

## Lift Up Your Eyes

I want to bring you a very special message from the words of Jesus in John, chapter four. "Lift Up Your Eyes."

"My food," said Jesus, "is to do the will of him who sent me and finish his work. Do you not say, 'Four months more and then the harvest'? I tell you, open your eyes and look at the fields! They are ripe for harvest. Even now the reaper draws his wages, even now he harvests the crop for eternal life, so that the sower and the reaper may be glad together" John 4:34-36.

### *My First Missionary*

I thank God for Christian parents. Because of the teachings of my mother and father from the Word of God, I was led to accept Christ as my Savior at the very early age of eight years and was baptized into Christ at the South Joplin (Missouri) Christian Church. When I was 14 years old, I saw my first real life missionary. His name was Vernon Newland. Brother Newland had been a missionary in China and with the Communist takeover had gone to the Philippines. There he and his family fell into the hands of the Japanese and were held as prisoners at the infamous Santa Tomas

Prison Camp in Manila all during the dark days of World War II. When General Douglas MacArthur came with the US soldiers and the prisoners were liberated, the Vernon Newland family returned to America to report to their sponsoring churches. One of those churches was my home church, South Joplin Christian. I shall never forget how thrilled I was that Lord's Day morning as I heard him tell his missionary stories and experiences.

*Vernon Newland's Story*

One of the stories he told was about another missionary in Africa. This missionary had labored for five years in the Congo. He found himself to be homesick and physically ill. With a great deal of joy, he boarded the little river boat that would take him downstream to the seaport town, where he was to catch the ocean liner back to America. As this little riverboat made its way downstream, it stopped at various villages along the way to let off cargo and take on supplies. During one of these regular village stops a group of curious pygmies gathered around the little boat and started chattering noisily. Someone noticed the white man on board and recognized him as the missionary from upstream. Soon all the pygmies started to shout, "White man, you come and preach to us and tell us about your God." The missionary explained that he could not do it because he was on his way home for his furlough. This excuse meant nothing to the pygmies and they shouted all the louder, "NO, white man, you must come today and tell us about your God."

Patently the missionary tried to explain his problem. He tried to explain to the pygmies that the great ship at the port wouldn't wait and he had to get there to catch it and return home. To reassure them, he made them a promise. "When I return next year, I will come to your village first and preach God's Word to you." But this did not satisfy the pygmies and they only shouted all the louder and insisted that he come at once. By that time the cargo had been transferred and the captain gave the orders, the ropes were loos-

ened from the dock, and the little ship quietly slipped out into the Congo stream, and the engines started. When the pygmies realized that he was not going to come and preach to them, the leader of their group angrily shook his finger at the white man and he shouted, "*White man, I'm going to tell your God on you!*"

### *I Forgot the Story*

Perhaps you can imagine how that story, as Vernon Newland related it, really convicted me in my heart as a young teenager for foreign missionary service. But, I am sorry to say, as the years went on I forgot about it. I even grew cold and indifferent towards overseas missionary work. Whenever I thought about Vernon Newland's story it was only for a moment, because, to excuse myself I would say, "Oh well, that story probably wasn't true anyway. It was probably just another one of those stories that preachers tell when they are trying to make a point." But, during the past 28 years God has made it possible for me to go into 66 different countries of the world. I have found out that Vernon Newland's story is definitely true. I have experienced it in Asian countries like India, Burma, Vietnam, Hong Kong, Taiwan, Japan, Korea, and China. I've experienced it several times on the Australian continent and islands of the sea like New Zealand, Barbados, Jamaica, Haiti, St. Lucia, and St. Martin. In South American countries like Guyana, Surinam and Chile. In African nations like Rhodesia, Zambia, Benin, Burkina Faso, Ghana, Ivory Coast, and Nigeria. I've also found it to be true in Europe and Russia. Around the world I find that the hands of the people are outstretched and they are actually pleading, "Come and preach to us. Tell us about your God."

**I. The first point I want to try to make in my message is this: there is a great work to be done for Jesus.** I know that is true right here in America. It is also true everywhere else. I pray that God will use my message to try to challenge you to obey Jesus

*Prayer Meeting*

We entered into a season of prayer asking God for help. Right away a very, very tall and skinny African man came to us and introduced himself. "I am Kouame Sylvestre, the second soul you baptized here." We visited with Brother Kouame and learned he was a professor at the local University. He spoke nine different languages, including perfect English.

I asked Kouame, "Would you serve as minister of this new church?" Kouame replied, "I will do whatever God asks of me!"

*Putting Kouame to Work*

We gave Kouame three books, *The Church in the Bible*, by Don DeWalt, *So You Want to Preach*, by Don DeWalt, and *13 Lessons in Christian Doctrine*, by Denver Sizemore. I asked, "Kouame, will you study these books and teach the lessons to the church?" "Yes," Kouame solemnly promised.

One year later, in August 1988, Brother Tom Mullenix traveled to the Ivory Coast and taught Kouame and the Church leaders. Tom Reported:

Kouame Adjoumani Sylvestre was a man hand picked by God for church leadership in Africa. He can speak fluently French, English, German, and seven African languages. He is presently learning Arabic, because his heart is burdened to win Moslems to Christ. Kouame has endured persecution for his commitment to Christ and His church. His employers (the leaders of a Catholic college in which he teaches) gave him the ultimatum to discontinue holding church meeting in his house (provided by the college) or move out. Kouame moved to a different house, not nearly as nice and began paying rent from his own pocket so the church can continue to meet.

The church in Abengourou has more than doubled in size in the one year. Kouame expanded his ministry to include Bible

in an even greater way than you ever have before. Jesus has commanded us, "Lift up your eyes and look on the fields, they are white unto the harvest." If I were to tell you about all the 66 different countries where we have been during the past 28 years, we would be here all night long and all day tomorrow. So, I'm not going to try to tell you about all 66 countries as much as I would love to do it. I'm not even going to try to tell you about a few of them, just one.

*Ivory Coast, Africa*  
*Kouame Adjoumani Sylvestre*

In August 1987, we began the fulfillment of a vision of long standing when we departed for the Ivory Coast in Africa. We had made many plans and had sent a Ghanaian evangelist ahead of us to make all advance preparations. We even had a preacher available who was eager to serve as minister of the Christian Church which was to be established in the Ivory Coast.

*The Devil Interferes*

But, we faced many unexpected obstacles. We had spent three weeks evangelizing in Ghana and had planned a border crossing into the Ivory Coast. We were stopped about 26 times by unscrupulous, money hungry border police. Because we refused to pay bribe money we spent nearly 24 hours traveling a little over 40 miles. We had no food or water during this stressful experience.

We faced further difficulties as we entered the Ivory Coast. We were unable to exchange money into the local currency. The preacher we brought with us was unacceptable as the local minister because of cultural problems and visa problems.

We ended our church planting effort with a new church of 28 members, but with no minister!! It was a low moment!

studies (evangelistic) in four other towns. Again, he paid traveling expenses out of his own pocket.

While I was in the Ivory Coast, I was able to spend much time teaching and encouraging Kouame. I taught the church and also baptized 21 people into Christ. Some of the men who were baptized desire to study and become church leaders.

We traveled to a new area, Assetry, with the goal of reaching souls for Christ and establishing a church there. This area, like much of the Ivory Coast, has a very strong Catholic influence (due to having been a French colony). Some denominational groups have entered the area and attempted to condemn the Catholic church; the people rejected them.

### *The Church in the Ivory Coast Grows*

Today, some seven years later, the church in the Ivory Coast continues to grow. More than 2,000 souls have been baptized and 18 congregations have been established in various villages. Truly there is a great work to be done for Jesus and God is able to provide what is needed to accomplish that work!

**II. But, my second point is that there is a great price that must be paid.** Jesus commanded us, "Lift your eyes, look on the fields, they are white unto the harvest." Why did He want us to lift up our eyes and look? Because He wanted us to be challenged enough to do something about it, to go, and if we couldn't go, to help somebody else who can go. That takes money. There is a great price that must be paid.

### *Korea*

In 1975 I went to Korea, where we labored during August and September, preaching a six weeks campaign all over the entire nation. It was the very greatest result wise of all our overseas cam-

paigns we've had the privilege of conducting. I want to tell you just a little bit of the background that led up to this crusade, because we are talking about the price that must be paid.

I received a letter from our beloved missionary in Korea, Brother Gordon Patten. He said in this letter, "Reggie, Korea is ripe for Christianity. In fact it is probably the most responsive nation in the whole world today toward the Gospel. There are more people in Korea willing to hear God's Word and more people willing to obey God's Word than any other place on earth. I'm convinced that 1974 is the year that we need to evangelize all of Korea. Will you come?" By faith, I answered Brother Patten's letter and said, "Yes. How many workers are we to bring?" Brother Patten wrote right back and said, "We need twenty. We need ten preaching evangelists and ten song evangelists. There are sixty major cities and populations centers in South Korea and we want one revival per each city or all sixty areas, a nationwide effort." He went on to tell me the army of Korea is very receptive to the Gospel. He said, "We want you to go to all the army camps while you are here because Korea has the fourth largest standing army in the world. It is an unparalleled opportunity to reach people for Christ. Also, the penitentiaries and prisons and jails are all open. The orphanages are open. The fallen women's homes are open. In every way we want this to be a nationwide effort."

### *6 Tents — 6 New Churches*

I was really thrilled and I wrote an enthusiastic letter and told him that we would do it. Brother Patten was baiting me for something that I didn't know about. He immediately wrote me back a very enthusiastic letter and said, "Good. Glad you accept our plans. But there is just one more thing that would make it complete. There are six cities in South Korea where there is no Church of Christ. Wouldn't it be great if we could use these meetings as a launching pad to start six new congregations." That was the thing I was most

interested in; was to go places that nobody else had ever gone. I immediately answered and said, "Yes! Let's do it!" Brother Patten immediately wrote me back and said, "Good! I'm glad you are willing! All we need is six tents to do it. Naturally, we do not have any property, no church buildings in these six towns. Would you purchase the six tents? They only cost \$560 each." When that letter came, I did a flip, because I couldn't imagine where I was going to get that much money. I thought about it for awhile and I thought, "Well, there is a whole year to do it. Surely in a year's time God's people will supply the money. By faith, again, I wrote Brother Patten and said, "Yes! We will do it." He got a letter back so fast that I thought he must have written it before I had ever written mine. He said, "Good! Let me tell what has happened. Inflation has hit Korea just like every other country in the world. The price of those tents will go up 30 percent in December and in February there is going to be another price increase of 30 percent. I know you don't want to pay inflated prices like that, therefore, I have gone ahead and ordered the tents and paid for them with a personal check. Will you please deposit a check with my forwarding agent in Oregon, so my check won't bounce."

### *Leroy Trulock Helps*

My heart bounced, because I didn't have \$3,500. There was no way that I could get it, not even by borrowing it from the banks. I was just about in despair for two or three days, but I prayed about it and somehow God gave me the courage and I wrote a letter to my dear friend, Brother Leroy Trulock. Knowing that Brother Trulock has a weakness for starting new churches, I told him all about the opportunity in glowing terms and then I got around to the bad part . . . money. I said, "Brother Leroy, it is going to cost \$3,500 to start these six new churches. Would you loan me the money until August 15? If you will, I'll pay you back that day, because that is the day before we leave for Korea." Brother Trulock tracked me



down by telephone and discussed the situation further. Then he said, "When will you be home, Reggie?" I said, "Monday." He said, "O.K., you'll have the money when you get there." Sure enough, when I got home he had mailed the \$3,500 interest free as long as it was repaid by August 15.

I thank God that God's people gave the money and we were able to repay Brother Leroy by August 15 the \$3,500. So, we went to Korea and the six new churches were established and we preached for the army, the penitentiaries, for the fallen women's homes, for the orphanages, and for the Churches of Christ in Korea. We were able, God being our Helper, to preach for six weeks, day and night, and the results were so great that I could hardly believe it. There were 12,283 souls that repented of their sins and accepted Jesus Christ as personal Savior during those six weeks. Truly, it was absolutely the thrill of my whole lifetime to see the power of God's Work, of God's Word, at work among the people of Korea. Gordon Patten did not in any way over exaggerate the opportunity there is in Korea. I really believe there is the possibility that the entire nation will turn to the Lord Jesus Christ.

### *The Price Quadruples*

But, I want to point out that there was a great price attached to that campaign. The \$3,500 turned out to be just the beginning. The expenses of that campaign finally amounted to \$12,000. Some people have questioned me rather critically since our return from Korea. Isn't that a lot of money to spend in just six weeks? That is a ridiculous amount of money! \$12,000? But, in my opinion it is a bargain in evangelism. I know of one church in the United States that had a budget of \$1,500,000. I also know that church baptized 35 souls for Jesus Christ. That means that it cost that church \$42,857.14 for each soul baptized. That makes home evangelism very costly, doesn't it? I leave it to you to compare to your congregation locally. I challenge you to do it. You will be shocked at the

tremendous cost of evangelism right there in your home congregation. But, it is worth it, isn't it? Why, of course it is worth it. All of you gladly vote the budget in each year and gladly pay for the budget. You thank God that you can give the money to carry on an evangelistic program in your local congregation. Personally, I thank God for the Christians back in Joplin, Missouri, who paid the budget back in 1936, because that was when I was baptized into Christ. That means everything to me. If the budget of that church was \$1,000,000 that year, it's worth it as far as I'm concerned. I know that you considered it worth it to preach the Gospel in your local congregation, however much it costs. But, somehow we get rally upset when it comes to spending money overseas. We say, "But, doesn't it cost a lot of money?" The only answer I now to give is, "Yes!" It is the truth. Overseas evangelism is very costly. Just as it is costly to preach the Gospel right here at home.

### *Jesus Paid the Price*

But, when Jesus began this Gospel work, He was willing to pay the price. And, He did pay the price, His own' life's blood! Ever since Jesus paid that greatest price of all, those who have chosen to follow Jesus have discovered that there is a price that we must pay. Must Jesus bear the cross alone and all the world go free? No! There is a cross for everyone. There is a cross for me.

**III. There is a third point that I want to make in my message and that is the fact that there are great rewards to be enjoyed.** Jesus put it like this, "He that reapeth receiveth wages and gathered fruit until life eternal that he that both soweth and he that reapeth may rejoice together." Dear friends, we have been partners in overseas evangelism. There are a lot of reasons to rejoice. Let us think about some of the individuals involved.

*Guyana*

Come with me if you will to Guyana, South America and there I will introduce you to a young lady 20 years old. Her body is horribly scarred and disfigured. When I first met this girl, I gasped and I said, "What happened to you?" The poor girl bowed her head and told me her life story with all the sordid details connect to it. She related how she had reached the end of her rope and she thought life was not worth living. She poured oil all over her body and set herself afire. Fortunately, someone put the fire out and her life was spared. Then the girl dropped her head even lower as she said, "I am sorry to tell you that I had reached the point that I decided to try it a second time. I know that the second time I would've succeeded." At that point she lifted her head and smiled at me. She said, "You know the rest of the story. That's the very day your revival meeting came to Georgetown." That afternoon we took that girl to the Atlantic Ocean and there she was baptized into Christ. I'd love for you to see that young Guyanese girl today. She still has the scars and she always will, but there is a beautiful smile upon her face. A smile that Jesus has placed there, because now she has a real purpose in living. Her purpose is to share her Savior with others. Rejoice, dear friends, for that girl in Guyana is part of the fruit that has been gathered unto life eternal.

*Haiti*

Would you come with me quickly to the island of Haiti? There on the island of Haiti a young couple were found writhing in agony in the center of a village. One of our overseas evangelists, Dave Manning, found them. He stopped his car and said, "What's going on?" Somebody said, "Oh, these two people have been poisoned and they are dying." Dave Manning would not let them die. He got them into his automobile and he drove over those horrible Haitian roads at breakneck speed, risking his life, and got them to the hos-

pital at Port-au-Prince in time to have their stomachs pumped and save their lives. That's not the best part of the story. The best part of the story is after they recovered, they came back to the village and heard the Gospel of Jesus and they were converted to Christ. They are now serving Him as active Christians. That is not all of the story. As a result of our going to Haiti, we were able to recruit a fine man, he was a denominational preacher, Church of God. We were able to lead that man to the New Testament Church and right now he is one of the major Christian Church preachers in Haiti. Rejoice, dear friends, for these victories on Haiti are a part of the fruit that has been gathered unto life eternal.

### *Rhodesia*

Would you come with me once more to the country of Rhodesia (now Zimbabwe)? One time when John Pemberton invited us to come visit their work, we stayed for three months and helped in meetings all over Rhodesia. God, through His powerful Gospel, reaped a mighty harvest. There were 3,785 souls baptized into Christ during those three months. The final night was in Bulawayu, Rhodesia. The old African preacher, Brother Sithole, was in charge of that final service. He made a beautiful farewell address to our team. At the close of his farewell address the choir stood up, the African choir. They had learned this song in English and they sang it to us through tear filled eyes.

Goodbye Brothers, Goodbye Sisters,  
If I don't see you anymore, I'll meet you in heaven,  
In that blessed Kingdom, if I don't see you anymore.

We'll part in the body, we'll meet in the spirit,  
If I don't see you anymore. So now God bless you,  
Now God bless you, if I don't see you anymore."

I don't hesitate to confess that my own eyes filled with tears as

## LIFT UP YOUR EYES

I listened to the choir sing those heart-touching words. But, I want to tell you something. I was not crying because of having to say goodbye to those Christian folks in Rhodesia. Of course, we loved them, and, of course, it was difficult to tell them goodbye, but I believed the words of the song, if we never seem them again in this world, we're going to meet them in heaven. So, my tears were for others, those who were not Christians, those who had attended the services, but they had never accepted Jesus, they had never been baptized, they had not committed their lives to the Lord Jesus. They heard the Gospel, but they rejected the Lord Jesus Christ. And, without them having a Savior, we'll never see them in heaven.

To this day, I'm still thinking about others. Not only others there in Rhodesia, but others everywhere. Yes, others right here in my community and others right there in your community who have never accepted Jesus Christ as their own personal Savior. Would you do it right now? Jesus loves you. He died for you. Won't you love Him and come and accept Him and obey Him and let Him save you?

The garden was a vast, open space, a kind of
 blank canvas upon which the gardeners had
 painted their vision of a perfect world. The
 paths were wide and straight, leading to
 various sections of the garden, each with its
 own unique character. There were formal
 gardens with geometric patterns and
 symmetrical designs, and there were
 wilder, more naturalistic gardens with
 meandering paths and a mix of plants and
 trees. The garden was a place of
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