

To Reach the Unreached

What has moved so many Christians over the centuries to leave their homelands to take the Gospel to the ends of the earth? Why would they leave everything that is familiar, cross oceans and lands to live amongst unreached peoples, savage tribes and pagan cultures?

William Carey, often referred to as ‘the father of modern missions’, said, *“It must undoubtedly strike every considerate mind, what a vast proportion of the sons of Adam there are, who yet remain in the most deplorable state of heathen darkness, without any means of knowing the true God.”* In 1792 he and his family left England’s shores to go to India - never to return.

All believers are certainly called to evangelize in their locality and culture. However, not all are called to evangelize as missionaries in regions beyond. Missionaries (or ‘sent ones’) have a special calling to work cross-culturally and to proclaim and demonstrate the Gospel to unreached peoples. This often involves translating the Bible, setting up churches, hospitals and schools.

To Rescue a Lost Mankind

Adam and Eve were created as perfect human beings in the image of God. But because they sinned, the image of God in them was marred and they became subject to death. Since then all the sons and daughters of Adam and Eve are born into the world as sinners. Tragically, in that fallen state, they missed out on the chief purpose for which people were created — to glorify God and to enjoy Him forever.

Regardless of how the image of God may be marred by sin, the fact is that men, women and children still bear the image of God. This shapes our views and actions toward them.

It also underscores the urgency of reaching out to those who do not know the Lord Jesus. Their eternal destiny is at stake. Will they spend eternity in heaven or hell?

The Mission of Jesus

God the Father sent Jesus Christ to this earth on a mission - **“to seek and to save the lost” (Luke 19:10)**. Jesus willingly left the glories of heaven **“to dwell amongst us” (John 1:14)** in order to communicate and demonstrate God’s love to a lost humanity. God foreknew that to do this He would need to send **“his own Son in the likeness of sinful man” (Romans 8:3b)**. The taking on the bodily form of a man by Jesus is described by the word *‘incarnation’*. Not found in the Bible, this word means *‘coming in the flesh’*. We can be eternally grateful that Jesus achieved His mission!

God’s ultimate goal for those who come to faith in Jesus is to **“be conformed to the image of his Son” (Romans 8:29)** who is the perfect **“image of the invisible God” (Colossians 1:15)**. When an individual believes in Jesus he or she experiences the miracle of becoming **“a new creation” (2 Corinthians 5:17)**. The image of God in them has been renewed and they are recipients of the free gift of eternal life.

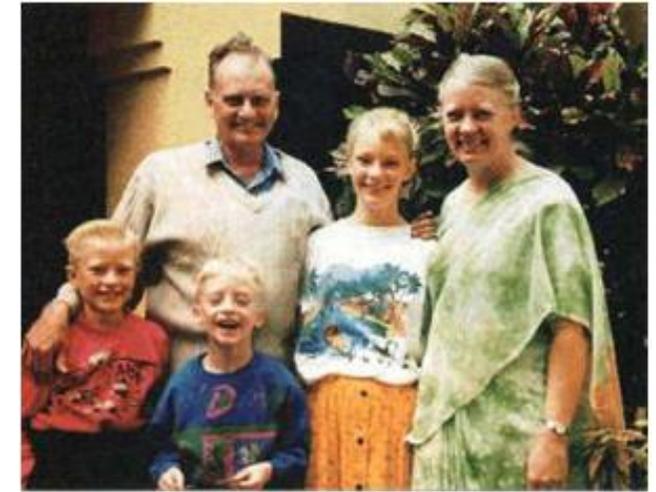
We Have Been Commissioned!

After Jesus had laid down his life and taken it up again, He sent forth the disciples to continue the work He had begun.

They were commissioned to **“go and make disciples of all nations” (Matthew 28:19)** that is, to proclaim the Gospel using all possible means to reconcile a lost humanity to God. Down through the centuries this same task or mission applies to all who are disciples of Jesus. He left us an example, known today as the *‘incarnational model’*. What does that mean?

Incarnational Missionaries

Australian missionary Graham Staines started working in remote tribal areas in India in 1965. From 1967 he worked with leprosy patients while translating the New Testament into a tribal language that he spoke fluently. In 1981, he met his future wife Gladys in India where she had come to serve God. He continued serving God there with Gladys and their 3 children, Esther, Philip and Timothy, until his death in 1999.



The Staines spent more than 30 years working with leprosy patients in the eastern state of Orissa. As a nurse, Gladys worked tirelessly among the lepers and the wider community.

Gladys always wore the garb of local women. Graham was popular with the patients whom he continued to help after they were cured. He taught them how to make mats out of rope and baskets from local grasses and leaves, and in this way giving them a means to live.

In January 1999 Graham and his two sons Philip, aged 10, and Timothy, aged 6, were burnt to death by a mob of Hindu fanatics who accused Graham of

forcibly converting Hindus to Christianity. They were sleeping in their old jeep when the attack took place. Their charred bodies were found embracing each other. Despite the tragedy, Gladys Staines offered a clear and public statement forgiving the killers. She then stayed on in India with her daughter, overseeing the completion of a hospital for leprosy patients in Orissa.

Dear Heavenly Father, Thank You for sending Your Son Jesus on a mission to save a lost humanity. Thank You that You sent Your perfect Son in the likeness of sinful man to suffer and die and so pay the price for the sins of all people once and for all. Thank You that in His incarnation, Jesus, the perfect image of the invisible God, showed us the Father. Thank You that the finished work of Jesus opened the way for us to become new creations. The image of God has been renewed in us and we are recipients of eternal life! Thank You that Jesus modelled what it means to be a missionary. Father, please raise up many more missionaries so that every tribe, nation and tongue will be worshipping around Your throne. Speak to me if You want to send me to an unreached people who do not know the Name of Jesus. In the Name of Jesus I pray. Amen.

About 'Image of God' Leaflets

In the Bible we read that God *"created man in His own image"* (Genesis 1:27). Many maintain that all human history revolves around this truth. The Judeo-Christian belief in the unique dignity of human beings is at the very foundation of Western civilisation.

The 2010 Canberra Declaration therefore states:
"We believe that all human life, being made in the image of God, has intrinsic and equal value from conception to life's natural end."

'Image of God' leaflets relate the doctrine of man as created in the image of God to various issues we face in Australia today.

The 21 leaflets in SERIES ONE are dedicated to Sophie Scholl who was martyred at the age of 21 in World War II for writing and distributing leaflets.

You can download other 'Image of God' leaflets at the Canberra Declaration website.

Please:

READ & SIGN

The Canberra Declaration
to Protect

- *Religious Freedom*
 - *Marriage and Family and*
 - *Human Life*
- in Australia

Website: www.canberradeclaration.org.au

Email: info@canberradeclaration.org.au

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SERIES ONE

Leaflet 10

Missions



and the Image of God