

Sending the Gospel from the Regions Beyond

By

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One of the buzzwords heard in many circles today is “networking.” It refers to leaning on the strength of others, and working together to accomplish goals. We have a Great Commission to reach the whole world with the whole Gospel. How can this be done? Right on! It is accomplished through global networking.

The United Pentecostal Church International now has a witness in 177 nations and we project reaching into every country by 2010. For years, the North American Church has taken the lead in sending missionaries and supporting them through the Partners in Missions program. My prayer is that this will not only continue but will increase. It is not time to relax. Jesus is coming soon and we must bring in the harvest. Over 6.4 billion people now populate our world. Each one needs to hear the good news of the Gospel. **What do you do when the task gets larger and the workers are few?** A wise manager would look for more help. That is exactly what we are doing in our world evangelism program. We need more missionaries and financial assistance from our faithful supporters throughout **North America and beyond.** I think that the last word of the

previous sentence is an often overlooked but important key. We must look to North America and “beyond.” For years we have sent the Gospel to the regions beyond. We will continue. In fact, we must continue. However, **now the Gospel must also be sent from the regions beyond.**

Beyond the borders of North America, in 177 nations people have been touched by truth, have responded to it, and preach it with all their strength. Into their hands is also placed the responsibility of world evangelism. The Great Commission is not culturally exclusive but inclusive. It is the same Commission for all believers regardless of location, social standing, and economy. “And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature” (Mark 16:15). There is work in the harvest for everyone. A global network must be built between the church at home and the church around the world. This association is called the Global Council of the United Pentecostal Church International and the Global Commission for Missions. Let me briefly explain both.

The Global Council. Every National Organization having affiliation with the United Pentecostal Church International is a member of the Global Council. Each member organization has the right to send two delegates to the meeting held once every five years.

At the recent Global Council, in Bangkok, Thailand, 175 attended, representing 110 nations, and 171 languages. We received solid direction and vision casting. Our General Superintendent, Rev. Kenneth Haney said the United Pentecostal Church International exists for two fundamental reasons: to preserve doctrine and for evangelism. We do more together than we do separately. He also explained that “the Global Council was created as a vehicle to carry us where we need to go” and “the need of the hour is evangelism of our world with truth and power.” Church growth reports showing remarkable progress; anointed preaching and teaching by delegates from Zambia, Indonesia, Netherlands, and Pakistan; outstanding news from the regional missionary program, and dedication to the *International Articles of Faith* position us for planning for massive global growth. There were also reports given by, and meetings held with, the Global Commission of Missions. Nineteen regional missionaries join hands with the approximately 652 North American appointed missionaries and AIMers to impact our world.

You may ask, “What are the benefits of the Global Council?” Glad you asked.

The Global Council is a great opportunity. It unites the forces of our global family to fulfill the task of world evangelism. Leaders come together from around the world to insure loyalty to (and preservation of) pure doctrine,

adherence to holiness, and cooperation with an evangelism program that will effectively reach the lost world.

The Global Council safeguards doctrinal truths. The *International Articles of Faith* of the United Pentecostal Church International are the doctrinal foundation basis of all of these churches. By formulating this council, it can be assured that there would be no changes made to these universally held truths without input from all those that would be affected by those changes. Great investment of time, missionary personnel, and finance has gone into establishing churches around the world. We protect our investment by securing that the apostolic doctrine and standards of holiness are preserved.

The Global Council enhances evangelism. A deep burden for souls is the demanding factor that mobilizes the worldwide church. The Global Council seeks to provide the coordination of the whole gospel to the whole world -- by the whole church. A clearer understanding of fellowship and a plan for working together will involve more people in the performance and financing of the immense task of world evangelism. This plan includes the Global Commission for Missions.

The Global Commission for Missions organizes evangelism outreach to assure that all countries are properly evangelized. Under the administrative

guidelines of the Global Council of the United Pentecostal Church International, Regional Missionaries are commissioned. The purpose of the commission is to coordinate the efforts of the churches sending, the missionaries going, and the nations receiving.

Regional (national) missionaries will not replace our vital North American missionaries. We once partnered with them to evangelize their nations. Now the table has turned. In obedience to the Great Commission they place the yoke on their shoulders. They collaborate with us to reach all nations. "Two are better than one, because they have a good return for their work" (Ecclesiastes 4:9, *NIV*). It's only when we maximize partnership that we will maximize impact. Realizing that one or two nations alone cannot reach the world the Regional Missions Program of the UPCI Foreign Missions Division mobilizes the church around the world to give and go.

It is difficult for our North American missionaries to enter closed-door nations. Our God specializes in opening doors. George Eldon Ladd once said, "It is true that many doors are closed at the moment, but God is able to open closed doors overnight, and God is able to work behind closed doors. My concern is not with closed doors; my concern is with the doors that are open which we do not enter." Two problems exist: closed doors, and not entering the open doors. Regional missionaries could be the solution to both problems. They, in some

cases, can obtain visas easily, often know the language, and adapt to the culture quickly. They are ready and able to go. The Gospel should be sent from the regions beyond us.

Each nation, many of which are poverty-stricken, raise funds to support the regional missionary program. The Foreign Missions Division has set up a PIM account for this remarkable plan. We desire to match the funds given by the overseas regions so we can hasten regional missionaries to un-reached or under-reached nations. You can be a part of this partnership too. Contact us today for more information.

Here is one example of what the regions beyond are doing to accomplish the Great Commission. Regional Director for *Asia*, Lynden Shalm reports great things happening in China. We are thankful that the two regions, Asia and Pacific, have joined hands to evangelize 1.3 billion people. The goal is to penetrate China with the gospel from all sides, and this is being done. Our worldwide goal is similar—to penetrate our world with the gospel from all sides, and not only send the truth to regions beyond, but to see that same life-transforming truth being sent from the regions beyond us.