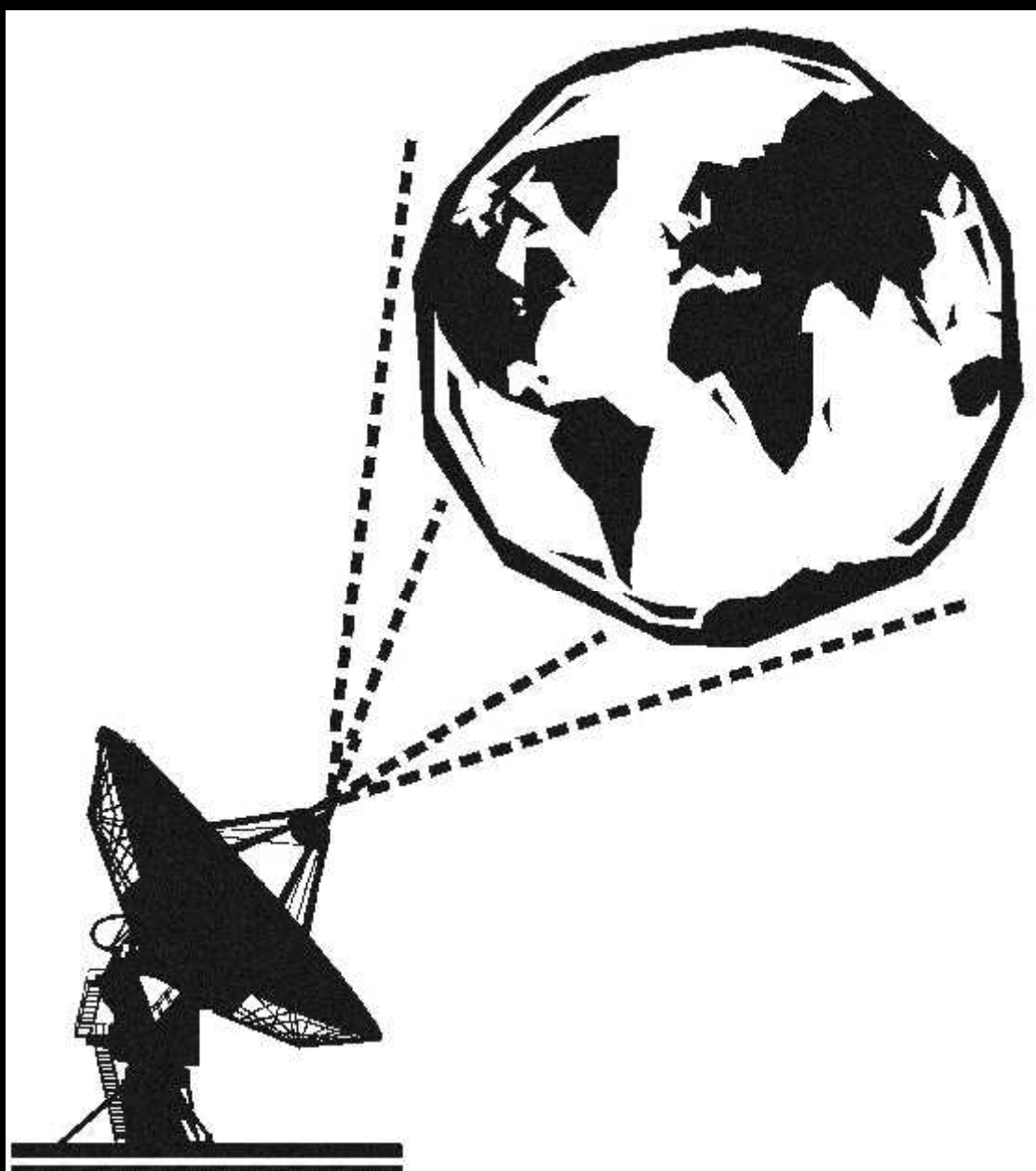




LIVING MINISTRIES INTERNATIONAL

AN INTERNATIONAL MINISTRY OF REACHING • PREACHING • TEACHING



INTRODUCTION

The new century presents some great and exciting challenges to the Christian Church.

The rampage of secular humanism, the relentless march of other religions, especially Islam, the holocaust of the Aids virus and the nuclear threats in the Middle and Far East, place new demands on the body of Christ.

Will we be relegated to the scrap heap of antiquity an irrelevancy or will we rise to the occasion with renewed fortitude, revived approaches and understanding of the crucial role we are called to play in an hour when new doors are opening, new facilities in technology are available and emerging evangelists are desperate to be equipped to be on the cutting edge.

This chapter is designed to look at where we have come from and to face the new day before us.

Cecil J Peasley

“EVANGELISM INTO THE 21ST CENTURY”

OUTLINE

1. LOOK BACK

Secular World
Church Emphases
Church Growth in 20th Century
Challenges facing the Church
Condition of Church

2. FOUR TRENDS THAT POSE A CHALLENGE TO CHRISTIAN EVANGELISM

- Uncontrolled urbanization
- Unrelenting aggressive secularism
- Expanding non-Christian religions
- Shifting Frontiers and Emerging Fields

3. UNCHANGEABLE FACTS

- Our Message
- Our Mandate
 - a) A re-discovery of the Full Biblical Message
 - b) Mobilization of the Whole Church
 - c) Explore new methods and new fields Evaluation
 - d) Total and Unconditional Dependence Upon God

EVANGELISM INTO THE 21ST CENTURY

1. LOOK BACK

SECULAR WORLD

1960's - _____
1970's - _____
1980's - _____
1990's - _____

CHURCH EMPHASES

1950's - _____
1960's - _____
1970's - _____
1980's - _____
1990's - _____

CHURCH GROWTH in 20th CENTURY

The good news is that from 1900 – 2000, the number of people who profess faith in Jesus grew from 558 million to two billion; a 358% increase. There are probably more Christians alive at the beginning of the 21st century than all the Christians who lived and died from AD 33 to 1900. Christianity remains the largest religion in the world, 1.6 times that of Islam and 2.4 times larger than Hinduism. The not-so-good news is that the number of Christians, as a percentage of the world population, has not changed. In 1900 christians represented 34.4% of the population, and that percentage has remained remarkably consistant for one hundred years. In 2000, it was still the same, 33.4%.

(Quote from: Every Nation in our Generation page 216. Author: Rice Broocks)

1995

Non-western Churches - _____ million
Western Churches remain _____ million

Challenges facing the Church

Political; Social; Demographic; Economic; Philosophical

Condition of Church

Paralyzed and confused, torn by division and uncertainty; withdrawn into ecclesiastical ghettos; pre-occupied with its own internal affairs and unconcerned and irrelevant to deepest needs of those around us. However, the 21st century could be the greatest moment of the Church.

2. FOUR TRENDS THAT POSE A CHALLENGE TO CHRISTIAN EVANGELISM

A. UNCONTROLLED URBANIZATION

By 2000AD:

- _____ people (about three times the number of people living at the dawn of the 20th century).
- Half the world in _____ uprooted & disillusioned.
- 50% of world’s population under _____ years old.
- 22 cities with a population of over _____ million.

B. UNRELENTING AGGRESSIVE SECULARISM

Secularism

- Excludes God from the world and human life
- Live for the present, without any reference to God or divine, moral or spiritual values, e.g. education “responsible decision making” - teachers do not tell kids what is right or wrong any more, they only teach them a process for making their own decisions.

C. EXPANDING NON-CHRISTIAN RELIGIONS

Due to failure of secularism, there is a religious awakening taking place but it is not historic Christianity.

- Islam - _____ % growth per year
- Hinduism - _____ % growth per year
- Buddhism - _____ % growth per year
- Christianity - _____ % growth per year



D. SHIFTING FRONTIERS & EMERGING FIELDS

The last decade of the 20th century remembered by historians as one of the watershed periods of the modern era. The collapse of Marxism in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union has opened the door for the Gospel to reach millions.

The 21st century presents the possibility of major changes e.g. “New”(New South Africa; New Age; New World Order)

_____? viz., Turkey, Middle East & China

_____? Liberal & Conservative; Social & Evangelical; Inter-faith & Independents; Reformed & Charismatic



Will “_____” abandon Christian roots for the sake of trade purposes and conformity and political correctness?

So called “Christian” nations are now becoming new targets of _____ for proselytizing.

3. **UNCHANGEABLE FACTS**

(a) _____

- God loves and communicates
- Mankind has rebelled and is alienated from God
- God has taken the initiative to bridge the gap
- Hope for the future - Christ is risen; He will reign; God has not changed, nor the Gospel, nor has the heart of man
- The 7 recorded messages in Acts all called for a verdict

(b) _____ (Mark 16:15) The disciples obeyed this command and their ministry shook the Roman Empire. The evangelistic imperative remains unchanged.

- _____
- _____
- _____

(i) A _____ of Full Biblical Message

(ii) _____ of the Whole Church

Professor Michael Green

“Whenever Christianity has been at its most healthy, evangelism has stemmed from the local church and has had a noticeable impact on the surrounding area. I do not believe that the re-Christianization of the West can take place without the renewal of the local churches in this whole area of evangelism.”

I Thessalonians 1:8 *“Your faith in God has become known everywhere”.*

Professor George Hunter

“Western Christianity needs a multitude of international missionary congregations — churches that will abandon the old decrepit Christian models of ministry and whose prime

mission will be to reach and disciple people who do not yet believe"

Encourage gift of _____

(iii) Evaluate _____ and explore _____
Be creative. Paul was *"all things to all men."* Methods are only a means to an end.

(iv) Depend _____ & _____ upon God

Archbishop George Carey at his enthronement in April 1991 stated, *"It will be more woe to us if we preach religion instead of the Gospel ... woe to us if we preach a message that looks only towards inner piety and does not relate our faith to the world around. Woe to us if we fail to hand on to future generations and the unsearchable rules of Christ, which are the very heartbeat of the Church and its mission."*

People who believe the Bible are deranged — and even dangerous.

Charles Colson in the chapter on Healthy Believing in his book *"Dangerous Grace"*, states that when film director Martin Scorsese updated the 1992 thriller CAPE FEAR, he made one significant change: "He turned the crazed villain into a Bible quoting Pentecostal Christian, with a cross tattooed across his back. In a scene where he tries to rape a woman, he shouts: "Are you ready to be born again?"

The message is clear: People who believe the Bible are deranged and even dangerous. The belief that religion is harmful to mental health is common in secular media and academia today: The idea goes back to Sigmund Freud, who regarded belief in God as neurosis.

But, in *Christianity Today*, Christian Psychiatrist David Larson exposes that assumption as mere myth. When he examined the imperial data, Larson says he found exactly the opposite. Religious people are actually healthier than the general population, both mentally and physically.

" people who believe in Christianity but don't practice it, do experience greater stress"

For example, in a literature review, Larson discovered that 19 out of 20 studies showed religion plays a positive role in preventing alcoholism. 16 out of 17 studies showed a positive role in reducing suicide. Religious commitment was associated with lower rates of mental disorder, drug use and pre-marital sex. People who attended church regularly even show much lower blood pressure levels.

The standard view that associates religion with psychological problems does have one kernel of truth, however. Larson found that people, who believe in Christianity but don't practice it, do

experience greater stress. People who believe in God, but who neglect church attendance and Bible reading; those who are divorced, or abuse alcohol, show higher rates of anxiety than the general population. In short, the inconsistent Christian suffers greater stress than the consistent atheist.

The committed Christian is happier and suffers less mental illness than the general population.

*The most miserable person of all is the one who knows the truth
and yet does not obey it*
“A Dangerous Grace” – page 90, Author: Charles Colson, Word
Publishing.

**Suggested addition reading on Contemporary Approaches to
Evangelistic Ministry:**

- **The Purpose Driven Church by Rick Warren**
A Contemporary Approach to Church Growth
- **Praying Without Ceasing by Calvin Miller**
A Contemporary Approach to Spirituality
- **The Visionary Leader by William M Pinson**
Contemporary Approaches to Christian Leadership
- **The Power of Praise by Don McMinn**
Contemporary Worship and Evangelism
- **Finishing the Task by**
Contemporary Approaches to World Missions