“Through you all peoples will be blessed”
(*Genesis 12:3*)

Nazarene missions history in context:
The Kingdom Strikes Back!

A presentation by Howard Culbertson
Southern Nazarene University
Two key questions to understanding Nazarene missions:

- What do we fit into the modern missionary movement?
- Which cultural and historical dynamics shaped our missionary enterprise?
5 Epochs of Redemptive History

- Romans (0 AD - 400 AD)
- Barbarians (400 AD - 800 AD)
- Vikings (800 AD - 1200 AD)
- Saracens? (1200 AD - 1600 AD)
- Ends of the Earth (1600 AD - 2000 AD)

Concept developed by Ralph Winter
Winning the Romans AD 0-400

Bible in Gothic translated by Ulfilas

Early Roman Fresco of St. Paul

Fulfilling the Great Commission
Emperor Constantine’s Vision
Winning the Barbarians
AD 400-800
Winning the Barbarians
AD 400-800

Origin of Christmas tree?

Boniface after chopping down the sacred oak of the thunder god
Winning the Vikings
AD 800 - 1200
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
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
To the Ends of the Earth
AD 1600-2000
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?”

William “Uncle Cam” Townsend

Unreached Linguistic Groups
Unreached Peoples

“God wants His lost children found!”

Donald McGavran
Unreached Ethnic Groups

December 13, 2020
Fulfilling the Great Commission
Focus: What will it take to finish the job in the unoccupied fields?
Nazarene movement born at end of Great Century

How were Nazarenes influenced by what was “in the air” at the time?
What we’ve always said:
The Church of the Nazarene is the product of mid-1800’s holiness revivals

What we should now ask:
How much of Nazarene missionary ethos is due to the Great Century’s passion and zeal to reach the unreached?
“We are debtors to every man to give him the gospel in the same measure we have received it”

-- P.F. Bresee
What did Bresee mean by that?
Prior to Pilot Point

❖ Northeast: Association of Pentecostal Churches of America
  – 1897, India
  – 1901, Cape Verde Islands

❖ West: Church of the Nazarene
  – 1904, Spanish mission in Los Angeles
  – 1906, India

❖ South: Holiness Church of Christ
  – 1903, Mexico
  – 1907, Swaziland

❖ South: Pentecostal Mission
  – 1902, Cuba
  – 1903, Guatemala
  – 1904, India
A missions flavor from the start

1908

- 6 countries
- 19 missionaries
Passion and vision from the northeast

H.F. Reynolds

Susan Fitkin

December 13, 2020

Fulfilling the Great Commission
From the south, the African legacy

Harmon Schmelzenbach

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Fulfilling the Great Commission
Decisions with far-reaching consequences

- General Superintendents given jurisdiction over all district assemblies world-wide
- Only General Superintendents would lead ordination services
1923: Sweeping restructuring

- Organization of a single General Board
- Setting up of unified budget
- Missions mobilizing and support raising left in hands of an auxiliary, the WFMS with Fitkin as president
- First tentative step toward creation of “regions”
  - (This particular step abandoned in 1926)
Depression Years: Retrenchment, not Disaster

“Can’t you do just a little bit more?”

– J. G. Morrison, Foreign Missions executive secretary
1928-36
From Morrison’s “just a little bit more” -- our holiday offerings

❖ 1932 -- first Thanksgiving offering ($11,749)

❖ 1933 -- first Easter offering ($29,433)
  – “Shower of Dimes” promoted by young people’s society
War opens some doors

- First “million for missions” year
- Italy
- Australia
  - Direct result of contacts by U.S. military personnel
- Germany
- Papua New Guinea
  - Entered because of burdened servicemen
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
1940’s: Post-War advances

- 1948 First “native” speaker at General Assembly

- 1949 Funding crisis solved
  - Alabaster offering begun
  - 10% plan -- Leslie Gay’s 1905 idea is finally accepted
Italian takes 1948 General Assembly “by storm”

Did his General Assembly appearance, his vitality and ability subtly move forward the processes of indigenization and internationalization?

Alfredo Del Rosso
The 1970’s:

Internationalization
under Jerald Johnson’s leadership

Work and Witness
Internationalization

- **1972** Steps put on paper
  - General Assembly approves multi-stage process for districts to become “regular”

- **1974** First Regular World Mission District
  - Northeast Guatemala
    - Japan had applied in 1936, but we didn’t know what to do with request

- **1976** Intercontinental zone reps on General Board
  - Three zones created

- **1980** Six regions created
A federation of national bodies or a unified family?

- Only the Roman Catholics are attempting to do what we are: create a global church
- Regional assemblies or regional conferences?
- Regional Directors now appointed by General Superintendents and report to them
Volunteerism

Did Work and Witness save us?
The 21st Century?

Issues and themes to deal with

- Sending
- Overseeing
- Intermediacy
- Support
- Centralization
- 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”
- Impact of Shrinking World
- SOP, PDQ, ETC, FYEO
- Tentmaker Witnesses
- Multicultural Teams
- Minimal Management
This PowerPoint presentation is available along with related materials and other PowerPoint presentations at http://home.snu.edu/~hculbert/ppt.htm