To the *Ends of the Earth*

What you need to know about the spread of the Gospel

Joshua Project

Eric Degrove, March 2013
Defining “Gospel” and “Spread”

Jesus was on earth 2k years ago, what’s happened since?

What’s changed in 50 years?
Defining “Gospel” and “Spread”
The Gospel should be defined and understood through the entire story of the Bible, not just a few verse. Often this is termed the meta-narrative of Scripture.

In recent times it has become popular to reduce the Gospel to a short presentation one shares face-to-face. While this kind of Gospel definition is helpful for evangelism, it does not give a complete picture of God’s work in redeeming creation for His glory.
Gen 3:15 “And I will put hostility between you and the woman and between your offspring and her offspring; her offspring will attack your head, and you will attack her offspring’s heel.”
Isaiah 49:6b “will make you a light to the **nations**, so you can bring my deliverance to the remote regions of the earth.”
John 3:17-18 “For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world should be saved through him. The one who believes in him is not condemned.”
Defining “Spread” – Jesus Building His Church

Mt. 28: 19a “Therefore go and make disciples of all nations”

Acts 1:8 “But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the farthest parts of the earth.”
Rev 5:9 “They were singing a new song: ‘You are worthy to take the scroll and to open its seals because you were killed, and at the cost of your own blood you have purchased for God persons from every tribe, language, people, and nation.’”
Defining “Gospel”, “Spread”

- Fall into Sin
- Creation
- Hoping for Messiah

Jesus’ First Coming
- Jesus Building His Church

Jesus Returns
- Re-creation: New Heaven & Earth

©Joshua Project
Jesus was on earth 2k years ago, what’s happened since?

- Early Christianity
  - Council of Ephesus (413)
  - Council of Chalcedon (451)
  - Great Schism (11th Century)
- Council of Separate Lineage
- Restorationism
- Protestantism
- Anglicanism ("Via Media")
- Roman Catholicism (Eastern Rites)
- Eastern Orthodoxy
- Oriental Orthodoxy ("Monophysites")
- "Nestorians" (Including Assyrian Church of the East)
Jesus was on earth 2,000 years ago, what’s happened since?

Jesus’ commands in the NT:
- make disciples

We read them in the NT:
- seeking to obey Jesus’ command

We understand how to obey them not just from the Bible, but also through the lens of history.

©Joshua Project
Jesus was on earth 2,000 years ago, what’s happened since?

How was “mission” understood in each age?
Age of the Apostles: Missions as the itinerate preacher

©Joshua Project  Map source: Logos Bible Software
Two Periods:

100-313
“The blood of the martyrs is the seed of the church.” – Tertullian (160 – 220)

313-600
Christianity spreads legally.
Constantine’s Edict of Toleration (313)
Notable Missionaries

Martin of Tours (316–96)—patron saint of France, preached to the Burgundians (East Germanic Tribe).

Patrick of Ireland (389–461)—captured at 16 years and taken from Britain to Ireland. Tended sheep 6 years, escaped but determined to return with the gospel. Studied in France. Established monasteries in Ireland.
“Missions” and political power mixed
-“Christianizing” the masses

“Missions” and rise of the Catholic Church
-Missions among Monastic orders
Medieval 600-1500: Missions with the “Christian” State

- Christian areas, c. 300
- Areas Christianized, 300–600
- Areas Christianized, 600–800

- Centers of Christian diffusion
- Dates indicate period of conversion to Christianity

©Joshua Project
Reformation 1500-1750: Missions as Rediscovering the Gospel

Luther       Calvin       Zwingli
1st - Protestant Reformation (1517 -)
Salvation by grace alone
Scriptures for the people in their language

2nd - English Reformation (1536-)
United Kingdom Breaking away from Catholicism

3rd - Catholic Reformation (Council of Trent 1545–63)
Preserve the Catholic Church

©Joshua Project
Reformation 1500-1750: Missions as Rediscovering the Gospel
At a Baptist ministers' meeting in 1786, Carey raised the question of whether it was the duty of all Christians to spread the Gospel throughout the world (to the “heathen”).
Bringing the Gospel to the “heathen” or “unreached” became the primary way missions was understood – to this day.

South Asia – William Carey

Africa – David Livingston

China – Hudson Taylor
• More indigenous church leaders

• Missions defined more broadly: social action, economic help

• World War I and II

• Growth of non-denominational missions
What’s Changed – Last 50 Years

1960 - 2010
How did Evangelical Christianity change and spread from 1960-2010?
1990

PERCENT EVANGELICAL
Represented by height and color:
- Grey: Less than 2
- 10 - 19
- 30 - 48
- 2 - 9
- 20 - 29

Data source: Operation World 2010, Map source Bryan Nicholson

©Joshua Project
Protestant and Evangelical Christianity has spread wider
How has the face of Christianity changed in each country in the last 100 years?
Protestant and Evangelical Christianity has spread wider

Why?

Mission - modern missions movement

Politics – religious freedom, diversity of Christianity allowed

Theology – growth of Charismatic/Pentecostalism
What’s Changed – Last 50 Years

¾ of Evangelicals world-wide are Charismatic or Pentecostal

³⁄₄ of Evangelicals world-wide are Charismatic or Pentecostal

Data source: Operation World 2010
Changes – Last 10-25 Years

1. Non-Western countries sending missionaries
2. Short-term missions

North America is sending 60 times more short-term than long-term missionaries
3. Relief & development vs. Evangelism & church planting

2001-05 Donations:
...to relief & development increased 74.3%
...donations to evangelism and church planting increased 2.7%

©Joshua Project
What’s Changed – Last 50 Years

4. Sending more money than missionaries

The U.S. church is supporting far more indigenous workers than American missionaries
Joshua Project - bringing definition to the unfinished task – joshuaproject.net