

"Can This World Be Evangelized in Twenty Years?"

By Arthur T. Pierson
from the *Missionary Review*,
November-December 1881

Why not! These are days of giant enterprises in the interests of commerce, science, art, and literature. Why not carry the spirit of sanctified enterprise into our religious life and work! I wish by voice and by the aid of the press to set forth a practicable business proposition, namely, that *before the year 1900, the gospel shall be preached to every living soul!*

The time has fully come for conducting the colossal scheme of the world's evangelization as an enterprise of the united Christian Church, upon business principles, with a definite plan, by a division of the field which is the world, and a distribution of the work among all evangelical denominations.

A careful consideration will show us that it is perfectly feasible, during the remaining years of this century, to put the Word of God into the hands of every living human being, in his own tongue, and to proclaim the good tidings to every creature.

Among the thousand millions of souls in Papal, Pagan, and Moslem lands, there are at least six hundred millions yet wholly unreached. What force have we wherewith to compass this host? We must distinguish between evangelization and conversion. To evangelize, or bring the gospel into contact with souls, is the special commission of the church (Matt. xxviii. 19, 20). For such a contact between the saving gospel and the unsaved we are held responsible. Conversion is God's work, and for that he alone is responsible. But if we preach the gospel to every creature, he will be with us to add the work and power of the Spirit. Let us remember that one hundred and eighteen millions belong to Protestant and evangelical churches. If we could depend on each one of this whole number to do his or her share of this work, how easily it could be done! If personally or by proxy, every such believer should, during these next twenty years, reach six new souls with the gospel, the whole world would be evangelized! Of course we must make a large discount from this gross number

in estimating our working force. Let us then suppose that out of this one hundred and eighteen millions, only ten millions have real evangelical knowledge, faith, and experience. Could not God use his picked band, like Gideon's, to do the whole work? Let each of those ten millions, during twenty years, reach sixty new souls with the gospel, and the grand result is still reached! Think of it! We may take *one in ten* of the Protestant church members, and with them bring the whole present population of the world to the knowledge of the Gospel, by simply securing this result: that each of that elect number shall in some way bring the gospel into contact with three souls each year for twenty years!

Of course both men and means must be multiplied, if this great work is to be done. We must have at least ten thousand more missionaries; but that is but one of a thousand of the supposed ten million. We must have at least ten million more dollars a year for the support of these missionaries, and another ten million dollars for the various helps and appliances necessary. But let these ten million disciples give each five dollars a year, and we have fifty millions for the work of missions annually. England gave more than that to carry on the war in Afghanistan.

The enterprise of the world's evangelization is perfectly practicable. We need only a baptism of prayer, systematic effort, and faith in God. If the children of this world had a project before them with as good a prospect of success, although its dimensions were world-wide, they would undertake it with an energy that would girdle the earth with men and means in ten years? Why do we hesitate?

Let us have an Ecumenical Council representing the whole evangelical church, solely to plan a world-wide campaign, with reference to bringing the tidings of salvation into contact with every soul in the shortest time! Let the field be mapped out, and divided, with as little waste of men and means as may be; let there be an universal appeal for workers and for money, a system of gathering offerings so thorough that every giver shall be regularly brought into contact with the Lord's treasury, and the mites be increased to millions! The proposition is perhaps startling, and yet, looking at

it with studied calmness and coolness, tell us what is there to prevent its consummation, but a lack of new anointing from above!

"An Appeal to Disciples Everywhere"

Issued by the Northfield Convention,
1881

To Fellow believers of every name, scattered throughout the world, greeting:

Assembled in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, with one accord, in one place, we have continued for ten days in prayer and supplication, communing with one another about the common salvation, the blessed hope, and the duty of witnessing to a lost world.

It was near our place of meeting that, in 1741, at Northampton, Jonathan Edwards set forth his trumpet-peal, calling upon disciples everywhere to unite the whole habitable globe. That summons to prayer marks a new era and epoch in the history of the church of God. Praying bands began to gather in this and other lands; mighty revivals of religion followed; immorality and infidelity were wonderfully checked; and, after more than fifteen hundred years of apathy and lethargy, the spirit of missions was rekindled. In 1784, the monthly concert was begun, and in 1792, the first missionary society formed in England; in 1803, William Carey, the pioneer missionary, sailed for India. Since then, the hundred missionary boards have been organized, and probably not less than one hundred thousand missionaries, including women, have gone forth into the harvest field. The Pillar has moved before the humble laborers, and the two-leaved gates have opened before them, until the whole world is now accessible. The ports and portals of Pagan, Moslem, and even Papal lands are now unsealed, and the East of the hermit nations welcomes the missionary. The results of missionary labor in the Hawaiian and Fiji Islands, in Madagascar, in Japan, probably have no parallel even in apostolic days; while even Perseus is surpassed by the ingathering of ten thousand converts in the mission station in India within a few days, in the year 1878. The mission lands had scarce compassed the w