



When I was 12 years old, we had a missionary come to our small town to speak at our church. Because my dad was the pastor, the missionary stayed at our house. The man's name is Charlie Harvey. Charlie was a missionary in Congo, who was this driving force focused on making a difference in that country. However, like many other missionaries, he had contracted malaria while in Africa and the weekend he was staying with my family, his malaria flared up. I can still see him sitting on a chair, leaning against the pulpit to support himself, beads of perspiration on his forehead and drinking water none-stop. Yet despite how ill he was, his eyes glowed with a fire of excitement and passion because of what the Lord was doing in Nigeria and because he loved his Nigerian brothers and sisters with all his heart and soul. As a 12 year old boy, I watched this weak, yet powerful and dynamic man and I said to myself, *"Now this is the kind of man I want to be. I want to be a man who moves with passion and power into whatever God calls me to be and do."*

Listen to how Paul put it in II Corinthians 5:13 – 15. *"If we are out of our mind, it is for the sake of God; if we are in our right mind, it is for you. For Christ's love compels us, because we are convinced that one died for all, and therefore all died. And he died for all, that those who live should no longer live for themselves but for him who died for them and was raised again."*

In our church we have people just like Charlie Harvey who have been *'out of their mind for God's sake* and have given up all they had to travel the world because of their love for Jesus, their obedience to God's call on their lives and because of their love for people who lived half way around the world for them. People from our church like Gottfried & Christa Schalm, who spent 40 plus years in Niagara; Paul & Vanessa Miller, who are in Japan right now; Ormi & Freda Uptigrove, who spent years in Haiti as members of the Medical Team; Ed Schuster in China; Dorothy & Eduardo in Mexico, Bob & Sheila Lever who were in Nigeria with Wycliffe; Keith & Yvonne Kerr who were missionary pilots in South America and I could mention many more people. Plus, others of you have been key players in orphanages in the Ukraine, Brazil, Mexico, Haiti and South Africa. I haven't even mentioned those who have felt called to go on short-term trips. Please understand that if you are part of Brentview, you are part of a community of believers who have a passion for our World.

From the beginning to the end of the Bible, we see that our Father God is on a mission and He has invited us to join Him on that mission. His mission is to reach out and bring the world into a relationship with Himself. His passion is that no one will be lost and His hearts cry for boys, girls, men and women from around the world will feel His practical care in their lives. His desire is that all will have a chance to hear His soft whisper in their lives, to know that they are never alone in life but are loved by Him and that His goal is for them to spend eternity with Him.

This morning I want us to begin the fourth part in our series we called, *'Stepping Out.'* So far, we have talked about making a difference in our Neighbours lives, getting involved in the life of our Community, and then looking at how we can make an impact in our City. Now I want to draw the circle a little larger and talk about making a difference in our World.

I. In a Village of 100

As a congregation you are well traveled. Many of you have traveled to Europe, Britain, USA, South America and other parts of the world. Plus, an increasing proportion of our congregation are from countries outside of Canada (that is so exciting, this allows us to be truly the Church of God. There are things which we need to know that only come as you, (who are from outside of Canada), give us insight which is beyond on Canadian viewpoint.) As you have traveled, you have found that Walt Disney was right when he said, *"It is a small world after all."* However, despite our growing world perspective, it is still so easy to see the world through North American eyes. That is why if you look at the world map that Pastor Brad has placed at the bottom of the stairs near the Global Resource Room, you will see that it is upside down compared to the maps we grew up with in school. The point is that we, in North America are not the centre of the universe. To help with the idea, I want to play a 3-minute clip from a children's video called, *The World is a Village*. The idea is simple; if the world was a village made up of only 100 people, what would that village look like. The idea is to let us get a more realistic view of our world.

The World is a Village Video Statistics:

Of the 100 people in the village:

61 from Asia

13 from Africa

5 from North America

8 Central America

12 from Europe

1 Oceania (Australia/South seas)

Language:

22 speak Chinese

9 English

8 Hindi

7 Spanish

4 Bengali

4 Arab

3 Russian

3 Portuges

Age:

39 would be under 20

42 ages 20 – 49

18 ages 50 to 79

1 over 80

Faith:

32 Christians

19 Muslim

13 Hindu

12 Folk Religions

6 Confucianism, Buddhism and Shintoism

1 Jewish

15 don't practice any religion

School of the 39 kids in the village:

only 31 go to school

7 (mainly girls) will never learn to read or write because they need to work so their family can eat.

Money:

20 people will have money left over after paying for their daily food and shelter

20 would have almost nothing and most days wouldn't have enough to eat

60 would be somewhere in between.

We could go on and explain how while 75% of the world has safe water to drink and 25% drink water that is polluted and bearing diseases. Or that 68% of the world breathes clean air but 32% breathe unhealthy and polluted air. But these facts and figures show us how complex and varied the world is in which we live. While so much of the world is full of people, whose thought patterns and situations are so different than our own, yet at their very heart, they are just like us.

Our world is now over 6 billion people; 6 billion individuals who have the same needs to be loved, to want to have a family, who have, within them, a cry to know God and live their lives with purpose. They do that within the context of so many different situations, struggles, passions and yet powerful abilities to make a difference. In the middle of all these lives stands one simple verse. John 3:16 says, *"For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son,[a] that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life."*

God said as I look at the world I created, as I think back to how I used to walk in the cool of the evening with Adam and Eve, and when I think of the dreams I had for this world. My only response must be to send Jesus into this world for the sake of each individual within that world.

II. God's Heart

Turn to Psalm 67.

"May God be gracious to us and bless us and make his face shine upon us, that your ways may be known on earth, your salvation among all nations.

May the peoples praise you, O God; may all the peoples praise you.

May the nations be glad and sing for joy, for you rule the peoples justly and guide the nations of the earth.

May the peoples praise you, O God; may all the peoples praise you.

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."

The context of this passage is that every Thanksgiving (Pentecost), the people would sing Psalm 67. Its roots are found back in Numbers 6:24, 25 where God said to Aaron that as the High Priest of Israel this is how he should bless them as their pastor. It was a blessing he would pray over them and it was only for the people of God, only for the Jewish nation. Now look at Psalm 67; It begins just like the benediction that Aaron gave (verse 1). Now remember, for centuries the Jews thought that there was the Jews (us) and then there was the rest of the world (them). Those they felt really didn't matter to God and those who God loved more than anyone else. Now look at the shift that happens here in verses 2 - 7. As I read this, look at how the shift happens from God blessing the Jewish nation for their sake to God blessing them so other people/nations would also see the goodness of God. May the peoples, (roughly translated the people groups of the world) see who you are God, may they be glad and sing for joy; may you rule in their lives and guide them and then God will not only be blessings us (the Jewish nations) but He will also be involved in blessing all the nations to *'the ends of the earth.'*

I'll bet for years, they sang that song and concentrated only on verse 1, about how God would bless them, and the rest was just verse two of the song that you sing and don't pay much attention to. Centuries passed like this, and then, I wonder if on that first Pentecost day in the New Testament, after Peter's sermon they were baptizing over 3000 people, if someone started to hum or sing this passage from Psalm 67. And someone said, *"I get it! Today in our sight, God has brought this Psalm to pass."*

Today, right in front of our eyes, God's heart for the world is finally being lived out in front of us. God is for the whole world. And that is why the cry of the church became; they needed to tell the world about this Jesus.

Philippians 2:9 – 11 says, *"Therefore God exalted him to the highest place and gave him the name that is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father."*

There needs to be that moment for every follower of Christ and for every local church, that we have that same 'AHA' moment. When, in the midst of reveling in the fact that God has saved us, He has been involved in our lives and has richly blessed us and our children. We stop and realize that it isn't all about us; God loves the world. He loves, not just the nations of the world, as mentioned in Psalm 67:5, but He also loves the 'people groups' of the world. For example, God not only loves those in India but more specifically, He wants to be intimately involved in the over 4,600 distinct groups in India who are unique with their own language, ethnicity, caste or culture in which they live.

Revelation 14:6 *"Then I saw another angel flying in midair, and he had the eternal gospel to proclaim to those who live on the earth—to every nation, tribe, language and people."*

Let me stop for a moment. Can I ask you to call out loud what country you have come from or lived in? We, as a congregation, probably represent 40 countries! Not only does God love you and the relatives and friends in your country of origin but He loves your country and the people groups within that country. What God needs is for people to help our world be introduced to our Jesus just as you and I have been introduced to Him.

Matthew 28:18 – 20 says, *"Then Jesus came to them and said, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore go and make disciples of all*

nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age." But in order for that to happen, God's heart has to become our heart. Somehow He has to place on our heart, as a congregation, or your heart as an individual a specific place in the world that needs our personal prayers and passion.

The other day, I asked Bob Lever, who has, (with his wife, Sheila), already given 30 years of his life with Wycliffe Bible Translators. When asked why he went to Nigeria and served the Lord there for 9 years, he simply said, "*Because the Lord called me*". When I pushed him to explain a little more, he said he became a believer at age 33 through the ministry of this church, while having a thriving business in office furnishing and design. He said that through a series of events, he felt God calling him to step back from the business he was in. Then, as he was stepping back from that business, he said one Sunday morning; his new car would not start. So he walked to the missionary church near their house. It just happened that a missionary from Zaire was speaking. He said it was as if the man was speaking right to him and that morning he received his call to Africa.

Here is a man, who was doing well in business when he heard the call of God to help John 3:16 happen in people's lives across the world. That call lead him half-way around the world to make an eternal difference in people's lives. It was only possible because God's heart had become his heart. Many of you have told me about a place in the world you feel called to pray for, others will tell me a missionary or ministry you help support in some place around the world. Can I challenge you to ask the Lord to help you find that place that He wants you to pray for, give toward or even go for a short or long-term commitment? As you do, you will be able to join the Lord in His Worldwide work.

III. A Local Church that is not Mission minded is by definition not a Church

Turn to Acts 1:8. "*But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.*"

It has the idea that in each of our lives, (and each local church), there needs to be a way that we are making a difference on three different levels. There is our Jerusalem - caring for our neighbours and our community; there is the call to make a difference in our Judea and Samaria - making a difference in our city or maybe our province (like First Nations care.) The third circle of care would involve joining with your church or going beyond your church's specific mission call and finding that '*End of the Earth*' or world ministry you NEED to be involved in.

Understand that the church in Jerusalem wasn't just a '*nice church*' to attend. It was a church which saw its role was to make an impact for Jesus' sake. It saw its mandate was to touch the world – change a lot of people's lives and turn their neighbourhoods and world up side down. That is still the call on the church today; it is the call of our church as well.

How do we do that?

i. We must seize opportunities. Acts 13:1 - 3

In the middle of their church life; teaching, praying, preaching and worshipping, they felt called to set aside some time to find out what and where God wanted them to be involved as a congregation in touching their world. As they prayed and fasted, it would seem that, like in the lives of the Levers or some of you who went to Haiti, Ireland, Mexico and Brazil, there was this inner tug from God that they needed to do something they had never done before; to step out and send Paul and Barnabas on a missionary journey. You find on all of Paul's missionary journeys two things happen side by side. (1) There is the nudge of circumstances (in Bob's case, a car that wouldn't start and a preacher from Zaire); which is linked to (2) a nudge from the inner voice of God.

It sounds too simple doesn't it? But think about how God has often directed you in the past. Often it has been through circumstances, backed by the inner pull of the spirit within you, which is confirmed as we pray. Because the world is so large and the needs are so varied and great, you and I need to simply pray, wait and watch and when we do that, I believe God will lead us as a church and individuals into those places He wants us to be involved in our world.

ii. We must see ourselves as part of the solution.

Now comes the hard part. In this instance, unless Paul and Barnabas were open to following the Lord's leading, no matter how loud the call or how great the need, nothing would have happened. But Paul and Barnabas, like Samuel, were willing to say, "*Here Lord, send me.*" So, if we want to be involved in making an eternal difference, we need to be willing to listen and obey God's call. Remember that the greatest, safest, most exciting place we can be is in the middle of God's will for our lives.

iii. We must together deal with Barriers that could stand in our way.

I am sure there were barriers, such as finances and travel arrangements that stood in the way of making that first missionary journey. I also believe that the church had 2 possible ways of looking at those issues: (1) the cost, the danger, the '_____' is too hard to handle OR (2) to believe that where God guides He will provide and where He leads, He meets our needs.

Let me conclude with an example from within our church of how God loves to work in peoples lives. Last week, I was talking to two families, who attend our church, the Boonstras and the Solomons. They told me that as they have prayed as individual families and talked together, they have felt a call to do something fantastic. They have felt a call to do something as a family concerning missions (there is that inner call). And then it happened that Dorothy and Eduardo were here a while ago, (a circumstance falling into place) and the result is that they are planning on a trip this November with their families to go to Foundation for His Ministry in Mexico. Each family has 4 young kids and hopefully grandma is going as well. When I asked Michael Solomon, who is just finishing his MBA, why they are going he said, "*We could go and stick our feet in the sand on some beach for a while but we felt it was good for us and the kids to see how others live in our world, to go and make a difference and as families go and care for others on God's behalf.*" By doing that they are hoping God will make a difference in their lives, their kids lives and the lives of others they will touch on their trip.

My belief is that they will see first hand how small our world is. God desperately loves the people across our world and that He will place in them and in us, as a church, through them, a heart for our world. The result will be that we will feel, again, the heartbeat of God for our world.

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