

## INTRODUCTION

Senior Pastor Dr. Stuart D. Broberg; The Session Elders;

Mission Committee Chairman David Fleming Taylor, Esquire;

The Mission Committee and Church of the Covenant Family.....

I greet you in the name of The Christ. Thank you for extending an invitation to address you on this Mission Day Observance.

There is a clarion call to Mission Fields where the **Three D's – dirt, discomfort, and disease** are ever present. The **David** of Christianity has to slay the **Giant** of Poverty and ignorance. The **Three M's** are needed – **masses, material and money**.

The concept of the world has a mission field is conceptualized in the words of the poet, Frederic J. Haskin, in his poem entitled ***“The Immigrant”***.

I am the immigrant.

Since the dawn of creation my restless feet have beaten new paths across the earth.

My uneasy bark has tossed on all seas.

My wanderlust was born of the craving for more liberty and a better wage  
for the sweat of my face.

I looked towards the United States with eyes kindled by the fire of ambition  
and heart quickened with newborn hope.

I approached its gates with great expectation.

I entered in with fine hope.

I have shouldered my burden as the American man-of-all-work.

I contribute eighty-five per cent of all the labor in the slaughtering and meat-  
packing industries.

I do seven-tenths of the bituminous coal mining.

I do seventy-eight percent of all the work in the woolen mills.

I make nineteen-twentieths of all the clothing.

I manufacture more than half the shoes.

I build four-fifths of all the furniture.

I make half of the collars, cuffs and shirts.

I make half the gloves.

I refine nearly nineteen-twentieths of the sugar.

And yet, I am the great American problem.

When I pour out my blood on your altar of labor, and lay down my life as a sacrifice to your god of toil, men make no more comment than at the fall of a sparrow.

But my brawn is woven into the warp and woof of the fabric of your national being.

My children shall be your children and your land shall be my land because my sweat and my blood will cement the foundations of the America of Tomorrow.

If I can be fused into the body politic the melting pot will have stood the supreme test.

The text today is found in Paul's second letter to the church at Corinth.

II Corinthians, chapter 5: verses 17 to 21, inclusive.

The subject for consideration is ***"Empowered World-Wide Ambassadors"***.

Let us review the context of this lesson. Perhaps if we listen retroactively 2,000 years, we may learn some spiritual truths.

**I. Second Corinthians is written to the assembly that was founded on Paul's first visit to Corinth.** Since his departure and subsequent ministry in Ephesus, the apostle has learned a great deal about the serious problems fermenting in this assembly.

**A. Problems with worldliness, internal wranglings and doctrinal defections** continue to fester in spite of Paul's efforts in the first epistle.

**B. Opposition to Paul's ministry continues to mount, especially, with the Hellenistic and legalistic group that associated itself with the Corinthian Church.**

- But whose hearts had not been filled with the Spirit of Christ. For they had not experienced the mystical union in which we live because Christ lives in us.

**C. The charges leveled against the apostle by this group are:**

- A. Fickleness
- B. Authoritarianism
- C. Ministering without proper credentials
- D. Cowardice

E. Failure to maintain proper clerical dignity

F. Presumption and fleshliness

D. The apostle responds in a teaching/pastoral manner. This group has:

A. Corrupted the Word

B. They are deceptive, Jews masquerading as ministers of Christ.

C. Domineering, bold, and lacking in spiritual courage.

D. Thus it was no small wonder that the apostle was seriously concerned about the spiritual well-being of the Church.

E. What is God's Solution to the problems of this Church?

**II. In verse 17 Paul teaches of an inner change** the equivalent of a new creature; not merely improved, or reformed or altered in anyway, which implies no more than an external change, however great;

A. But that he is to be remade as a new creature and the change is radical, it goes to the roots of his very being.

B. The old has passed away... the new has come.

- C. The old may refer to the desires and purposes of a self-centered life; and the new to the desires and purposes of a Christ-centered life.
- D. The new man lives in a new world because his outlook is changed, for the world we live in depends upon our outlook.
- E. When we are made new, some of the things we once valued lose their appeal.
- F. Money, pleasure, position cease to have the old attraction.
- G. Love, duty, brotherhood, service become important.
- H. There is a transformation of values, rendering the individual believer a new creature in Christ. Suffering, disappointment, hardship, instead of being merely doom or misfortune, become the means of God's challenge or discipline. The beauty of the earth, the familiar blessings of life, the affections of the home, the people we meet in business or in casual contacts, all appear in a new light.

**III. Verse 18 – Reconciliation to God is man's basic need.** "God was in Christ reconciling the world unto Himself."

**A.** The chasm between God and man has been dug from man's side of the equation.

**Verse 19** – All this is from God who through Christ reconciled us to himself and gave us the ministry of reconciliation.

**IV.** In the context of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century, a local assembly challenge is to change narcissistic (self-centered) behavior and to transform our behavior into tangible Christian commitment to administer domestic and foreign mission projects.

**A.** To present Christ's love in the context of each individual mission field culture and political challenge.

**B.** While understanding cultural and political nuances and paying due respect to the indigenous native clergy.

**C.** To understand as the priesthood of believers "that God in Christ is the "aggressive lover" who has come to break into the citadel of our self will and set us free from guilt and the power of sin.

**D.** This is what God has done in Christ whose whole life was an offensive of divine love, which culminated in the Cross.

**E.** The cross is God's love at the flashpoint of its power, which made it possible for us to enter into fellowship with God, in a union of heart and will

A. It is this experience that calls us to be a minister of reconciliation. Our object world-wide is to transmit love and reconcile men with God.

**V.** We are ambassadors for Christ and tasked to speak and act in the name of our Lord.

1. Our task is that of building the bridge between men and God and between men and men. We need to cross the geopolitical divide of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century, where mission work is life threatening.
2. The task of an ambassador is one of honor and responsibility.
3. We must present Heaven's point of view, assert Heaven's right, and at the same time seek always to smooth out frictions and create a spirit of harmony.
4. Every Christian is Christ's ambassador offering reconciliation and the power that makes us willing to be reconciled.



5. But the spirit in which the ambassador transmits the message is all important. "You must not only lift up the cross, you must carry the cross."
6. Be filled with compassion, never acting in contempt or superiority.
7. But viewing the world as weary, futile, hungry for new sensations, and hungry for material satisfaction – as that of shepherd-less sheep.
8. For final healing and the integration of human personality can come only from reconciliation to God.
9. We need to teach by Word and deed, "The Kingdom of God is at hand".

**VI.** God made Christ to be sin, who knew no sin, for our sake so that in Christ we might become the righteousness of God.

- A. In his death Christ was completely master of the situation.
- B. Far from being God's victim, he was not even the victim of the evil men who crucified Him.
- C. He was Victor, not victim. "I lay down my life, that I might take it again".
- D. He and God were one in the Sacrifice of Calvary.

E. He made himself to be sin is only a forcefully way of saying that Christ took on Himself the whole burden of our sin, the shame, the guilt and the judgement of God upon it.

Therefore, Christ is the centerpiece of all civilization!

He is the Highest Personality of Philosophy!

He is the Gateway to Glory!

He is the Superlative of every good thing!

He is the Highest ideal of literature!

He is the Roadmap of Righteousness!

His Reign is Righteousness!

His Yoke is easy!

His Burden is light!

Herod could not handle Him!

Pilate could not kill Him!

Death could not keep Him!

The grave could hold Him!

The Pharisees hated Him but could not stop His love force!

So we are challenged with the message of Love to develop Missions of Christ in Washington County, State of Pennsylvania, the USA and along the 26 thousand mile circumference of the earth.