

# Acts 13 Breakthrough

*“Observe! be astonished! Wonder! Because I am doing something in your days—you would not believe if you were told” (Habakkuk 1:5). Here is powerful strategy for igniting the Church worldwide with a vision for releasing a task force of at least 200,000 new missionaries to the harvest fields of the world. Every church and every Christian needs to be a part of this vision in obedience to the Great Commission the Lord has given us to complete in this kairos moment of history.*

by George Verwer

**T**he “Acts 13 Breakthrough” is both a vision and a strategy for churches and Christians to raise up, recruit, train, send and support 200,000 new missionaries to the harvest fields of the world—doing it in obedience to the mission command given to us by Jesus Christ in Matthew 28:18-20 to go in His name to all the nations (ethnic groups) of the earth and to disciple them and plant His Church and Kingdom among them.

The vision is inspired by the example of the New Testament church in Antioch (Acts 13:1,2) who obeyed the leading of the Spirit of God to “set apart Barnabas and Saul [later changed to Paul] for the work to which I have called them.”

## **Why do We Need 200,000 New Missionaries?**

In a world now consisting of 6 billion people, we must face the reality of how many still have not heard the Gospel, much less have a church or even a witness in their midst. In book after book, and article after article, it has been made clear that large numbers of workers are desperately needed in so many parts of the world. To be sure, I have not heard anyone say that we need less than 200,000 new missionaries, some believe we need close to 1 million.

The reality of mission allocation is as follows: About 90% of existing

workers are in places where the church already exists. Many continue to return home or head for glory, so tens of thousands are needed to fill those gaps. Of course, in many cases, the church is now planted and so the missionary can move into some other ministry or more unreached areas.

However, this is more easily said than done. Our greater burden is for the more unreached people groups of the world with the millions of individuals who have been so greatly neglected until recently. In places like Canada, the USA, U.K., Brazil, Philippines, Korea and a number of other lands, there are hundreds of thousands of Christian workers and millions of other committed Christians. Yet in all those places they are calling for help and more workers. If workers are needed and employed in already reached nations, how much more we need large numbers in places and among peoples where the church is just being born or even is non-existent. Keep in mind that many of the workers are couples. Also remember that we are including in our target full-time missionary support and back up staff.

We feel we should aim high. We are not claiming that God has given us a magic number of 200,000 new missionaries. Nor are we claiming they will all be on the field by the year 2000. In fact, since we have had this and other goals for some years now, we can praise God that many thou-

sands of new missionaries are already on the field. Tens of thousands are already in some kind of training or holding pattern wanting to get to the mission field.

## **What Kind of Missionaries are Needed?**

Who do we classify as a missionary? We are talking about people who have been sent by the Lord and by the church, as in Acts 13, who are moving out into cross-cultural ministry. It is hard to know how to draw the line, especially as we want to include tent-makers or bi-vocational missionaries. Some might say that all committed Christians are missionaries, and we are overly aware of the complexity of definitions.

However, for the purpose of what needs to be accomplished, we must accept a narrower definition as set forth by many missiologists. We are talking about people with specific spiritual guidance (a specific call of God) who will launch out into missionary work in a serious way.

We are talking here about people going out of their own culture to work among peoples of other cultures. This specific calling is not to say that they are better than someone led to work among people in their own cultures. We need both; however, our goals and aims must be for cross-cultural workers especially targeting those peoples and cultures who have never heard

the Gospel for the first time, nor have any Christian church of any form whatsoever planted in their cultures and language groups.

When all is said and done, there will always be complex situations that will not be easy to define or measure. We want to be as big-hearted as possible in counting someone as a missionary, but we must have some parameters. We feel that sending churches and denominations will be the ones to make the final decision in these matters. Our unity on this will be in the midst of diversity.

However, we are not just thinking of traditional career missionaries from Western countries though we need as many of them as possible. We believe the new emerging sending countries will be the bigger partners in this great mission thrust. Many of them will work in their own nation, as in India, among people of a different language and culture. This is already happening in countries, and it is virtually impossible to measure its impact.

For instance, in Western countries Christian workers working cross-culturally in a serious way must be classified as a vital part of our missionary force. An Anglo-American working in the inner city among black people is a missionary whether they accept the term or not. A native American working among other Americans would also be a missionary.

We must all recognize a major paradigm shift in the global world missions program. We do not include people going on a mission trip, or anything less than one year, even though we esteem that kind of ministry. Many longer term people got their vision when they were on something very short. We are talking about people who are headed into specific mission-

ary work for at least a year or two with the great majority going to the 10/40 Window of the world. We know some of these will return after a couple of years, but with an on-going strategy, there will always be others to take their place. We are talking about people who have undergone specific training for their life and ministry. This is one of the reasons we want to make local churches linked with mis-

### Graph here of the 10/40 Map of the World

sion agencies the center of the entire strategy. This is one of the reasons we are calling this ACTS 13 BREAKTHROUGH.

### Why Do We Need 200,000 New Missionaries?

This will not be easy and we must not be intimidated by the complexities and problems. It is essential that we realize that our goals are for the whole Body of Christ and that we do not think we are the people who are making this happen. Many great things are happening, often by denominations and churches that do not have any link with AD 2000 & Beyond, and in some cases with anyone else. We would like to get information from them even if it were just once a year, but it is not easy to know how to go about that. In any case, we would like to find strong national entities in

every nation that would partner with us to keep track of what is happening. We would like to see whole denominations and church streams or fellowships taking ownership of this vision and strategy.

In a number of nations books are published that give statistics about the number of missionaries. In the U.K. we have the *UK Christian Handbook* which is updated every couple of years. We hope that more nations will have similar material and information. In some ways, the final statistics will only be written in heaven. We want to be proactive in this thrust and not be held up because of the many problems and obstacles that surface. Every method of communication, and especially email, will be used to keep vital information flowing to all those who want and need it.

### How Will we Present the Vision?

This vision and challenge is being launched by the Missions Mobilization Network of the AD 2000 & Beyond Movement. Working with Luis Bush (with whom I have had many phone calls lately) the initial challenge will go out to the world-wide network. We believe each aspect of AD 2000 & Beyond, including every Task Force and Track of the AD2000 Movement, will see how it fits into the vision and work that God has given them.

Our dream is that everyone linked in any way with the movement will

Photo  
here  
by  
Luis Bush

*This is a breakthrough concept! It captures the essence of the heart of Jesus when He said, "Pray to the Lord of the harvest to thrust out laborers into the harvest field." It provides a handle for every local church in every region of the world to contribute to God's initiative of our times.*

take ownership of this vision and share it with others especially any churches with whom they are linked. Our prayer is that other umbrella organizations, like national missionary alliances, will also take ownership and begin to run with the vision. Most of them already are into this kind of vision or something similar. Many parts of this challenge are not new to people who are already on the cutting edge recruiting and sending. We hope to see a spiritual explosion in answer to prayer (still the heart of our strategy as per Matthew 9:35) that will cause hundreds of mission agencies, networks and key churches to take hold of this breakthrough. We hope they will contextualize it into their own situation whether they are part of AD 2000 & Beyond or not. Our prayer is that churches and Christians would seriously pray and then seriously obey just as those early Christians did at Antioch in Acts 13.

How does this vision and strategy fit into the whole Joshua Project 2000 effort? If you have read about this, then you already know that sending workers, especially to the unreached and untargeted peoples, is already at the heart of the Joshua Project. The "Acts 13 Breakthrough" is a vision and strategy that will help make it happen. Biblical research, prayer, mobilizing and training should lead to actual workers being sent. This breakthrough vision shows that reaching every people group, and planting a church in each people, is doable. We realize this might not happen by the year 2000. That is one of the reasons the word BEYOND was added to the

name some years ago.

In any case, it would be a huge mistake if we allowed things we do not agree with about AD 2000 and the Joshua Project, etc., to keep us from the basic biblical task of sending out workers especially to the nations who still have not been disciplined. I believe this would clearly grieve the Holy Spirit of God. In that light, I would urge everyone to read Chapter 9, "Graciously Disagreeing and Pressing On" in Charles Swindoll's book *The Grace Awakening*. Without this kind of I Corinthians 13 biblical reality we will never be able to do what God wants us to do. Without on-going biblical renewal, we will never reach our goals. This particular vision and strategy must be woven into all the other great goals and aims that we all have on our hearts. Quality of life and biblical purity in Christ must be at the heart of all we do. Other vital emphases like worship, spiritual warfare, church growth and ministry to the whole person and the whole society are all part of what burns upon our hearts. God will, of course, lead different people, churches and organizations in different ways, but I believe, with godly humility, we can learn to appreciate one another's visions and ministries and thereby produce huge synergetic action that will result in millions coming into the Kingdom.

### What about Missionary Support?

It would be easy to say that God will supply, but we know he has turned that task over to us and it will not be an easy one. We have launched "Operation Support Breakthrough," and are helping thousands of churches and workers deal with this tough issue. It is uphill all the way. Many new workers

will need a number of churches to cooperate to get them to the field, and this is where mission fellowships often play such a key role. It is unlimited what we could do if we did not care about who got the credit. We

#### NUMBER OF CHURCHES NEEDED TO SEND 200,000 NEW MISSIONARIES (According to Country and Area)

This represents less than 10% of the churches in the world.

AUSTRALIA	2,000
CANADA	5,000
CARIBBEAN	1,000
CENTRAL AMERICA & MEXICO	5,000
EASTERN EUROPE	5,000
EAST ASIA PACIFIC	4,000
GREAT BRITAIN	5,000
KOREA	5,000
NEW ZEALAND	1,000
SCANDINAVIA & FINLAND	1,200
SOUTH AFRICA	5,000
REST OF AFRICA	5,000
SOUTH AMERICA	10,000
SOUTH ASIA (India, Pakistan, Nepal, & Sri Lanka)	15,000
USA	25,000
WESTERN EUROPE	4,800
REST OF WORLD	1,000

**TOTAL 100,000**

must not just sing about the glory of God (and preach), but we must live and act in a way that demonstrates that we want HIM TO GET ALL THE GLORY.

We know that ten times more money is now in the hands of churches and Christians than say 25 years ago. Money is not really our main problem. As people get fired up, repent and obey, we will see an avalanche of finances to get the workers to the field and keep them there. A top priority must be getting people who are back home at present trying

Photo here by Chacko Thomas

*I am so convinced about the "Acts 13 Breakthrough Strategy" that by God's grace I am giving it a major chunk of the next two years. This a a great plan which has enormous potential to help finish the task of world evangelization.*

to raise support so that they can return.

We are also hoping to mobilize in a greater way all those now at home who have had field experience as they can be so key in the mentoring and mobilizing aspect of raising and sending more workers. Of course, many are already doing this especially in their own local fellowships. Can you imagine 100,000 churches and fellowships around the globe getting into the Acts 13 reality in a big way?

### **In Conclusion**

Where do we go from here? Of course, that depends where you already are as to vision, missions and the unreached peoples of the world. We must all by faith take some dynamic giant steps forward. If you and your fellowship already share the heart for this vision, the most important thing is for other Christians and for your fellowship and other churches to grasp the vision and then to adopt a clear plan to see it happen. You and leaders in the Body of Christ can do what believers did in Acts 13, allowing the Holy Spirit to speak and lead. Ask God to clarify the vision and plan. If your fellowship is too small to send one new missionary by itself, consider partnership with others in your church or area.

Also, good missionary training is very important. Appoint someone to research this whole area, to contact mission agencies and training colleges, etc., who can advise and help. You can contact the IJFM editor about this all important training or mission equipping matter.

Where did this vision come from? The heart of this vision came to me on a flight from Cordoba to Buenos Aires after taking part in Love Latin America. Based on that vision I BELIEVE WITH ALL MY HEART THAT THE SAME HOLY SPIRIT THAT SENT OUT THE WORKERS IN THE BOOK OF

ACTS WILL DO IT WHEREVER PEOPLE ARE SERIOUS ABOUT HIS COMMANDS AND KINGDOM.

To find out more, and see the big picture, we have produced various resources that are free of charge to help you grasp the vision and get involved. Contact AD2000 Missions Mobilization Network, PO Box 660, Forest Hill, London, SE23 3ST ENGLAND. Or send an email to:

chacko.thomas@london.ict.om.org

You can also contact the editor of the IJFM especially regarding the crucial aspect of mission training. (See IJFM address, tel., fax., and email address in the Contents page of this edition.)

Photo here  
of  
George  
Verwer

*George Verwer is the leader and founder of Operation Mobilization, a mission organization dedicated to*

*motivate, develop and equip people for world evangelization, especially among the unreached in the Middle East, South and Central Asia and Europe.*

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