

Chapter 2

History of World Evangelization

LESSON OBJECTIVE

We learn to understand that:

- God is the sovereign Leader of world-, church-, and missions-history
- All through this history He called and sent men and women on certain missions
- Increasing unity among Christ's disciples leads to increasing Kingdom results
- Worldwide movements started with individuals and developed via organizations and organizational partnerships into global streams

LESSON OUTLINE

Topics we discuss in this lesson:

- Ten Epochs of Redemptive History
- The First Period of NT Missions History
- The First 1,750 Years
- The Second Period of NT Missions History
- The Next 225 Years
- Since 1974: Growing Excitement!
- So: How Far Are We?

LESSON CONTENTS

In this chapter we look first at ten epochs in the Bible's redemptive history of 4,000 years. Then we zoom in on an overview of NT missions history.

As from the post-apostolic era we consider *three* periods: the *first* from 30-1750; the *second*, the modern missions movement, from 1750-1975 (also preceded by a historic overview) and the *third* since 1974. If you think missions-history is boring, be surprised by the present developments, which are about to culminate in the return of our Lord, which we can speed up by prayer, doing missions and living holy lives.⁵⁶ Any disciple of Christ can join! Will you?

*Ten Epochs of Redemptive History*⁵⁷

Dr. Ralph Winter divided redemptive history into ten epochs with a rough average of 400 years each.⁵⁸

1. *In the first period* Abraham moved to the Promised Land. This patriarchal period, from Abraham's birth to Joseph's death, covers about 360 years.⁵⁹ There were successes and failures in passing on the blessing.⁶⁰
2. *The second period* was Israel's slavery in Egypt of 400 years.⁶¹ Generally speaking, the Egyptian empire rejected the blessing.
3. *The third* was the era of the Judges of \pm 330 years,⁶² that started better than it ended in their divine vocation.
4. *The fourth period*, from the Kings to the exile, was about 465 years.⁶³ The zenith of divine purpose was reached under David and Solomon. After Israel's fall into idolatry, God's mission was severely thwarted.

56 Matt. 9:37,38; 24:14 and 2 Pet. 3:11b,12a respectively

57 The history, as His Story, showing God's saving, protecting and preserving activities. Wycliffe Bible Encyclopedia 1983:1447

58 Perspectives, 1981:137-155

59 2166-1805 BC

60 See Van 't Slot, 2014: 1-40

61 Acts 7:6

62 From \pm 1380-1050 BC (shortly after Joshua's death, until the beginning of Saul's reign)

63 From the beginning of Saul's rule until the exile (1050-585 BC)

5. *The last period* BC of 580 years included the exile.⁶⁴ The last century of this era sees some Pharisee outreach, mainly to Persia, through which Judaism spread, emphasizing outward cultural conversion.⁶⁵

These five OT epochs add up to about 2,100 years, from the time Abraham entered the Promised Land until the birth of Christ. Winter then sums up five other periods, starting with Christ's birth:

6. *Winning the Romans*: The greatest triumph of Christianity's history may have been its conquest of the Roman empire, from 0-400 AD. At first this was a pretty involuntary-go; Christians were scattered through persecutions. Until then Christianity was the only religion that had no nationalism at its root. This period ended with Christian emperor Constantine. Christianity became the state religion by AD 375, and gradually lost its saltiness. Complacency led to much nominalism.⁶⁶ Christianity in Rome largely failed to reach out to the northern barbarians, who gradually became a threat to them, and later became politically dominant.
7. *Winning the Goths*: 400-800 AD. The Gothic barbarians took over from the former empire, and Roman Christian influence came within their borders. This period ended with a Christianized barbarian, emperor Charlemagne, a 'second Constantine', but more devout. They too, failed to reach out to the new barbarians: Scandinavia's Vikings. History repeated itself and the Vikings invaded the Gothic empire and basically caused its demise.
8. *Winning the Vikings*: 800-1200 AD. Mission history repeated itself again: the Vikings brought gothic Christian influence within their borders. Because there was much persecution (deportations), the Christian movement was cleansed and refined. This period ended with the then strongest man in

64 From 586-6 BC, when Christ was born

65 Stearns, 1991:116, 117

66 Tucker, 1983:35

Europe, pope Innocent III, who authorized the first of a whole new series of mission orders, the Friars.

9. *'Winning the Saracens':* (well, they were definitely not 'won'!) 1200-1600 AD. It was the time of the crusades, teaching us that good will, even sacrificial obedience to God, is no substitute for understanding His will.⁶⁷ They established an image of brutal militant Christianity that alienates a large proportion of mankind – the Muslims – to this day. Nowadays, seeing Muslim invasions in our lands: will they see such a solid Christian witness that they find the Lord through us? Or are we heading for persecution first, before we start to reach out to them?
10. *To the Ends of the Earth:* 1600-2000 AD. Until that time Roman-type Christianity had been the rule. Although the council of Jerusalem had not demanded that Greeks become Jews,⁶⁸ Germans had been obliged to become Romans. In the Reformation the gospel finally succeeded in allowing Christians to be German, not merely permitting Germans to be Roman Christians. It used to be Latin uniformity versus national diversity. In other words: conversions were not enough if they were of spiritual nature; cultural conversion was demanded as well. Contextualization lacked; it was even forbidden. 'Double conversion' became the standard.⁶⁹

It was also true in world missions: by 1945 Europeans had control over 99.5% of the non-Western world. Colonialism was the rule, even in missions: 'Plant churches of your own denomination, teach them your doctrines and culturally Westernize them' seems to be a gross distortion of the great commission, but was practiced nevertheless. Between 1945 and 1969 Western control collapsed for the better part. New nations emerged, gaining independence of the Western powers that had controlled them. These developments had far-reaching effects on the attitudes that accompanied W.E.

67 Eph. 6:12 our battle is not against flesh and blood – as the crusaders did

68 Acts 15

69 See my book *The Bible's Missionary Message – Part IIA – New Testament*, 2015a:41-44

The First Period of NT Missions History

Patrick Johnstone gives this analysis:

- 30- 500 Early church outreach from the Mediterranean to India;
- 500- 800 The Celtic mission thrust to Europe;
- 480-1250 The Nestorian Evangelization of Asia;
- 1209 onwards Roman Catholic missionary orders: Franciscans, Dominicans and Jesuits
- 1727 onwards Moravians.⁷⁰

The First 1,750 Years

- 30 – 64 Early church reaches out in Jerusalem and as far as Rome
- 67 Martyrdom of Peter and Paul
- 156 Martyrdom of Polycarp
- 313 Constantine issues Edict of Milan
- 325 Council of Nicea
- 340 Ulfilas begins ministry with Goths
- 361 Martin of Tours begins missionary work
- 432 Patrick arrives in Ireland
- 563 Columba arrives in Scotland
- 595 Gregory the Great commissions Augustine
- 635 Nestorians arrive in China
- 638 Muslims conquer Jerusalem
- 716 Boniface begins missionary work
- 800 Charlemagne crowned emperor
- 827 Anskar arrives in Denmark (1095 Crusades begin)
- 1212 Francis of Assisi begins mission to Syria
- 1216 Founding of the Dominican order
- 1219 Franciscans sent to North Africa, Friar John arrives in Peking
- 1276 Raymond Lull opens a monastery at Majorca
- 1510 Dominicans arrive in Haiti

⁷⁰ Johnstone, 1998:70-80

1534	Founding of Jesuits
1542	Francis Xavier arrives in India
1555	Calvin sends colonists to Brazil
1583	Ricci arrives in China
1606	De Nobili arrives in India
1646	John Eliot delivers first sermon to Indians
1705	Founding of the Danish-Halle Mission
1706	Ziegenbalg arrives in India
1722	Count Zinzendorf establishes Herrnhut, Egede arrives in Greenland
1732	Moravians send missionaries to the Virgin Islands
1733	Christian David arrives in Greenland
1737	George Schmidt arrives in South Africa
1743	David Brainerd begins missionary work
1744	Zeisberger begins ministry to Indians
1750	C.F. Schwartz arrives in India

The Second Period of NT Missions History

Johnstone then explains how the modern era of missions gains momentum through Count Von Zinzendorf and William Carey, and compares progress made from 1792-1992. His division of this period is interesting:

<i>First Wave</i>	:	<i>Denominational</i> missions to the continental coastlands (1792-1865)
<i>Second Wave</i>	:	<i>Interdenominational</i> missions to the continental heartlands (1865-1910)
<i>Third Wave</i>	:	<i>Evangelical</i> Missions to the countries of the world (1910-1966)
<i>Fourth Wave</i>	:	<i>Global</i> missions to the peoples of the world (1966-present). ⁷¹
<i>Latest Wave</i>	:	<i>Polycentric</i> missions: Christian mission as a local AND global enterprise ⁷²

⁷¹ Ibid. p. 94-108 (italics mine)

⁷² See e.g.: Yeh, *Polycentric Missiology: 21st Century Mission from Everyone to Everywhere* (Downers Grove: IVP Academic, 2016)

For the first era (30-1750) I simply gave you a summing up of years, names and geographical areas, whereas the following period of 225 years is summarized in waves. It would be too complicated to do it otherwise: many names and areas should have been mentioned then in *each* of the 225 years! Yet, we would do injustice to some great pioneers of the modern mission era (1750-1975), if we were to leave it at this, and not take a closer look. So:

The Next 225 Years

We zoom in now on the 225 years from 1750. We call this 'the Modern Missions Movement'. The easiest way here is to give a brief outline of the lives and ministries of some of its pioneers:

Count Nicolaus Ludwig von Zinzendorf (1700-1760)

German nobleman Zinzendorf greatly advanced protestant missions in the early 18th century. He founded the Moravian church with Christians who fled persecution in Moravia. The name of his shelter was *Herrnhut*, meaning 'protected by the Lord'. Zinzendorf was a godly leader, who started an important missions thrust after a renewal experience of the Holy Spirit in 1727. The movement was built on prayer: they had a prayer chain going on around the clock, 7 days a week, for 100 years without break. Between 1732 and 1760, 227 workers were sent out to St. Thomas, Greenland, Arctic, Algiers, China, Persia and Ethiopia. Other fields were opened in Surinam, North America and West- and South Africa. By 1930 over 3,000 missionaries had been sent out.⁷³

William Carey (1761-1834)

Carey was called 'the father of modern missions'. After trying in vain to convince the church leaders of his day of the necessity of world missions, he wrote a missions handbook of 87 pages, with the title

73 Johnstone, 1998:78

'An Inquiry Into the Obligations of Christians to Use Means for the Conversion of the Heathen' (1792).

The book inspired the foundation of 12 mission organizations in Europe and the USA. He went to India as missionary in 1793, translated the entire Bible into Bengali, Sanskrit and Marathi, and some portions into other Indian languages. After seven years he did not have any convert, and after another 18 years there were about 600 baptized believers.⁷⁴ This may not seem much, yet Carey, a true catalyst, triggered much initiative by others.

Hudson Taylor (1832-1905)

Until then most mission efforts had been denominational and directed towards the coastlands. Hudson Taylor became one of the first pioneers of interdenominational missions into the heartlands. In 1853 he went to China, and in 1865 he established the China Inland Mission (CIM), with headquarters in China, not in the UK. At present the mission is known as Overseas Missionary Fellowship (OMF). Taylor became a 'Chinese to the Chinese': he dyed his hair black, wore it in a pigtail and dressed like the Chinese. By 1882 the CIM had entered every province of China and in 1914 it had become the largest missions organization in the world with 1,368 workers in 1934.⁷⁵ Johnstone writes: 'It is interesting to see how many missions in the wave included in their name words such as 'Inland' or 'Heart', e.g. Africa Inland Mission (AIM), Sudan Interior Mission (SIM), Heart of Africa Mission' (now WEC).⁷⁶ Other important names in an African context are David Livingstone and Henry Stanley.

C. T. Studd (1860-1931)

Charles Studd, a British cricket player, gave away his huge fortune to become a missionary with CIM (1885-1894). After that, he went to India as a missionary (1900-1906) and then to Central Africa (1913-

⁷⁴ Krupp, 1984:99, 167

⁷⁵ Ibid. p. 168,169

⁷⁶ Johnstone, 1998:99

1931). He established World-wide Evangelization Crusade (WEC), nowadays known as World-wide Evangelization for Christ. His primary objective was: To reach the remaining un-evangelized peoples on earth in the shortest possible time. His motto was: *'If Jesus Christ is God and died for me, no sacrifice can be too great for me to make for Him'*.

W. Cameron Townsend (1896-1982)

Townsend arrived in Guatemala in 1917 and developed a vision for Bible translation work, after an Indian to whom he tried to sell a Spanish Bible said to him: 'If your God is so great, why hasn't He learned our language?' He established the Wycliffe Bible Translators (WBT) and related SIL and JAARS ministries. WBT/SIL is a huge mission today and is known for its extraordinary high professional level. Townsend said: *'The greatest missionary is the Bible in the mother tongue. It never needs furlough and is never considered a foreigner'*.⁷⁷

Many more great names could be added. In this period we see great pioneers translate their efforts into the establishment of different specialized ministry *organizations*. Only some of these can be mentioned:

SVM	Student Volunteer Movement	1868
SA	Salvation Army	1878
Navigators	Youth, discipling ministry	1933
WBT	Wycliffe Bible Translators	1934
GR	Gospel Recordings (audio ministry)	1939
NTM	New Tribes Mission (unreached tribes ministry)	1942
MAF	Mission Aviation Fellowship	1945
YFC	Youth For Christ	1945
FEBFA	Far East Broadcasting Association (radio ministry)	1948
WV	World Vision (aid and relief ministry)	1950

⁷⁷ Tucker, 1983:351-357

CCC	Campus Crusade for Christ	1951
TWR	Trans World Radio	1954
OD	Open Doors (ministry to the suffering church)	1955
YWAM	Youth With A Mission (youth, evangelism)	1960
OM	Operation Mobilization (youth, evangelism)	1962
TF	Tear Fund (aid and relief ministry)	1968
JFP	Jesus Film Project	1978

The worldwide mission movement has gained an ever-increasing momentum. Now let's have a look at the period since 1974. This era has been one of almost exponential growth!

Since 1974: Growing Excitement!

The major event that initiated this last period is the Lausanne Congress on W.E. (LCWE) that took place in Switzerland in 1974. Never before was there an event in which so many evangelical leaders, churches and organizations sat around the table to address such a wide spectrum of spiritual, emotional and physical needs. Many of the present major evangelistic efforts, plans, strategies and partnerships had their beginning then and there.

In the summing up of the first 1750 years we saw years and individuals. The gospel spread relatively slow. In the following 225 years we saw a multiplication of individuals who started movements of which many developed into organizations, and the spreading-speed of the gospel continually increased. Since 1974 progress was made in more *geographical* areas, among more *people groups*, in more *languages*, more *people coming to Christ* and more *churches being planted* than ever before. If ever there was a sign of the end times, W.E. is!

After the LCWE, the AD 2000 Movement developed under leadership of Luis Bush. Before its dissolution on 31 December 2000, a range of global resource networks and task forces were developed that focused on specific aspects of the unfinished task in the decade of the 1990's. Some of these networks and task forces continued into the 21st century. They unite ministries in the area of:

Radio, translation, audio communication, media, Bible and literature, saturation evangelism, small group leadership, united prayer, unreached peoples, cities, partnership development, mobilization of new missionaries, denominational and missions leaders, mobilization of local churches, women, training for church planting (also among Muslims), peoples information, strategy and resources.⁷⁸

Some of these worldwide ministries are:

Radio Ministry & Jesus Film Project

Co-operating Christian radio ministries are able to reach 99+% of the world's population with the gospel in a language their audiences either speak as their heart language, or in a widely spoken language within their area.⁷⁹

The Jesus Film Project has had 7.7 billion accumulative individual viewings of 'the' Jesus Film and their related movies worldwide since 1979, through the work of 1,500+ agencies, yielding 530+ million responses. These media are available in 1,625 languages and 99+% of all people can watch them in a language they know.⁸⁰

Bible Translation

As of 2018 there are about 7,100 living languages in the world. Of these, 670 have a complete Bible, another 1,530 have a NT and translation of Bible portions are underway in another 1,150 languages. Some languages may die out in the coming years, but there is still a need for translation processes to be initiated in another 1,650 languages, serving 110 million people.⁸¹

78 African National Initiatives, conference booklet handed out at the SCP Consultation in Harare, Zimbabwe, 4-8 May 1998:1

79 Johnstone, 1998:141,142 mentions that 'by the year 2000 Christian Radio can reach 99% of the world's population...'

80 Mandryk, 2010:9,10 and <https://www.jesuskfilm.org/about/learn-more/statistics.html> (accessed 1-2-2018)

81 Wycliffe.net/statistics (Oct. 2017) and joshuaproject.net (sites accessed 31-1-2018)

But Now: How Far Are We?

If we simplify facts and figures to the utmost, we can conclude that radio-, film-, and Bible translation ministries jointly were able to reach already 99% of the world's population in the year 2000. Yet, not all will turn the radio on, watch the film, or read the Scriptures. In other words, even today there is an estimated 41% of the world's population that has never had a fair chance to hear the gospel as yet. Can the great commission be fulfilled in our generation? Will we bring all hands on deck? We have to, if we just look at the next paragraph:

Some Facts for Strategy Towards 2025

The least-evangelized peoples in the world have shown to be the most responsive to the gospel. By 2025 there will be one billion illiterate people; this stresses the need for audio-visual gospel communication. By then, 70% of all Christians will lack access to basic needs of food, water, shelter and medical care. In some African countries, the life span will be reduced to 30 to 40 years, generating 40 million orphans and contributing to poverty, crime and instability. The number of induced abortions per annum will almost double from 70 million to 130 million and the number of abandoned children and infants will double to 150 million. Fifteen million Muslim, Hindu and Buddhist converts have chosen to remain within their religions as active witnesses of Christ.⁸²

It costs Christians 700 times more to baptize new Christians in rich countries (e.g. Switzerland) than in poor countries (e.g. Nepal), and 70% of 688 hundred million Evangelicals know almost nothing about the 1.8 billion un-evangelized individuals in the world. About 70 million Christians have been martyred since Christ; half of them in the 20th century. Between 1974 and 2000, 9 out of 10 new missionaries started work among reached people groups, starting new churches and discipling converts.⁸³ The list is sheer endless!

⁸² In missiology this phenomenon is called 'Insider Movements'

⁸³ World Christian Database (WCD); World Population Prospects, UN (2002/3); World Health Organization; UN Development Program (sites accessed 31-1-2018)

Unreached People Groups

The Joshua Project counts 16,956 people groups. Of these 7,035 are unreached (41.5%). From the remaining 58.5% 'reached' there are 3,259 people groups significantly reached (19.2%); 3,781 are partially reached (22.3%); 1,704 are superficially reached (10%) and 1,177 are minimally reached (6.9%). Almost 5,900 unreached people groups, over 3 billion individuals, live in the 10-40 window.⁸⁴

RESEARCH

The websites below give a lot of interesting additional information:

<https://home.snu.edu/~hculbert/line.htm>

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Timeline_of_Christian_missions

MISCELLANEOUS

Recommended books: Please see the Bibliography at the end of the book

Recommended articles:

Piper, Dr. John. 1997. World Missions and the End of History (sermon) found at <http://www.desiringgod.org/sermons/world-missions-and-the-end-of-history>

Van 't Slot, Dr. Steef.
2009-2010. Twelve Missionary Themes in Genesis

_____ 2008-2011. Double Conversion (All articles, see www.recruiting4missions.org (also in Dutch))

⁸⁴ www.joshua.net (accessed 31-1-2018)

Assignments:

- Write a short essay in your personal journal (100-200 words) about your 'missions history' – if you have one – or describe an important lesson you learned from this chapter
- Describe how you see your own future in missions and how you see your missions develop on a worldwide scale
- Check out both websites mentioned under 'Research' and read John Piper's article, or listen to his sermon. In 2 sentences each, describe your most important findings

STUDY QUESTIONS

1. Which three time divisions form the historic outline of this lesson?
2. When did Christianity become state religion, and what was the consequence of that?
3. Mention five important missionary enterprises from the first period of 1750 years
4. Mention five important missionary statesmen from the next 225-year period
5. Mention five missionary organizations that were founded in the past 100 years
6. Which event inaugurated the last period?
7. Which movement developed within the Lausanne movement?
8. Which three types of ministry can reach 99% of the world's population with the gospel?
9. Explain the tension between this given and the fact that 41% of the world's population still did not have a chance to hear and respond to the gospel