

## **Back on Mission**

Today, we want to look at one of the other benefits...or out workings of the Protestant Reformation and the preaching of the Word by the men involved in the first Great Awakening.

### **Read Matthew 28:18-20** (The great commission of our Lord)

In the 18<sup>th</sup>, 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries, there seems to have been quite a resurgence in the church's desire to spread the gospel of Jesus Christ. That is what we will look at today in some measure.

- There are many dedicated Christian missionaries we could talk about, but we will take a brief look at just a few

Also, I think it is important to know that, just as we see in the N.T., faithful Christians have an effect on the lives of Christians who come after them.

- The goal is...and the key is...Christians need to influence others by the way they walk in the light of the Word of God, by the power of the Holy Spirit
- And by their diligence in teaching the truth

The first person I want to talk about would become known as "the father of modern missions" though he began as a shoemaker in England.

### **William Carey** (Lived from 1761-1834)

- Though younger, Carey lived during the time of John and Charles Wesley and the evangelical revival taking place in England
- While working, he taught himself several languages, including Greek and Hebrew
- Carey was married to his wife Dorothy in 1781, and they had 6 children, however, only 3 of them would live to adulthood

His later missionary work would be influenced by at least two written sources.

1. A pamphlet a friend gave him in 1781 entitled "The Gospel Worthy of All Acceptation."
  - a. This was all about how Christians in England should think about overseas missionary work
2. In 1785, by reading the biography of the life of David Brainerd, missionary to the Native American tribes in New England
  - a. Here, we have influence from the great American preacher, Jonathan Edwards
  - b. If you remember from a couple of weeks ago, I mentioned Edwards published this biography, almost 40 years earlier because Brainerd's preaching had so inspired him
  - c. This reading would serve to spur on Carey's desire to see the Gospel of Jesus Christ taken to the unreached people of the world

In 1789, Carey took on the pastorate of a small church in Leicester, England. He was part of what was called Particular Baptists, also known as Reformed Baptists.

In 1792, he published a book that was very important regarding missionary work.

- *"An Enquiry into the Obligations of Christians to Use Means for the Conversion of the Heathen."*
- He wrote that Christ's Great Commission was for all believers
  - In other words, there was a global need for the gospel to be preached and this was not only the work of Pastors.
  - This was a work for all Christians to be engaging in

Included in that book was a brief history of mission work from the early church all the way to John Wesley and he had many pages dedicated to statistics on world religions, populations and other areas showing the great need for mission work.

It was around this same time that William Carey helped found what was known as the Baptist Missionary Society. That wasn't the original name though. They first called it:

- *"The Particular Baptist Society for the Propagation of the Gospel Amongst the Heathen."*
  - Later, it became the Baptist Missionary Society
  - Now, it is still going and called the BMS World Mission

By 1793, Carey was on his way to India, where he initially managed an indigo factory so that he could spend time in translating the Bible into Bengali.

- We should notice, not only the importance he put on missionaries learning the languages of the people
- But, more importantly, getting the Word of God to them in their own language

In 1801, he became a professor of Bengali at the College of Fort William in Calcutta. There, he would not only revise his Bengali New Testament, but would also start to translate into the Sanskrit language.

- He also translated the Bible into other languages
- And they would establish a printing press to make copies of their translations to distribute them to the people
  - In a major fire in 1812, they lost many valuable documents, but the press itself was saved and they were back up and running in six months
  - This printing press would be used to print biblical materials in dozens of languages and dialects by the time Carey's life came to an end

In 1818, the mission established a school specifically to train pastors, offering training to people without consideration of their place in the caste system of India.

William Carey died on June 9<sup>th</sup>, 1834 after spending his life in the service of missionary work and spreading the gospel through the preaching, translating, and printing of the Word of God.

- William Carey had been influenced by Jonathan Edwards, who was influenced by David Brainerd, who was influenced by a puritan from the 17<sup>th</sup> century named John Elliott

- Elliott had translated the Bible into the language of Native Americans as far back as the late 1600's.

Just like Carey was influenced, he too would influence others. He influenced another British preacher named **Charles Simeon**, who would go on to devote his life to training men in Bible Exposition.

- His work has continued to this day.

**Henry Martyn** heard Charles Simeon preaching and talking about all the work that William Carey had done in India, causing Martyn to desire the same work.

- Martyn would later write memoirs that would influence other English folks
- **Anthony Norris Groves** would become a missionary to modern-day Iraq and later to India as well.
  - *Groves wrote about Henry Martyn once and said, "I have today finished reading, for the second time, Martyn's Memoir...How my soul admires and loves his zeal, self-denial and devotion; how brilliant, how transient his career; what spiritual and mental power amidst bodily weakness and disease! O, may I be encouraged by his example to press on to a higher mark."*

All this from the work of William Carey. Carey also influenced the next Christian missionary I want to mention. That would be a man named **Adoniram Judson** and this time it was an American.

- Judson was born in Massachusetts in 1788, 12 years after the United States gained it's independence.
- He grew up in a Christian home, the son of a pastor, but walked away from all his upbringing by the time he was a college student
  - This was the result of the influence of his friend, Jacob Eames, who said he should abandon Christianity and become a deist
    - That is, one who looks to human reason to determine truth
- He told his parents this on his 20<sup>th</sup> birthday in 1808 and said he was going to New York to be a playwright.

The story is told that sometime later, he was staying at a small-town inn one night and could not sleep because he heard the sounds of a person dying in the next room. The thought of death haunted him all night as he pondered his eternal state.

- The next morning, as he was leaving, he found out that the man in the next room had indeed died.
- Even more shocking was the fact that he found out that man was his friend, Jacob Eames
  - The same friend that talked him into becoming a deist
  - Now that man was dead

Judson would come back to the Lord through this encounter, as God worked on his heart, and he was truly saved. He would finish seminary 4 years later in 1812. That same year, he would marry his wife Ann, and they would leave two weeks later for India, on February 5, 1812.

- Judson was one of the first missionaries from North America to go to the foreign mission field

Interestingly, several months before they got married, Judson wrote a letter to the man who would be his future father-in-law, to tell him what his plans were and what kind of sacrifice it would entail for his daughter if she married him.

**In that letter Judson said, these words,** *"I have now to ask whether you can consent to part with your daughter early next spring, to see her no more in this world; whether you can consent to her departure for a heathen land, and her subjection to the hardships and sufferings of a missionary life; whether you can consent to her exposure to the dangers of the ocean; to the fatal influence of the southern climate of India; to every kind of want and distress; to degradation, insult, persecution, and perhaps a violent death? Can you consent to all this for the sake of Him who left His heavenly home, and died for her and for you; for the sake of perishing immortal souls; for the sake of Zion and the glory of God? Can you consent to all this in hope of soon meeting your daughter in the world of glory, with a crown of righteousness brightened by the acclamations of praise which shall redound to her Savior from heathens saved, through her means, from eternal woe and despair?"*

Apparently, the dad consented, because they got married and left for India, but due to loss of financial backers and trouble with their visas, they were not able to enter India and would settle in Burma instead.

- Now they had language barriers they were not ready for
- Spent years learning the language
- When they did learn the language and began to share the gospel, it was not well received, perhaps partially due to the fact that they could be put to death for switching religions in Burma

After 12 years, the only fruit they saw were 18 conversions to Christianity and like many foreign missionaries today, he faced threats from the government and at that time, sickness and disease were a constant.

- At one point, during the civil war in Burma, he was put in a death prison, he was tortured and nearly died after a forced death march
- He was there for 17 months in those harsh conditions
- His wife died a few months after he was released
- From 1812 to 1850, two dozen of Judson's relatives or close friends died, including his first and second wives, and several of his children.

In the face of all this hardship and loss, he continued the work of translating the Bible into the Burmese language.

By the time he died in 1850, there were 100 churches and 8,000 Burmese people who professed faith in Jesus Christ

- In 1993, the head of the Myanmar Evangelical Fellowship made a statement saying, *"Today, there are 6 million Christians in Myanmar, and every one of us trace our spiritual heritage to one man, the Reverend Adoniram Judson."*

Now, to look at another of these important Christians who came before us, I must go back to a name I mentioned earlier, Anthony Norris Groves.

- Groves was influenced by Henry Martyn
- But Groves also influenced to guys in particular, George Muller (1805-1898) and James Hudson Taylor (1832-1905)

Hudson Taylor was the first modern missionary to reach the interior of China and he established the China Inland Mission. At one point during his work there, he would return to England and spend some time trying to encourage young Christians to come to China.

There was a world-famous cricket player at Cambridge named **C.T. Studd** who heard Hudson Taylor preaching and was so impacted by it that he would leave the life of fame and comfort to go overseas for a life of service to Christ.

- The publicity this would bring about would be very influential on British campuses and would be the beginnings of the Student Volunteer Movement for Foreign Missions in North America as well in 1886
- This would be led by men like D.L. Moody and others, who would lead American young people to a life of foreign missions as God called them.

C.T. Studd (Charles Thomas Studd) was born on December 2, 1860, in England. By the time he was 16 years old, through the influence of D.L. Moody, he would trust Christ as his savior.

- By the time he left the fame of the sport of Cricket, he had decided a life of athletics was not what he wanted.
- He said, *"What is all the fame and flattery worth...when a man comes to face eternity?"*
- He also said, *"How could I spend the best years of my life in working for myself and the honors and pleasures of this world, when thousands and thousands of souls are perishing every day?"*

Studd spent 10 years in China, working in a rehabilitation center for people addicted to opium. He shared the gospel with them and saw many come to Christ in faith.

- He also married his wife Priscilla there, with whom he had 4 daughters
- He went back to England and after a few years, they left for India, where Studd was the pastor of a church for 7 years
- After that, he went to the Belgian Congo 1913
- While there, he had several difficulties, including contracting a terrible case of malaria
- He and other missionaries would set up stations in the heart of Africa and preach the gospel to the different tribal people who had never heard the name of Jesus Christ.

Studd, like others we have looked at, was a hymn writer and he wrote over 200 hymns

- He also translated the New Testament into the native language
- Africa is where C.T. Studd would die in 1931 at the age of seventy
- He spent most of his adult life as a missionary in foreign countries
  - 10 years in China, 7 years in India, and about 20 years in Africa

Like many of the others, Studd showed great resolve in service to the Lord and sacrificial living for the gospel.

- He would say of the taxing nature of the kind of missionary work he did, “If Jesus Christ be God and died for me, then no sacrifice can be too great for me to make for Him.”

Hudson Taylor had that impact on C.T. Studd, but that’s not all. Taylor’s testimony was influential in the lives of missionaries we might even be more familiar with.

- **Amy Carmichael** was influenced by Taylor, and she would spend her life in India, saving the abandoned children of temple prostitutes.
  - She suffered from debilitating health problems all her life and would be bedridden for almost the last 20 years of her life after an injury, but continued to write and minister to the children
  - She lived to be 83, dying in India in 1951
- **Eric Liddell** who was portrayed in the 1981 film “Chariots of Fire” was a missionary to China after winning gold in the 1924 Olympic Games in Paris.
  - He too was inspired by Hudson Taylor
  - He would serve in China until he died in an internment camp in 1945 during WWII
- **Elisabeth Howard** was born in 1926 to missionary parents and attended Wheaton College. She later wrote this, “When I was a college student, my father lent me the two-volume life of Hudson Taylor. Another college student, Jim Elliot, read it too and this was one of the great things he and I had in common, a huge hunger for that sort of godliness, for a true missionary heart.”
  - So, you would know her as Elisabeth Elliot, wife of Jim Elliot who, along with 4 other missionary friends, was speared to death in 1956 while trying to reach the Auca Indian tribe in Ecuador with the gospel
  - Elisabeth Elliot would go on to continue that work and the Lord would provide for her to reach the same tribe with the gospel of Jesus Christ just 2 years later
  - Elisabeth died in 2015 at the age of 88

The work that these folks did in following Christ was always based on their own salvation and their firm commitment to the truth of the gospel and the necessity of following the Great Commission so other lost souls could be saved by the power of the gospel through the working of the Holy Spirit.

- The same things are necessary here that we saw in the Reformation
- The power and authority of the Word of God in the lives of Christians
- And the help of the Spirit of God in spreading it to others