

Chapter 9

The Eleventh Hour Workers

Our last chapter reached a peak with the fulfilment of the vision in the birth of the missionary son Joseph. A vital church must possess a vision for mission.

Oswald Smith, the great missionary statesman, clearly stated that :

"The supreme task of the church is the evangelisation of the world." (1)

With half the world still waiting to hear the good news of Jesus' victory over death, sin and Satan, this task of the Church becomes ever more urgent.

God is raising up new missionary armies from the four corners of the earth to facilitate this task. A prophetic word given during a prayer vigil held in Jerusalem in May 1989 over Pentecost gives an encouraging confirmation of all that is in God's heart for the last days.

"Today is the time of harvest and ingathering, a time when the Spirit is being poured out upon all flesh in these last days... Through the centuries he has called workers into his fields and has promised that they are worthy of their hire... These have indeed borne the burden and the heat of the day. And still, the harvest is not finished.

Now, the Lord says, I will send to work at your sides eleventh hour workers, those who have been idle because no man would hire them... This army of workers will be mostly young people who will go forth to proclaim the gospel without fear or compromise ... They will come from the nations and peoples that you least expect. They are a great company that you do not know at this time, but the Lord is preparing them even now ...

You must pray for and welcome these eleventh hour workers that I will give to you. You must not be jealous of them but rejoice at the reward that I will give them - for they were willing to come at the last hour - and without them the harvest would not be complete ..."(2)

These "eleventh hour workers" are beginning to rise up from places like Korea, South America and Africa where God has been pouring out His Spirit in revival power over the last years. This chapter is designed to encourage each of us to a wider concept of the missionary challenge, and to inspire hope and creative partnerships with the emerging mission movements. Joseph's branches are indeed climbing over many walls, and my present work is dedicated to the encouragement, building up and training of a particular army of pioneers being raised in the hidden country of Central African Republic.(3) I'm longing to see "a new Africa" rising up from the ashes of disease, poverty and war, transformed by the power of a holistic gospel, and playing a vital role on the world stage.

Through His written Word, God is bringing new light to the Christians in Africa concerning the missionary mandate, which runs as a silver thread throughout the Bible. This word is beginning to be made flesh, black flesh, in the form of hundreds of men and women organising themselves into many indigenous world missionary movements.

Let's take a closer look at *Matthew 20 :1-16*, the parable of the workers in the vineyard, which has proved to be quite a prophetic rallying cry for this new missionary movement. (The historical reality of Israel first in the vineyard with the gentiles coming at the 11th hour is explored in the end notes. The present study opens up the scripture to a more prophetic interpretation linked to the missionary imperative of new global missions.). (4)

Jesus, as he has already done in the other kingdom parables in the gospels, is communicating something about the Kingdom of God. Here he is emphasising that God's reign is definitely linked and concerned with the recruiting of men and women to service in the (mission) fields or (global) vineyard. The "landowner" is God Himself - *"The earth is the Lord's, and everything in it, the world, and all who live in it;" (Psalm 24 :1)* - hovering over history, sending forth the Holy Spirit to bring forth His resources at the right time and bring men into His kingdom purpose.

"Early in the morning,"

From the dawn of creation God has had this burden on His heart. The first man hired was Adam himself placed in the garden of Eden *"to work it and take care of it."* (*Genesis 2 :15*). God also gave the first missionary mandate to Adam and Eve telling them to :

*"Be fruitful and increase in number;
Fill the earth and subdue it
Rule over... every living creature..."* *Genesis 1:28*

Where there was *"no man to work the ground"* (*Genesis 2 :5*), there was also no rain sent from heaven. God is longing to send the rain of the Holy Spirit onto the earth so that born again believers multiply and fill even the ends of the earth manifesting and proclaiming the glorious reign of the Lord Jesus. He needs men to get the job done.

Throughout each hour of history God has been seeking the men and women who would mark their generation as workers worthy of their hire in the Lord's vineyard.

*"About the third hour he went out and saw others
standing in the market place doing nothing. He told
them, 'You also go and work in my vineyard, and I will pay you
whatever is right.'..."* *Matthew 20 :3*

Perhaps this third hour represents a time when an ageing Terah was feeling the pull to move out of the Ur of the Chaldeans to make a new start in Canaan. The settle

spirit overcame his pioneering dream of a future land of promise and he settled for Haran (a parched place, the place of dryness), (5) where he died. However, God broke into history with a fresh word of summons to another potential worker, Abram. The comfort zone of settlers was blasted away in the Lord's opening words.

"Leave your country, your people and your father's household and go to the land I will show you." Genesis 12 :1

Someone has said that the very worst sin is not the obvious kind of sin that we point the finger at, like adultery or stealing, but the sin of doing nothing!

Abram needed to be jolted out of the "market place" of Haran where routine and indifference had taken over. Physical movement, loss of nationalistic pride, new social customs and a liberation from past traditions were the prescription God presented to get Abram on the move again into his family destiny. God always pays what is right to His workers and Abram was no exception. The true reward is always to recognise the Lord himself as being our portion and this is the encouragement God brought to Abram in a vision to help him overcome his fear of moving out.

*"Do not be afraid, Abram
I am your shield
your very great reward."* Genesis 15 :1

Abraham received a most magnificent promise and blessing. Two thousand years later the apostle Paul speaking to the Galatian Christians makes reference to this particular blessing.

"He redeemed us in order that the blessing given to Abraham might come to the Gentiles through Christ Jesus, so that by faith we might receive the promise of the Spirit." Galatians 3 :14

But what is the blessing of Abraham that is now available to the Gentiles, to the British, the Korean, the American, the Brazilian and especially to the emerging missionary nations in Africa and beyond ?

"I will make you into a great nation..." Genesis 12 :2

There are many hidden nations in the "Global South." Nations which rarely make international news, who don't win gold medals at the Olympics and who are left to gather the crumbs from under the table of international commerce and trade. However, God's now promise to such nations is that they will become great.

"I will bless you..." Genesis 12 :2

The promise of God's smile upon a nation. Good harvests, prosperity and peace within their borders. God wants to bless the nations. God wants especially to bless the forgotten nations.

"I will make your name great."

Genesis 12 :2

Unfortunately many African states and nations are known for their poverty, corruption, tribal wars and disease. God longs to change that. He wants to put such nations on the map, not as a trouble spot, but as a place of renown. In Europe, the British Isles are known as Great Britain. It is questionable as to how "great" Britain is these days but the title "Great" was given during a period of unrivalled missionary expansion in the nation. Here is the key to the promises we have just looked at. The inference in *Genesis 12* is this.

"I will bless you so that you will be a blessing... and all peoples on earth will be blessed through you."

Genesis 12 :3

America and Britain became world powers when their commitment to world evangelisation was strong. Perhaps the present economic growth in Asia is related to the strength of its Church and its desire to send out missionaries.

Instead of praying "*God bless me*" full stop, we need to enlarge the prayer to, "*God bless me so that I can bless others.*"

The desire to be a blessing for all the peoples of the earth draws a blessing onto the whole nation. If we are self-centred only looking to what we can receive from others we frustrate the blessing of God.

The road to change in Africa does not begin in the political or social arena, but within the body of Christ, as she rises to take her responsibility for the rest of the world in sharing the gospel, as she prays to become a light to the nations and a blessing for the peoples of the earth.

King David, caught up in the worship of the Lord, understood this principle well in *Psalms 67*. This psalm is taken direct from the Priestly blessing given to Aaron and his sons for Israel in *Numbers 6 :24*:

"The Lord bless you and keep you; the Lord make his face shine upon you and be gracious to you; the Lord turn his face towards you and give you peace".

Israel, in their self-centredness had kept the blessing to themselves but David, under the sheer inspiration of the Holy Spirit, enlarges the blessing to the world linking it back to the Abrahamic blessing.

*"May God be gracious to us and bless us
and make his face shine upon us,*

*(so) that your ways may be known on earth,
your salvation among all nations..."*

David even understood the very physical and temporal blessing that would prosper Israel in obeying the Lord's missionary mandate.

*"Then the land will yield its harvest,
and God, our God, will bless us.
God will bless us,
And all the ends of the earth will fear him..."*

It would be a mistake to over simplify and generalise in suggesting a universal panacea for every nation's woes. However, the biblical mandate to Abraham has to be taken seriously, and there is much evidence in socio-economic history to suggest that obedience to this promise brings the fulfilment of that promise upon the nation. It may be right to suggest that each nation has the opportunity to peak (and subsequently decline) within this covenant.

In God's timetable it seems that nations within Africa and beyond are emerging, at long last, to take up their own share in the covenant alongside the long line of other Gentile nations throughout history.

We will come back to the thread of Abraham's blessing running through the Bible at a later stage, but time is moving on and we need to be going back to our landowner recruiting his workers for the vineyard.

*"He went out again about the sixth hour and the
ninth hour and did the same thing."*

Matthew 20 :5

God's methods remain constant. His answer is always a man or woman willing to be a worker in the vineyard.

God has, with relentless regularity, been calling his workers to accomplish his works at specific times in history. Perhaps it was the rough fisherman Peter, who met Jesus' passionate gaze on a beach in Galilee at some 6th hour, who responded to "*Follow me*", and became a fisher of men, one of the heralds of the gospel of grace bringing in the new Church age following Pentecost.

It would be foolish to attempt a literal time transcript from the parable relating it exactly to Church and mission growth in history, but between the hours the landowner would have rejoiced at such workers as the early Benedictine monks and Celtic missionaries.

"...The monasteries of the Benedictine order were one of the principal means by which Christianity was spread among the Teutonic nations during the seventh and eighth centuries. From Ireland also, by way of the isle of Iona and through

Scotland, the Columban monasteries and settlements prepared and sent out devoted missionaries into Northern and Central Europe." (6)

The integrity and quality of the workers called is well illustrated by a description of Columba himself by Adamnan the Abbot of Iona.

"...He never could spend the space even of one hour without study or prayer, or writing, or some other holy occupation. So incessantly was he engaged night and day with the unwearied exercise of fasting and watching, that the burden of each of these austerities would seem beyond the power of all human endurance. And still, in all these, he was beloved by all; for a holy joy ever beaming on his face, revealed the joy and gladness with which the Holy Spirit filled his inmost soul." (7)

Men such as Francis of Assisi felt called to restore the church as it slid into corruption and in 1219 he was one of the first to express concern for evangelising Muslims as he crossed from the ranks of the crusading Franks into the Saracen lines. Although there was a price on the head of every Christian, he hurried into the Sultan's presence where he declared :

"I am not sent of man, but of God, to show the way of salvation."

Lord Longford, in his biography of St Francis describes him as:

"a man drunk with the spirit or driven forward by 'a very intoxication of the Divine love.'" (8)

A famous incident in his life reports how he very literally fulfilled God's words to Abraham about leaving his father's house. He was obliged to repay some money to his father. Longford continues the story.

"...Stripping off his clothes, he laid them with the money at the bishop's feet. 'My Lord', he said, 'I will gladly give back to him not only the money that belongs to him but my clothes also'... I wish to say only 'Our Father which art in Heaven', not 'my father, Petro Bernardone...' They gave him an old tunic which belonged to one of the bishop's farmhands. Francis took it gratefully and drew a cross on it with a piece of chalk making it, in St Bonaventure's words 'a worthy garment for a man who was crucified and a beggar!'" (9)

Following on from St Francis the first worker called to labour amongst the Muslims heard the call to work in the vineyard. Raymond Lull (1236-1315), who gave up his high position in the Court to follow the footsteps of Christ.

"Raymond Lull was raised up to prove what the Crusades might have done if they had fought for the Cross with the weapons of the Prince of Peace." (10)

Hearing of Francis' covenant with God, he too vowed his consecration to the Lord.

"To Thee, O Lord God, I offer myself, my wife, my children, and all that I possess. May it please Thee, who didst so humble Thyself to the death of the cross, to condescend to accept all that I give and offer to Thee, that I, my wife and my children may be Thy lowly servants." (11)

He wrote an apologetic book for use amongst Muslims and set up missionary colleges for training men in Arabic and other languages. He found himself in prison after preaching to Muslim leaders in Tunis. In 1307 he returned to Africa. In the market place of a Muslim town Bougie (old French colonial name for Bejaiah in Algeria) he, unwisely, declared Mohammed to be a false prophet and found himself again in jail. Although this information is contested he returned to Bougie in 1314 at the age of 78 to minister to a small group of converts with whom he stayed for about a year. One day he strode into the centre of town appealing to the people to renounce Mohammed. He was immediately stoned to death!

It is interesting to note that for several years now there has been a mini-revival in the same town of Bougie. Many of the Christians there report having come to the Lord via supernatural intervention and visions of the risen Christ. A few years ago, I also visited the town and can testify to it being one of the most open places spiritually in the whole of Algeria, a nation which still represents a major challenge for the Church of Jesus Christ. Surely the sacrifice of Raymond Lull is still bringing forth fruit today. Samuel Zwemer, a prolific writer and statesman for the Muslim world, writes of Lull and the Muslim challenge.

"The unoccupied fields of the world must have their Calvary before they can have their Pentecost. Raymond Lull, the first missionary to the Muslim world, expressed the same thought in medieval language when he wrote, : "As a hungry man makes dispatch and takes large morsels on account of his great hunger, so Thy servant feels a great desire to die that he may glorify Thee. He hurries day and night to complete his work in order that he may give up his blood and his tears to be shed for Thee."" (12)

It would be fitting to end this section on Raymond Lull with a quotation from his own writings:

"He who loves not lives not; he who lives by the Life cannot die." (13)

Although Luther brought in the Protestant Reformation there was a strange lack of workers for the mission field which remained neglected for 200 years leaving the way free for the Catholic workers and notably the Jesuits who led the way into the recently discovered Americas and Asia. Francis Xavier is probably the best known of these

workers and the following quote from the Moorlands Missions Paper gives a glimpse of his labours.

"At the age of 36 (May 6th 1547) Xavier landed in Goa India and began the establishment of the Church of Rome in that land. Two hundred Jesuits were installed and others followed. Xavier suffered much hardship, visited the sick and prisons. He soon counted so many thousands of converts from among the heathen that his voice often failed from weariness and his arms sank exhausted in the act of baptising. Later he went to Japan establishing the Jesuit mission there, and finally died in 1552 in an abortive attempt to enter China." (14)

Protestantism began offering its first workers for the vineyard as a result of the Pietist movement which led to the establishment of the Moravian missionary movement. Driven from Austria, Moravia and Bohemia under the leadership of Christian David, they took refuge on the estate of Count von Zinzendorf at Herrnhut, Dresden. This was in 1722. They adopted as their seal a lamb bearing the resurrection cross on a crimson background, with the motto :

"Our Lamb has conquered; Him let us follow."

Within ten years they had sent missionaries to ten different areas of the world - and those the hardest areas! In their first 150 years they sent forth 2.170 missionaries! (15)

It would be too arduous a task to make mention of all the workers that the landowner has summoned into his fields over the last centuries but, as the hour glass of missionary endeavour empties its grains, we need to press on to look at three men who significantly changed history and ushered in the modern era of missionary advance.

William Carey (1761-1834), is one of the greatest names in the history of missions. Through the pamphlet he wrote entitled : "An enquiry into the obligation of Christians to use means for the Conversion of the Heathen," (16) this part time teacher and shoemaker attacked the prevailing attitude of his day that the Great Commission no longer applied to the Church and awakened the conscience of Christians as to their responsibilities towards the pagan nations. The story goes that at one meeting where Carey was sharing his missionary burden the chairman interrupted and rebuked him saying :

"Sit down young man, you are an enthusiast. If God intends to convert the heathen, he will do it without consulting either you or me."

Well, Carey wouldn't sit down or be quiet but quietly laboured away. On the wall of his shop, commonly called "Carey's college", he had a map giving details of almost every known country in the world. Eventually he succeeded in getting the group of local ministers in Kettering England to agree to set up the very first "missionary society", so launching a new era of mission via such "means". The society was called "The Particular

Baptist Society for Propagating the Gospel among the heathen". "Perspectives" continues his story in this way.

*"Carey and a colleague, under the newly formed Society, sailed for India in 1793, eventually settling in Serampore, a Danish enclave near Calcutta. Carey, Joshua Marshman and William Ward, the 'Serampore Trio', translated and printed parts of the Bible into several Asian languages and founded a school for the training of Indian Christians. With little formal education but possessing extraordinary perseverance and conviction, Carey weathered financial crises, natural disasters, family illness and criticisms from England to make advances in evangelism, philology, the natural sciences and education. He exhorted others and himself to : **"Expect great things from God, attempt great things for God."** Today, Carey is recognised as the "father of Protestant missions"; since historians date the modern era of Protestant missions back to the publishing date of his Enquiry."(17)*

However God was longing to reach all the peoples of the earth and up till now the majority of societies contented themselves with a ministry on the coastlands. It was also apparent that traditional methods of supporting missionaries were insufficient and that a new faith dynamic was imperative to the growth of the missionary army.

God chose a man and burdened him with the "Macedonian" call of the immense Chinese continent. After a first term in China he retired through ill health to England but also, strategically, to set about the creation of a new "faith mission" to inland China known as the Chinese Inland Mission.

During the first forty years of its existence the C.I.M. saw 52 of its missionaries, plus 16 children, martyred. In spite of this, or perhaps in view of this, the mission grew (becoming O.M.F. today) to be responsible for sending or facilitating as many as 6.000 missionaries into the interior of China!

That man was Hudson Taylor, who at 16 years of age had received the consecrating touch of the Lord on his life. Battling inside over the tremendous responsibility he could be carrying in setting up a "faith mission" - someone had said that he would be carrying the blood of the young people he would be sending to their deaths in China - the Lord broke through on a beach in Brighton saying :

"You are not sending young people into the interior of China, I am."

O.M.F.'s account of this moment from Retrospect - "The Call to Service" is worth reading, as it captures Taylor's struggle and eventual victory.

"Yet, what was I to do ? The feeling of blood guiltiness became more and more intense ... On Sunday, June 25th, 1865, unable to bear the sight of a congregation of a thousand or more Christian people rejoicing in their own security, while millions were perishing for lack of knowledge, I wandered out on the sands alone,

in great spiritual agony; and there the Lord conquered my unbelief, and I surrendered myself to God for His service. I told Him that all the responsibility as to issues and consequences must rest with him; that as His servant, it was mine to obey and follow Him - His, to direct, to care for, and to guide me and those who might labour with me..." (18)

Missions are birthed in such intimate soul searching battles. The new mission movements in Africa and beyond will no doubt be founded on the foundation of such intercession carried in the hearts of his chosen labourers. May you too know victory as you fight your own particular battles of owning responsibility for the work of God.

Our final worker Cameron Townsend, who brings us up to our present hour, is much less well known than the others but someone who highlighted the hidden or unreached people groups to the world. While witnessing in Spanish to a Guatemalan tribal Indian, he was asked the question :

"If your God is so smart, why can't he speak our language ?"

This led him to concentrate on the unreached tribal groups of the world. Ralph D. Winter in his article "Four men, three eras, two transitions" highlights the value of his work.

"Surely in our time one person comparable to William Carey and Hudson Taylor is Cameron Townsend. Like Carey and Taylor, Townsend saw that there were still unreached frontiers, and for almost half a century he has waved the flag for the overlooked tribal peoples of the world. He started out hoping to help older boards reach out to tribal people. Like Carey and Taylor, he ended up starting his own mission, Wycliffe Bible Translators, which is dedicated to reaching these new frontiers. At first he thought there must be about 500 unreached tribal groups in the world... Later he revised his figure to 1.000, then 2.000, and now it is closer to 5.000. As his conception of the enormity of the task has increased, the size of his organisation has increased. Today it numbers over 4.000 adult workers..." (19)

History testifies to the numbers of brave workers already having made their mark in the master's vineyard. They are those who have indeed borne the,

"burden of the work and the heat of the day." *Matthew 20 :12.*

However, the full harvest is yet to be gathered in, with over half the world still needing a clear presentation of the gospel message. Praise the Lord for the marvellous history of missions, expanding with courage and power since the day of Pentecost, and taking about 2.000 years to get to the present situation.

Will we need to wait another 2.000 years to see the job accomplished ?

In our day the final hour seems to be approaching. Israel has returned to her homeland and many other world events seem to be telling us that this is indeed the eleventh hour. The last opportunity to volunteer for the works of missionary service.

It is most surprising to note that, despite the great urgency in the heart of God to get the job done, the vast majority of Christians are still standing around in the market place doing nothing.

"About the eleventh hour he went out and found still others standing around. He asked them : "Why have you been standing here all day long doing nothing ?"

Matthew 20 :6

"Why have you been doing nothing for the cause of world evangelisation ?"

asks the Lord. There is no escaping the direct challenge of this question to us all, but especially to the Christians living in the Global South. The past ages of missionary endeavour are filled with the exploits of Europeans and later Americans. Is this the pattern to be followed in the future ?

At the turn of the century 95 % of all Christians were to be found in the Western world with only 5% in the Global South (or 2/3 world.) Today 75% of all Christians in the world are found in the Southern nations, with by far the biggest growth point in Africa. Ralph Winter notes in his "World Mission Survey" that :

"Someday there will be more Christians in Africa than on any other continent in the world! By the year 2000, the African followers of Jesus Christ in all their diversity will number 350 million." (20)

God has saved his best wine till last. It is obvious that the landowner has in reserve a vast army of workers from Africa and beyond. These workers represent the young adolescent African church, coming to maturity, full of energy and a vision for the future. A mighty African warrior emerging to confront the powers of hell that hold many nations in bondage to fear and death. The enemy wants to keep the Church doing nothing for the cause of World mission. Many African nations, have a Christian population numbering over 70% of the population (many of whom would call themselves evangelical), and yet not yet possessing an indigenous missionary work ! Surely the time has come to stand up and be counted.

"No one has hired us,"

Matthew 20 :7

you may cry.

"We have always been used to receiving missionaries rather than sending them! We have no structure or strategy. Our lands are poor and underdeveloped. We feel

rejected, uneducated, scared and unfit for hire!" You may also be giving your own reasons for not engaging in mission.

This doesn't change the eleventh hour command of the master.

"You also go and work in my vineyard."

Matthew 20:7

You, Christians of the Global South, and the world over, take up the baton of world evangelisation, take up the Abrahamic promise which will transform your own nations enabling them to fulfil their God ordained destiny of bringing Jesus to the world. Now is your hour. Will you have the courage to respond ? Surely this glorious eleventh hour army will be no less heroic than those who have preceded it.

During a recent visit to Central African Republic, a nation nestled at the heart of this great continent, the following vision was shared. A flash of three images was received of a young African man. In the first image he had a rifle and a machete in his hands and was filled with ethnic hatred going on to kill and be killed.

In the second was an emaciated image of the young African dying of Aids like a lonely animal.

The third was the same man, yet having a Bible in his hands, preaching in the Muslim strongholds, and dying the death of a martyr.

The following interpretation was given. The devil longs to destroy the emerging Christian army in Africa. Through ethnic violence, immorality and disease the spirit of death and destruction seeks to wipe out the sons of promise as he did in Europe through the first world war. The Lord has a better plan. Rather than let your life be stolen away by the devil, offer your life to Jesus as a sacrifice. The Lord is preparing an African army of fearless martyrs willing to give their all.

"You also go and work in my vineyard,"

Matthew 20 :7

says the Lord.

Our missionary zeal in the West is no less undermined by the more subtle scourges of indifference, unbelief and materialism.

In a future chapter we will look at the new structures the Lord is bringing into place to facilitate and release this missionary army, notably a new approach of Business and World Enterprise working for fair trade and justice and linking itself to the thrust of world evangelisation, but first, let us continue to work through the biblical and historical motivation for building World Mission.

We end this section on the "eleventh hour workers" with an amazing revelation.

"I want to give the man who was hired last the same as I gave you."

Matthew 20 :14

What a privilege! What generosity on the part of God! We can enter into the same promises and privileges as those who have preceded us! The same reward of a Hudson Taylor or an Adoniram Judson can be ours. Let us not lose out on this privilege and begin to grumble and count the cost as some did. (*Matthew 27 :14*).

Workers will begin to grumble when they lose sight of the privilege of serving Christ.

Ours is the privilege of bearing, *"the burden of the work and the heat of the day"*.

Our reward is the sharing in the sufferings of Christ himself and also in His glory. (*Romans 8 :17*). If we lose sight of Him, our portion, we will quickly slip into legalism and grumbling. The work will become heavy and joyless rather than a glorious celebration of Christ's ultimate victory over sin and death. Christ Himself was the first and last (*Revelation 1 :8*), the first worker at the Father's side in creation and the last worker returning for the heavenly harvest. He fills up each hour with his life and gift of himself. To see who truly bore the burden of the work and the heat of the day we need only to look to that naked figure nailed to a wooden cross under the hot Palestinian sun, bearing the sin of the world and the heat of hell upon his shoulders. No grumbling for him! Rather the glad accomplishment of the heavenly mission.

"For the joy set before Him, he endured the cross and scorned its shame."

Hebrews 12 :2

His joy was seeing the army of workers who were being raised up to follow him. His joy was in the emerging missionary communities. The African, Brazilian, Chinese or Korean missionary armies. His joy is in us! Perhaps we feel last as a person or a nation, but God wants to make us first in our desire to witness and glorify Him. We may be the last in a long history of missionary movements but perhaps we may be the first to usher in the return of the King!

"...The last will be first, and the first will be last."

A few years ago my wife was pregnant with our third child. As the bump grew bigger I asked the Lord to give me a prayer of blessing for the child. I laid hands on the yet unborn child and heard the Lord give me the verses from *Mat 20*. Could there be a greater blessing or privilege than being a worker for God and inheriting the glory of Christ.

"Oh God, please may there be some work left for her as she grows up! Give her the joy of serving you!"

My daughter is now 13 and growing quickly. In the same way may he give the emerging nations of this world, may he give you, the joy of being eleventh hour workers in his harvest!

"You also go and work in my vineyard."

Matthew 20 :7

Endnotes

1) Smith, Oswald, The Passion for Souls, Mitchell Morgan & Scott, London 1950, P.25.

2) Noble, John, Everyman's Guide to The Holy Spirit, Kingsway, Eastbourne, 1991, P.P.210-211.

3) See Appendix, O'Toole, Thomas, C.A.R. The Continent's Hidden Heart, "The Physical Setting"

4) Henry, Mathew, Commentary, Vol V, Matthew To John, Revel New York, 1958,

"Nothing was more a mystery in the gospel dispensation than the rejection of the Jews and the calling in of the Gentiles; so the apostle speaks of it (Eph. 3.3-6); that the Gentiles should be fellow heirs : nor was anything more provoking to the Jews than the intimation of it. Now this seems to be the principal scope of this parable, to show that the Jews should be first called into the vineyard, and many of them should come at the call; but, at length, the gospel should be preached to the gentiles, and they should receive it, and be admitted to equal privileges and advantages with the Jews; should be fellow-citizens with the Saints, which the Jews, even those of them that believed, would be very much disgusted at but not without reason..." Also seen as a parable of how folk are converted into the kingdom with the hours being, "the several ages of life, in which souls are converted to Christ". P.P.281-283.

5) Chârân means parched in Hebrew derived from Chârar "to dry up"

6) Broadbent, E.H., The Pilgrim Church, Pickering & Inglis, London 1963, P.32.

7) Clifford, David, History of Missions Course Paper, Moorlands Bible College, P.10.

8) Longford, Francis of Assisi, A life for All Seasons, Weidenfield & Nicholson, London 1978, P.14.

- 9) Ibid, P.P.14-15.
- 10) Clifford, David, History of Missions Course Paper, P.16.
- 11) Ibid, P.P.16-17.
- 12) Zwemer, S., The Glory of The Impossible, from Perspectives, Paternoster Press, London 1992, P.B.120.
- 13) Clifford, David, History of Missions Course Paper, P.18.
- 14) Ibid, P.20.
- 15) Grant, Colin, Europe's Moravians : A Pioneer Missionary Church, Perspectives, P.B73.
- 16) Full Title "An Enquiry Into the Obligations of Christians to use Means for the Conversion of the Heathens; in which the Religious State of the Different Nations of the World, the Success of Former Undertakings, and the Practicability of Further Undertakings, are considered...".
- 17) Winter & Hawthorne, Perspectives On The World Christian Movement, Paternoster Press, London 1992, P.B.94
- 18) Ibid, P.B.108
- 19) Ibid, P.B.41
- 20) Winter & Hawthorne, Perspectives On The World Christian Movement, P.B.210.

