

Reaching Your World for Christ
by
Andrew Murray

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Publisher's note:

This new edition from Whitaker House has been updated for the modern reader. Words, expressions, and sentence structure have been revised for clarity and readability.

All Scripture quotations are from the King James Version (KJV) of the Holy Bible.

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I

The State of the Home Church

I have a deep burden on my heart for foreign missions. But I have an even deeper concern about the one thing on which missions most depends: the state of the home church. Of course, by home church I mean any church that supports missionaries in foreign fields.

I see vividly the worldwide need of the Gospel message. Furthermore, openings exist for bringing the Gospel to every person throughout the world.

The piercing question is this: Will the church be able to enter these open doors? The state of the home church is an all-important factor in the possible solution of the great challenges in missions. Indeed, I have recently seen

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new meaning in the words *the state of the home church*.

Everything in foreign missions depends on the home base. Everything depends on the ability and readiness of the church to respond to God's call. It is well worth our while to read what some concerned pastors and missionaries have said about the life of the church:

As we contemplate the work to be done, we are conscious that the fundamental difficulty is not one of men or money, but of spiritual power. The Christian experience of the church is not deep, intense, and living enough to meet the world's need. We need a more perfect manifestation by the church of the spirit of the Incarnation and of the Cross. We need a new vitalizing of the whole church.

This renewal of the whole life of the church is indeed a great thing—an impossible thing, we are tempted to think. But does it seem so impossible when we get the conviction that God, being who He is, wills it? It does not seem so impossible when we saturate ourselves in the thought of the Gospels, with their repeated teaching, "*Ask, and ye shall receive*" (John 16:24).

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It is also worth our while to read the statements of other church leaders on this subject. The following section contains a summary of the thoughts of key church leaders on the state of the church, written for our consideration.

Thoughts on Missions

“The missionary problem of the church today is not primarily a financial problem. The problem is how to ensure a vitality equal to the expansion of the missionary program. The only hope of this is for Christians to obtain the more abundant life through Christ, which is given as we walk in the pathway of obedience to Him.

“A crucial factor in the evangelization of the non-Christian world is the state of the church in countries that already have been evangelized. Until there is a more widespread consecration among the members of the home church, there can be no hope of expanding the missionary enterprise and making the knowledge of Jesus Christ readily accessible to every human being.

“The most direct and effective way to promote the evangelization of the world is to influence Christian workers, and, indeed, the whole membership of the church, to yield

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themselves completely to the authority of Christ as Lord. We must establish and preserve at all costs those spiritual habits that will surely give us spiritual power and Christlike witnessing.

“Above all else, we need to have such a spiritual atmosphere throughout the church that the very character and spirit of Jesus Christ will live anew in the hearts of all His followers, and that, through them, His life may flow forth to the world lying in darkness.

“We are driven back, at every turn, to the question of the spiritual condition of the home church. Does the church have sufficient vitality for the tremendous task to which it is called? We realize that the fundamental problems lie in these areas: the sincerity of the spiritual experience of the church, the quality of its obedience, and the intensity and daring of its faith.

“There can be no forward movement in missions, no great offering of life, without a deepening of the spiritual life of the church leaders and a real spiritual revival among the church members. New methods can accomplish nothing unless they are begun, continued, and completed in prayer, and permeated from first to last with the Holy Spirit. ‘Back to divine wisdom, back to the living power of Jesus Christ, back through prayer to the source of all

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power'—this must be the motto of all missionary organizations, all church leaders, and, ultimately, all church members. This is necessary if the Great Commission of our Lord Jesus Christ is to be carried out.

“Therefore, we recommend that every endeavor be made to spread the spirit and habit of prayer among all Christian workers, young and old. We are confident that when the entire church will devoutly pray for the coming of the kingdom, the triumph will already have been achieved.

“We must make believers understand that it is only their halfhearted consecration and lack of faith that hinder the rapid advance of the work, only their own coldness that keeps back His redemption from a lost world. We must always bear in mind that He is eager and able to save the world, which has already been redeemed by Him. Alas, if only we, His professed followers on earth, were willing that He do so.

“We frankly confess that it is futile to talk about making Christ known to the world unless there is a great increase of vitality in the members of the churches. It is the will of God that the most remote human soul have the opportunity to know Jesus Christ as his personal Redeemer. Of this there can be no doubt. We are all aware that the opportunity and means

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are sufficient. The work halts only because the entire church is not yet in full submission to His will.

“Other church leaders see and speak in similar words of the same great need. Cooperation, if it is to lead to unity, requires a spiritual revival, which must be in its very nature supernatural. The reinforcements that are needed are dependent on the spiritual state of the churches that are to supply them. The very religions that Christianity is to replace teach her that her own life must first be lived on the supernatural plane, with the power of a living faith in a living God.

“If our missionaries are to be fully and properly prepared to convince the world, they must go forth from a church in which the Spirit of Christ is evidently at work. They must go forth from a church in which the Gospel is continually and irrefutably proved to be, in very truth, *‘the power of God unto salvation’* (Rom. 1:16).”

Think on These Things

Let me beg every reader, whether minister or member, to look back over these thoughts on the condition of the church. Think about them until you come to realize the intense solemnity

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of what that condition implies, the place that God calls the church to take, and what is needed if God and the world are to find the church ready for the work that awaits her.

Before us lies a world dying in its need of the very message that the church of Christ alone can bring. The world in its need is accessible and open to this message as it never has been in ages past. The Lord Jesus Christ, having laid down His life to redeem this world, still waits for the message of His redeeming love to be brought to those for whom He died. But His church does not have the power or vitality or consecration that would make it possible for her to fulfill her blessed task.

A revival is greatly needed. Something must happen if the plea for prayer for that revival is to be carefully obeyed by God's people. Something must happen if prayer is to be truly effective. That something is this: The state of the church as it has been described must become an unbearable burden. We must learn to give ourselves no rest, and to give God no rest, until He makes His church a joy in the earth.