“Through you all peoples will be blessed” (Gen. 12:3)

The Kingdom Strikes Back!

A presentation by Howard Culbertson
Southern Nazarene University
5 Epochs of Redemptive History

Romans 0 AD
Barbarians 400 AD
Vikings 800 AD
Saracens? 1200 AD
Ends of the Earth 1600 AD

Concept developed by Ralph Winter

Fulfilling the Great Commission
Fulfilling the Great Commission

Winning the Romans
AD 0-400

The Roman Empire

Fulfilling the Great Commission
Winning the Romans
AD 0-400

Early Roman Fresco of St. Paul

Bible in Gothic
translated by Ulfilas

Fulfilling the Great Commission
Emperor Constantine’s Vision

Fulfilling the Great Commission
Winning the Barbarians
AD 400-800

Fulfilling the Great Commission
Winning the Barbarians
AD 400-800

Cyril and Methodius,
missionaries to the Slavs

Origin of Christmas tree?

Boniface after chopping down the sacred oak of the thunder god

Fulfilling the Great Commission
Winning the Vikings
AD 800 - 1200

Fulfilling the Great Commission
Winning the Vikings
AD 800 - 1200

- Vikings delighted in
  - killing people in the churches
  - burning churches
  - selling monks into slavery.

- Anskar (801-854)
  - “Apostle of the North”
  - Sadly, no visible, lasting results

- Though England and the Continent were devastated by the Vikings, it was not a victory for paganism
Winning the Saracens? AD 1200-1600

Fulfilling the Great Commission
Winning the Saracens? AD 1200-1600

versus

The stain of the Crusades

St. Francis of Assisi and the Sultan of Egypt

Raymond Lull’s martyrdom in North Africa

Fulfilling the Great Commission
To the Ends of the Earth
AD 1600-2000

Fulfilling the Great Commission
To the Ends of the Earth
AD 1600-2000
1792-1914: The Great Century
(in historian Latourette’s words)

❖ Opened:
  – William Carey forms Baptist Missionary Society

❖ Ended:
  – World War I

“Imperfect as they were, those nineteenth-century missionaries turned what some thought to be a declining Caucasian religion into the largest and most dynamic religious faith in the world”

Ruth Tucker
Three eras; four men

- To the coast lands (1792-1910)
  - William Carey
  - “Haystack” prayer meeting
  - European dominance

- To the inland areas (1865-1980)
  - Hudson Taylor
  - “Faith” mission agencies
  - American dominance

- Unreached groups (1934- ?)
  - William Cameron Townsend
  - Donald McGavran
William Carey

Father of Modern Missions

The rebuke to Carey: “When God chooses to win the heathen, He will do it without your help or ours.”
A Chinese convert:

“What! For hundreds of years you have had these glad tidings and only now have come to preach it to us? My father sought after the truth for more than twenty years, and died without finding it. Oh, why did you not come sooner?”
Unreached Peoples

An Indian’s question:
“How come God doesn’t speak my language?”

Unreached Linguistic Groups

William “Uncle Cam” Townsend

Fulfilling the Great Commission
Unreached Peoples

“God wants His lost children found!”

Donald McGavran
Unreached Ethnic Groups

Fulfilling the Great Commission
World Missionary Conference
Edinburgh 1910

Focus: What will it take to finish the job in the unoccupied fields?
1945-1969: The Twenty-Five Unbelievable years
(Ralph Winter’s phrase)

- Returning veterans bring global consciousness
- Nationalism explodes
- Collapse of Western control (from 99% to less than 5%)
- Upsurge of Christianity in non-western world
The 21st Century?

Issues and themes to deal with

- Sending
- Overseeing
- Intermediacy
- Support
- Shrinking World
- SOP, PDQ, ETC, FYEO
- Tentmaker Witnesses
- Multicultural Teams

- Colonialistic vestiges
  - “Missionaries can go anywhere”
  - “Missionaries can do anything”
  - “We are here to build things for God”
  - Using stewardship as excuse for a controlling posture”
“Through you all peoples will be blessed” (Gen. 12:3)

The end

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