia; and from thence they sailed to Cyprus. And...they were at Salamis...And...they had gone through the isle unto Paphos” (Acts 13:2, 4-6).

Paul’s first missionary journey came out of a simple prayer meeting. It was the direct result of godly people obeying Jesus’ words to pray for God to send laborers into the harvest. Indeed, this passage shows us just how missionaries are raised up and sent: They’re called and commissioned through prayer.

The same is true today. We’re to be about the work of praying for the harvest just as those godly servants in Antioch did. And while we’re praying, the Holy Spirit is searching the earth putting an urgency in the hearts of those who desire to be used of the Lord. He’s touching people everywhere, setting them apart for his service.

In Matthew 8, a centurion came to Jesus seeking healing for his dying servant. Christ answered the centurion, “Go thy way; and as thou hast believed, so be it done unto thee. And his servant was healed in the selfsame hour” (Matthew 8:13). I believe the same thing happens with all who intercede for the harvest. While we’re asking God to send forth laborers, the Holy Spirit is stirring someone somewhere. It could be happening in another part of the world—China, Russia, Africa, anywhere. It doesn’t matter where it takes place; our prayers are being used to send laborers into the harvest.

You may wonder: Does God call certain Christians to specific places? Yes, absolutely. Consider Peter’s example. After Pentecost, the apostle was in Joppa visiting a tanner named Simon. While he was there he made himself available to the Lord through prayer. Scripture tells us, “He tarried many days in Joppa” (Acts 9:43). What was Peter doing in Joppa? He was waiting on the Lord, offering himself for any assignment. At one point, Peter had been used to raise a godly woman from the dead. When we next see Peter, he is sitting on Simon’s rooftop deep in prayer. He was seeking the Lord about his next assignment.

While Peter was still praying, a group of men showed up at Simon’s door. They told Peter the following: “Cornelius, the centurion, a just man, and one that feareth God, and of good report among all the nation of the Jews, was warned from God by an holy angel to send for thee into his house, and to hear words of thee” (10:22). In other words: “Cornelius has sent us here to ask you to come to his house. He desires that you teach us God’s Word.”

You know the rest of the story. Peter went to Cornelius’ house and shared the good news about Jesus. Thus God began his work of reaching the Gentile world with the gospel.

Are you resisting a call? It’s never too late to go to the nations. If you’re open to being sent and you’re diligent in prayer about it, God will open every door. He’ll place you exactly where he wants you. And he’ll bring people into your life who need Jesus. You’ll be given assignment after assignment. Then you’ll find your life being fulfilled as never before.

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