

New York: A Modern Mission Field

By Paris Reidhead*

Matthew, Chapter 9, verse 35 to the end of the Chapter: (I will take you on a missionary journey this evening, I want you to be escorted by our Lord Jesus.)

“And Jesus went about all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues, and preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing every sickness and every disease among the people. But when He saw the multitudes, He was moved with compassion on them, because they fainted, and were scattered abroad, as sheep having no shepherd. Then saith He unto His disciples, The harvest truly is plenteous, but the labourers are few; pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that He will send forth labourers into His harvest.”

Our theme, New York City, a modern mission field, our text; our Lord Jesus, in the company of His disciples, on a foreign mission journey. Is that correct? Where were they? Let me read it again, And Jesus went about all the cities and villages. It is extremely important that we should identify this, in order that we might understand the nature of our Lord in relation to the lost. These villages and these cities into which our Lord came were in Galilee, His own province, the province in which Nazareth was located. These were His neighbors, These were people in the little communities, scattered throughout this land called Palestine, the Promised Land, and the Holy Land. These were the heirs of the promise of Abraham, these were the descendants of the prophets, of the fathers. These were Jews.

Now our Lord saw these cities, and villages as worthy of His presence, and so we discover that He went into all of them. I like the word all. It was not into the large cities. It was not into the prominent place. It was not into the conspicuous opportunity. He went into all of the cities and villages, the cities were not large. I suppose we would have to remember that the city of Jerusalem could have comprised only a few thousand people at that time, according to its dimensions, its size, as we would view a large city, thinking of Chicago or Los Angeles, New York, Philadelphia. We certainly would not have any such concept in our mind. A large city would be 2 thousand residents, 2 or 3, 4 thousands homes and families, maybe 10 or 12 thousand people. Perhaps a few more, but in that area. Now the villages would be just a few houses clustered together in some fertile piece of ground, along some stream or some pass. A village such as Nazareth, on the road North toward Europe, the place through which the Roman legions would come and pass, through which the galley slaves would be taken to the sea for their servitude. This would be Nazareth, one of the villages, one of the cities.

And they all spoke the same language. It would be Aramaic, a form of the Semitic language, Hebrew, spoken today. Similar to Hebrew. This was the common language. So He was with His Own people, in His Own culture, in His Own language. Now you must understand this, if you are to understand what has happened. Now He has gone into their synagogues. Isn't it interesting that our Lord never fought the synagogues. He went into the synagogue as was His wont. Do you know why our Lord could approach the synagogue and could accept it for what it was and nothing more? and not fight it? Because He realized that the synagogue was nothing more than the trellis upon which the culture of Israel hung. Israel, you know, had had an up and down experience. They had been tempted to go into idolatry again and again, and had been punished by captivity. And one of the last times of captivity they seemed to lose their taste for idolatry. And the only means that the fathers could discover to keep their people from going into it was to take and adapt to the culture of Israel the phenomena of the temple that they had seen in Babylon. There, as you know, the influence of India and the ancient rites and mysteries of that land had crept up through the Medio-Persian conquest, and through the Roman and Grecian influence, and when they were in captivity they saw these buildings set aside for worship and they accepted them and adapted them. They converted them, if you please, to the need of Israel.

Now Israel is supposed to have the Tabernacle and then the Temple. This was the sacred place, and none other is specified. But when they came back they said, We need something to hold our people together to keep them from going into idolatry. They said, We need a trellis on which the vine can grow. And thus they, without any Scriptural precedence, and without any command from the Lord, developed this synagogue system which is the source of ethics and morals and religion in the day of our Lord. And our Lord went into the synagogues. He recognized that, though ostensibly it was Jewish, though it was

administered by Rabbis and lawyers and scribes, though they had the scrolls of the Scriptures, and the Talmud, that it had really no relationship to the Tabernacle nor to the Temple. It was just a cultural phenomenon. That is all. It had nothing more than influence upon the day and the generation. And so He did not try to fight it, because at the time there was not anything better. The only alternative was idolatry. And this at least had kept them monotheistic. It had kept them from going into the vile rites of the idolaters, the sensualism associated with that. And so our Lord consented to the fact that, not having life, this was the best kind of death that they could have. And He just consented to the fact that there it was. It was neutral to Him.

Here the Scriptures were read. Here the Talmud was presented and its precepts were taught, and our Lord viewed it as a proper place for evangelism, a proper place to go. To use the fact that religious people came, the irreligious did not. Those who had some concern for God would come, but the point I wanted you to see is this, that our Lord looked upon the expression of religion of His day as being simply an instrument of evangelism, and a tool for ministry. It was not that He went into synagogues because the synagogues were that which He comes to support and to strengthen and to use. It had no relevance at all to what He was doing. It was similar to the market place as far as its spiritual significance was concerned. It was a cultural phenomenon, the same way that we have a pledge of allegiance, we have a flag or any other thing that was associated with culture, so the synagogue was to the day of our Lord, and so He viewed it.

He went into the synagogues. He went into the market places. He went into any place that people gathered and could be brought to the place of listening with interest to what He had to proclaim. So the point then is this, He accepted the fact that the religious system of His day was dead, but He also recognized that it was in no sense in competition with what He was bringing, for what He was bringing was altogether different. He was not trying to destroy it, because it had its significance. He was simply trying to replace it, or not even in a sense to replace it as far as all was concerned as removing it. He was trying to call men and women out of death into life. He believed that there were some that could hear the call in the synagogue, and so He went where they were gathered and used the rostrum that they presented in order that He could preach the Gospel of the Kingdom, heal their sicknesses and their diseases, that He could minister to them in life, in power and in grace.

This you must understand. Our Lord viewed His own countrymen, His own generation, His own, the religious system of His people, as a legitimate and proper mission field, point and place of labor. He saw these people as being part of His responsibility. Now this we will accept, I trust, at least for contemplation, and we will move on to the next thing. There was a company of people with Him. Who were they? They were His followers, His disciples. They were the men that heard His call, "Come follow Me," and they were following Him (Mat. 19:21). You know it is possible to be a follower without being a follower. And this is the case of this company. They were going with the Lord, reluctantly. They went reluctantly.

If you want to get some sense of their reluctance view it from the standpoint of that company of women, mothers, that brought their little children at the close of the day. I personally believe these little children were not as the artist pictures. Beautiful little flaxen haired, brown eyed children, that came into their starched pretty dresses to the Lord. This is not the same at all. If anyone has ever been anywhere near an oriental country, the artist that drew that picture had no reference at all to the event. It could not have been like that. I can visualize them, dirty with infected eyes, and clothes scant and incomplete, and many, most of the children would follow this pattern. But these that the mothers brought at the close of the day, I believe, were the hopeless cases, pushed by paralysis, possessed by demons, corrupted by infection, palsied by cerebral injury. Here were children that were grotesque, and distorted, and twisted by the effects of sin in the race, the ones that the mothers felt were utterly hopeless, the ones that they said, in the morning when the others went out and the sick people went, the mothers said, Oh no, there is no need to take them. He could not do anything for our children. But as the day wore on, and as those that had been healed came back into the village, testifying of what had transpired, I can see them encourage each other at the well at the close of the day, to go timidly and with a frightened heart to their homes, gather up these little spectacles of need and disease and slowly walk toward the throng in which our Lord was the center. And as they approach it, they meet the disciples.

Here are some of the twelve that have grown weary with the Lord's preaching, our Lord's ministry, who feel that He is wasting His time in such an inconsequential province as Galilee, and that He ought to be in Jerusalem, persuading the officials that could support His cause, and they look and say, Oh, see what is coming now! We have had a day of it, and now here are the

worst. And they say, Look. The Lord is tired. You go back home. Don't bother Him at such a late hour. And our Lord, sensing and knowing what they are doing, what is being done to the women that have brought their little ones to Him, lifts His eyes above the throng, speaks to the disciples at the edge and He says, "Suffer the little children to come unto Me, and forbid them not" (Luk. 18:16). And thus a way is made through the throng and the mothers come with these children, and present them to Him, the one paralyzed and twisted as only the evil genius of God's arch enemy could possibly invent, and present this little one to the Lord, and limbs that have never moved move under His touch; the one with cerebral palsy, not a controlled motion possible, and the Lord touches the little head, and instantly the child is healed; the deaf and dumb made to speak and hear; the demon possessed set free. And all the time, the disciples are on the edge, in their skepticism and indifference, thinking that their Lord has completely missed the purpose for His coming, spending His time with these little insignificant, inconsequential morsels of humanity that certainly can have no place in such an important thing as throwing off the Roman yoke and setting up the kingdom of David.

Now it is these disciples that are with Him. These men that have forsaken all to follow Him. Why? Because they believe He is the Messiah, and because they believe that as the Messiah He is going to establish the throne of David, and because they believe that when He establishes the throne of David He will share the spoils of His victory with them, and they are following the Lord primarily because of what they can get out of Him, not what He can get out of them. And so their interest is that He should advance their cause by achieving the success that they have designed for the Lord. They are following Him, but they are not following Him. They are following the teachings that they have had concerning the Messiah. They are following the prejudices that they have had, and they are following the vain ambitions of nationalism that have become synonymous. They are following a multitude of things when they think they are following Christ, but they are not following Him. They are following their own idea of what they think Christ ought to be, and what they would be if they were the Messiah. And the consequence of this? Well as they are on this trip, in all the cities and villages (it must have taken a good while), listening to Him teach, watching Him as He has ministered, healing and delivering, they have become increasingly indifferent. They have become increasingly hard of heart. They have become increasingly calloused to the need on every hand. And thus this particular morning, market day, from the expression that is here, for only a market day would gather such a company of people as is described in the original. For if the word multitude can better be expressed by, He saw a company of people stretching from horizon to horizon. It is as though a little valley, from the crest of the hill where they stand, for obviously they have not seen it. It bursts suddenly upon them. They are walking together, pursuing their own thoughts and their own reactions to what they have been experiencing in these weeks with the Lord, talking together in little groups according to their disposition and their interests. And as they walk up the crest of the hill, there before them, as far as the eye can see, are people, people that have undoubtedly gathered for that which would bring them their merchandizing, their buying and their selling. They have come from the surrounding countryside to a major merchandizing event. They are there in great numbers from horizon to horizon as far as they can see, and as our Lord comes upon this scene, something happens to Him.

Remember they are His Own countrymen. They speak His language. They share His culture. They worship in the synagogues. They are the heirs of the promise of Abraham. They are Jews, and when He saw the multitude, He was moved with compassion. That word, moved with compassion, is a medical term, and we could best translate it by saying, He almost fainted with compassion. It has reference to the rush of blood that would come in great emotional stress, that caused our Lord, overwhelmed with love and mercy and pity and compassion, living in an infinite heart, and a mortal frame, seeing this mortal, and knowing their need, our Lord begins to sink. And the picture is, the disciples on either side saying, Lord, what has happened. And one arm goes under His left arm, and another, a strong man to the right, and they hold up the Son of God whose physical frame is melting with a burst of passion and love and pity, that He feels for whom? His own countrymen.

Do you see? These are His people, and He is moved with compassion for them. But notice the pronouns: when He saw the multitude He was moved with compassion. I asked myself this question. Matthews Gospel was not written until 40 years after the ascension of Christ. Why was it, when the Holy Ghost was causing him to write, he could not have said this, When they saw the multitude, they who had walked so long with the Lord Jesus had begun to share His heart. They were all moved with compassion. Do you know why? Because it was not that way. The only one of the group that was moved with compassion was the Lord Jesus. He was the only one. All the rest. Well if you want to find out what moved them, talk with James and John.

John, what were you and James talking about back there? Well you see, when we get home we are going to go to mother and we are going to get mother to go to the Lord. You see she has a lot of influence with Him. And we are going to get her to say, Prefer my sons, and you see one of us want to sit on the Lord's right hand, and one of us wants to sit on His left hand. That is what James and John were talking about, Who would be first in the kingdom of God. Who would get the honor? Who would get the preference? Who would get the choice seat? This was the thing that they were concerned about. But they were not concerned about the dirty ragamuffins, the waifs, the strays. They were not concerned about the common people. They were concerned about the place they would occupy.

Talk with Judas. What is he concerned about? He is concerned about how much money he can make on the operation. This is where his concern and interest is. And then talk with Peter. Well. He is concerned because he is a great nationalist. He is concerned that the kingdom should be restored to Israel. Oh, they all were concerned, but they were not concerned about that which was breaking the heart of the Lord Jesus. They did not share His love. They did not share His burden. They did not share His pity. They did not share His longing. They all had their own. You want to find out what moved them? Talk to these two men on the road to Emmaus after the resurrection. We thought that it had been He that had restored the kingdom to Israel. This was their concern. When He saw His own countrymen that spoke His language, that shared His culture, He saw them as what? as sheep scattered without a shepherd. This is how He saw them.

Now what did our Lord Jesus say? "Then saith He unto His disciples. The harvest truly is plenteous." Isn't this a wonderful missionary sermon text. My you know this can certainly be effective when you apply it to China. Think of that-600 million people. The harvest is plenteous in China. But wasn't there a China in our Lord's Day? Oh yes. There was a China in our Lord's Day. Did it have its culture? It did. Its beautiful porcelains had been antiques at the time of our Lord. Did you know that? You go to the museum of art up here on 5th Avenue and go into the room where they have gathered the china porcelains, and look at the date on them. And you will find that they were antique, several hundred years old when our Lord was walking. China had its culture. China had invented gun powder and the rocket from which we have gotten our intercontinental ballistic missiles. They had a culture. They had literature. They had language. They had a lot of things. Didn't our Lord care about China? Of course He did. Of course He did.

Well what about India? Didn't they have their system? Oh yes. Didn't our Lord care about India? Yes, because we know He sent Thomas there. Well what about Africa? Wasn't He concerned? Yes, He was concerned; because there was one, who was there, probably even bore His cross that was from Africa. Our Lord was concerned about Africa. But of what is He speaking when He says, The harvest truly is great. He is speaking about Galilee. And what is He saying? He is saying, If you do not see the harvest around you you will not see it anywhere. If your heart is not burdened for those you can see, you have no burden for anyone. This is what He is saying. The harvest, these men from villages and cities, that speak Aramaic, that share synagogue life and Jewish culture, these men that observe fastings and tithings, and dietary laws prescribed by the Rabbis in the Talmud, these are the people that are the sheep scattered without a shepherd, and these people are the harvest to which He refers when He says, "The harvest truly is plenteous."

If our Lord Jesus were to come back to New York City tonight, do you think — and were to identify Himself with us — do you think He would walk up and down the streets of this city that He would find the harvest is plenteous? I think He would. Some months ago there were two women that came into the city, Mrs. Helen Ball, the founder of the Christian Professional Women, a great friend of my own, dear friend in the Lord, now with Him, Aunt Harriet Williams from Atlanta. Mrs. Williams was instrumental in helping her found the Christian and Professional Women, and then there was Miss Clark who was instrumental under God in founding the Christian Women's Clubs Associate with the Christian Professional Women, and also Village Missions. And they came here. I had been in contact with them. I met them over in Hackensack, New Jersey, on a Monday morning, I believe it was. We left about 9 o'clock, and I started driving the streets of New York, on what I call, Heartbreak Tour.

We went up to Fort Washington. Drove down among the apartments. We stopped at the children in the street, and looked at the mothers with their carriages in the sunshine. We came down through Harlem, and wound back and forth through the streets of Harlem. We went over just into East Spanish Harlem, and then back across on about 125th Street, until we were up in Manhattan. Went up Broadway until we came to the Presbyterian Hospital, wove down and around the streets, and just

looked at apartments, and every apartment had a man or a woman or a family. We went on and on and on, 9 became 10. We were down now about 72 Street there looking at that area, back and forth, street after street. By this time the women were talking in subdued tones. They had very little to say. From Kansas City in the west.

And then we went on till 12, and we were down on the lower east side, winding around the city, and then back up on the east side, and across and over, until nearly 1:30. And when the time was over, they said, Never in our lives have we had such an experience. You see they had come from out of the area. They had come with tender hearts and with concern for villages, of a few hundred people where there was no church. God had used them to establish churches and open churches in over 300 villages in America where churches had been closed. But they had never had an experience like that.

They said, Do your people in the Gospel Tabernacle Church feel the way we feel? I said, I do not think so. Well why? I said, For the same reason that the Apostles with the Lord Jesus walking through the villages and the towns of Galilee did not feel the way our Lord felt. They have grown accustomed to what they see. And their minds have ceased to calculate the tragedy of human life represented by these monstrous buildings where people live, layer upon layer, lost in their sin, isolated against the Gospel, impervious to the outreach of truth. "The harvest is plenteous."

Do you realize that within the area comprising the parish of this church, if you go to Long Island, to Irvington, down on Staten Island, and the out at Morristown, do you realize that if you would draw a circle inscribing these points that you have more than one tenth of this country's population encircled. This is the case, for it is very nearly 20 million people. But where is the concentration of Gospel effort? I'll tell you where. It is in the suburbs where people have one family to one address, a nice lot, front and back, and this is not to be despised or scoffed at but this we must remember, the people that have concentrated in the urban areas are the ones that are deprived of adequate opportunity to hear the Gospel. This church in which we meet was never erected for the purpose of ministering to a great cosmopolitan city. The very structure, the very design, the very manner in which it is here testifies by every architectural feature that it was designed to serve an Anglo-Saxon Protestant constituency that lived adjacent to it. But where is that Anglo-Saxon Protestant constituency now? Is it still adjacent? Oh no. No, that Anglo Saxon Protestant constituency, enjoying the blessing that God gives, to those who labor and who tithe and who serve for the most part has found far more congenial and pleasant surroundings, and the result of it has been that there has come in wave after wave, after wave of pagans into the city, until today it must be viewed as a mission field. New York City cannot longer be viewed as a typical community to be served in typical ministry. We recognize this by virtue of the fact that we have given support to agencies which are seeking to serve this community.

You know it was Wyn Welkie, Associate Pastor of Gospel Tabernacle Church, who became burdened for the children of New York City, and out of this grew the Children's Bible Fellowship, with an attempt through Camp and through street meetings, through classes, every means possible, to reach the children of New York, for it was viewed that 2 million children in this city and the 5 boroughs were viewed as a mission constituency. And so the community and the area has been willing to support Wyn Welkie, and has been willing to some degree to make possible the Camp ministry, and the street ministry, and other associated ministries for which every Christian heart ought to rejoice and every Christian ought to pray. But I want to ask you, Do you believe that by any stretch of imagination that 2 million boys and girls living in a vast concrete jungle such as this can be reached by one agency?

Then we are going to have to do one of two things, we are going to have to say that they do not constitute a legitimate field for ministry and leave them in their paganism and leave them in their darkness and leave them in their utter oblivion to God and His truth, or else we are going to have to say, They constitute a mission field. We will have to do one or the other, either have to consign them to darkness by indifference, or accept them as a mission field.

We thank God that Brant Reed became burdened for the young people that had gone into High School, and saw that there was a legitimate ministry to these children, that our high schools in America had become centers of paganism, centers of immorality, and that they have been actually spawning grounds for delinquents, and he became burdened about it that there should be strengthened in the hearts of Christian young people an intelligent witness, and we are grateful indeed for what God has done through the High School Bible Evangelism, and its ministry of HiBA. We are deeply grateful to God for raising it up, for

every child that has been touched and strengthened, encouraged and blessed, and everyone who has faithfully served the Lord Jesus through its outreach and through its ministry. How grateful we are that God has given to us in the one who is the national youth director of the Alliance, our Brother Marlon who is with us tonight, and also the youth director of the church, years of ministry on behalf of HiBA, and has had the experience of going into the homes of the area. But he and Brant Reed, and Ted Shelling, and all who have any association with it recognize that by all odds the most difficult place for this ministry is right here in Manhattan and downtown Bronx, and in Brooklyn. That this is an entirely different effort. It is an entirely different way than what is fruitful and effective in Westchester, and New Jersey. It is difficult to the extreme, almost to the impossibility. For years it was impossible for them to get a home in which to meet, and so they used our fellowship hall as the only place where they could meet, for there was not a Christian home that would open its doors on the island of Manhattan for this ministry of HiBA. This was the situation that we faced. This was the problem that we encountered. We are grateful I say to the Lord for every ministry.

Do you realize that there are some 27 agencies which are designed to reach the down and out, the drunk and the alcoholic of the street, and I would not have one taken away. For I am sure that the hundreds of men that roam the streets, derelicts out there on the sea of their own oblivion and their own narcotization by their sin and their indifference, that these are not a mission field. Of course they are. And I am grateful for every agency, and I submit to you that it is often easier to direct a ministry to a restricted group, especially of the deprived, than it is to face the fact that there are homes, that there are mothers and fathers and young people that live in these massive apartments and these buildings, that are villages that have been by the accident of geography crowded up on top of each other. Whereas 27 agencies are addressed to the refugees from society, to the alcoholic, to the bum, if you please, on the street, and these ministries are certainly not to be ignored nor to be decried, how many agencies are there that are sponsored by evangelicals that are addressed to the families, to the homes of the community, on this island, in this area?

What has happened? I believe that somehow evangelicalism has come to the place that it is utterly unwilling to face the stark reality of its impotence in the urban center. We have fled to the hills and carried our little tents out there, have erected lovely mausoleums which stand as monuments to a one class, religious society, rather than to face the fact that our Lord Jesus went into the place of great need, and there was the release of His omnipotence in an outpouring of love and mercy and compassion.

The pulpit of this church, its testimony and its ministry began because a man from Canada, from way out there against the coast, came by way of Montreal and Toronto, down to Louisville and back to New York, and when Albert Benjamin Simpson¹ came to this city, falling in love with the Lord Jesus, and seeing something of His power released in his ministry in Louisville, his great heart cry was to reach New York with the Gospel. What is seldom understood is this, that when he came to the city and his ministry began to reach out into the highways and byways, he was overwhelmed with a burden for the people coming at that time in the immigration push from southern Europe, Italian people, the German people, the people that were coming in from the catholic countries, fleeing out of Europe into the United States where they had had little or no access to the Gospel, and it was his burden for these that corrupted his ministry in the minds of his congregation, for when he brought in these that he had won to the Lord through his ministry and the inspiration that he had been to some of the people, his elegant congregation there at the 13th Street Presbyterian Church tilted their noses a little higher, moved a little further away, and then would meet in session with the pastor and say, We are very happy for your enthusiasm but won't you let us erect a mission somewhere to which these people can go. We do not feel it is appropriate that we should bring them here. And because of this, Dr. Simpson resigned from the church. You say he had a world mission vision at the time. I submit to you that according to his own testimony his reason was primarily a concern for the thronging multitudes that were pressing into this little island, that were coming in from all over the world here, and he felt that he had to be free to reach these who were in dying need of the Lord Jesus Christ and could not be reached through the facilities that he was then serving. And thus it was that out of his burden for those he could see there increased a burden for those that he could not see. It was in a convention here in the church that a couple came up on their way to India that had no support, and it was through the inspiration and the challenge of a heart that

¹ Albert Benjamin Simpson (1843-1919) founder of The Christian and Missionary Alliance

had broken and fallen in love with the multitudes around it that he said, We'll send you out there, and from this grew our missionary endeavor. But be it known by you and understood by you that the genius and the genesis of this testimony was a burden for those about and thronging on the doorstep that did not know the Lord Jesus Christ.

And thus we come back to the fact that we, living in the 20th century have got to recognize that New York is a mission field, and the blood of the multitudes that push us in the subways and throng us on the streets rests upon our hands. I can think of no greater danger in all the world than to be a Christian in New York whose eyes are blinded to the throng. For I believe that in eternity God is going to hold us responsible for the crassest of all crimes of allowing men and women dead in trespasses and sins because they speak our language and share our culture go unloved, unwanted, and unwitnessed, go out into a Christless eternity. Beloved, our Lord Jesus has given specific instructions. He has said, "Pray ye the Lord of the harvest that He will be able to send out laborers into the harvest." You will look at me and say, Now friend, you have been trying to castigate us for our indifference. And I do not share that at all. I am not whipping you. I am not trying to bruise you. I am trying to share with you the burden that has grown until it is like a poultice upon my heart from which I cannot escape by sleep, nor avoid by morning, and begin the day with burden greater than when I left. For if I came to you as anything it was as a missionary who had a heart for the lost, whose heart had been broken by walking the streets of New York as much as by going into villages in Africa where the Gospel had never been preached, and so I submit to you that after 5½ years I find myself frustrated in the extreme because of a burden that refuses to grow less and continues to intensify, and the frustration of the fact that we seem so utterly impotent in reaching these that are upon us and whose blood stains our hands.

You say, What plan do you have. I do not know. As I mentioned this morning in announcing the message, I have accumulated a wealth of negative information. It seems that I have spent 5 years learning what will not work, but I utterly refuse to be intimidated by failure, because the failure is mine and the success is His, and the Lord Jesus Christ has a burden for the multitudes of sheep scattered without a shepherd. I do not know what the answer is, but I know there is an answer, and that answer is in the Person of the Risen Christ, and in the power of His resurrection. But I know that it can only come through a people that love Him enough to meet Him on His terms, a people that are willing to be utterly committed to Him. The only answer that comes is through disciples, men and women who are prepared to serve the Lord Jesus on His own level.

Perhaps the answer lies in the mind of commitment that I saw this past week down in Norfolk, Virginia, where there in the Tabernacle Church there has grown up in ten years since my wife and I had the privilege of being there a Christian school ministry, till they are now reaching over 350, now nearly 355, 375 children through a grade school and Junior High, and a High School, a ministry that has only been made possible by sacrifice with no diminishing incidentally of their foreign needs. It was at the very time that I was there in a missionary convention 9 years ago that the Pastor said, We are going to build this Christian School and have it ready for the classes in September, but we will not take \$1 from foreign missions. Where it will come from we do not know, but the 5 rooms were up, and since they have been added to, and now they have the beautiful new Christian High School.

I think I know where it has come from. I think I know that it has come from people that have been willing to abandon themselves and all that they have. I met a man, a Mr. Miller, who is the grounds keeper, in charge of the buildings. And the Pastor with tears in his eyes and in his voice told me that Mr. Miller had had a good job in the city and was due for a transfer and a promotion and an increase, but he came to the Pastor and said, I believe God is leading me to become the grounds keeper here and building superintendent. You have put out an appeal, and you know my qualifications. He said, My wife and I feel that we can live (and this is in Norfolk) on 33 hundred dollars a year. The Pastor said, It is utterly impossible. It is fantastic. You have yourself, your wife, and your children. And he said, Well, I believe so. He said, I won't allow you. He said, Well you'd better let me and God take care of my business. I tell you what we can do. Come to find out that the family had been doing just that, cutting their salary more than in two and so they were able because of this, on this level of commitment of discipleship, to take over the school. I do not know what it is going to mean, but I know that there in Norfolk, in the Christian schools, there has been achieved a level of discipleship and a level of commitment that I find seldom, and which actually put me on my face before the Lord with tears.

Then I have also been aware of other ministries in other places, some of which might be applicable to New York City. I know that the Mennonites have come into the city with a burden. We had Mr. and Mrs. Robinson with us as you may recall some years ago for a year. They were here in behalf of the Mennonites, looking for a place for ministry. They found that Bronx and Brooklyn were the two needy places. They bought a center, not a church, for they said it is not a church that is needed, but it is a mission ministry of love, and then they put out an appeal to the young people, and now we have the phenomena of young people coming in from out in Pennsylvania and elsewhere in the Mennonite constituency getting jobs in offices, and they bring their salary back every week, and turn it over to the center, for which in return they receive \$10 a week, their board, their room, and their lunch that they can carry to their place of employment. And they are by their own consent spending 4 to 6 hours a day in ministry through the center, and there is a waiting list of young people that want to come into such a ministry. The Mennonites are doing this.

If you will go to the Catholics and see the convents and homes of the clergy you will see that there is a level of commitment of — at least a financial commitment, a personal commitment that Protestantism seems to have no answer for. I do not know the plan. I am frank to tell you I do not know the plan. But I do know this, that if someone comes to us today and says, I am taking Jesus Christ literally. I am forsaking all that I have to follow Him because my heart is breaking for a world of need in New York City we do not have a plan, and this is the matter that breaks my heart. We have no vehicle. If it is the ends of the earth we have a vehicle. We have a ministry. We have a means. But if it is New York City, we fail to view it as a mission field, and fail to create a vehicle for the abandoned life to the Lord Jesus.

You say, What have you done for us tonight? I hope I have shared with you my burden. I hope I have told you that when I walk up and down the streets of the city in the summer time and see the apartments on the front of the street open, and the people sitting on the steps, that I weep in my heart the same that I wept when I went into tribes and villages in Africa that said they had never seen a missionary, because I realize that it is possible for one to grow up between 8th and 9th Avenue, between 23rd and 42nd, and never have a saving opportunity to hear of the Lord Jesus Christ. You say, What is the answer? I do not know the answer. But I do know the commandment. And the commandment is this, "Pray ye the Lord of the harvest that He will thrust out laborers into the harvest field." I do not know the answer, but I know the One who has the answer, and I know the One who has given us commandment, and therefore the effect of what I have said tonight is to challenge to exhort, to entreat you in the Name of Jesus Christ and a world for which He died to view the community where you live as part of that dying world, and then to obey Him and pray that He will thrust out laborers into the harvest field. But do not do it unless you are prepared to be the laborer that is thrust, for there is nothing more consummately arrogant than to say, Lord, send someone but don't send me. And so may the Spirit of God bind our hearts together tonight at in that compassion that says, I must be all that the Lord Jesus would have me be. I must be a part of fellowship with those who are similar in their commitment and their burden, for my life is expendable. It is abandon to the Son of God. And I like my Lord will look up around me and see this people that share my culture, that share my language, and who share the death that was mine in my natural state, and I view them, moved with compassion.

Shall we pray. Our Heavenly Father, as we stand before Thee tonight, a company of people whose lot has been cast here into the midst of great darkness, who by accident or by choice have made our way into this city of great need, Pergamus where Satan's seat is, this place of iniquity where Satan reigns undisputed and unchallenged, where multitudes live and die, never see a cow or a green field, nor ever hear savingly of the Lord Jesus Christ. O God and Father of our Lord, wilt Thou not do for us as Thou didst do for servant Saul and take the scales from off our eyes. Wilt Thou not break our hearts until with our Lord, seeing the multitude of our countrymen, we will view them as the great harvest field, and like our Lord will be moved with compassion. This we believe Thou hast commanded us to pray that Thou wilt be able to thrust out laborers into the harvest. O Father, we can pray that Thou wilt do something other, something in addition to what is being done, something new, something Lord Jesus that is going to give to us the vehicle whereby Thou canst communicate life, the life of Jesus Christ in the midst of darkness where Satan reigns. So we plead the Blood. We plead the Blood of Christ over us, upon whose hands the Blood of men and women rest. We plead, Lord, for our hearts that have been content to ride the subways, and go into our apartments and up and down these streets with so little burden. Some of us that have been missionaries, have lived and walked in distant lands, have found our hearts strangely calloused here. O forgive us, cleanse us, and purge us, and let Calvary

love be shed abroad in our hearts anew until we share the love of our Lord Jesus and the fellowship of His sufferings. And O Father, for the sake of Thy Son, release and send out men and women and young people into the streets of this concrete jungle to reach those for whom our Savior died, and bring them to know Him. So to that end, bind us as a people around the foot of the Cross in an abandonment of confession and brokenness, of petition and intercession until we can be instruments in the hands of the living God for the task that He has committed to us to faithfully serve our generation. Hear our prayer, for Jesus' sake.

With our heads still bowed and our eyes closed. You are going to have to do something. So will I. Thank goodness you will never have to stand before me and give an account of what you do. But you are going to have to stand before Someone that loved the both of us and died for us who said, "If you love Me, feed My sheep" (Joh. 21:16). "Feed My sheep." And these that are here, the other sheep you must bring, our mission field. He saw His Own. May we see them as He did. If you are here tonight unsaved, do not go without asking this wonderful Lord to come into your heart. He died for you. Make known your need so we can pray with you; share with you the truth concerning our risen Christ. You are going to have to do something. Frankly I do not know what to tell you to do except to pray that the Lord of the harvest will thrust out laborers into the harvest field. Let us stand for the benediction.

I am going to ask that Don Morelan lead us in the closing prayer and benediction: Our gracious Heavenly Father, our ears have heard Thy Word and Truth, and we pray that our hearts might be obedient. We realize that Thou hast called for an obedient heart more than sacrifice. Father, we pray that each one of us will recognize our responsibility, and at this time and this hour obey God and say, Yes, Lord, here am I, send me to every contact that I personally have in New York City. We pray that we might have.... as individuals.

In the Name of our Heavenly Father, in the Name of the indwelling Holy Spirit, in the Name of our Lord and Savior the Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.

* Reference such as: Delivered at The Gospel Tabernacle Church, New York City on Sunday Evening, April 1, 1962 by Paris W. Reidhead, Pastor.

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