Greetings once again in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. Let me invite you to join me in prayer as we begin. Let us pray. 

*Good and gracious God, we ask that You would open us once again today to that which You have to teach us. Guide us by Your Spirit, for we pray this in Christ’s name. Amen.*

Kenneth Scott Latourette has called the 19th century, “The Great Century,” in large measure because of its deep and pervasive commitment to the Christian mission around the world. In the Great Commission (Matthew 28:16-20) Christ commanded His disciples “to go into all the world and make disciples of all peoples, baptizing them in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And lo I am with you always, even unto the end of the age.”

Faithful Christians have responded to this call in every age of the church. Yet no period is so dominantly marked by Christian outreach as was the 19th century. The story begins, of course, much earlier, traced across the centuries from Pentecost to the present, in the spreading flame during the Roman Era, soon after the founding of the church, the evangelization of Europe during the Middle Ages, the encounters with Islam, the strategies of the Crusades, and many other instances as well. The story is told in much more detail in such books as: Steven Neil’s *A History of Christian Missions*, by Penguin Books; or Herbert Kane’s *A Concise History of the Christian World Mission*, by Baker Books; or a variety of the writings of Kenneth Scott Latourette—especially his *History of the Expansion of Christianity*, a seven volume set [that] focuses largely on the expansion of Christianity across the centuries.

In our own text for this course, you might want to refer specifically to a variety of passages in Latourette. You will find more help in Latourette on this subject than any other within his book. Pages 923-994 cover the period of missionary expansion following the Reformation. Pages 1063-1225 focus specifically on this great
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century, the 19th century, that we are talking about in this lecture. You’ll find pages 1409-1453 focusing on developments after 1914. And there is a whole additional section which Ralph Winter has added to this particular edition of that text on The World Christian Movement, 1950 to 1975, this is in pages 1477-1514, concluding the book. A whole variety of other sources are available as well: Oliver Elsbree’s [work] *The Rise of the Missionary Spirit in America*, by Williamsport Printing Company; or Colin Goodykoontz’s [work] *Home Missions on the American Frontier*; or Pierce Beaver’s [book] *All Loves Excelling*, by Eerdmans; and many, many others. These are available for us for our study of this magnificent story of missionary outreach.

Today I want to focus primarily upon the 19th and into the 20th century. This is a period of enormous missionary activity, and we begin the story with the Continental Pietists. You’ll recall those from our earlier discussions that Philipp Jakob Spener, a Lutheran pastor in Strasbourg, later in Frankfurt, sought to raise the spiritual level of his flock through development of vital piety. You may recall in his writings his emphasis on conversion, upon Bible study, small group prayer meetings, concern for the needy and the like. These folks experienced great persecution. And when the University of Saxony closed its doors to the Pietists, they opened their own university at Halle in Germany in 1694. And for 10 years, Spener helped to build the school. Following his death in AD 1705, August Francke took over the leadership of this growing university center. Halle not only became the educational center of Pietism, but it also became the fountainhead of the modern missionary movement in the 18th century.

As one of my former teachers at Princeton commented—this is James Hastings Nichols—“The university was surrounded with other institutions, a pauper school, a boy’s boarding school, an orphanage, a Latin school, and over 6,000 Pietist clergy were trained by the Halle Theological Faculty which was the largest divinity school in Germany.” Out of Halle grew the first Protestant mission, what is called the Danish-Halle Mission. In 1620, Denmark established its first trading colony at Tranquebar on the east coast of India. From the beginning, they sent out chaplains to minister to the spiritual need of these colonists. In 1705, Dr. Franz Lutkins, Court Chaplain at Copenhagen, was commissioned by Frederick IV to recruit missionaries to the indigenous populations of those areas that were being settled. Lutkins turned to the University of Halle to find recruits, [and] two names were suggested: Bartholomew Zigenbalg and Heinrich Plutschau. These were both
students of August Francke. They both volunteered and sailed for Tranquebar on November 29, 1705.

There was great opposition from members of the Lutheran church. The faculty of theology at Wittenberg called them “false prophets.” Why the opposition? Some Lutheran theologians were teaching that the Great Commission pertained only to the original apostles and they had fulfilled it. The church today, therefore, has neither the authority nor the responsibility, many of them felt, to send missionaries to the ends of the earth. Ambivalent attitude toward mission by magisterial reformers is one of those ongoing questions that is continually studied and debated today. Be that as it may, Plutschau lasted only five years. Zigenbalg, however, remained in India for 15 years, and through his writings and speaking gained enormous interest and following for the mission throughout Europe.

The Origins of the Moravian Church go back to AD 1467 when the persecuted followers of John Huss joined with some Waldensians to form the “Unitas Fratrum,” United Brethren. Migrating to Saxony in 1722, they were given refuge and land on one of the estates of Count Zinzendorf, this one near Dresden. This became known as Herrnhut, “The Lord’s Watch,” and it became the center of an enormous missionary outreach.

Nicolaus Ludwig Zinzendorf (1700-1760) decided as a young man to devote all of his time and treasure to the cause of Christ. He became a Bishop of the Moravian Church in 1737, and for 30 years he guided its worldwide missionary outreach. He and Francke were without doubt the greatest missionary leaders of the 18th century. Zinzendorf was visiting Copenhagen in 1730 when his interest in missions was first triggered. He met a black man from the West Indies and two Eskimos from Greenland, [and] all three of them pleaded with him to send missionaries to help them. He was deeply moved by their need. And when he returned to Herrnhut, he placed the challenge before his brothers and sisters there. Their response was immediate and enthusiastic. The first mission sent out to the black slaves on a Danish island of Saint Thomas in the Virgin Islands went there in 1732. The following year they went to Greenland. One year later, they were in Saint Croix in the Virgin Islands. Then came Suriname in 1735; and the Gold Coast of Africa; and down in South Africa in 1737; and to the North American Indians in 1740; to Jamaica in 1754; and to Antigua in 1756.
All told, between 1732-1768, 226 Moravian missionaries went to ten foreign countries. That is really remarkable. As Charles Henry Robinson commented in his *History of Christian Missions*, in 1915:

> Within 20 years of the commencement of their missionary work, the Moravian brethren had started more missions than the Anglicans and Protestants had started during the preceding two centuries combined. Their marvelous success was largely due to the fact that from the first they recognized that the evangelization of the world was the most pressing of all obligations and that the carrying out of the obligation was the common affair of everyone in the community.

Their work prospered. It is interesting to note that the Moravian missionaries had very little formal and almost no theological training. This was in sharp contrast to the Halle missionaries, almost all of whom were well educated. And I think it is important to note that God seemed to bless the ministries of both the educated and the uneducated. The first two missionaries to Greenland were grave diggers, to the West Indies were carpenters and potters. God uses all sorts and kinds and gifts and interests.

Today Moravian missions continue to flourish [with] four major centers in western Germany, England, Denmark, and the U.S. During the 18th century, missions were dominated by the Danish-Halle mission on the one hand, and these marvelous Moravian missions on the other.

During the next 100 years, throughout the 19th century, 16 new missions were added: The Netherlands Missionary Society in 1797; in Germany, the Berlin Missionary Society in 1824; the Rhenish Missionary Society in 1828; the Gossner Mission in 1836; the Liepzig Mission Society in 1836; the Hermannsburg Mission in 1849; In Scandinavia, six new societies were started; in France, the Paris Evangelical Missionary Society in 1822; followed by others in Switzerland, the Basel Evangelical Mission Society in 1815; and the list could go on and on. Virtually all of these are still functioning; some 1,300 German missionaries are working today throughout the world.

Missions tended, having started in Europe, to move to the West, to the British Isles, and eventually we will see to the Americas. And now today, pretty largely, into the “Two-Thirds World,” [“The Majority World”], or “The Third World,” as it is often called. That is the pattern that we’re going to see now over the next century.
or century and a half.

We turn now from Europe to the British Isles and to the growth of the great British mission. The missionary movement in the British Isles is rooted in the evangelical awakening, which took place under Wesley and Whitefield in the 18th century. Three mission societies were established as a result. All designed originally to spread the Gospel in North America. The first was the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in New England, established in 1649. The focus was upon Native Americans. This was an Indian mission. The first missionary was John Eliot, whose name should be a familiar one to all of us.

The second mission was the SPCK—the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge in 1698. This was basically rooted in the Anglican Church. The leading figure in its formation was Thomas Bray, a rector in Maryland under the Bishop of London. The focus was the white colonists of the new world. Its strategy was dissemination of Christian literature to lay people and to clergy. They wanted to strengthen the libraries [and] they wanted to reach out largely through the printed page. Today the SPCK has bookstores virtually all over the world. Most of its focus is still Anglican, but its constituency tends to draw in folk from other traditions as well.

The third of the early missions was the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts—the SPG—founded in 1701. Its focus was dual, upon ministers who needed to minister to the spiritual needs of the English settlers overseas, and the evangelization of Native Americans, the Indian peoples here.

The major figure in British missions is, of course, the great William Carey. He is often called “The Father of Modern Missions,” I think, with just cause. What Luther was to the Protestant Reformation, in many ways, Carey was to the Christian Missionary Movement.

The story really begins with Robert Miller’s 1723 volume, *A History of the Propagation of Christianity and the Overthrow of Paganism*. They loved those long titles in earlier years. He advocated intercessory prayer as the primary means for converting unconverted. This led to prayer groups all over the British Isles, and the focus of their prayer was the conversion of the world. In 1746, British Christians sent a request to Boston Christians to enter in with them to a seven year concert of prayer for worldwide missions. Jonathan Edwards picked up the request here and helped by issuing his own call for that kind of intercessory prayer. And those concerts of prayer, which are now being revived in our own day, began to
emerge in many quarters here in the new world.

It was in this context that William Carey rose to prominence. His years are 1761-1834. He was an apprentice shoe maker at Hackelton, [who] converted at the age of 18. He joined a Baptist Church. He mended shoes, taught school, and preached on Sundays. He read voraciously, [and] he taught himself Latin, Greek, Hebrew, Italian, French, and Dutch. He got very interested in Captain Cook’s book *The Last Voyage of Captain Cook* and his missionary interests were kindled. He then read Edwards’ *Life and Diary of David Brainerd* that has been reproduced in one of the great Edwards series from Yale Press (I think in its seventh volume). There is enormous power in books. And we need to focus periodically upon the impact which books have had in changing people’s lives and redirecting the course of their own ministry and work.

He made up his own map of the world [and] had it on his wall. [He] inscribed every bit of information he could find through letters or through reading. He would mark it down on his map. It is an interesting experiment, and one that some of us may do well to try. In 1792, Carey published his little 87 page book *An Enquiry into the Obligations of Christians to Use Means for the Conversion of the Heathens*. That is perhaps the single most important missionary tract ever written and it is available now in reprinted form and is fairly easy to get hold of.

Carey, who was part of a Calvinistic Baptist Group, tried to get a society established to send out missionaries. And at a meeting of this group in Northamptonshire, Carey proposed a discussion of the Great Commission and its implications. Dr. John Ryland, who was there, retorted, “Young man, sit down. When God pleases to convert the heathen, He’ll do it without you and without your aid or mine.” Carey remained undaunted. He and others who shared the vision continued to pray—John Sutcliff, Andrew Fuller, Samuel Pierce, and others.

On May 30, 1792, at the Baptist Ministers Association at Nottingham, Carey preached his famous sermon on Isaiah 54. And it is in that sermon that he coined the phrase, “Expect great things from God, attempt great things for God.” This had a profound impact on many, and by the following October they had formed the Particular Baptist Society for Propagating the Gospel Among the Heathen. Reginald Hogg was treasurer. Andrew Fuller was Secretary. Money was being raised by individual contributions, [but] there was a tremendous obstacle to this. Carey’s father
considered him mad. And his wife said if he ever went to the mission field, she wouldn’t come. Later she recanted, of course. Carey sailed for India on June 13, 1793 with a reluctant wife, four children, and two companions. Five months later, he arrived in India and was there for the next 40 years.

It has been my privilege recently to stand in Carey’s pulpit in his church in Calcutta. It is quite a remarkable thing to see from the inside, and God made mighty use of Carey throughout that part of the world and by his influence around the world. Carey’s example, in fact, inspired the formation of a flurry of new missionary societies: The London Missionary Society in 1795; The Scottish and Glasgow Missionary Society in 1796; The Netherlands Missionary Society in 1797; The Church Missionary Society in 1799; The British and Foreign Bible Society in 1804; The American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions in 1810; The American Baptist Missionary Union in 1814; The American Bible Society in 1816; and so on.

The impetus for the missionary outreach moves now from Europe to the British Isles and finally to America. On this side of the Atlantic, the modern mission story begins really with Samuel Mills. He came from a Connecticut farming family and entered Williams College in Massachusetts in 1806. He was planning to prepare for the ministry. There he was joined by a group of kindred spirits, James Richards, Francis Robbins, Harvey Loomis, Gordon Hall, and Luther Rice. These came to be known as the Society of the Brethren. They met frequently for prayer and discussion. One day in a thunderstorm, they took refuge in a haystack and there prayed for the conversion of the world. They also there resolved to become America’s first foreign missionaries. They signed a pledge to that affect. Thereafter, this group was called “The Haystack Group.” And American Missions really reach back to that interesting haystack event, which is commemorated on Williams College Campus as the beginning of the American missionary outreach.

After graduation, many in this group went on to Andover Seminary, which had been founded in 1808. [It was] the first of our seminaries of the style that we know now and have become familiar with. It was the center for Christian missionary activity, and there these folk were joined by Adoniram Judson, who had graduated from Brown University; Samuel Newell, who had graduated from Harvard; and Samuel Knott, from Union College; and others.
They formed, under Judson’s leadership, The Society of Inquiry into the Subject of Missions. [On] June 28, 1810, Judson; Mills; Knott; [and] Newell offered themselves for missionary service to the General Association of Congregational Ministers of Massachusetts. This led to the establishment of the Foreign Missions Board, the original Board of Commissioners for Foreign Mission in 1810. These were the simple beginnings of the American Missionary Movement, which led ultimately to a reality of missionary activity in the world that is marked by 70 percent of all worldwide Protestant missionaries and 80 percent of all finances, focused and rooted here in America.

They had close ties also with the London Missionary Society. They chose Burma as the first field. And the original party included eight missionaries: Judson, Newell, Knott, their wives, Gordon Hall, [and] Luther Rice. All were graduates of Andover Seminary, [and] all were ordained at the tabernacle in Salem, Massachusetts in 1812. [In] February of that year, the Judsons and the Newells set sail from Salem on the [ship] The Caravan. You can actually visit the dock where they took off. The rest of them left from Philadelphia on the ship Harmony. Four months it took them to get across, [and] soon other fields were open as a result of their labors: Ceylon in 1816; the Near East in 1820; China in 1830; and Madura in 1834.

On board the ship going over, Judson changed his mind about baptism. He was immersed as an adult. He wrote [to] the Congregationalists at home who were supporting him to resign since he could no longer, in good conscious, take their money since he no longer believed in infant baptism. The Baptists, however, picked up his cause. And it led to the formulation of what is now the American Baptist Foreign Missions Board, which began in 1814, and Judson became its first and most famous missionary. Other missionary societies were quickly formed: The Methodist Episcopal Church in 1819; The Protestant Episcopal Church in 1821; The Presbyterian Church in 1831; and The Evangelical Lutheran Church in 1837. The 1980 Missions Handbook lists 714 mission organizations presently in America, with a budget of over one billion dollars per year supporting 53,000 missionaries in nearly 200 countries. All of that from that simple little haystack prayer meeting out in the western part of Massachusetts. [It is] quite a story.

Latourette, of course, gives three of his seven volumes in his larger church history set to the 19th century. The focus there, of course, is upon the missionary expansion of that century. Never
before in the church’s history had there been more concerted, organized, or successful attempts to spread the gospel around the world. By the end of the century, every Protestant country was represented on the mission field. This was done through four types of missionary societies. And in the 19th century, you begin to get the division between strategies for mission. The first and second, the interdenominational missions—these were the earliest forms: The London Missionary Society; the ABCFM; and others.

As the movement got momentum, virtually every denominational group started its own missionary society. The third, and one of the most interesting, was The Faith Mission Movement. It came about in the mid-19th century. Hudson Taylor is usually seen as the kind of father or leader of this movement. It started in Great Britain and then moved to the U.S. The first of the Faith Missions was the BMMF, founded in 1852. Others were added, like the China Inland Mission (now the OMF) in 1865 and some two dozen more by 1900. In America [The United States], the very first Faith Mission was WUMS, The Woman’s Union Mission Society, [was] founded in 1860. And that was followed by: The Christian Missionary Alliance in 1887; Team Mission in 1890; Sudan Interior Mission in 1893; Africa Inland Mission in 1895; and the like.

One of the things that interests me most about this is the fact that the oldest British Faith Mission, the BMMF, combined recently with the oldest American Faith Mission, Woman’s Union Mission Society. My mother-in-law served for many years as the President of the Woman’s Union Mission Society and my father-in-law was the architect that put the two together. So this has special meaning for me in terms of that Faith Mission development.

The fourth kind of mission was the specialized missions. Later in the 19th and early 20th century, missions started focusing on certain people or areas: Indian missions, Eskimo missions, missions to the deaf, the blind, the military, to children, to lepers, literacy missions, radio missions, aviation, and to relief, and the list could go on. I should also mention the Bible societies, the United Bible Societies, made up of 66 separate organizations, centered now in Stuttgart, Germany. [They were] all dedicated to translating, publishing, and distributing Bibles. This has been an enormous help in the world outreach of the church.

The 19th century produced many marvelous missionaries as well. The International Biography of Missionary lists 2,286 missionary biographies, focusing on William Carey, Adoniram Judson,
Robert Morrison of China, Hudson Taylor of China, William Miller of India, Samuel Brown of Japan, Ludwig Nommensen of Sumatra, Daniel Bliss of Beirut, David Livingston of Africa, Robert Moffatt of Africa, and the list goes on and on. If you’ve not had any occasion to read through Missionary Biography, you have a great treat in store for you. And let me encourage you to find a good biography and to begin to read it. One good place to begin is Joan Jacobs Brumberg *Mission for Life, the Story of the Family of Adoniram Judson*, put out by McMillan. It is an exciting book, and others are available of that sort as well.

What about 20th century developments? The course of missions in the 20th century is marked by development of three basic movements: (1) The Faith Mission movement which had started earlier, but now took new root and new impetus; (2) The Bible Institute Movement; and (3) The Student Volunteer Movement, which ended in the 1930s.

The Faith Mission Movement is a fascinating one. The term is applied really to several interdenominational agencies that trust God for their support. There is no natural constituency. The principles are simply that they do not go into debt. They do not solicit funds. And they have a statement of faith to sign. Most of these are all conservative evangelical statements. They make their needs known and then they trust God to prompt the hearts of people to support them. This is true of the Wycliffe Bible Translators with some 4,200 missionaries [and] Campus Crusade [with] a staff of some 6,000 now in 150 different countries.

The second of these movements is the Bible Institute or the Bible College Movement, started in the 1880’s. Now there are nearly 300 in the United States and Canada. The first of these was at Nyack, New York in 1882; Then you have Moody in 1886; You have Boston Missionary Training School, now one of the founding schools of Gordon College and Gordon Conwell Theological Seminary, founded in 1889; Ontario; Columbia Bible College; Prairie Bible; Lancaster; and the list goes on and on.

The contributions of these schools to missionary work around the world are incredibly important and almost unknown. Moody Bible Institute has had 5,800 of its graduates serve under 255 mission boards in 108 different countries. That is just one school. This means that today, someone out of every 18 North American missionaries anywhere in the world is a graduate of Moody. That is an incredible figure. And even though they probably dominate more than any of the other Bible schools in the missionary
enterprise, if you add together all of the Bible institute movement schools, the impact upon missions is almost incalculable.

Too little is known of the impact of these schools. There are nearly 100 schools now in the AABC, which is the accrediting association for Bible colleges [with] a total enrollment of nearly 40,000 students. And if you add to these the 40 Bible schools in Europe, and some 30 Bible schools in the British Isles, the impact is even greater. Look at a school like Spurgeons College in London, founded in 1856, and the like.

So that, in addition to the Faith Missions Movement and the Bible Institute Movement, we need to add also the Student Volunteer Movement that started in the 1880’s. [It was] the vision of Robert Wilder, emphasized through the preaching of D. L. Moody, [and] organized by John R. Mott.

[In] the summer of 1886, 100 college seminary and university students met at Mount Herman, Massachusetts to sign what was called The Princeton Pledge: “I propose, God willing, to become a foreign missionary.” That was the statement and many signed it. The watchword of the movement, given by Wilder, was “The Evangelization of the World in this Generation.” The last convention was held in Indianapolis in 1936. But for 50 years, it helped to send over 20,000 student missionaries out to the field. SMF and InterVarsity now carry on this same kind of work.

In recent decades, missionary activity in mainline churches has been, of course, on the decline. If you look at the figures comparatively in some of our major denominations, you get the idea of what has happened. Between 1970 and 1980, in the American Baptist Convention, the number of missionaries dropped from 290 to 200; in the Presbyterian Church, 1201 dropped to 618; the United Methodists, 1175 to 938; in the Protestant Episcopal, 138 to 69, in the UCC, 356 to 160. You see the pattern. The Southern Baptist Convention continues to hold its own. Many conservative evangelical groups are actually growing. And this has been increased by two new programs which emerged in the 1960’s: (1) The Short-Term Missions Abroad, and (2) Summer Missionary Projects. It is interesting, according to studies, that some 25 percent of “short-termers” who go out to the field actually become career missionaries. That is a pretty good number. Most of them who go out, even though they may not become career missionaries, greatly appreciate the experience. In fact, only 3.1 percent tested were at all negative about it. And they carry that positive image and emphasis into their own work.
here in the United States or wherever they live.

We should say a word about Missionary Radio. Radio has been a major vehicle for spreading the Gospel. Stations like HCJB in Quito, Ecuador, which went on the air Christmas Day, 1931. They first had a little 250 watt transmitter, and this now has been expanded to an enormous outreach in many languages. FEBC, [out of] Manila, started in 1945, now has 28 transmitters [and] 1,900 program hours in 91 languages; ELWA in Liberia; HLKY in Korea; KLKX in Korea; RVOG in Ethiopia; and others. Add to this the impetus: (1) of church growth, under the work of Donald McGavran and others, (2) evangelism in depth—the work of Ken Strachan and others, (3) theological education by extension—Ralph Winter and others, (4) Urbana Missionary Conferences, (5) [and] InterVarsity. All of these have added up to an enormous outreach of missionary work around the world.

Today some 15,000 non-Caucasian missionaries are serving around the world as well. From Korea, Japan, the Philippines, from India, from Africa, from Latin America, the real growth of missions now seems to be coming from third-world countries. Those other newer churches around the world who are now seeing the vision of the Commission of God and going out—some of them right here to America [The United States], to bring the gospel.

As we look back upon this great missionary movement, how can we assess it? What did the missionaries do wrong? What did they do that was right? Let me suggest a few things.

First—areas of failure, which I think we need to admit. Some of their emphases depreciated the pagan religions of the countries in which they were serving. Some of them had a superiority complex and carried that with them from the culture here into their work in the field. Some of them failed to make adequate distinction between Christianity and Western Culture. And that is one that is worth a great deal of discussion. And, in fact, [it] has received a good deal of discussion in the literature. Some of them tended to export denominationalism. Some of them failed to encourage indigenization and development of national leadership. Some of them were paternalistic. Some of them identified too closely with the Colonial System. These and other things, I think, are genuine failures on the part of missionary activity.

Second—but overall, I think we can say that the much stronger tendency is what those missionaries did right. I’m deeply impressed by the fact that they felt called of God and went out at enormous personal cost and often times great peril of life.
Many of them went loving the people with genuine appreciation for indigenous cultures and, in fact, in some areas were the real protectors of that culture. Many of them took years to learn the language so they could communicate. They translated the Scripture. They saw the potential of national leaders. They opened hospitals and schools. They introduced social and political reforms. They provided water. They cleaned up the atmosphere so that there would be less disease. These and many, many others are wonderful contributions these missionaries made to the field. And I have a deep love both for the missionaries and for the calling to worldwide missions.

Many difficulties are faced today in missionary activity: (1) enormously high costs. Inflation is running rampant in many parts of the world, and this is making it difficult to live as missionaries; (2) nationalism, anti-American sentiments; (3) the inroads of Universalism; (4) growing ethnocentrism. All of these things have created obstacles for worldwide mission endeavor today. In fact, I think some of the most important issues theologically today that face us are issues that are fundamentally missions concerns and missions issues.

The world population [as of 1990] was some 4.5 billion, and only 1.2 billion of those are Christians. In fact, there is a shrinking Christian population. In 1960, Christians made up 33 percent of the world’s population. In 1970, that had shrunk to 30 percent. In 1980, it had shrunk further to 26 percent. Of the 1.2 billion Christians, 750 million of these are Roman Catholics; 350 million are Protestants; about 100 million of these are Orthodox. Meanwhile, there are some 85,000 total career and short-term missionaries today—53,000 of these come from North America; 13,000 come from Europe; 3,500 from Australia and New Zealand; and well over 15,000 and growing now from the third-world countries.

There is a great task before us. And the history of missions should not only encourage and spur us on, but it should remind us of that great calling which God gave to His church in the very first century and which has been repeated, picked up, and fulfilled in different ways throughout all of these centuries. And we need to pick that theme up again today.

One of the most powerful statements of this is the Lausanne Covenant. You can find the references to this, in fact, the actual statement itself in Christianity Today, in its August 16, 1974 issue. If you can’t find it easily elsewhere, I would encourage you to
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dig out that old issue from the library and Xerox it and put it up on your desk or hang it up on your refrigerator. I try to read it virtually every month, to remind me of the kind of impact and calling which God gives us as joyful ministers of the gospel around the world. It begins:

We, members of the Church of Jesus Christ, from more than 150 nations, participants in the International Congress on World Evangelization at Lausanne, praise, God for His great salvation and rejoice in the fellowship He has given us with Himself and with each other. We are deeply stirred by what God is doing in our day, moved to penitence by our failures and challenged by the unfinished task of evangelization. We believe the gospel is God’s good news for the whole world, and we are determined by His grace to obey Christ’s commission to proclaim it to all mankind and to make disciples of every nation. We desire, therefore, to affirm our faith and resolve, and to make public our covenant.

Then it goes on to describe: (1) the purpose of God, (2) the authority and power of the Bible, (3) the uniqueness and universality of Christ, (4) the nature of evangelism, (5) the emphasis on Christian social responsibility, (6) the church and evangelism, (7) cooperation and evangelism, (8) churches and evangelistic partnership, (9) the urgency of the task, (10) evangelism in culture, (11) education and leadership, (12) spiritual conflict, (13) freedom and persecution, (14) the power of the Holy Spirit, and ultimately this great conclusion:

Therefore, in the light of this, our faith, and our resolve, we enter into a solemn covenant with God and with each other, to pray, to plan, and to work together for the evangelization of the whole world. We call upon others to join us. May God help us by his grace and for his glory to be faithful to this our covenant! Amen, Alleluia!