

**CULTIVATING A HEART FOR CHRIST'S WORLD
THROUGH VISION
OR
MEGATRENDS IN MISSIONS**

Mark 16:15 and John 3:8

Jesus' last command was, **"Go into all the world and preach the good news to all creation" (Mark 16:15)**. The world of the New Testament is much different than the world of our day. Both need the gospel but they are much different worlds. It is a different world than Augustine's day or Calvin's day or William Carey's day. In fact, this may well be the most unique time in the history of the world for Christianity. The gospel never changes but the gospel must be preached without compromise to a rapidly changing world.

So where is missions headed? What will the world look like by the year 2015, which is only 15 years away? How will the mission field change? Who will be the main targets of people for ministry? If we are going to have an intelligent approach to missions, we are going to have to know the pressure points in the world and how this effects missions.

I want to lift your vision! I want to get you ready for the Third Millennium. As we move into Y2K we must approach missions differently.

Jesus in His discussion with Nicodemus told him, **"You must be born again"** but Jesus also said something else in that conversation that has tremendous spiritual significance as it relates to world missions. Speaking of the sovereign work of the Holy Spirit in salvation, He said, **"The wind blows where it pleases. You hear its sound, but you cannot tell where it comes from or where it is going. So it is with everyone born of the Spirit" (John. 3:8)**. In light of this verse we need to ask ourselves, "How is the Holy Spirit moving around the world today? Where is He at work? How is the wind blowing? It is very important that we know how and where the Spirit is sovereignly moving right now so our emphasis will be the same as the Holy Spirit's emphasis.

In this message, I will be giving an abundance of facts and statistics. Please remember these facts and statistics are based on trends as seen today. Things could change. We could have world famine, a world epidemic of AIDS a hundred times worse than the Black Plaque of the Middle Ages, a nuclear or germ war which could wipe out much of the world's population. On the brighter side, we could have a world revival or the Second Coming of Christ, which would alter these statistics greatly. I will also take the liberty to interpret some of these facts and my interpretations are not inspired. Recently I heard, "Statistics don't lie but statisticians do."

THE CHANGING WORLD OF THE FUTURE

It Will Be A Larger World. 1. Today there are six billion people on the planet earth. But by the year 2040 there could be eleven billion people. The population of the world has doubled since 1940 and may well double again by 2040. 2. Every five days a city the size of Denver, Colorado springs into existence. **CHALLENGE.** This is the greatest period in the history of the Church for evangelism. More souls can be ushered into heaven than ever before. Therefore missions must become the heartbeat of every individual Christian and every local church and the visible church on earth. With modern technology, it is now possible to reach every individual in the world with the gospel of Jesus Christ.

It Will Be A Developing World. 1. Eighty percent of the world population will be in developing countries by the year 2025. 2. Today 50% of our world lives in Asia with only 5% Christian. By 2010, 66% of the world will live in Asia. 3. India will become the most populated country with more people than Africa and Latin America combined. In 2020, India will have more people in it than China. **CHALLENGE.** Political power is moving from the West to the East. When countries like India and China get the capacity to make nuclear weapons and deliver them with missiles, then those nations with the most population will have the greatest political clout, providing they can solve their food problems. More and more Third World countries will become nationalistic and want to rule their own countries and remove all foreign influences.

For Christians we must realize and adapt to the fact by the year 2000, 86% of all non-Christians will be located in 77 countries that are either closed or restricted to traditional missionaries. Christians, therefore, must be creative and figure out ways to reach the world for Christ, overhauling or scrapping traditional methods of Western missions.

It Will Be an Older World. By the year, 2025, there will be one billion people over the age of 60 (1 out of 8). **CHALLENGE.** There must be a plan to reach the elderly in this world for Christ, even though statistics show that very few people come to Christ after the age of 30. But some do!

It Will Be A Younger World. 1. Sixty percent of the world population today is now under the age of 24. Half of Latin America is under the age of 18. 2. Mexico City has a population of kids 14 and younger equal to New York City. Twenty million people live in Mexico City and 10 million of these people are 14 years old and younger. **CHALLENGE.** The Church must place its emphasis upon reaching youth. Eighty percent of the people who come to Christ do so before the age of 25. The church must adjust its thinking and bend and flex methods to reach young people without compromising the gospel.

Did you know that about 85% of western missionaries first felt the initial stirring of God for missionary work in the fifth and sixth grades? Tomorrow's missionaries will come from the young not the folks over 35.

It Will Be an Urban World. 1. Today there are well over 400 cities with populations over one million. By 2010, there will be 475. There are 21 mega-cities of 10 million. The world population is moving to the cities. 2. Mexico City has 20 million people today but by 2015, it could be 30 million. This city is running out of air and has the highest crime rate of any city in the world. 3. The second largest Mexican city in the world is Los Angeles, California (51/2 million). 4. Percentage wise, the fastest growing city in Mexican population in the world is Houston, Texas. 5. Chicago is the second largest Polish city in the world. 6. Paris has 14% Algerians. Turks go to Germany. Iranians go to Spain. **CHALLENGE.** The mission field is at our back door. Countries, which are closed to the gospel, send their brightest and best students to the West for an education. There are 350,000 plus foreign students in the USA alone. Out of their own cultures, international students are much more receptive to the gospel. Christians must learn how to take the gospel to the cities of the world where it is much more expensive to live and much more violent.

It seems to me that public and Christian schools should require students to learn Spanish at a very early age because it will be imperative to speak both English and Spanish in American. Furthermore, God is bringing the Spanish speaking world to America to hear the gospel.

It Will Be A World of Conflict. 1. Fifty percent of the scientific minds in the world today are engaged in defense. 2. Third world countries, which have gained independence, will experience much civil war. 3. Many experts expect a nuclear incident by the new nuclear nations or by terrorists around the year 2000. Terrorists will also use germ warfare on the USA. Gas has already been used by radical religious groups in Japan. **CHALLENGE.** America will decrease as a super-power by the year 2020. Americans, especially American Christians, are going to have to learn to get along with people of different races, colors, religions, languages and cultures.

It Will Be A World of Different Religions. 1. Islam is growing at the rate of 16%. Hinduism at 12%. Christianity (Christendom) at 9%. 2. There are now more Muslims than Baptists in England. Percentage wise the fastest growing religion in America is Islam. 3. For Christianity, by 2020, there will be more Black Christians than White Christians. 4. Today all the evangelical missionaries of the Western world number about 80,000. By the year 2000, the number of missionaries from Africa, Latin America and Asia will exceed that of the Western world. 4. By the year 2010, the center of gravity for the gospel will move from the Northern Hemisphere to the Southern Hemisphere. The growth of the Church will move from the West to the East and will be centered in Africa, probably in Nairobi, Kenya. 5. By the year 2015, North America and Europe will become increasingly spiritually bankrupt despite all of its technological advancements. In Europe, people are leaving Christendom at the rate of 4000/day. That is over one million/year.

Third World countries are targeting Europe and America as potential mission fields of the future. **CHALLENGE.** Western Christians must learn to find a servant role in world missions. European and American Christians are going to have to take a large dose of humility and become part of a world team to reach the whole world.

WHAT TO EXPECT IN THE NEXT TWENTY FIVE YEARS

An All Out Effort To Reach the Unreached. There are still 1600 tribes and social groups which have never heard the gospel today. It is estimated that this includes 2.3 billion people. Jesus said concerning His second coming, **“And this gospel of the kingdom will be preached in the whole world as a testimony to all nations, and then the end will come” (Matt. 24:14).**

A Significant Gospel Impact Upon the Muslim World. There are 1.1 billion Muslims in the world today. Muslims are a young race and religion. They are well adapted to the cities and are very militant for their beliefs. Today there are around 44 Muslim countries with no gospel witness. Yet, less than 3% of the Christian missionary force is trying to reach the Muslims. By the year 2020, China will have 60 million Muslims.

By 2020, Indonesia, Pakistan, Bangladesh and India will have over 100 million Muslims in each of those countries. There will be a renewed thrust to penetrate the Muslim world with the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ. NOTE: In the 1960's, we saw a breakthrough for the gospel in Africa. In 1970's a breakthrough in South America. In the 1980's, a breakthrough in Asia. The 1990's have brought a slight breakthrough in the Muslim world.

An Unparalleled Church Growth. We will see the church grow inside of Communist China. In 1949, missionaries were forced to leave China and at that time it was estimated there were 850,000 Christians. In 1990 there were an estimated 50-75 million and by the year 2000 there could be 135 million Christians in China.

Russia is experiencing revival in Christianity. It is estimated that there are 35 to 45 million Christians in Russia. There could be even more true Christians in Russia than in the United States.

Eastern Europe is experiencing revival. The Church is growing like topsy in Poland, Hungary, Czech Republic, Romania and even in the most Christ-hating country of Albania.

North Korea is experiencing revival. It is estimated there are over 10,000 house churches in that communist country.

In Latin America 1000 people come to Christ every hour which is 24,000 a day and 9 million a year. It is estimated that as much as 40% of Guatemala is evangelical Christian. Nicaragua has 15%. The country with the least amount of evangelical Christians is Columbia at 5%. Five new churches start a day in Brazil. Much of this revival is being experienced in the Pentecostal church and we can no longer ignore this movement. There are 365 million Pentecostals. In his visit to the United States a several days ago, the Pope said that the rapid growth of Protestants in the world must be stopped—a reference primarily to Pentecostals.

In Africa, 20,000 people a day and 7 million a year are coming to Christ.

India is also experiencing revival in some sections of that country.

South Korea is probably the most Christian nation on earth. One-third of the population is in church on Sunday morning. South Korea is 26% evangelical Christians having the largest evangelical local church in the world of over 70,000 people under Dr. Paul Chou—a Full-Gospel Church. South Korea also has the largest Presbyterian Church in the world. It is estimated that 56% of the South Korean military is Christian.

Third World Countries Sending Missionaries. The greatest missionary movement in history will come out of the Third World countries. Africa, Asia and Latin America will lead the way in world evangelism. Brazil is now sending missionaries to Portugal. Argentina is now sending missionaries to Spain. The South Korean church has had as its goal 10,000 missionaries for Asia by the year 2000.

WHAT IS THE FUTURE ROLE OF AMERICAN CHRISTIANS IN MISSIONS?

To Provide Financial Support. America for the next 10 to 20 years will be financially strong and American Christians can support missions better than any other Christians can in the world.

To Provide Teachers and Trainers. Christians in the Third World need to know how to disciple and train all the people coming to Christ. For a limited time, American Christians will have this door open to them.

There is still a need for the traditional missionary, especially in the 10/40 window. But the need and trend is to train national pastors.

To Provide Institutions of Higher Learning. American Christians need to get behind building and staffing Bible Schools, colleges and seminaries in the Third World countries so they can train their own leadership. NOTE: Must teach nationals in their own countries. 95% of nationals who come to the United States to train never go back to their countries. A very poor investment.