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**The Complex Task—A Place for Everyone: Session Four  
Manhattan Christian College, October 1981**

**Donald McGavran**

*In 1981, Donald McGavran presented a series of lectures at Manhattan Christian College. Over the next few journals, we will publish this series in a continuing effort to honor McGavran and his legacy of Church Growth Missiology. This is the fourth in the series. — Editor*

This article has been transcribed from the taped lectures.

*Scripture Passage Read:*

“... To the end of all things is near. Therefore be clear-minded and self-controlled so that you can pray. Above all, love each other deeply because love covers a multitude of sins. Offer hospitality to one another without grumbling. Each one should use whatever gift he has received to serve others, faithfully administering God’s grace in its various forms. If anyone speaks, he should speak as one speaking the very words of God. If anyone serves, he should do it with the strength God provides. So that in all things, God may be praised through Jesus Christ, to him be the glory, and the power, forever and ever. Amen”

*McGavran:*

As I came down here, I looked at the seat beside me and found this copy of *How Churches Grow*. And I thought I’d tell you that when I wrote this back in 1958, I sent it to six publishers, five of them had rejected it one after another before I got the sixth one to publish it. So if you run across minor difficulties like that—in the course of your missionary experience—don’t be deterred. Just keep going on.

I want to speak to you this afternoon about the worlds outside North America. This morning we looked at effective evangelism in the United States of America, in our own country, in

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our own people. This afternoon, we shall look at the worlds outside USA. Now to speak of the worlds outside USA, I need fifty hours. I've been given about fifty minutes. But I'll have to simply pack it in, and you'll have to understand that there is a great deal that cannot be possibly said in this brief time. And, again as I said this morning, we must think about Christian mission outside of North America, regarding very seriously the two basic foundation stones that I laid before you. The first: that it is God's unswerving purpose to disciple multitudes of individuals, and *panta ta ethnee* through faith in Jesus Christ. If you don't believe that, don't touch missions with a ten-foot pole. If you do believe it, you will be undergirded for your work. And the second thing is—that New Testament churches were greatly growing churches. And the church of Jesus Christ, a characteristic mark, of living churches, New Testament churches, is that they grow. That's particularly true in ripe but unreaped fields. It isn't true in unsoiled fields. Or it isn't true in fields that haven't been completely reaped. But believe me, there are enormous numbers of ripe but unreaped fields all around us.

Now the first point I want to make as we talk about the worlds outside North America is that there are more than a hundred worlds outside North America. Please note the plural there. There are more than 'a hundred worlds'—there's not just the world out there, there are more than a hundred worlds. And each world is a very—repeat, very—complex world. I'm going to speak about a few of these, I couldn't speak about all of them. And as I speak about them, I want you to remember constantly that these are simply illustrations. And when we speak about 'the world out there' that's a high, over-simplification. There are worlds, each one of them tremendously complex.

Now my first illustration will come from a country that is very much in the news, but where there is no missionary work being carried on at present. I speak of Afghanistan—you read about it all the time in the news. The Russians took it over years ago, and there is a civil war going on, and thousands and thousands of Afghans, and thousands and thousands of Russians are being killed all the time. And the future is yet in doubt. I knew a great deal about Afghanistan, because India is a close neighbor to Afghanistan. And as I've traveled up in Panjab, and Kashmir, Afghanistan is just over that range of hills. And furthermore, I had an Uncle who was a civil surgeon in Quata, just south of Afghanistan, for many years. But I really came to know Afghanistan when a young lady, Marsha Sair, by name, decided to become a missionary to Afghanistan—this was some eight years ago, when you could get in even before as a nurse. So she came

to study with me. And the first thing I did, was to say to her, "Alright, Marsha, lets find out all we can about what Afghanistan is comprised of." Afghanistan isn't just one people—Afghans—O'h no! Afghanistan is a wonderful mosaic of many different kinds of people. There are quite a number of Mongolian peoples in Afghanistan. A fair number of these are Buddhists. There are quite a number of Iranian people/tribes in Afghanistan. They're Muslims. There are quite a number of Aryan tribes in Afghanistan. There are urban peoples, and there are rural peoples. There are tribes, whose people are entirely based on the camel. There are tribes, whose entire culture is based on the yak. And they live up twelve, thirteen, fourteen thousand feet in the air—up in the high Himalayas.

Afghanistan is the gateway to India, and all the great invasions of India have poured down through the Cairo pass into India. That's the way Alexander the Great went about 300 B.C, as he poured down into India with a conquering army. And practically all those who went through Afghanistan left small populations, which with the passages of the years—which sometimes had grown to ten thousand, twenty thousand, forty thousand, fifty thousand, a hundred thousand. And so Afghanistan is a wonderful welter of tribes, as Marsha Sair found out. And each of them, poses—will pose, when we get in and we will (God will open that door)—poses a separate problem to evangelization.

My second illustration is taken from Europe. Italy. Now if you were thinking of evangelizing Italy, you'd say, well, Italy is a Roman Catholic land, and in Italy everybody speaks Italian. In Italy, who lives there? Well, Italians live there. And that's true ... that's true. But it greatly and greatly simplifies and falsifies the true picture. If you were to ask, "what is the standard language of Italy," it is of course, Italian. That's what they broadcast in, that's what television is, that's what the papers are printed in. But if you were to ask what do they talk in their homes, O'h Italy is a patchwork of different dialects. All up and down that long peninsula. This segment, this county, this half-county, this valley, this mountain range speaks one dialect, over there they speak quite a different dialect. There is a segment of southern Italy where some thousands of people still speak Greek. There the descendents of Greek immigrants, who came over there from Greece more than two thousand years ago. And just to show you the bearing of that on evangelization, some years ago a converted Roman Catholic priest came to me, and he said to me, 'Dr. McGavran, there are four thousand Italian immigrants in Toronto—four hundred thousand immigrants—in Toronto. And they are intensely anti-clerical. They're against the Roman

Catholic church. Although they are nominally Roman Catholic, they are intensively anti-clerical (particularly the men), the women not so much so. And he said, "I want to get ... I want to get Protestant missionaries working there. That is a very winnable population." Well if you're really gonna work that population ... And one of the missionary societies said to me, "How do you suggest we ..." and I said, "Send a dozen missionaries over to Italy, to those sections of Italy from which these people came. And have them learn standard Italian, and the dialect of that area. So when they come back to Toronto, they'll work not just with Italians, they'll work with Italians who speak that particular dialect and live in one section of Toronto. They'll start with a very great advantage. So you'll have some missionaries speaking this dialect, some missionaries speaking that, some missionaries speaking that, as they present the gospel to those Italians in Toronto."

You see each one of those segments of society must be evangelized on its terms. If you're going to evangelize the Greeks, you better speak Greek. If you're going to speak Italian, you better speak their brand of Italian. Or take New Guinea. One of the ladies here—at the eleven o'clock hour—was very much interested in New Guinea. What about New Guinea? Is New Guinea just one island? It's just one island. And the people who live in New Guinea are New Guineans. But that again falsifies the situation. New Guinea is a welter of tribes. Eighty-years ago, in 1900, each tribe had its own valley. And each tribe was fighting the surrounding tribes. And up until 1960, in high New Guinea—in the western part of it, what is now Eerion there was no governmental law, and one village would be fighting other villages. And the men always took spears, and bows and arrows with them, so that they would be ready to repel the attack instantly. And the men didn't do all the fieldwork, the women did that. If the men did the fieldwork, all of them would be killed. So the men were there defending, the women were there doing the fieldwork. Many different tribes: East Donnies and West Donnies; North and South. The people who lived at eight thousand, the people who lived at seven thousand, the people who lived at six thousand, the forest tribes, the valley tribes, and on and on. Christian Keysser, a great German missionary, went out there in 1898. He stayed there in New Guinea for twenty-one years. Twenty-two years. And came back in nineteen hundred and twenty. His classical book is *Eine Papuagemeinde*. And I had been trying for years to get it translated into English. I finally succeeded. It has recently been published by William Carey Library, under the title, *A People Reborn*. You want to know New

Guinea, read that wonderful account on New Guinea culture and evangelization.

Or take another illustration. One of my early students at Northwest Christian College at the Institute of Church Growth was an Alliance missionary; Sundaw by name, Jim Sundaw (he was a Floridian), went out there. And shortly after he arrived, eight thousand West Donnies came pouring out of their villages, in one hand a stick of wood, in the other hand their fetishes. And they said, "We've resolved to become Christians, we're going to build a great big funeral fire, and put all our faces on this, and burn them and become Christians." Now the Alliance missionaries had never heard about this way of becoming Christians. And a lot of them said, "You can't do that. That's no way to become Christians. You have to know about Jesus Christ to become Christians." Fortunately, there were some wiser missionaries there, and they said, "Go ahead! Burn your faces and we'll put you under instruction. And as soon as you know enough about Jesus Christ, we'll baptize you." And so the rest of that day, about eight thousand people—and by the way those High New Guineans didn't wear any clothes, men or women—those High New Guineans danced in a great circle around the plane for hours. Beating drums and carrying on and then they piled their wood in a great long pile—as long as almost from here to the front door—and they put their fetishes on top of that, and then they lit the fire and they all went up in smokes. And that was the beginning of a great turning to Christ. A great turning to Christ! There are now a hundred thousand Christians in the Baleen Valley and its surroundings. But the East Donnies, who wanted to burn their fetishes at that time, and were not allowed to by the missionaries in their part, they are resistant, they haven't still become Christians. They will, eventually. But when the tide was in, that group of missionaries didn't take advantage of it. They didn't understand the tribal mentality. Well, that's New Guinea. New Guinea, by the way, is becoming solidly Christian, from East to West, to North to South. It will be Christian entirely. Some of it is Lutheran, some of it is Seventh-day Adventist, some of it is Roman Catholic, some of it is Baptist, some of it is Alliance, some of it is many brands of Christianity. But that's going to be a solidly Christian island. And Christianity has transformed those people. There's now a high degree of literacy. And young New Guineans are taking over the management of their churches. And one of the missionaries problems there, today, is what should be the relationship between the missionaries who started all this and these New Guinean church leaders, who are now saying "Hey this is our country, this is our church," and are go-

ing to take it over, and are making a good many mistakes.

Or take Zaire. Now Zaire is a very big country: Nine-hundred miles this way, and nine-hundred miles this way; right in the heart of Africa. It used to be called, 'Congo.' And the Christian churches had a notable mission there. In fact, the largest younger church that the Christian churches have established everywhere was in Congo. A quarter of a million people were baptized believers. You multiply that by two, there was at least a community of a half a million people in equatorial province. They call it that because the equator runs right through it.

What about Zaire? Well, Zaire, again, is one of these very complex situations. A hundred years ago, the seventy, eighty, ninety tribes of Zaire were constantly fighting each other. Then the Belgium's conquered it. And they pacified it, and they pacified it rather roughly. And they treated the tribes (what you and I would consider) scandalously. But they did establish peace. And the fighting ceased. And the Belgium government controlled. Missionaries were admitted. And mission stations were established all across Zaire. The Roman Catholics came in large numbers because Belgium is a Roman Catholic country. The Southern Presbyterians were in Central Zaire. The Baptists came in around what was then called, 'Leopoldville,' and now called 'Kinshasa.' The Alliance ran at the mouth of the Congo River. The Baptist churches from Britain had certain places. The American Baptists had certain places. The Christian churches had equatorial province and surrounding, and on and on.

And across the years, the people turned to Christ in very considerable numbers. Norman Riddle and I did a study of Zaire four or five years ago, and the book that eventuated out of it, called, *Zaire: Midday in Missions*, is a good, accurate picture of what's there. Let me try to summarize it very briefly:

- Of these seventy-tribes, at least sixty-two or sixty-three have become substantially Christian. There are a few small tribes which have yet not become Christian at all. I'll speak of them in a minute. So that sixty-two percent of the population of Zaire has now been baptized, either as infants or as adults. They belong to the Roman Catholic church, or the Methodist church, the Presbyterian church, the Baptist church, to the African Inland church, or whatever.
- Twenty-three percent more of the population of Zaire, if you point your finger at them—go down the street and point your finger at them and ask, "are you a Christian, or a Roman Catholic, or a pagan"—he'll either say Roman Catholic or Christian, he won't say pagan. Now his

name is not on any church register. He's not a Christian at all. He hasn't been baptized. But he classifies himself as a 'Christian.' A very winnable twenty-three percent waiting to be won.

- And that leaves some seventeen percent, if my arithmetic is correct, who are still pretty solidly animist.

Now there are three big problems there:

*First* of all, there is quite a considerable national, mission tension. Here are these big churches—two-hundred and fifty-thousand, in the case of the Christian churches. Sixty-thousand here, a hundred-thousand yonder, two-hundred-thousand some place else. And these people, now educated—the educated leaders in Zaire speak French; they don't speak English. If you go to Zaire as a missionary, you learn French. You don't operate in English. And these French speaking nationals who speak good French—excellent French, by the way. They say, "We're in charge of the church. This is our land." How do missionaries help that kind of a situation? Well some missions have said, "We'll take all the missionaries out. We'll leave the church to manage its own affairs. We'll send them some money, and let them run it." Other missions have said, "No, we'll take out half the missionaries and leave half the missionaries." One mission has said, "Fine. You run the church, but there is still a lot of work to do" and they have increased the number of missionaries. So there's one of the problems. And these different responses simply indicate the way in which intelligent Christians looking at that have reacted. This is needed. This is needed. This is needed. And the mission boards that have taken out all their missionaries, think that the folks who send in more missionaries are absolutely wrong. And the people who send in more missionaries, think that the board's who took out all their missionaries are wrong. That's one of the big problems.

A *second* big problem is there are few dark areas. Mr. Riddle and I, while we were there, we discovered just East of the great city of Kinshasa, a strip—a hundred kilometers wide, and four-hundred kilometers long—in which there was no mission at all; Roman Catholic or Protestant. That's a fairly big chunk of territory. Four-hundred kilometers long, which is (what?) about two-hundred sixty miles (something like that). And a hundred kilometers wide, say eighty miles. And in that there were a hundred and twenty, and maybe, a hundred and fifty-thousand people. There are other dark areas like that, that have been bypassed and need for them to be mopped-up and added to the church.

And *then* there is the problem of the cities. The country people have poured into the big cities. In Kinshasa, there are two,



two-and-a half, may three million people now. And there are seven-hundred thousand people in Kinshasa who say "We are Protestants!" Seven-hundred thousand! Less than ninety-thousand have their names on any church roll in Kinshasa, which means that there is six-hundred thousand people who claim to be Protestants, who don't belong anywhere. What an opportunity to plant churches. Now most of the churches in Zaire are not taking advantage of that—there not sending in church planting teams. The Christian Missionary Alliance sent in two missionaries, and gave them enough money so that they could operate. And in the last four or five years, they have planted over forty churches. And they plan to plant forty more. How to evangelize the cities out beyond the existing Christians: Somewhat the same problem we have here in Kansas, but a great deal more urgent and a great deal bigger. Now do you see the complexity of each country? Afghanistan. Italy. New Guinea. Zaire. Let me go on to give you some other illustrations.

Go down to the High Andes in South America—part of Columbia, all of Ecuador, all of Peru, all of Bolivia, there you see the High Andes—the Andes come up on the West, and they come up on the East, and up here is a high cool country, seven thousand, eight thousand, nine thousand, ten thousand, eleven thousand, thirteen thousand feet high, good rain fall, pleasant weather, the closest place to heaven that you'll ever get on earth is down in the equatorial regions about eight, nine thousand feet. It's wonderful down there! It never freezes. It never gets cold. It never gets hot. There's plenty of rain. It's ideal.

Well, that country has been occupied by Indians for thousands of years. But these Indians, quite like the Indians of the Kansas plains (back a couple of three-hundred years ago), there's separate tribes fighting other tribes. And while, if you were to go down there you'd hear about Kichwa Indians and Imara Indians, actually in the year 1300 there were sixty-nine tribes of Indians in that high Altiplano of the Andes. Sixty-nine tribes. Then the Incas burst out of their section of the High Andes near Kusko, and they conquered the High Andes from one end to the other. Some military genius rose amongst them and they conquered it. And they imposed their language on all the tribes they conquered, except they were not able to impose it on forty-nine Imaras tribes. So at the end of the Inca conquest, there were fifty-five tribes who spoke Kichwa, each one with its own local dialect by the way. Because this Inca language had been imposed upon the local dialect, upon the local language, each one of them spoke a somewhat different Kichwa, and then there were the fourteen Imaras tribes. Then the Spanish came along, and they

took it away from the Incas, together with all the Inca gold. And the Spanish have ruled it. And they've held the Indians down. And that's the situation that you face there today.

Now as the missionaries went down there from North America, it was practically universally true, what language did they learn? Well, they're going down there to Latin America, well they're going to learn Spanish. And when they got down to Bolivia and Peru, and Columbia and others, they said, "the Indians all understand Spanish, they speak some language in their own homes, but they understand Spanish." And so, whatever evangelization the Indians went on, it went on in Spanish. And the Indians really didn't understand Spanish. And so the Indians from North to South, had begun to be very resistant. Some of the Spanish-speaking people, the Mastifoe's, became Bible-believing Christians. Very few of the Indians did. They were resistant. And then first in Bolivia, and most of the Imaras, they started to evangelize in Imara. And they found great receptivity. And large numbers of Imaras became Bible-believing Christians. And the Friends down there, and the Canadian Baptists down there, and the Andes Evangelical Mission down there, began baptizing thousands of Imaras. And here about ten years ago, maybe twelve now, in the province of Chimborazo in Ecuador, out of some very resistant Quechuas, missionaries were beaten up. A lady missionary was thrown down, her teeth were knocked out, she was almost killed. But out of that kind of resistance, and the forgiveness that went along with it, there came a new opening, and a Quechua people movement in the Chimborazo province developed and thirty-thousand Quechuas have become Bible-believing Christians with churches in practically every one of the villages. And if the other fifty-five tribes of Indians could be led to have a people movement develop within them, so that they could become Christians—Bible-believing Christians; biblical Christians, our kind of Christians within their own people—there are great possibilities down there. Do you see something of the complexity of the High Andes? You evangelize in Spanish and you won't get anywhere. If you do win a few, the Indian members of your church will come in and sit like bumps on a log, on the back-seat, while the Spanish people run a church.

As a matter of fact exactly that happened up in the Abugatake country in southern Mexico. I visited there, and there was the town of Abugatan (down there in the valley), and up on the hillside there are about twelve-thousand Abugatake Indians. And a man name McArthur, of the Wycliffe Bible Translators, went down there and he started translating some of the gospels into Abugatake. And his informers became believers. And when

they became believers, they said to him, "Now shall we be baptized and join that church?" And McArthur was a very wise man. He said, "No! Be baptized but don't join that church. Start an Abugatake church." So they did that, and immediately many Abugatakes started listening to the gospel. A tenth of the tribe became Christians. And when that happened, they then said to themselves, "Now let's have a broadcast in Abugatake." And then they said, "We don't know much about broadcasting. These Masteeso Christians, they put a broadcast on everyday. Let's put one or two of them on our committee and they'll help us to broadcast. And McArthur said, "No, if you have one Masteeso on your committee, all of you will sit like sheep and he'll make the decision. You have a committee without any Masteeso's at all." And his voice carried the day. And that Abugatake broadcasting committee is now broadcasting. It's a complex situation. It's a complex situation—one that you have to know from the inside. One that you have to see what has actually worked. What methods God has blessed, and what methods God has not blessed. Look at it with intelligent eyes. Weigh it carefully. Don't say, this happened back in Kansas, so it ought to happen here. Maybe it will, but maybe it won't. And don't say it happens in the Masteeso community, so it will happen in the Inca community. Maybe it will, and maybe it won't.

Now I have not touched on great India. I'd like to spend a lot of time on that. That's the country I know best. But let me just briefly give you some facts there:

- There's three thousand tribes and castes in India—three thousand! There are more than three thousand. Separate and endogamous communities they don't know what to do with themselves. A great sense of peoplehood. Just like the Orthodox Jews here—they marry only Orthodox Jews and they eat only with Orthodox Jews. A distinct sense of peoplehood—that's the way it is with these tribes and castes in India. Now from among those more than three-thousand tribes and castes, only twenty-one have any sizable numbers become Christian. And only fifty more, have, you know, five-hundred, or a thousand, or two-thousand, or three-thousand become Christian and then stopped. So if you add twenty-one and fifty, you get seventy-one. Take seventy-one from three-thousand, and you get two-thousand, nine-hundred and twenty-nine.
- Two-thousand, nine-hundred and twenty-nine. Twenty-nine—tribes and castes from whom practically nobody has become Christian. Now, most of those are highly re-

sistant. They wouldn't dream of becoming Christian. You had a young man come in here yesterday, at this session, his name of Upataire, he was from Nepal. He was a Nepali Brahman. He spoke very courteously and kindly here. But as a Brahman in Nepal—the Brahmans in Nepal are not about to become Christians. And even if he were greatly influenced to become Christian here, he'd say to himself, "when I go back there, if I go back as a Christian, they'll throw me out of house and home. My wife would leave. I'd lose my inheritance." He'd face that kind of a situation.

- But there are some of the castes that are open and receptive. Maybe twenty, maybe fifty. And amongst them, there is great possibility if they are evangelized, if they are evangelized correctly.

You see, each people poses a different problem. That's what our Lord meant when he said, "Disciple [panta] all [ethne] the peoples." Every one of them he knew perfectly well, who poses separate problems. But that's the task. It's a huge task. It's a complex task. But praise God he gives us power to understand them, to tackle the jobs, and to solve them, if possible.

Now the second point that I want to make this afternoon—the first one was this tremendous complexity, more than a hundred worlds in each one of them, very complex. I gave you just a few examples. Now the second point is that you face the most winnable world ever to exist. When William Carey went out there, in 1792, he faced a world that was definitely not winnable. Missionaries went out and they worked for five years, ten years, fifteen years, twenty years—not a convert. Ten missionaries went out to Africa, and within a couple of years, nine of them were dead. To go as a missionary meant to lose your life, almost certainly. Other sections of the world, missionaries went out and they spent half their time just keeping alive. Just keeping alive! They didn't know the language, nobody taught them the language, no idea how the gospel would be received or not be received. They went out to a non-winnable world. When David Livingstone entered Africa from the south, he went to a non-winnable Africa. And I think that if David Livingstone, and William Carey, as they look down from heaven at the winnable world that exists today, they must be rejoicing exceedingly at what they see because you face the most winnable world ever to exist.

Now don't misunderstand me. There are plenty of resistant populations. Plenty of resistant populations! There are many populations where you can preach, and preach, and preach, and

teach, and teach, and teach, and heal, and heal, and heal, and serve, and serve, and serve, and nobody but nobody will become Christian. But in addition to those, there are also many populations where the world is preached, they hear it gladly. And from them, many individuals, groups, groups of families, become Christian. They don't often march in eight thousand at a time, as those West Donnies did, declaring, "We're going to become Christians!" But they do come in considerable strengths. They do come in considerable strengths.

In India, where the bottommost ranks of society among the Mullahs and Madeega's become Christians, now the ranks just above them are opening to the gospel. And when I was there three years ago, I drove through East Andra, in the place where eight-hundred of the land-owning Cumbas have become Christians. And as we drove through the villages, we saw tractors parked in the front yards of a good many Christian homes. Now, to own a tractor in India means that you're a man of great wealth. The mayor, of this town, was a Christian. The leading citizens of that town were Christian. Eight-hundred Cumbas! And I talked to some of the leaders, and I said, "Are any more Cumbas going to become Christians?" "O'h," they said, "in another three or four years, we'll have another eight-hundred, because we Cumbas are becoming Christians." That night, 10:00, raining cats and dogs, we drove up before a big brick house, where a Combodi lived. Now a Combodi is a merchant-caste man. He was our host for the night. He knew we were coming. He ushered us in. We went into a big room, about half as big as this church, in the center of the house, and then a lot of small rooms around the outside of that hall entering in. That family—the father, the son, the grown-up boy, the grown-up girl—had all become Christians. And I asked him, "how many other upper-caste people here have become Christian." He said, "There are a hundred, twenty-five of us." I said, "is that all of them?" He said, "There're about two-hundred more, who are studying, and when they know enough, we'll baptize them too." I said, "Have you built a church?" He said, "we don't." "We're not going to church, we're going to meet in here." And that was plenty big enough, and I said to myself, "thoroughly New Testament." And as I was standing there, a sixteen year-old girl came hurrying up, and she had a hand full of certificates (she'd seen Bible correspondence courses advertised in the Indian newspapers and every time she saw one, she wrote off, and she took the course, and she passed the examination, and on this certificate it said ninety-two marks, on that it said eighty-five marks, on this one it said eighty-one marks, on this one it said ninety-eight

marks) she'd done real well. She really knew the Bible. Yes, that is happening. That is happening. There are plenty of resistant populations. But there are also many receptive populations.

Now, let me hurriedly speak about the Philippines. The Philippines has been an open population since 1900. I wish I had time to tell you of the circumstances that made it open. Fairly large Protestant churches were established. But after World War II, after a period of rapid growth following World War II, practically all the churches plateaued. And then an extraordinary man named, James Montgomery, who is now the editor of the *Global Church Growth Bulletin*, as he worked there, he said we can do far more than what we're doing in the Philippines. And he carried on a Philippine-wide crusade for Christ.

Then a conservative Baptist, Leonard Tuggy, by name, he said, "we conservatives have been here with about thirty missionaries, and in thirty years we've established twenty-eight churches." "Now in the next eleven years," he was speaking in 1969, "by 1980, let's have two-hundred churches." And all his colleagues, missionary and nationals, laughed. And they said, "Leonard, you're dreaming!" "We've established twenty-eight churches in thirty-years, do you think we can get two-hundred by 1980? You're crazy!" But they talked about it, and prayed about it, and finally, the whole group said, "Yes!" with God's help and power we'll do it. They called it "Operation 200." And as the other denominations heard about this, and thought through it with them, some of their leaders said, "Let us do the same thing."

The Christian Missionary Alliance that had four-hundred churches, their leaders said, "Let's plant four-hundred more!" So, instead of "Operation 400," they called it "Target 400." And they also met a lot of opposition. And some of their leading pastors said, "Target 400 my eye!" "What we ought to be seeing is force-it four hundred, force-it four hundred! Forget about it. It's nonsense." But that opposition was also overcome. And they agreed on "Target 400." They made their four-hundred. In fact, in the time they set for themselves, they made two-hundred more. So they are now at a thousand. And they are joyfully, and cheerfully and vigorously working for the second thousand churches.

The Southern Baptists had three-hundred churches. They said, "let's shoot for three-thousand." And in the Philippines, the Protestant churches are in the midst of a tremendous expansion. Most of the Protestant churches in the Philippines (and the Catholics) are at the *publaciones*, that's the county-seat towns. And the counties are full of small barrios, and citadels—little

villages out there. Well those little villages have gotten to be quite big—thirty families, forty families, fifty-families, sometimes a hundred families, and those people are supposed to walk in—five kilometers, ten kilometers—to church in the *publacione*. And so these Protestant leaders have been saying, “Let’s put a church in every barriol by the year 2000”—nineteen years from now. “A church in every barriol!” And they said, “how many churches would that be?” “Only fifty-thousand!” Only fifty-thousand. They’ve got ten-thousand right now. Only fifty-thousand churches by the year 2000. It’s that kind of thinking and the Lord is blessing.

I was there, about this time last year—in October, early November 1980—we had a great church growth seminar in Sabu, and another one up in Bagua. And in the Sabu, a pastor got up and said, “In 1963 I went to such and such a place and we planted a church. And it was a new church there. And that congregation has been thoroughly Christian and earnestly Christian and Bible believing. And the next year they planted another church. And the next year they planted another church.” And he said, “In the seventeen years that I’ve intervened, we’ve planted seventeen churches. So there are now a cluster of eighteen churches.” Now one swallow doesn’t make a summer, you know. And one case like that may not be repeated again. But the fact that there could be one case like that is very significant. Yes, the Philippines is one of those great places.

In Indonesia there’s great Christianization going on in Kalimantan. There’s been a fairly, solidly animistic section. Kalimantan is a huge island. And the people there are pretty largely animist, there’s some not, and there’s some Chinese in the west, but mostly there animistic, primitive peoples. And they are becoming Christians in a very big way. On the island of Jahwa, a hundred and fifty-thousand Muslims have become Christians: The only place in the world where that has ever happened in the last thousand, twelve-hundred years. In south Sumatra, fourteen whole Mosques have become Christian, and the Mosque building is now a Christian church. In west Malaysia, where there are more than a thousand indentured Indians, Tumillians, working on the rubber plantations. There recently has been (I wish I had time to tell you the story) a great spade of church planting. The Assemblies of God have planted thirty, the Methodists have planted thirty-four, the Lutherans have planted six, and others are being planted. Those Tumillian labors in West Malaysia are a ripe and responsive population. In Northeast India ... Northeast India is made up of (in the hills) Chinese people, Mongolian people, Mongolia people, yellow-skinned peo-

ple, and they have felt quite different from the brown-skinned Indians. And for centuries they have fought the brown-skinned Indians. They have become head-hunters. Now if you want to keep people at some distance from you, become a head-hunter (laughs). It really discourages people to lose their heads. It really discourages them, they keep quite a distance from them ....<sup>1</sup>

“... You’re an essential part of India and we’re going to keep you in India if we got to fight to do it.” And so there has been an underground war going on for a number of years. And finally India said, “Alright, you can be autonomous states, but you must disband your army and we’ll take care of your foreign relations. But you can rule yourselves just about as much as you want.” And so there are five or six autonomous (small autonomous) states—five-hundred thousand people here, three-hundred thousand there, four-hundred thousand in the other states. And those states have become substantially Christian. Meeseram is ninety percent Christian—Presbyterians in the north, Baptists in the south. Nagaland is eighty percent Christian—solidly Baptist, north to south. Monteepoor is about forty percent Christian. Dr. Beard was telling me that hear at this college you’re going to have a young man from Monteepoor—a Cookee tribesman, a college graduate, who is going to come here to study for a year. I hope that that plan carries through. You can do him a lot of good. In the Megalie hills, fifty-five percent of the Classies and fifty percent of the Garoes are now Christian. That’s why I say this is the most winnable world ever to exist. And the movement goes on.

There’s opposition. In Aronauchoo (which is another state up there), there’s been a lot of church burning. The government is pro-Hindu. And they say, “these tribesmen are going to become Hindu.” They say, “we’re going to see that they do. We’re going to burn churches.” They say, “you can’t be baptized here.” “It’s illegal.” So those people who want to be baptized just walk out fifty miles, into Asand, they get baptized there, and they walk back as Christians. And the movement is going on. It’s a winnable world.

I wish I had time to tell you about Madras, which is a big southern state in India. A Christian Church man named, Arthur Morris, has been working there. Arthur Morris has sixty-seven thousand Christians. And I think I’ll take time to tell you what’s happening there. As the missions withdrew from south India, the far village churches (the big churches in the centers—around the towns and in the towns) they had enough Christians to pay their own pastors and look after themselves. But out into the far reaches, where the small villages were, those people were badly



neglected. They didn't get communion for ten years at a time. They said, "We've been abandoned!" Arthur Morris started preaching the gospel in those villages. Of the sixty-seven thousand Christians that he has, he says, "fifty-two thousand come from the Hindu, about fifteen-thousand come from those who were formally Christians in somebody else." He's accused of sheep stealing. He says, "I'm not stealing sheep. I'm just looking after scattered, battered, abandoned Christians." Well that's a rather special kind of church growth. But there it is going on. And when I was in India this time last year, Arthur Morris took me to another section of the field, where a whole caste of about five million people ("Marroves" by name) are beginning to turn to Christ. Yes, you live in a responsive and receptive world. I wish I had time to speak of Mexico and Brazil and Argentina, and many of the receptive sections of Latin America.

Now my third point, which I will just mention briefly because the time's about up, now and always use minds are set toward missions, study to see what God is blessing to the increase of his church. What methods is God blessing? What people is he opening up? Don't run ahead of God. Be behind God and where he opens the way, go in. And what he blesses, do. You who go, always do that study, not only when you first go there but as long as you remain there. And you who send missionaries, the sending churches should not just shut their eyes blindly and send missionaries, do whatever you want out there. No! They should require of their missionaries a true accounting as to how their getting through. Now if they send missionaries to an unripe field, the missionaries will truly report, "we've been preaching the gospel, but it's a seed-sowing operation and we've had practically no converts." Fine! Then the sending church knows that it is doing a seed-sowing operation. But if the population is at all receptive, they will be reporting the actual state of church growth.

Then I would say—all of you (again part of this third point) build research into your mission activities. Industries in the United States put in about five percent of their income into research. So we can do the job better. I think missionary societies and mission stations could do the same. Put in—maybe not five percent, maybe two percent, maybe more than five percent—into finding out (finding out!) what methods work. Finding out what does actually bring men and women to decision. Finding out what methods God is blessing to the increase of his church. Steady, regular, scientific, intelligent, responsible research.

And then I would say, occupy resistant fields lightly. Don't concentrate all your resources in resistant fields. Concentrate

your resources in receptive fields. But don't abandon resistant fields. They must be sown. The gospel must be preached to every creature. The Bible is quite clear on that point.

Overseas—this is the day of harvest! And we must plan our overseas work. We must pray for our overseas work, remembering that it is the day of harvest. Two-hundred years of seed-sowing is beginning to pay off. And God calls us at a time of harvest. And he supports us as harvesters. So work diligently and work faithfully to please the Lord of the Harvest.

*Applause*

*Spokeswoman:*

Thank you, Dr. McGavran. Very encouraging words! And I'd encourage all of us to listen attentively, and contemplate this session as if the harvest, and our future ministry, depended on it. Because it just may. Let's close in prayer.

Father, thank you for opportunities like this, to hear about the things that you are doing in the world. The fact that you are alive ... show us our purpose ....<sup>2</sup>

Writer

McGavran, Donald A. (1897-1990): Dr. Donald A. McGavran is widely noted as the founder of the modern Church Growth movement. After a distinguished career as a field missionary in India (1923-1954), he served as a traveling researcher and visiting professor of Church Growth missiology. In 1961 he founded the Institute for Church Growth in Eugene, Oregon and eventually became founding dean of the School of World Mission at Fuller Theological Seminary in Pasadena, California.

#### NOTES

1. The recording abruptly ends here because the tape ends. What follows hereafter is side two of this recording.

2. The recording of the prayer ends abruptly, and then the prayer ends, followed by student discussion and noise in the room, until the recording fades-out.