

INTRODUCTION

For almost two years, I have been preaching through the book of Romans. We are coming to the last words of the Apostle Paul, and we get a glimpse of the missionary heart of this great Apostle.

The problem with many American Christians, and perhaps some of you in this room, is that to you Christianity is just such a personal thing; you don't ever want to share it. You have your ticket to heaven, you have your eternal fire insurance, and frankly, you don't really care whether anybody else goes to heaven or not.

Sometimes Christians remind me of the lady who was taking a first-aid course. In the process of the class, the students were asked to give examples of how they had already been able to use their first-aid training. One week this lady said, “I got to use my first-aid training this week. I heard a terrible crash in front of my house. A car had run into my yard, hit a tree, and the car doors had flown open, and there were some injured people on my front lawn. Because I had taken this first-aid class, I immediately knew what to do. I sat down and put my head between my knees, so I wouldn't pass out.”

That's the problem. We're like a bunch of people using first aid on ourselves, when there are hurting people all around us. If you're content to hang on to the gospel and not share it with anybody else, you don't share the missionary heart of the Apostle Paul.

Romans 15:17-24. “Therefore, I glory in Christ Jesus in my service to God. I will not venture to speak of anything except what Christ has accomplished through me in leading the Gentiles to obey God by what I have said and done—by the power of signs and miracles, through the power of the Holy Spirit.” Notice the widespread missionary travels: “So from Jerusalem all the way around to Illyricum, I have fully proclaimed the gospel of Christ. It has always been my ambition to preach the gospel where Christ is not known, so I would not be building on someone else's foundation. Rather, as it is written: [a quotation from Isaiah 52] ‘Those who were not told about him will see, and those who have not heard will understand.’ This is why I have often been hindered from coming to you.” Look at verse 23. “Now that there is no more place for me to work in these regions, [meaning Corinth, we call this Greece] and since I have been longing for many years to see you, I plan to do so when I go to Spain. I hope to visit you while passing through and to have you assist me on my journey there, after I have enjoyed your company for awhile.”

Did you notice the three locations there? Jerusalem was the beginning point of the Christian church. Then he said, “I preached the gospel all the way from Jerusalem to Illyricum.” Now we would call that modern-day Yugoslavia, all the way over to that part of Eastern Europe. Then Paul says, “I'm probably going to come see you guys in Rome, but it's only on my way to Spain.”

Had you looked at a map of the civilized world when Paul, in Corinth, wrote these words in about 56 or 57 A.D., you wouldn't have found Spain on the map, because it was such an utter end-

of-the-earth at that time. In those days, they thought the earth was flat. If you sailed much past Spain, you were going to drop off the end of the earth. Paul says, “My heart’s desire is to go where Christ has never been preached, even if I have to go to the very ends of the earth.”

We know Spain is not the end of the earth. We know the earth is a globe, and we can go all the way around the world, taking the gospel. Today, I issue to Green Acres Baptist Church and I issue to each one of you individually, a missionary challenge. Now, you don’t have to say much about missions to get my heart excited. I am a missionary. I really am. What I do instead of serving on the foreign field full-time is I pastor a missionary church that sends missionaries, prays for missionaries and sends money for missionaries. Today I want to inform you and I want to inspire you.

I. SHARE A GLOBAL VISION

1. The world: 6 billion people in 12, 800 ethnolinguistic groups 180,000 new people every day

First of all, I’m going to ask you to share a global vision. Let’s stop looking just around our own neighborhood. Let’s look around the world. First of all, I want you to consider the world itself.

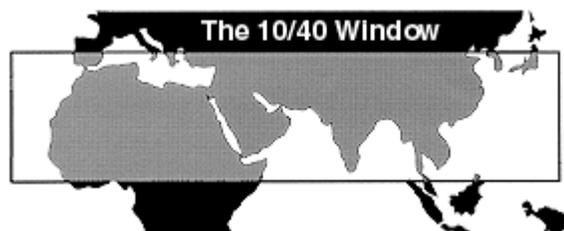
There are six billion people on this planet. That’s the world we live in. We have six billion people in this family. Now, how many nations are there? It changes weekly. This week when I accessed the United Nations website, I was told as of Wednesday of last week there were 288 nations on this planet.

It is better to think in terms of ethnolinguistic groups, because even in a nation, there may be different ethnic and language groups. So I’m here to tell you there are six billion people in 12,800 ethnolinguistic groups on this planet. That’s the world in which we live.

Did you know every single day there are 180,000 people added to the world population? If you have a hard time grasping the magnitude of that number, think about it like this. Go to Texas Stadium in Arlington and fill it up three times, that is 180,000 people added to our population every day.

2. The Lost: 1.7 billion in 2,161 groups 187 groups with more than a million people

The lost are those who are unreached, who don’t know Jesus Christ. Experts tell us there are 1.7 billion lost people on the planet. They are living in 2,161 people groups. Now, compare that with 12,800 groups. There are still 2,000 of those groups who have not been reached for Jesus. Lest you think these are small, obscure tribes with a dozen or more people, look at this number. There are 187 of these groups having more than one million people.



I put a map at the bottom of your outline; because I want you to be able to visualize something mission strategists call “The 10/40 Window.” It starts with Northern Africa and heads eastward across the Middle East through India, Pakistan, China, and Southeast Asia. Southern Baptists call it the last frontier. Sixty-three percent of the world’s population lives in that 10/40 window, and they represent the vast majority of these 1.7 billion lost people.

Why is it called The 10/40 Window? It stretches roughly from 10 degrees north latitude to 40 degrees north latitude. For instance, look at the right side of that window. You can imagine where China is. We are told in China, there are over 1,000 cities where there is not a single church, not a single gospel witness.

I want to challenge Green Acres Baptist Church, because there are few churches that can do what I want to challenge you to do: I want to challenge our church as we approach the 21st century, that we as a church will find one of those cities in China of at least 100,000 people where there is not a church or gospel witness, and we will adopt that city and plan and work to evangelize that one city in China. I don’t know where it is. I don’t have a city picked out. We need to pray for God to show it to us.

You say, “Wait a minute, I thought you couldn’t send missionaries to China.” Legally, you can’t. But you know what we can send over there and what we are sending all the time? We can send schoolteachers over there. We can send doctors and dentists and nurses. We can send businessmen over there to lecture about capitalism, because capitalism is exploding in China. We can send fine arts, musicians and groups over there, and we can reach an entire city for Christ. There are over 1,000 cities in China without a single gospel witness. Let’s make sure, as a church, there is one less city and let’s reach that city for Christ.

Why do we need to do that?

3. The Command

Jesus has given us. When I read this command, called the Great Commission, would you do me a favor? Underline or circle the word or words you think are most important in this Great Commission. “Therefore, go and make disciples of all nations [the word there is “ethnos”] baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely, I am with you always, to the very end of the age.” Matthew 28:19-20 On Wednesday nights, Dennis and the other staff members have been teaching our Sunday School leaders the LIFE training for evangelism. When he was teaching on this verse, he asked that question, “What is the most important word?” A lot of times, people circle the word “go” or “make disciples” or “nations” or “baptizing.” I believe the most important word in that command, look at the second line, is the first full word, “them.” Look at the third line, halfway through it, teaching “them.”

The target of missions is not a plan. It is not a program. It is not even a strategy. It is people, and “them” are 1.7 billion people, all of whom are loved by God, all of whom were created by God,

all of whom God knows their name, and He knows how many hairs are on their head. We need to reach individuals for Jesus. So first of all, I'm going to ask you to share the global vision.

II. JOIN THE GLOBAL STRATEGY

I want us to also join in the global strategy. Now, how are we going to reach 1.7 billion people? People who are smarter than me have come up with a global strategy, and it's not just Southern Baptists, although we're a leading partner in it. We have partnered with other Great Commission Christian groups to come up with a strategy to reach the people in this 10/40 window.

There are four things you and I can do:

1. Pray for missionaries!

Not only pray for the 2,700 missionaries who are already serving in foreign fields, but pray for God to send more missionaries. How are we going to reach those 2,100 new people groups? Some of you are going to have to go. People like you are going to have to leave America and go and reach them. Look at what Jesus said in Matthew 9:37. "Then he said to his disciples, 'The harvest is plentiful but the workers are few. Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into his harvest field.'"

I heard a song saying, "My house is full, but my field is empty." You know, I don't want to ever be guilty of saying I'm going to pray for something and I don't do it. So right now, when Jesus has told us to pray for the Lord of the harvest to send more laborers, I want us to stop right now and pray and ask him to do that. Let's pray.

Lord, I know you love every one of those people who are lost without Christ. I pray, I ask you, Father, to even look down into this group is in this room right now and call out some of these people to be laborers in your harvest. I ask you, Father the Lord of the harvest, to send more laborers to reach these people for you. I pray this in Jesus' name, amen.

That's the first thing to do. Pray for missionaries, pray for the ones who are there, pray for more of them.

2. Love the lost

Now, you see, you'll never go across your street or even go across the globe unless you have a burden for lost people and you love them the way Jesus loved them. The Bible says, "God so loved the world." He's not talking about the world of nature. He's talking about people. "God so loved the world." And when you love God, you'll love the same thing God loves. God loves a lost world. Look at what God said to Ezekiel. "I looked for a man among them who would build up the wall and stand before me in the gap on behalf of the land so I would not have to destroy it, [listen to God's frustration] but I found none."

Could it be when God is thinking about these 2,121 people groups who don't have Jesus, He is saying, "I looked for a man or I looked for a woman to stand in the gap and to be a spiritual

arbitrator between me and them, but when I looked, there was no one to do it?” We need to understand these people out there who have never heard the gospel, respond to the gospel.

You know, sometimes people don’t want to go and do mission work, because they tried to witness to Americans. It is a totally different experience. We have a bunch of sermon-soaked pagans in America - Americans who have heard the gospel over and over and over again. The gospel is on the radio; it’s on the television; it’s on the news; it’s in the newspaper; it’s everywhere, and they have heard it and heard it and heard it. They have rejected it and rejected it and rejected it. I’m of the conviction that nobody should hear the gospel twice until everybody’s heard it once.

When people start hearing the gospel for the first time, you won’t believe their reaction. They actually *run* to Jesus. That is why our church has been working with the Indians of Nicaragua, taking the Jesus film to the backwoods villages. When these Indians see the Jesus film and hear that Jesus wants to give them eternal, do you know what they do? They don’t say, “Let me go to the cafeteria and think about it.” No. They run to Jesus.

These cities in China who have no church or gospel witness, what do you think those people are going to do when they hear the gospel? Many of them will run to Jesus.

In 1991, as soon as the Iron Curtain came down, I challenged our church to go over to the former Soviet Union to share a witness. In 1993, we formed a choir and took a group of 36 people to the Ukraine. These folks were not choir members. They were missionaries who were going to sing, and Mike whipped them up into a choir. We rented the Yalta Concert Hall. It was a beautiful building the Communist has built and it seated over 3500 people. We put out the money to rent it. Our people paid a lot of money to go over there and they worked all year long to learn these songs in Russian.

We went to the Ukraine and the night of the free concert, we were on the stage warming up. All we could see were empty seats. There were four or five people sitting down front, because they were our friends who came in the back door with us. I was thinking, “Oh, no. I have made a terrible blunder. We have prayed over this, spent a lot of money, and here we are and it’s a big flop. Nobody’s going to come.”

The concert was supposed to start at 7:00 and at 6:45, the choir left the risers to go behind stage and join hands and pray. I was out front sweating bullets and thinking, “This is absolutely the biggest goof-up I have been involved in.”

About that time, one of the Russia pastors came up to me and says, “Please, Pastor David, may we now open the doors?” I said, “Yeah, open the doors.” I did not know the people had been lined up for hours to get in for this free concert. When they opened the doors, the people literally ran to fill up that whole room. They weren’t like Baptists. They all ran for the front row, not for the back row.

The choir sang that night, and I’ll never forget, when we sang “America the Beautiful,” they all stood to their feet. Then we sang Christian songs and preached the gospel to them. What is it like

for people who have never heard the gospel, who have been under the tyranny of godless communism? I asked them how many wanted to trust Jesus Christ, and two-thirds stood to their feet to receive Jesus Christ.

When you're passing out Bibles, it's like passing out \$100 bills. That's what it's like for people who have never heard. That's why we need to get a missionary spirit to go take the gospel to these people who have never heard.

3. Give your money!

You give your money because the missionary endeavor is an expensive one. We have 2,700 foreign missionaries, 2,600 home missionaries, almost 6,000 missionaries you and I support. The beautiful thing about our Southern Baptist missionaries is that they don't have to come back on furlough and go into the churches and beg for money. Why? Because when we bring our offering every Sunday morning to Green Acres Baptist Church, a portion of that goes to the Cooperative Program to support missionaries.

We also have what we call our annual World Mission Offering and that money also goes, 100% of it, to support our missionaries.

Our Southern Baptist Convention goal for this Christmas is \$125 million
Our Green Acres Baptist Church goal is \$224,000

You will be hearing more about that and giving to it before Christmas. That is a lot of money, but I hope we will raise every penny of it, and more, to support missions.

This past week, I read CNN and *Time* polls that report on the average, American families will spend \$760 this Christmas season for decorations, food and gifts. Some of you are saying, "Yeah, well, we're way above average then, because we're going to spend more than that." Some of you will spend less than that.

What would happen if a thousand families in our church gave that average? That would be three-quarters of a million dollars for missions.

As I do every year, I'm asking you to consider making your most extravagant Christmas gift to Jesus this season. Please don't spend more money on any other individual this Christmas season than you will spend on Jesus, through your gift to world missions. If you will do that, God will bless you. It takes money, and I thank God you have been faithful to give to missions in the past.

Those in the retail business know that how your Christmas season goes, so goes your whole bottom line for the year. Did you ever think that is also true for our missionaries? How our Christmas offering for missions goes, so goes their mission work for the whole year. Did you know one-half of the mission budget for Southern Baptists is dependent upon this Christmas offering? They are trusting Southern Baptists all around the world to give enough so one-half of their mission endeavor can be funded for the next year.

One of the greatest giants who ever walked the spiritual landscape of planet earth was a little lady by the name of Lottie Moon. She stood 4 feet, 11 inches tall. For 39 years, she gave her life for the women of China. In 1888, she wrote a letter back to some friends in the States and asked if they would take up a Christmas offering for missions. She said, "We need about \$2,000." Southern Baptists gave over \$3,000 that first year. Through the years, every Christmas, we have given more and more until this year the goal is \$125 million.

Lottie Moon wrote in 1888, "Is not the Christmas season the most appropriate time to send forth good tidings of great joy into all the earth, because it is when families and friends exchange gifts in honor of the one gift that was laid on the altar of the world for the redemption of the human race."

4. Pack your bags!

That means just go. Go somewhere and be a missionary. There are so many opportunities for you to be a missionary, and I want to give you some of them. Of course, there is what we call long-term mission service, where you are a career missionary. Most of them are seminary trained. Our International Mission Board sends them out. Some of them are called missionary associates and they serve from 2 to 4 years. If God is calling you to be a career missionary, great, we want you to do it.

I want to share with you four ways you can pack your bags in what we call short-term mission service.

a) The International Service Corps

The International Mission Board of the southern Baptists sponsors this. You have to be 21 years old. You have to have some skill you can use. You don't have somebody seminary trained. You go for a term of four months to two years, and you work beside a missionary. You may be teaching English as a second language. You may be a church organizer. You may be an administrator. You may be a health care professional. You serve for a short-term and work right beside career missionaries. Serving in the International Service Corps is how most of our missionaries are going into these areas where it is basically illegal to serve as missionary.

b) Journeyman Program

This is for college graduates. They must be single, age 21 to 30, and go for two years to an assignment the Foreign Mission Board gives to you, and you work alongside a missionary. Many of these become career missionaries. There is something fairly new called

c) the Master's Program

Our churches are full of retired people who have money and time, and the Master's Program is for people 50 years old or older who can serve two-three years alongside career missionaries. Whether you are 50 or 79 or 85, find someplace to go. You can be involved in what I call

d) Green Acres Baptist Church projects

Every year we have many projects and mission trips. You may not be able to go for four months or two years or three years, but you can go for a week or ten days.

I have listed the phone number and web site address for the International Mission Board, if you want to access it. If God is calling you to the mission field, I hope you will call that number and say, "Our pastor preached a message on missions and I'm interested in serving." They will connect you with some people who will help you.

The modern missionary movement really got started about 150 years ago with people who were concerned about the continent of Africa. There was a Scottish preacher by the name of Robert Moffatt who was serving in South Africa. He returned to Scotland to try to enlist more missionaries. On a cold, rainy night, he went into a little church in Scotland. To his dismay, the only people in the service that night were women. Back in those days, women didn't go alone to the mission field. He started to cancel his message, because there were no prospective missionaries there, but instead he preached to them about the need for the Lord of the harvest to send forth more laborers. He made this statement, "Every morning when I get up and look at the horizon, I see the smoke from a thousand villages where the name of Christ has never been heard."

Robert Moffatt didn't know there was a man, a teenager, in that service. He was hidden up in the organ loft where his job was to pump the bellows for the pipe organ. This teenage man, standing up in the organ chamber, heard every word he said, and he was haunted by that phrase, "the smoke from a thousand villages where the name of Christ has never been heard."

So this young man decided he would become a missionary. His name, by the way, was David Livingstone. He became a medical doctor and went to Africa. He was not content to stay in South Africa, where there were few native Africans; instead he explored the inner continent. He was a great missionary and a great explorer. He was the first white man to traverse the continent of Africa from east to west. He discovered Victoria Falls. He traveled over 29,000 miles and mapped one million square miles of previously uncharted territory.

When David Livingstone first began his ministry there, some of the native tribes opposed him. One particular warlike tribe said they were going to kill him and everyone in his party. One afternoon as they were setting up camp, word was out that these warriors had been tracking him all day, and they were outside the camp and they were going to attack and kill everyone when it got dark.

I have the words David Livingstone wrote in his journal that night on January 14, 1856. "It is evening. I feel much turmoil and fear in the prospect of having all of my plans knocked on the head by savages who are just now outside the camp." Those who studied his handwriting said you could even see the fear in the way he wrote the letters. He writes, "But Jesus said, 'All power is given unto me in heaven and earth, and lo, I am with you always, even unto the ends of the earth.'"

Livingstone writes, "This is the word of a gentleman of most strict and sacred honor, so that's the end of my fear. I feel quiet and calm now." Even his letters are straight now.

They didn't attack that night. Later the tribe was Christianized. A couple of years later, David Livingstone asked the chief of the tribe, "Do you remember the night you were tracking my party?"

"Yes."

"We had heard rumors you were going to attack us."

The chief said, "That's right, we were ready to attack the camp that night and kill you and everyone else." David Livingstone asked, "Why didn't you attack?" The chief said, "When we got close to the camp, we looked and saw 47 warriors surrounding your camp with swords in their hands."

David Livingstone was baffled. They didn't have any guards, any warriors. Later when he was on furlough in Scotland, he shared this story at a church that was supporting him. A man came up to him afterwards with his prayer journal. He said, "Look, I wrote it down, January 14, 1856, was that the night?" David Livingstone said, "Yes." The man said, "That night a group of men came to pray for you. We prayed for your protection. I wrote it down. There were 47 men praying that night for you."

David Livingstone got so immersed into the Dark Continent most people thought he was dead because they had not heard from him for years. The *New York Times* hired Henry Stanley, an explorer, to search out Africa and find him. Finally Henry Stanley ventured in on this one camp, and there was the only white man for miles and miles around. In that classic statement, he walked up to David Livingstone and said, "Mr. Livingstone, I presume?" Henry Stanley was a journalist, not a Christian, but he developed a friendship with Livingstone and was led to Christ. I love what Stanley said about Livingstone. "He converted me to Christ, and he wasn't even trying to do so."

What a mark of a Christian man. Stanley tried to get Livingstone to return back to civilization to receive medical treatment, but he refused. He wrote, "I am a missionary, heart and soul. God had only one son, and he was a missionary and a physician. A poor, poor imitation of him I am, or wish to be. In this service I hope to live; in it I wish to die."

Some of you, like me, have been to London, England and have toured Westminster Cathedral. There in the floor is buried this great missionary explorer, David Livingstone. What few people know is that that's just his body. His heart is not buried there, because not long after Stanley left, when Livingstone was 60 years old, the people in his camp heard a noise in his tent and went in at 3 a.m. There was Livingstone on his knees in prayer, dead. According to his wishes and his written instructions, his heart was removed from his body, and his heart was buried in Africa. Because, he said, "My heart has always been here, and this is where I want my heart to stay."

They shipped his body back, and it is buried in Westminster Cathedral, but his heart always will be buried in Africa.

Who knows if maybe in this service right now, there is a child, a teenager or an adult for whom

it’s not the smoke of a thousand fires in Africa that haunts you, it’s the statement I made about a thousand cities in China without a church or a gospel witness. Who knows? God may be putting his hand on you today to be the next David Livingstone, to be the next Lottie Moon, to be the next Paul the Apostle. Let’s go where Christ is not known and let’s tell the good news.

OUTLINE

I. SHARE A GLOBAL VISION

1. The World:

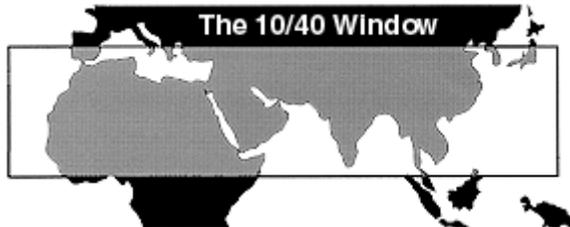
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3. The Command:

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II. JOIN THE GLOBAL STRATEGY

1. Pray for missionaries!

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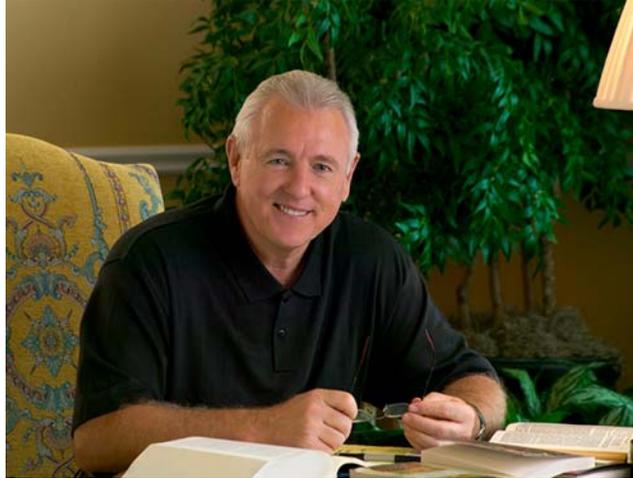
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SBC Goal: \$125 million
GABC Goal: \$224,000

4. Pack your bags!

- a. International Service Corps
- b. Journeyman program
- c. Masters program
- d. GABC projects

International Mission Board 1-800-866-3621



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If you borrow the majority of a message or outline, I encourage you to simply preface your remarks by saying something like: ***“Some (or “much” as the case may be) of the ideas I’m sharing in this message came from a message by Pastor David Dykes in Texas.”*** This simple citation may prevent any criticism that may be directed toward you.

To put it in Texas terms, “You’re mighty welcome to use any and all of my ingredients; just make your own chili!”

For the Joy...
Pastor David Dykes