

A SHORT HISTORY OF MISSIONS

A. The early church.

- * Everyone was a missionary, "informal missionaries" testifying with lives.
- * Gospel spread like wild fire.
- * Did it by amazing flexibility and adaptability.
- * The case of the church in Jerusalem - a wrong example.

B. The Patristic era to the Middle Ages.

- * Embodied a zeal to fulfill the injunction "Compel them to come in" (Lk 14:23).
- * Christianity became institutionalized and lost its early vigor.

C. Colonialism.

- * In 1528 Panfile de Narvaez came ashore in Tampa Bay and boomed out this ultimatum to an Indian village of the Tinucua tribe:
 - "The Papacy which is in charge of all nations of the earth has given these lands to the Emperor and Queen of Spain, and they must henceforth be recognized as sovereign. You are not required to become Christians until you have been informed of the truth and desire to be converted. However, if you do not do these things, or are slow in doing these things, I will make war upon you; I will make slaves of you, your wives, and your children; I will take your goods, doing all the evil and injury that I may be able; and all of this will be your own fault."
- * From the start, "missionaries" have meant superior/inferior relations.
- * We have both colonized and decolonized in the name of the Gospel.

D. Imperialism.

- * Missionary efforts often were tools of imperialism.
- * 4 imperialistic attitudes that animated the early missionary efforts:
 - (1) THE NON-WESTERNER WAS A HEATHEN TO BE CONVERTED.
 - (2) THE NON-WESTERNER WAS A BARBARIAN TO BE CIVILIZED--THE GREEK VIEW.
 - (3) THE NON-WESTERNER WAS A POTENTIAL ENEMY TO BE PACIFIED--THE ROMAN VIEW.
 - (4) AN ENERGY TO BE EXPLOITED IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF A STRONG INDUSTRIAL ECONOMY.

E. Protestantism.

- * Pierre Charles, Catholic Professor, said that Protestant missionary thinking over the last 150 years is marked by 4 stages:
 - (1) End of Wesley's life.
 - (2) By 1850, the thought had changed to the LOVE OF GOD.
 - (3) By WW I, THE LOVE OF MAN.
 - (4) Finally, the motivation became the FEAR OF MAN.

F. Contemporary situation.

- * We are seen as just one more amongst many firms of word merchants peddling our wares.
- * We exhibit an ambition to lead rather than to serve; a drive to dominate rather than to develop; a need to control rather than to contribute, to talk rather than listen. An Ambiance of arrogance, the smell of superiority!
- * Few missionaries are truly dedicated, instead, systematic professionals.

* Either techniques, medical missions, educational institutions are used as leverage to indoctrinate a captive audience or at the other extreme, missions is merely a gesture of good will, doing good, creating harmony in the world.

G. The future.

* Emilio Castro--"We have reached the end of the Western missionary era and a new one is beginning which will involve the entire church ministering to the entire world. One characteristic of the new era is that mission will be reciprocal. Western nations will increasingly be receiving assistance from so-called "missions lands" to minister to those being destroyed in their midst by the side effects of industrialized culture. And of course in the new era global missions will no longer be premised on singular Western values or a singularly Western understanding of the faith. A rich pluralism of values and viewpoints will characterize the new era of global missions."